



the perfect partner

COMBI CLAMP

USER TESTIMONIAL



Every Good Shepherd Should Have One!

Ceri Davies and Kristain Carpenter are the shepherds at Penllyn Estate, Cowbridge, South Wales where they manage all aspects of good sheep husbandry. The 2,300 acre mixed farming estate runs a 1,000 breeding Welsh Mule flock as well as lambing down 200 Broken Mouth Welsh Mountain sheep. The estate's farming interests include 1,000 acres of arable crops, a beef enterprise, forestry and unusually a food and green waste processing plant where the composted product is distributed as fertilizer back onto the farm's fields saving tens of thousands of pounds in artificial fertilizer costs. Not being afraid to try something different on the farm that makes commercial sense, Ceri and Kristain have been encouraged to introduce a modern approach to the estate's sheep handling management style. Previously, before Ceri's arrival in 2010, the estate's flock comprised of 300 ewes, Ceri now believes that with the improvement of Spring and Autumn grass availability and the introduction of a new handling system, a 2,000 breeding flock is not beyond the farm's potential.

Adopting sheep management methods from other countries, the estate has introduced New Zealand Pedigree Romney Rams to improve the flock. Extra replacement ewes have been reared so that a heavier cull of ewes with poor feet or lacking milk can be included into flock management. Likewise, the estate is able to profit from the 200 mountain ewes brought to the estate to benefit from its high quality grass forage. On the farm, from October to July, the ewe's lambs are sold off-farm at three weeks old; adding improved rotational benefits to the cropping sequence.

Ceri learnt his trade travelling the world as a professional shepherd and shearer, working for nine years in New Zealand, Australia and Switzerland. His early farming days were spent at Cowbridge helping to lamb whilst shearing in the Vale of Glamorgan. "Handling and working with as many sheep as I have" comments Ceri, "one can quickly assess which systems make the job easier. Particularly those systems that reduce backache whilst helping to keep the sheep secure and me healthy."

Kristain and Ceri had experience of using a Ritchie Combi Clamp sheep handling system and were able to incorporate it into their new purpose built sheep set-up to make the most of its benefits. Adapting a beef stock shed to accommodate 1,000 ewes in three pens, a central twin side-by-side race enables up to 60 ewes to be held ready for the Combi Clamp. Injecting up to 600 ewes in only a few hours, each animal is held securely within the soft-sided clamp for treatment. Whilst ease of operation is important to increasing flock numbers, Ceri and Kristain are keen to point out that animal and human health and safety is the main key to improving the handling system. Kristain tells that ewes being held within the Combi Clamp cannot jump out or rear up at the critical injection time, ensuring

that he doesn't end up injecting himself instead of the sheep! A shedding gate exit from the Combi Clamp means that sheep can be diverted depending on weight, health or field selection.

Safe in Operation

The Combi Clamp is also used as a mobile unit, being taken to outlying fields on its own trailer unit, where flock treatment maybe easier than bringing the flock into the sheep shed. Operated only by a foot sprung plate on one side of the unit, minimal physical effort is required to hold the sheep compared to traditional methods. The unit is kinder to in-lamb ewes or prime lambs, with the open race width being easily increased or reduced to suit specific breeds or pregnant ewes.

The flock can now be injected, drenched, crutched and health checked easily and quickly in a matter of days - with a noticeable lack of backache for both shepherds. Ceri plans to add to the Combi Clamp a weigh platform and electronic ear tag reader as time allows.

Ceri and Kristain look forward to a varied and interesting future building on the foundations they have started.

