

Unofficial Eastern Region Early Breeders'
Sale of Pedigree Southdowns 2025- Your Questions Answered
18 February 2025

*This is a rolling document if you have any further questions that you would like addressed please
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Bletsoes at Thrapston have a regular Saturday sale and, following the success of the sale in 2023, are organising the third annual **Unofficial** Eastern Region Early Breeders Sale of Pedigree Southdown Sheep for Southdown breeders.

Why are you doing this?

- More opportunities are needed – in the East- to sell stock than are currently available.
- Some of the arrangements at the current official Sales are expensive and impose unnecessary costs on sellers and buyers.
- Whilst the Melton sale in September is popular, it also has some faults:
 - It is too late in the season - breeding stock and rams for commercial farmers really need to be bought earlier.
 - It does not really reach commercial buyers.
 - It is expensive to attend and do well.
 - The auctioneer's loyalty/support is split between too many breeds so we have no influence over how the sale is run
 - It is too expensive to enter most older "flock age" ewes.
 - Melton and Worcester always sell MV stock first, some breeders feel that this places them at a disadvantage.
 - The queues to pay and escape Melton are horrendous (finger crossed for Thrapston!)

NB This does not mean breeders supporting this new event will not also support Melton

What is meant by "unofficial"?

1. No vet inspection – it's breeder's warranty and buyer's responsibility to inspect stock
2. No minimum weights – again buyers/breeder's choice.
3. No upset price – breeders need to set a reserve – and may publish guide prices in the catalogue.
4. Stock born after 31st December 2024 (2025 born lambs) do not need to be registered at the time of the sale.

Who may sell?

- The sale is for pedigree Southdown Sheep registered with the Southdown Sheep Society.
- All stock born in the preceding year – or older - must be registered with the Southdown Sheep Society and visible on Pedeweb. However, stock **born after 31st December 2024 do not need to be registered** but breeders **MUST guarantee to register all sold lambs within 30 days of the sale and provide relevant pedigree information for the catalogue.**
- While primarily offered to East of England/East Midlands members, it is open to members from all regions
- Sheep keepers who are not members of the Southdown Sheep Society may enter registered pedigree sheep. However, to sell unregistered lambs they must be members of the Southdown Sheep Society.

When is it?

- The last Saturday in July ie July 26th
- This gives early lambing and commercial flocks a chance to buy males and females in good time.
- NB This is the same date as the Hailsham sale but it is unlikely that relevant breeders/buyers will be attending both events.
- It is the week before the Society's Premier Sale. Thus it gives breeders the opportunity to offer stock at both sales and for buyers to see what's around.

What time of day will the show and sale take place?

There will be a light touch pre-sale show (see later) at **11.30** with the sale proper starting at **12.30pm**.

Are there any other events at Thrapston on the same day?

Thrapston has a regular Saturday store sale that starts at 10.30.

Where is Thrapston?

Thrapston is a small traditional regional market situated just off – 1 mile – the A14. It has excellent access to all the major North-South and East-West roads. 40 miles East of Rugby; 70 miles North East of Oxford; 23 miles North of Bedford, 75 miles West from Stowmarket, 55 miles South West of Kings Lynn and 41 miles south of Grantham. The market itself is situated in the centre of Thrapston and there are a number of local shops/cafes – as well as the award-winning market café. It does excellent fried bread if you ask!

How will stock be sold?

- Females will be sold by auction on the board in pens rather than the ring
- Rams will be sold in the ring.
- The event is open to MV and Non MV stock. It was envisaged that in alternate years MV stock will be sold first. As this is the third year, **Non-MV lots will be sold first**. This means that MV rams will be sold in their pens.
- Stock will be grouped by flock, and pen numbers/groups allocated randomly
- Breeders may publish guide prices as a range in their breed information
- Catalogue – to include a page about the breeder and the flock. Information about individual animals will be limited to factual information rather than opinion. A limit of two/three lines of text will be imposed to help reduce hyperbole!
- Patrick Goldsworthy will assist the auctioneers in preparing the catalogue.

What are the fees and entry arrangements?

- Stock will be sold in guineas
- Each **Seller** to pay a £10 entry fee per flock and a £5 headage fee. **Buyers** will pay the traditional shilling in the guinea.
- In lieu of the breed society levy, a donation of £10/breeder per flock will be made via the auctioneers to the Southdown Sheep Society.
- There will be a cap of 12 head per breeder
 - **Flocks can enter up to 4 males and 8 females**
 - There will be a reserve list for additional/late entries if the total number of entries falls below 100. Additional places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Stock on the reserve list may not feature in the printed catalogue and will be sold at the end of the sale.
 - Late entries may be permitted at the discretion of the Auctioneer.

Why is there a CAP on entries and what is the CAP?

In order to ensure there is an opportunity for as many flocks as possible to attend and not have any one flock dominate the event. There are two CAPs: 1) a maximum of 12 sheep per flock and 2) a maximum of four males per flock.

Can I just bring rams?

Yes, you may bring only rams provided you bring no more than four males per flock

What promotional activity will there be?

- Bletsoes Advert in Southdown Newsletter
- Bletsoes Advert on Southdown Website
- Catalogue on website
- Emails to Eastern/East Midlands members where their contact details are in the flock book
- Advert/email via Auctioneers Newsletters and Market Reports
- Listing within Bletsoes adverts in Farmers Guardian
- Auctioneers will publicise through their normal social media channels
- There will be an FAQ giving more information about the sale – this document!

How will the Pre-Sale Show work?

There will be a simplified version of a pre-sale show. An independent – hopefully Society - judge will be asked to select - in pens - the Best Shearling Ram/Ewe; Best Ram/Ewe Lamb from nominated sheep (no more than 2 per breeder) with a maximum of 10 in each class, if there are more than 10 entries all breeders with two sheep entered will be asked to select one animal only.

The judge will also be asked to select one “Outstanding” sheep from all the winners.

It is suggested that breeders participating in the show, should wash and tidy their sheep but minimise trimming. The judge will not expect the sheep to be halter trained but may wish to walk/run individual sheep up and down the aisles.

Who will judge the Pre-Sale show?

No decision has been made as to who will judge this event, however it is expected that a Society judge or experienced judge of native downland breeds will be asked to judge.

Who will decide on the judge?

Patrick Goldsworthy will seek the views of the flocks who have already committed to the sale.

Why is Patrick Goldsworthy listed as the organiser?

Patrick organised and hosted a successful Sensible Seventy sale of Southdowns on his farm in 2020. Patrick initiated the previous sale as he felt that for him and the breeders involved previously – and others who would have liked to have attended, that there needed to be more and more timely opportunities to sell stock. He was also keen to look at different approaches that would reduce costs. Patrick approached his local auctioneer Alastair Brown at Bletsoes who kindly agreed that Bletsoes would run the event.

Will you organise a similar event next year, will you make changes?

We were really pleased with the success of the two sales to date. However, we realise that it takes three or four years to get a new sale off the ground. Our hope – with your help – is that it will become a regular event for the East.

Will the Southdown Sheep Society miss out on any income?

Hopefully not, the Society will benefit from adverts in the newsletter, and on its website and will receive a donation of £10/flock entered. The Society will have no costs of its own, no vet's fees and may even recruit new members.

How do I enter sheep for this event?

Entry forms and associated paperwork will be available from both Bletsoes and Patrick Goldsworthy. If you would like to be notified when this paperwork will be ready please email: patrick@goldsworthy-uk.com and/or beth.kitchener@bletsoes.co.uk