

BREEDING PROGRAMME

(in accordance with the Animal Breeding Regulations, Regulation (EU) 2016/1012)

of The ROUGE DE L'OUEST SHEEP SOCIETY.

Date of Approval: 12th July 2024

Registered Office:

Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society, Seeorum, Bailieboro, Co. Cavan

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1. Aim of the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society's breeding programme

The aim of the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society's breeding programme is to improve and maintain the pedigrees of Rouge de L'Ouest sheep.

2. Name of the breed

The name of the breed is Rouge de L'Ouest, with the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society being the breeding organisation.

3. Geographical Territory

The Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society's geographical territory will be the Republic of Ireland.

4. Detailed characteristics of breed standard

4.1 General Appearance

Head - The head is reddish pink in colour, bare of wool but may have a covering of fine brown or whitish hair. A wide hornless forehead with ears of same colour, which are straight and alert. Broad muzzle, prominent eye sockets.

Body - Shoulders should be flat on top and no wider than the rib cage. The Rouge de L'Ouest should be symmetrical and block shaped. The chest broad and deep. Avoid heavy, narrow or open shoulders. The body should be long but must be in proportion to the rest of the body, the back to be level. Avoid dips or slackness behind the shoulder. The loin should be wide and deep. The rump should be as wide and level as possible and not tapering into the tail. There should be ample length between the haunch and the tail neatly set in.

Legs - Legs should be fine boned, but capable of carrying the weight. The back legs should be well sprung from the hock, standing on short upright pasterns. Legs may have a light covering of brown or whitish hair. Avoid front legs too narrow or too wide apart, pigeon or open toed, straight back legs, weak or long pasterns.

Gigots - The gigot should be deep, round and well fleshed from the tail and down the hock.

Fleece - The wool is fine and close, with a moderately short staple. Avoid an open fleece, kemp, black or brown spots in the wool, short staple, stripping around tail or down the neck.

Ewe characteristics - Mature ewes weigh 70 – 100 kg. They have excellent mothering ability and are extremely milky and have a wide pelvic structure for easy lambing. Lambing percentage is well above average, with many pedigree flocks reaching well above 200%. Out of season, breeding is a feature of the rouge and its early maturity. This enables ewe lambs to be bred from in their first year.

Ram characteristics - Mature rams weigh from 100 – 140 kg. The Rouge de L'Ouest is a dual-purpose breeding sire that crosses well on a large variety of breeds. They have excellent conformation, without excessive bone. They are extremely hard workers and are easily adaptable to a range of climatic conditions found throughout Ireland, even on the hill.

Lamb characteristics -Easily born – lively lambs which get up and start suckling quickly. Excellent muscle development, Fast growth rate with high meat bone ratio.

4.2 Attributes

Rouge de L'Ouest have Easily born lively lambs which get up and start suckling quickly, Maternal prolific and highly milky ewes, Rouge de L'Ouest provide top quality flock replacements, Excellent muscled terminal sires, Top confirmation with great length of loin and overall muscling with an extremely high meat to bone ratio Good grading carcasses with the potential to reach 30+ kg at 100 days

5. Division of the Breeding book

Currently the Rouge de L'Ouest flock book consists of the main section only. Animals that do not meet the requirements for entry do not enter the flock book.

To qualify for entry into the main breeding book a Rouge de L'Ouest animal shall:

- i) Be descended from parents and grandparents entered in a main section of a breeding book of the Rouge de L'Ouest breed (or entered in a recognized Rouge de L'Ouest Flock Book outside of Ireland)
- ii) have a pedigree established in accordance with the rules of this breeding programme
- iii) be identified in accordance Union animal health law on the identification and registries of ovines.
- iv) In the case of trade in or entry into the Union of an animal and where that animal is intended to be entered or registered for entry in the breeding book, that animal shall be accompanied by a Zootechnical Certificate.
- v) Where an animal is produced from a germinal product which is traded or which entered into the Union and where that animal is intended to be entered or registered for entry in a breeding book, that germinal product shall be accompanied by a zootechnical certificate.

6. Information in the system for identifying breeding animals

The primary system of identification used by the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society is in accordance with the Department of Agriculture and Food, National Sheep Identification Scheme (NSIS) electronic identification system. The identification and tagging system of the animal is in accordance with Union animal health law on the identification and registration of animals.

Every animal registered in the flockbook shall also be given a breeding book identification number therein, by which such animal may be identified. The breeding book identification number incorporates the unique three-character prefix code representing the flock of origin, the year of birth and the sequential unique animal identity number of the NSIS. The three-character prefix code is allocated to a pedigree breeder by the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society. As and from 26th December 2012, a breeder's flock prefix, the animal's year of birth and NSIS number must be laser printed or embossed onto a blank portion of at least one of the NSIS tag set.

Males and females used for pedigree breeding must be also named by their current owner. The zootechnical certificate will be reissued as a named certificate. Animal naming will lead to easier identification at sales, shows etc.


