

New Zealand sheep farmer Murray Rohloff who was one of the speakers at the Suffolk Sheep Society Conference held in Penrith, visited Northern Ireland, where he met some pedigree and commercial sheep farmers. Murray related the problems he had in New Zealand when subsidies stopped, to the position of farmers here in Northern Ireland to-day. He explained how he uses sheep recording to get the most out of his flock, by selecting the best EBVs to suit his situation. Depending on their ewe flock, farmers need to identify which trait they need most, whether it be maternal trait, muscle depth, growth etc. and through the signet recording system, these and many other traits can be identified. Murray explained that the current generation of sheep farmers in New Zealand are very market focused. Emphasis is on profit where efficiency and quality are fundamental components.

The Suffolk Sheep Society is committed to recording, and there has been a good increase in recorded flocks. The Northern Ireland Branch are holding a farm walk on 14th July at the home of S & W Tait, Omagh, when farmers will have the opportunity of viewing recorded stock and having figures and EBVs explained by breeders and DARD staff, who are committed to the Signet Recording Scheme. There will also be various competitions, which are being kindly sponsored by A W Ennis and Janssen Animal Health. This will be an informal evening and all members are invited to come along.



Morning meeting - Murray Rohloff seated centre, explains the computer data of his flock to John Martin, Joe Stewart, Jim Steele, Robyn Hulme, Sean Burns, Ronald Annett.
Seated Caroline Bryson and Edward Carson.



The group visited focus farmer Crosby Cleland who conducted a tour of his farm, and showed the work he is doing with the Suffolk ram on his Lleyn cross ewes. Photo shows Crosby Cleland, Murray Rohloff, Robyn Hulme and John Martin.



One of Crosby's Lleyn cross ewes with her Suffolk lambs



To end the day another group met with Murray, the photo shows Alan Montgomery, Ivan Porter, Murray Rohloff, Isaac Crilly and Alastair Carson.