

Shropshire Dwarf Gene Survey and Policy 2023

Recently the ASRA Board of Directors reviewed the Dwarf Gene Surveys sent last December. Five hundred twenty two surveys were emailed to Shropshire contacts and 34 were mailed to members not having email addresses. A total of 66 responses were received. All districts were represented. Results as follows:

Question 1: Do you want the Dwarf gene to be part of the Shropshire Breed? Yes () No ()
62 or 94% answered no, 4 answered yes.

Question 2: There was a recommendation by the Competition committee to start testing for the Dwarf gene at Shropshire sponsored shows.

Please pick one from the following options:

- a. () *Testing of the D-gene should take place at Shropshire Shows in a random fashion with some sort of penalty for testing positive.*
- b. () *Testing of the D-gene should take place at Shropshire shows in a random and blind fashion to help determine what level of occurrence we have.*
- c. () *No testing at Shows at this time.*

25 or 38% answered in favor of testing at shows with some sort of penalty for having a D, 22 or 33% answered in favor of blind testing to determine prevalence of the Dwarf gene, 18 or 27% answered against any testing at this time.

Question 3: If you selected option "a" or "b" in Question 2 when would you want this to start?

- a. () *In 2023*
- b. () *In 2024*
- c. () *In 2025*

23 or 35% wanted to start testing in this year in 2023, 19 or 29% wanted to start next year in 2024, and 9 or 14% wanted to wait until 2025

Question 4: If you selected option "a" in Question 2 what would you want the penalty to be?

- a. () *A stripping of the placing and removal from Shropshire events for a year.*
- b. () *A stripping of the placing.*
- c. () *Nothing.*
- d. () *Other_____*

15 or 23% wanted placings stripped and exhibitor banned for 1 year, 12 wanted only the placing stripped, 6 preferred no penalty and 5 had other suggestions such as verbal and written warnings.

In addition, 34 responders took the time to add comments, some very lengthy, well thought out and some right off the cuff and defensive. These comments were assembled as written into an 11 page document and shared with the committee along with the survey results.

The committee discussed all of this at length and presented a proposal at the Board meeting in late January. After much discussion The Board voted unanimously in favor of the following.

- 1. To continue with the previous BOD ruling of November 2022 that no ewes or rams with a Dwarf gene (D) will be allowed to sell at 2023 sales.***

- 2. To conduct testing in 2023 and 2024 of Champions & Reserves at named shows only for the purpose of determining the presence of the gene in the breed. No individual results will be published and no penalties will be placed. Results will be shared with the owner only. Shows involved will be NAILE (open, junior & Futurity winners), AAJS and 1-4 other shows that receive ASRA funding.**
- 3. To conduct similar testing in 2025 with penalties for detected D gene to be determined. DNA committee will develop this to present a draft at the next BOD meeting.**

With all of that being said, Shropshire breeders will have time to evaluate their breeding programs and take whatever steps they feel they need to control the gene within their flocks. No sheep with a D in their genotype will be allowed to sell in public and online sales where futurity ewes are offered. Consignors will have to guarantee (by either testing or parentage) that their entries are FF. These genotypes will appear on the sale orders or be listed in the info presented in an online sale. 2023 spring breeding decisions should include the possibility of having a Dwarf carrying Fall Yearling Ewe or Ram tested with a penalty at the NAILE National Show in 2025. At this time, the ASRA is not requiring testing of entire flocks or even individuals and continues to accept all registrations.