All animals will have double-barrel names. The first part of all names must always be the breeder's flock name (may not the current owner). The second name is the choice of the current owner at the time of registration, but it is essential to ensure that the same second name has not already been used, verification with the registrar takes place if in doubt. The flockbook database has inbuilt quality control measures to ensure this duplication of flock names and prefix codes does not occur. Male and female animals require a name that begins with a particular letter that is determined by the given year, for example, 2024; all animals born require a name beginning with the letter 'R'. The animal's name letter changes each year sequentially by alphabetical order, thus in 2025 animals require an animal name beginning with 'S'. This naming system is inbuilt into the flockbook database and allows for auto-generation of name when selected. This regulates the animal naming system within the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society. The length of the name is limited to 27 characters including spaces.

7. Information on the system for recording pedigrees

The Sheep Ireland database facilitates the recording of all Rouge de L'Ouest pedigree animals through online electronic infrastructure.

- Animal – sire, dam, sex, date of birth and death date can be updated
- Identification – NSIS, EID, Pedigree ID and management number can be updated
- Breed – breed parts (32 in total) and recalculation of all subsequent generations can be updated
- Ancestry – three generations of ancestry is displayed
- DNA – if an animal is genotyped and scrapie type available is displayed
- Weighing – weight date and weight in kgs can be updated
- Health – inspection date, instances of lameness, mastitis and prolapse (females only), condition and dag scores can be updated
- Scanning – Ultrasound Muscle and Fat scores displayed here
- Mating – mate date, ram ID, ram breed and type of mating displayed
- Pregnancy – pregnancy date and number of embryos can be updated
- Progeny – year, total offspring, dead at birth, average lambing difficulty, birth weights, 40- and 100-day weights, replacement and terminal Eurostar's are displayed
- Eurostar's – Eurostar profile for individual animals displayed as well as publish date of the latest genetic evaluation
- Sales Card – see, figure 2 of this document
- Pedigree – flock and animal names can be updated, naming rules for Rouge de L'Ouest flock book, current pedigree status and potential issues are displayed
- Death – death date and various reasons for death can be updated
- History – database stamp of date, time and what activity occurred
- Category – category of animal displayed
- Any animals that enter or exit a flock can be managed by Rouge de L'Ouest breeders. Any movements between Rouge de L'Ouest flocks can be viewed by the secretary of the Rouge de L'Ouest flock book at any time. Lambing and pedigree management (see figure 1), whole flock pregnancy scanning, health & weights (including option to record inspections), mating management and genomic ordering are all managed through this facility. Whole flock reports (see figure 1) are available including, Eurostar profile, Lambing, Ultrasound scanning, Ram, inbreeding checker, Mating, Health, Weighing, Pregnancy scanning and Genomic.

Figure 1: Flock management tools/ Flock reports&pedigree approval quality control checks


[Home](#)
[Inventory](#)
[Management](#)
[Reports](#)

Farmer Homepage

Movements into / out of your Flock, and summary of your flock

Your Current DQI

Your Pedigree DQI Score: **98.66%**

Your Commercial DQI Score: **74.44%**

[Click here for more details](#)

Lambing Management

Pedigree Management

Pregnancy Scanning


Health & Weights

Mating - AI and Natural

Genomic Ordering

Flock Linkage

[Click here for more details](#)


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Farmer Homepage

Movements into / out of your Flock, and summary of your flock

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[Click here for more details](#)

EuroStar Profile

Lambing Report

Ultrasound Scanning

Ram Report

Inbreeding Checker

Mating Report

Health Report

Weighing Report

Pregnancy Scanning Report

Genomic Results

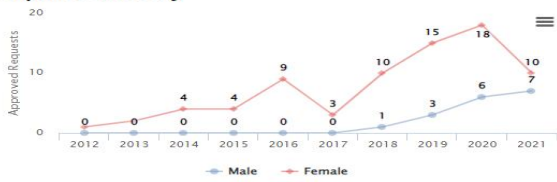
Your Essential Details

Trend

Pedigree Approval

Join Date: 01-JAN-2005, End Date: -

Requests History



Year	Male	Female
2012	0	0
2013	0	0
2014	0	4
2015	0	4
2016	0	9
2017	0	3
2018	1	10
2019	3	15
2020	6	18
2021	7	10

Outstanding Requests

01599D, 21008 (Female) Approve Reject

Name:	TOWNHILL MELANIE 2	Sire:	TULLYVALLEN ULTIMATE	Dam:	IE044735801060J
DOB:	16-JAN-2021		TULLYVALLEN ULTIMATE		TOWNHILL JADE
Requested:	03-SEP-2021	RL(100%)		RL(100%)	
Breed:	RL(100%)				

• Lamb born on 16-JAN-2021. Created on Sheep Ireland on 21-JAN-2021.

