

Before You Buy Soay and Boreray Sheep

If you are reading this page then presumably you have already decided that Soay or Boreray sheep are appropriate for you. But - before you take the plunge and rush out to purchase some sheep there are a few things to take into consideration...

There are basically three kinds of sheep – **registered**, **birth notified**, and **unregistered** – and it is very important to differentiate between the three:-

Registered sheep have an entry in the RBST CFB (Combined Flock Book) and come complete with a three generation pedigree certificate – rather like a pedigree cat or dog. This means that their ancestry is fully documented and their purity is guaranteed.

Birth Notified sheep also have an entry in the CFB but do not yet have a pedigree certificate because the registration process has not been fully completed. They are however eligible for registration and can achieve registered status upon payment of the appropriate fee.

Unregistered sheep are not recorded in the CFB and so their ancestry cannot be verified. This does not necessarily mean that they are not pure Soay but there is no official documentation to support the argument either way and no easy means of verifying their purity.

If you buy registered animals and you choose to breed from them – provided both sire and dam are registered then the progeny can also be registered. This is NOT the case with unregistered animals – their progeny cannot be registered.

If you are offered registered animals always check that they have the correct paperwork to support this. A registered sheep will have a pedigree certificate issued by Grassroots Systems Ltd. If you are shown such a certificate check that the eartag number on the animal matches that which is displayed on the certificate. If it doesn't then be careful – it could be that the sheep has lost its original eartag and a replacement has been applied which bears a different number BUT the details on the pedigree certificate should have been officially amended to reflect this.

If you are told by the vendor that they have “lost” the paperwork again be careful. If you can obtain the eartag number of the sheep concerned it is a simple matter to verify whether this is indeed a registered animal – any member of the committee would be willing to help you with this.

If you are offered a Birth Notified sheep there will be no supporting pedigree certificate BUT the vendor should be able to show you official paperwork to confirm that the animal's details have been recorded in the CFB with a view to registration. Again – if in doubt obtain the eartag number and it can easily be validated.

So before you buy – think carefully about what you hope to do with your sheep in the future and choose wisely. **Remember that if an animal starts out as unregistered it can never be registered whereas a registered animal is registered for life.....**