

CEO Report – November 2025

The Chairman has already set out many of the highlights and achievements of the breed this year and it is right to acknowledge what a successful year it has been for so many members and for the British Texel breed as a whole.

The Society's financial performance remains positive, underpinned by a clear business focus on financial stability, breed development, promotion and marketing. The published financial statements, supported by the Trustees' report, provide further detail on our policies and vision for the Society.

Communication remains one of our strengths. The professionalism and volume of reporting across all things Texel is exemplary: our website is well maintained and regularly updated, social media activity remains high, and members continue to benefit from both our Spring and Autumn Bulletins alongside the widely distributed *Primestock* magazine.

Commercial Success – The Core of the Breed

The enduring commercial popularity of Texel sheep remains central to the Society's success.

The British Texel story began on the windswept Dutch island of Texel, where early 19th-century farmers developed a sheep renowned for meat yield, thriftiness and adaptability. When Texels first arrived in the UK in the early 1970s, the prime lamb sector was ripe for change.

Within four years, the British Texel Sheep Society was formed (1974), with an ethos that still guides us today: **progress through measurable performance**. By the late 1970s, British Texel breeders were already data-driven, recording birth weights, lambing percentages and carcass grades while much of the industry still relied solely on visual appraisal.

The Meat and Livestock Commission progeny testing trials confirmed what early adopters knew: Texels excelled in lean yield and conformation. The arrival of Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) in the 1990s provided an objective measure of genetic merit, further accelerating the breed's progress.

The Society was at the forefront of ultrasound scanning adoption, allowing breeders to measure muscle depth and fat cover in live animals. This revolutionised selection, driving carcass improvement while maintaining strong maternal qualities.

Data at Scale – Building a National Resource

The 2000s saw electronic identification (EID) and national databases such as BASCO, with this later replaced by *iTexel.uk*, due to the speed of change in technology, providing breeders with the ability to manage thousands of pedigree and performance records efficiently. The Terminal Sire Index became a central breeding tool, supporting breeders and lamb producers with predictable, high-quality results.

In 2024, the Society took the genomic leap, after more than a decade of investment in collaborative R&D. Routine genotyping of registered sires since 2010 laid the groundwork for today's genomic evaluations. The publication of DNA single-trait markers on *iTexel.uk* now places information directly in the hands of breeders. Traits such as carcass quality, disease resistance and resilience can be predicted with greater accuracy. Published genotypes for

Microphthalmia and Scrapie and soon Maedi Visna (by 2026), highlight the Society's commitment to breed health and resilience.

A Future Built on Data and Drive

British Texel sheep today dominate the UK terminal sire sector, excelling across both intensive and extensive systems. The breed's consistent progress reflects the determination of breeders who have always insisted that **progress must be proven, not assumed**.

Looking ahead, genomic research, data capture and new technologies will continue to unlock gains in environmental efficiency, meat quality and resilience. Affordable and accessible services, delivered through the British Texel Society, will ensure that flocks of all sizes can become truly data driven.

A Bright Future for GREAT British Texel Sheep

The British Texel Sheep Society has a proud legacy of innovation, with a breed built on measurable progress and the dedication of its breeders. Today, British Texels are recognised worldwide for efficiency, adaptability and quality. With continued investment in data, genomics, and technology, the breed society is well positioned to keep setting the standard for the breeds excellence in sheep production.

The future isn't what it used to be, it is brighter, more data driven and full of opportunity. The Society stands ready to support members in meeting these challenges and continuing the GREAT British Texel story of success.

John Yates

Chief Executive