8. Procedure for entering an animal into the breeding book

Following the birth of lambs, there is a two-stage process to enter an animal in the breeding book. First, breeders can use their personal online flockbook account to birth notify lambs before 30th April in their year of birth. The second stage is to use their personal online flockbook account to request animals that wish to enter the Rouge de L'Ouest flockbook.

The animal should have been

- birth notified.
- allocated pedigree identifier – prefix code
- meet the naming criteria

- Other control checks are carried out by the flockbook registrar, for example, lambing interval, gestation length, etc.

Procedures for use of germinal products

Purebred breeding animals used in relation to embryo transfer (ET) and where oocytes collected and used for in vitro production of embryos and in vivo derived embryos conceived by use of semen must be genetically evaluated/performance tested. Where a purebred ram that has semen used in ET, the ram must be parentage verified themselves, including imported ram semen as well as being performance tested and accompanied by the relevant zootechnical certificate. A purebred ram, that has not undergone a performance test or a genetic evaluation, whose semen is collected for ET, will initially be used on a quantity of 50 females to enable the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society establish genomic and parentage tests and to establish progeny performance. A designated organization will be responsible for the collection, production, processing and storage of semen and embryos.

Once an animal has been requested, the flockbook registrar is notified by the database. The registrar can then approve the animal to enter the flockbook if they are satisfied that the animal/breeder has met all other adopted rules of procedure and rules of this breeding program. Once an animal has met the required criteria to enter the breeding book, a zootechnical certificate is generated for the animal.

Imported sheep must have been entered in a flock book for the Rouge de L'Ouest breed which is approved under E.U. Animal Breeding Regulations and accompanied by a zootechnical certificate to be eligible to be entered in the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society Flock Book.

Where a sheep that has been DNA genotyped is found (by DNA parentage testing) not to be the offspring of the sire and/or dam that was recorded at birth, and no other sire or dam can be predicted by DNA genotype, then the animal no longer fits the requirements for entry to the Flock Book and will be removed from the Flock Book.

Only animals that meet the eligibility criteria for entry are listed in the flockbook.

Current fees for services are available on the Society's website or from the Secretary.

9. DNA parentage verification of Rouge de L'Ouest animals

The society registrar has full visibility of all society DNA genotyping via the online flock book management system. In January 2023, 81.8% of sires used in the Rouge de L'Ouest flock book are genotyped; this has increased by 40.8% of sires genotyped since 2019. Parentage verification can be orchestrated by the society at any time by society representatives via the flock book management system. Annually, control checks such as random genomic testing to determine parentage (sire and dam) of animals will be carried out by the Society. A minimum of 5% of purebred lambs entering the breeding book will be randomly tested annually for parentage verification. This will be reviewed periodically. The Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society reserve the right to randomly test any progeny born as a result of AI and will refuse the registration of such progeny if members fail to comply with the stated regulations. -

The cost of DNA testing will be borne by the breeder.

Parentage verification through DNA and genomic testing is available to all Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society breeder via the flock book management system. This fully incorporated service

- Enables breeders to order and pay for genotypes from their account
- Issues tissue tags that have the animal's ID printed on them for additional quality control
- Provides a return address envelop for the samples to the lab
- Is fully integrated between the Sheep Ireland database and the lab. This means that the results of the genotyping at the lab are quickly loaded to the Sheep Ireland database, where parentage checks are complete
- Any parentage errors detected are updated based on the most up to date information available, and the owner and society are made aware of the changes.
- A full parentage report is available to all breeders for all the animals they have genotyped in their flock. See an example of the ordering screen and the genomic results screen in figures 2.

9.1 Figure 2: Genomic ordering system and Genomic result reporting screen (parentage verification)

Genomic Ordering

The purpose of this screen is to request a genotype of a specific animal.
Please note results will be visible in your Genomic Results Report in due course.

[Review Your Orders](#) [Help](#)

Flock Summary

- Genotyped: 25
- Resample Needed: 0
- Not Genotyped (Sample in Storage): 0
- Not Genotyped (No Sample Collected): 32
- Ineligible: 1
- Ordered: 0
- In Process: 0

[Select Animals to Proceed](#)

Search

Animal ID or name...

☐ Genotyped
 ☐ Resample Needed
 ☐ Sample in Storage
 ☐ No Sample Collected
 ☐ Ineligible
 ☐ Ordered
 ☐ In Process
 ☒ All

58 animals of 58 animals found, 58 displayed, filtering took undefined ms

Animal IDs	Genotype Status	DOB	Sex	Breed	Cost	Select	Sire	Dam
TULLYVALLEN YOUR ATTENTION_MAG21025 !	Not Genotyped (No Sample)	14-FEB-2021	M	RL(100%)	€15.00	Select	TULLYVALLEN WARLORD	MAG19040 !
BALLYHIVISTOCK YABBA BABBA DOQ_SCY21014 !	Not Genotyped (No Sample)	29-JAN-2021	M	RL(100%)	€15.00	Select	GLENGALLIAGH U R THE BOY !	LLR17741 !
IE044735801570B_SKI21060	Not Genotyped (No Sample)	20-FEB-2021	F	RL(100%)	€15.00	Select	TULLYVALLEN WARHORSE	IE041101102044A

Parentage Results

Showing animals currently in the flock for which Genotype Results are available.
To view all results, please use the Download button.

[Download](#) [Help](#)

[Parentage Results](#)
[Scrapie](#)
[Inbreeding Coefficient](#)

[ALL](#)
[Beltex](#)
[Rouge de l'Ouest](#)
[Valais Blacknose](#)

4.1% Animals Sire Verified

2.2% Animals Dam Verified

Mismatch History

☐ Invalidated Sample
 ☐ Resample Needed
 ☐ Sire Mismatch
 ☐ Dam Mismatch
 ☒ All

5 animals of 27 animals found, 5 displayed

Animal	Sex	DOB	Breed	Animal Result	Tested Sire	Sire Result	Tested Dam	Dam Result
09174H	M	12-FEB-2021	RL	Genotyped	TOWNHILL LAWRENCE	Match	8359A	No Result Available
09156A	M	04-FEB-2021	RL	Genotyped	TOWNHILL LAWRENCE	Match	9003F	No Result Available
09160H	M	04-FEB-2021	RL	Genotyped	TOWNHILL LAWRENCE	Match	8360R	No Result Available

Any animals who have been genotyped is displayed on the animal details section of the online flock book (see figure 3) and on their zootechnical certificates. If the animal is sire, dam or parentage verified, this is displayed in the sales catalogue (see, figure 4).



Figure 3: Animal data fields

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Animal Details:
Animal
Identification
Breed
Ancestry

Performance:
DNA
Weighing
Health
Scanning
Mating
Pregnancy
Progeny
EuroStars
Sales Card

Management:
Pedigree
Death
Ownership
History
Category


01570B, 01060
Rouge de l'Ouest (100%), Pedigree  20-FEB-2021, R5 (36%) T5 (39%), Female, Twin

Sire

Dam

Sex *
☐ Male ☒ Female

DOB *

Death Date

Figure 4: How a Rouge de L'Ouest animal appears in a sale catalogue

Owner: SHAY KENNEDY (DQI: 82%); Churchtown Hill, Carrick On Suir, Co. Waterford Breeder: BRIAN MATHEWS; Quarrymount House, Killeigh, Co. Offaly		
Animal IE042890109166B BMI21016 Quarrymount Mammoth DOB: 09-FEB-2021 Rouge De L'Ouest Male Twin Sire is DNA Verified	Ancestry <div> <div>GS</div> <div>GD</div> </div> Tullyvallen Ultimate MAG18046 Castlescreen 14597 TXC14597 Townhill Lawrence SKI20053 Quarrymount Kardasian BMI19004 <div> <div>GS</div> <div>GD</div> </div> Ballyhivistock Ultra SCY18011 Quarrymount Glamorous BMI16005	€uroStars 08-DEC-2021 <div> Replacement (€ 3.41) Acc 64% Rank Top 30% </div> <div> Terminal (€ 1.09) Acc 65% Rank Top 4% </div> <div> ★★★★★ ★★★★★ </div> <div> Lamb Survivability (1.51%) <div> Poor 0% Top 13% V 100% Acc 60.9% </div> </div> <div> Days to Slaughter -7.02 days <div> 0% Top 5% V 100% Acc 70.9% </div> </div> <div> No. of Lambs Born (€ 1.66) <div> 0% V Top 51% 100% Acc 62% </div> </div> <div> Daughters Milk (€ -0.01) <div> 0% V Btm 6% 100% Acc 67% </div> </div>
Comment:		

10 Selection and breeding objectives of the breeding programme

Breeding Objective: The breeding objective of the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society's breeding programme is to maintain the purity and characteristics of the breed. The ideal Rouge de L'Ouest breeding animal is a female that has 2 lambs per year, lambs without assistance and has good vigorous lambs, lambs once a year for an average of 6 years. The ideal Rouge de L'Ouest breeding animal should produce lambs weighing 4.5kg -7.5kg when born with a daily weight gain of 0.32kg per day. Weight at 100days =32kg. 135 days to slaughter weighing 43.2kg at 49% killout = 21.1kg carcass weight.

Mature Ewes weighs from 70-100kg.

Maternally the females must have good pelvic width to enable lambing ability without assistance, milk ability, neat udders and good teats, fertility, good functionality, longevity and still possess good terminal traits such as carcass conformation. These traits are all identified, measured and the results published in the Sheep Ireland Eurostar indexes (see Section 11 for more information).

Selection Objective: The Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society advise breeders to retain and breed animals in line with the desired physical characteristics for the Rouge de L'Ouest breed. Rouge de L'Ouest breeders can achieve the objective of the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society's breeding programme by selecting animals based on both their Replacement and Terminal indexes and taking into consideration some elements of the Replacement such as Number of Lambs Born. Using both these indexes, Rouge de L'Ouest breeders can identify animals/bloodlines that produce the most profitable carcass (and taking lambing and health into account). Using the Replacement index, Rouge de L'Ouest breeders can identify animals that are most suitable to breed profitable replacement females.

It is evident that through selection and breeding, significant progress has been achieved in the development of traits related to the productivity of Rouge de L'Ouest animals, leading to reduced production costs at the farm level. See evidence of this is figure 7.

The Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society has engaged with Sheep Ireland since their establishment in the development of an Irish Rouge de L'Ouest sheep breeding programme. Since its establishment, collaboratively Sheep Ireland and the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society have maintained a very high level of engagement with Irish Rouge de L'Ouest pedigree breeders with this breed improvement programme. Genetic merit is presented in monetary units, and a percentile star-rating helps breeders select the most profitable Rouge de L'Ouest animals.

This coincides with Sheep Ireland's current national breeding objective, which is to increase the rate of genetic gain in the Irish sheep sector by identifying and promoting the use of rams with more profitable and sustainable genetics.

11. Details on performance testing or genetic evaluation

Data on breeding animals which will be collected by Breeders and by Sheep Ireland will be stored on the Sheep Ireland Database. The following table outlines the data collected, who records it and its usage:

Data	Recorded by	Use
Parentage	Breeder	Maintaining Flock book, Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Date of Birth	Breeder	Maintaining Flock book, Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Sex	Breeder	Maintaining Flock book, Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Flock of Birth	Breeder	Maintaining Flock book, Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Lambing Difficulty	Breeder	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Ewe Milk ability	Breeder	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Lamb Vigor	Breeder	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Animal Pedigree ID	Breeder	Maintaining Flock book
Lamb Mortality	Breeder	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Animal NSIS	Breeder	Maintaining Flock book, Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Animal Name	Breeder & Society	Maintaining Flock book
Pedigree Status	Society	Maintaining Flock book
Litter Type (E.T., Single, Twin)	Breeder	Flock Reports

Rearing Type	Breeder	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Lamb Weights	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Mature Weight	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Muscle and Fat Depth	Sheep Ireland	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Genotype	Breeder	Parentage Verification, Breed Composition, Genetic Evaluation & Flock Report
Pregnancy scan result	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Flock Report
Lameness score	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Dag Score	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Genetic Evaluations and Flock reports
Carcass Weight	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Genetic Evaluations
Carcass Confirmation	Breeder, Society & Sheep Ireland	Genetic Evaluations
Carcass Fat	Breeder, Society & Sheep Ireland	Genetic Evaluations
Animal Movement	Breeder, Society & Sheep Ireland	
Mating dates	Breeder	Flock Reports
Service Type (AI, Natural)	Breeder	Flock Reports
Mastitis	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Animal Reports

Management Group	Breeder	Genetic Evaluations
Ewe Body Condition	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Flock Reports
Lamb Quality Score	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Flock Reports
Prolapsed Womb	Breeder & Sheep Ireland	Flock Reports

Sheep Ireland produces two genetic indexes, the Replacement index, and the Terminal index. Both indexes are aimed at increasing the profitability of the breed.

Gathering of performance data from the top rams in the country and accessing their strengths and weaknesses using genetic evaluations assists to achieve this aim

The genetic evaluations are developed into two overall selection indexes: Terminal index and Replacement index. The Terminal index ranks animals based on their ability to produce live, fast-growing terminal progeny with little lambing difficulty. The Replacement index ranks animals on their daughters expected maternal performance for mothering ability and ease of lambing and takes cognizance of the terminal traits they will transmit to their progeny. Terminal and Replacement indexes measure a selection candidate's genetic potential to generate profit at the farm level. In the Terminal index, the goal traits target male animals that produce fast-growing lambs with optimum carcass quality at slaughter and with minimum intervention at lambing time. To capture the growth and carcass quality, components of the Terminal index ('days to slaughter', 'carcass conformation', and 'carcass fat') are created from collecting performance data such as lamb live weight records, ultrasound scanning records (muscle and fat depth) and carcass data from Irish processors. This Ultrasound scanning service is made available to all Rouge de L'Ouest breeders participating in LambPlus. Lambing difficulty and lamb survival economic breeding values are created using on-farm recorded data where lambing difficulty is scored from 1 (no intervention) to 4 (veterinary assistance). Lamb deaths are recorded on farm and feed into the survivability index. The phenotypes mentioned in this paragraph feed directly into the genetic evaluations and impact both the Terminal and Replacement indexes. Please see figure 8 for the relative emphasis of each trait that feeds into the genetic evaluations.

The aim of the Replacement Index is to select animals that produce daughters with favorable maternal ability and produce fast-growing lambs at optimal carcass composition to account for the proportion of a maternal animal's progeny that are slaughtered. Therefore, the discounted genetic effects of dam on the growth, slaughter, and lambing traits were weighted into the Replacement index alongside ewe mature weight (recorded at adult age before the breeding season) and the number of lambs born.

The Sheep Ireland genetic evaluations are independently validated by Teagasc (Teagasc is the state agency providing research, advisory and education in agriculture, horticulture, food, and rural development in Ireland.). Research has shown that flocks that consistently use 5 Star (Top 20%) rams for breeding in their flock could increase profitability by €5 net profit/ewe/year.

Sheep Ireland has a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) comprised of two international geneticists with significant experience of breed improvement programmes, one Irish geneticist who has a detailed insight into Irish Sheep farms and a Sheep Ireland board member. This group reviews any changes to the genetic evaluation model before release. The TAG also advises on new research directions to ensure the genetic evaluations are delivering the maximum feasible return for the Irish Sheep industry. The evaluations are carried out on Mix99 and ASReml. The list of traits included in the evaluation are highlighted in figure 5.

Figure 5: Relative emphasis on each selection index

Relative emphasis on the indexes

Trait	Terminal	Replacement	
Days to slaughter	48.44%	15.66%	Prod/Growth
Carcass conformation	11.78%	3.81%	
Carcass fat	1.50%	0.49%	
Single lambing difficulty	1.04%	0.35%	Lambing
Multiple lambing difficulty	0.64%	0.21%	
Lamb survival	34.94%	11.68%	
Health - Dag	1.53%	0.54%	Health
Health - Lameness lamb	0.13%	0.04%	
Health - Lameness ewe		0.07%	
Ewe milk @40days		11.90%	Maternal
Ewe barrenness		10.09%	
Ewe mature weight		8.95%	
Maternal lamb survival		11.81%	
Maternal single lambing diff		0.15%	
Maternal multiple lambing diff		0.12%	
Number of lambs born		24.13%	

The development of each index's weightings and the estimation of economic values are based on the Teagasc Bio-Economic Model. The increase in profitability is a result of increased productivity (e.g. increased weight gain, increased litter size), reduced labour (e.g. less lambing difficulty) and reduced costs (e.g. reduced dagging costs, reduced lameness control costs).

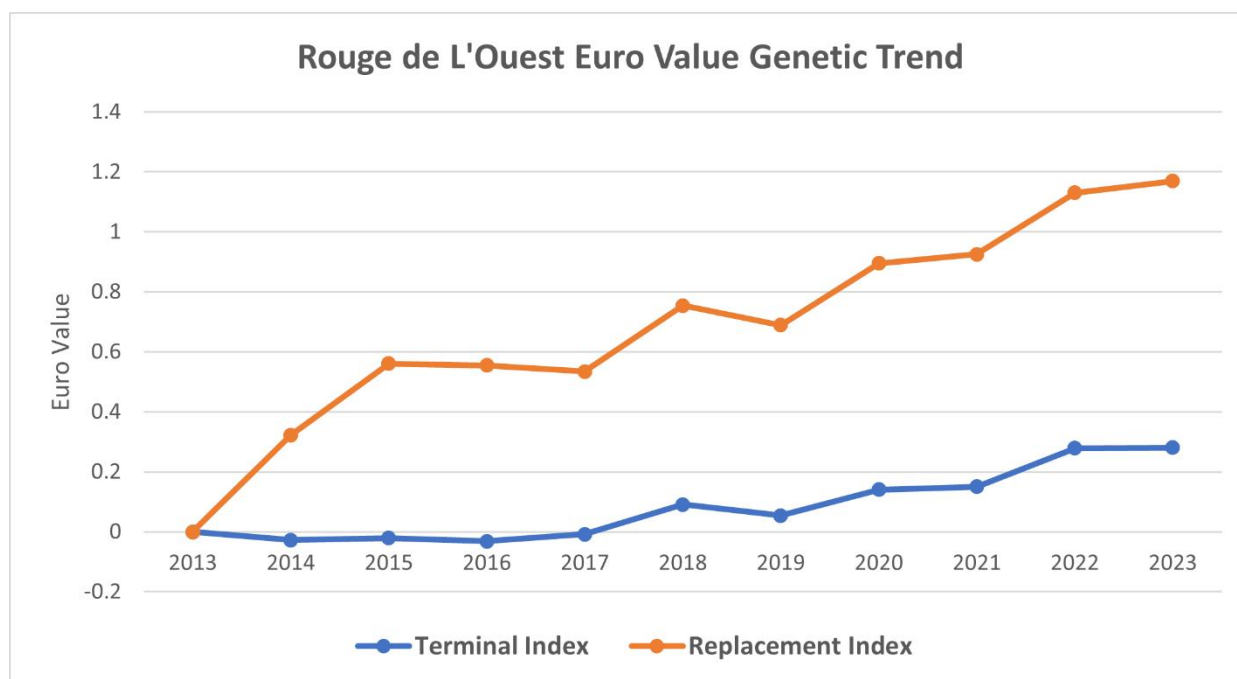
Genomic and genetic evaluation results will be made public via the online flock book service. In accordance with the terms and conditions of the LambPlus program, all stock rams must be genotyped to have genetic evaluations generated and genetic indexes published by Sheep Ireland for their progeny.

As a tool to assist in breeding selections the Rouge de L'Ouest sheep breeders can use the Terminal and Replacement breeding indexes produced by Sheep Ireland when selecting animals that are in the LambPlus programme, and this data is available on the online flock book available on the Sheep Ireland and Rouge de L'Ouest website at all times (<https://appsh.sheep.ie/finder/flockbook/RL>).

The levels of Rouge de L'Ouest breeders who are participating in the LambPlus Program far outweighs the level of breeders who are not participating. Currently, 85% of Rouge de L'Ouest breeders are performance recording their animals, and only a small proportion (15%) are not directly involved in performance recording their flocks but would still be buying and selling animals to current performance recording flock thus indirectly a proportion of animals from non-LambPlus flocks are getting genetically evaluated. In 2023, 52% of Rouge de L'Ouest breeders were members of the LambPlus programme. It is expected that this number will be maintained and increased by a further 30% in the next 3 years. In 2023, 89% of lambs registered with the Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society were participants of LambPlus.

Since 2013 there has been undeniable genetic gain within the Rouge de L'Ouest breed, and this is largely down to using the genetic selection indexes. The genetic merit of the breed's Replacement index has continuously been increasing in the last 3 years, with an increase of €0.27 from 2020 to 2023. The genetic merit of the breed's Terminal index has been lower but increased all the same by €0.14 from 2020 to 2023 (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Rouge de L'Ouest Terminal and Replacement genetic trend in terms of breeding Euro values

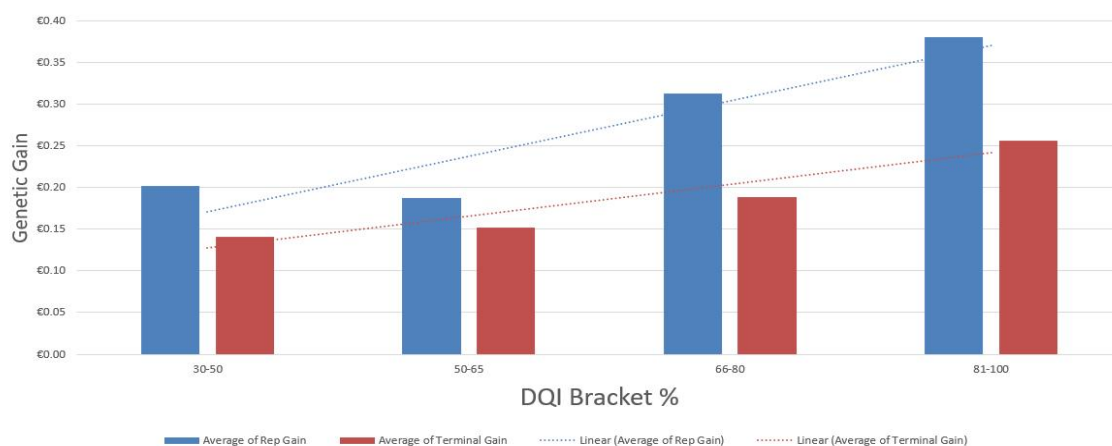


Genetic evaluation results are made available to breeders via their Sheep Ireland/Society account. The evaluations of rams are also available to the public via the Ramsearch.ie and via the online flock book <https://appsh.sheep.ie/finder/flockbook/RL> which Sheep Ireland maintains. This allows commercial farmers to identify and source their next stock ram based on genetic indexes. When the society is generating sales catalogues for any sale, the genetic evaluation results are automatically included in the sales catalogue.

Another aspect of the genetic evaluations is the Data Quality Index (DQI) which is given to each Rouge de L'Ouest breeder involved in the LambPlus programme. The DQI plays an integral role in the generation and publication of genetic evaluations. As seen in Figure 7, breeders who acquire higher DQI's make greater genetic gain. The implementation of the DQI has increased the integrity of the data which flows into the Rouge de L'Ouest flock book with 23% of Rouge de L'Ouest breeders attaining a DQI between 81-100% and 12% of a DQI between 66 -80. The Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society in collaboration with Sheep Ireland will continue to encourage better data recording through utilization of the DQI.

Figure 7: DQI effect on genetic gain

High DQI flocks making more Genetic Gain



Sheep Ireland incorporates a flock visit as a condition of the LambPlus programme which again, maintains the integrity of data collected from Rouge de L'Ouest breeders. LambPlus Rouge de L'Ouest breeders receive reminder texts on a regular basis on what is required to be recorded, as well as a useful wall chart and frequent letters of important updates throughout the year. The Irish Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society communicate on a regular basis with Sheep Ireland on how best to preserve the Rouge de L'Ouest breed while focusing on the genetic diversity of the breed while minimizing the potential for inbreeding. Rouge de L'Ouest breeders (LambPlus and non-LambPlus) have access to an inbreeding checker to minimize the risk of inbreeding within the flock book (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Inbreeding checker report

Search
RL 2015

60 animals of 448 animals found, 60 displayed, filtering took 3 ms

Ewe IDs	Ewe Birth Season	Breed	IE041064001532E	IE042200702783F	IE042200702793G	IE042821308167J	IE043927002704F
...	2015	RL	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
...	2015	RL	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low
...	2015	RL	Low	High	High	Low	Medium
...	2015	RL	Low	High	High	Low	Medium
...	2015	RL	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
...	2015	RL	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

12 Details where specific technical activities outsourced

Database and flock book management system services are outsourced to Sheep Ireland, whose contact details are:

Telephone: 023 882 0451

Fax: +353 (023) 8820229

Email: query@sheep.ie

Address:

Sheep Ireland,

Link Road,

Ballincollig,

Co. Cork,

P31 D452

Services provided by Sheep Ireland to the Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society

- **Zootechnical certificates:** An online system to allow the Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society to produce zootechnical certificates for Rouge de L'Ouest sheep.
- **Sales catalogues:** An online system to allow the Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society to generate Rouge de L'Ouest sales catalogues.
- **Birth notifying lambs:** An online system to allow Rouge de L'Ouest breeders to birth notify their Rouge de L'Ouest lambs annually.
- **Requesting pedigree registrations:** An online system to allow Rouge de L'Ouest breeders to request the Pedigree registration of their Rouge de L'Ouest birth notified lambs.
- **Mating records:** An online system to allow Rouge de L'Ouest breeders to record the mating records of their Rouge de L'Ouest ewes annually.
- **Flock inventory maintenance:** An online system to allow Rouge de L'Ouest breeders to maintain their Rouge de L'Ouest flock inventories up to date.
- **Inbreeding checker:** An online inbreeding checker to allow Rouge de L'Ouest breeders to assess the inbreeding risk associated with potential sires against ewes within their flock.
- **Breeder inventory downloads:** An online facility to allow the Rouge de L'Ouest Sheep Society secretary to download the flock inventory of any Rouge de L'Ouest breeder for any date in the past.
- **Online Flock book:** The Rouge de L'Ouest Flockbook will be available online.

- **Genotyping services:** An online system and database which allows breeders to select animals for genotype testing. An online report of genotype results. DNA parentage verification of Rouge de L'Ouest animals being entered in the flockbook.
- **Performance testing / genetic evaluations:** Genetic evaluation results are made available to breeders via their Sheep Ireland/Society account. The evaluations of rams are also available to the public via the Ramsearch.ie and via the online flock book <https://appsh.sheep.ie/finder/flockbook/RL> which Sheep Ireland maintains.
- **Genomic evaluation service:** A database where results from genotypes taken from purebred animals in the flockbook are incorporated into the genetic evaluation model on the Sheep Ireland database. This provides a genomic evaluation of genotyped animals. This also provides parentage verification and prediction of animals.

13. Zootechnical Certificate

- The Zootechnical certificate provides information on the owner and breeder of an animal. In the context of zootechnical certificates, the breeder is the person who enters the animal in the breeding book. The owner is the person who informs the Society of ownership of the animal at time of entry. The zootechnical certificate is issued to a breeder for an animal when it fulfils the rules of the breeding programme for entry into the breeding book.
- Results of relevant genomic tests, performance testing and/or genetic evaluations are published on the zootechnical certificate.
- An animal found to have a genetic defect or genetic peculiarities following linear assessment or flock inspection shall have details of such published on its zootechnical certificate or any other official documents provided by the Society. In the event of an animal not being inspected breeders must notify the Society office of any genetic defect or peculiarities on an animal.
- Zootechnical certificates for purebred breeding animals and germinal products shall be issued within one month when the animal/germinal product are considered to be purebred except in the event of exceptional circumstances.

13.1 Transfer of Ownership

The seller of a purebred breeding animal is responsible for notifying the sale of that animal. This may be done by accessing their personal flock book on-line through Sheep Ireland. The original zootechnical certificate is sent to the registrar by the purchaser with the appropriate transfer fee. The registrar will complete the transfer of owner process on the database. A new zootechnical certificate is issued in the name of the new owner and the flock book is updated. Zootechnical certificates are issued immediately to the new owner.

14. Derogation as provided for in Article 31(1) of Regulation (EU) 2016/1012

The Rouge de L'Ouest bred society has not availed of this derogation at this time.