



## PRESS RELEASE

**Ram Semen Collection Gathers Pace – More rams needed for the 2005/06 Season**      **29<sup>th</sup> July 05**

The number of successful semen collections each year have risen from 24 in the first season of collection to 54 in 2004/5, bringing the total number of collections to date to 117. This represents 12,630 straws of rare breed sheep and goat semen – an invaluable genetic resource that will be used both for Conservation Breeding and storage in the National Archive for use should our worst fears come true and the breeds need to be saved from extinction.

The aim of the Appeal is to collect from **25 rams from each breed**, to represent the widest genetic diversity available in the current population. Rams that are volunteered will have their pedigrees checked against those that have already been collected from to ensure that they are not too closely related. The RBST are *not* just collecting from those considered the *best* in the breed or even those that carry specific genes, we want *all* types to be represented. Scrapie genotype is not important when volunteering a ram for the RBST.

CBS Technologies have a new ram collection facility at Aubreys Farm on Bromsberrow Estate near Malvern. It can accommodate up to 100 Maedi-Visna accredited and non-accredited rams. The technical staff involved with collections have been formally trained and have extensive pedigree stock experience. They have learned a great deal about rare breeds in the three seasons that the RBST project has been in operation.

Rams are trained by the CBS staff, but it helps a great deal if rams are well handled and familiar with human company. Hand feeding the rams for a few days before they enter the collection centre may help, as can entering the collection centre with a female companion.

The semen freezing season generally extends from June to February, so it is vital that rams are volunteered in good time so that their pedigrees can be checked to ensure that they are not related to any already collected. This means that many more rams need to be volunteered than will be suitable for collection.

Of the semen collected, there are 3 different uses:

- 55% goes into a permanent National Archive stored by the RBST
- 30% is to be stored for use in Conservation Breeding Programmes
- **15% will be available to YOU the owner, free of charge**

In order for this project to succeed the Trust must work together with both ram owners and Breed Societies. The Trust will fund the collection and storage of the semen, the residential costs for a stay at one of the centres, transport costs (35p/mile up to £125) and any pre-entry health checks that are required.

Owners may prefer to transport their own ram and can take him to one of the THREE collection centres, Malvern, East Maines - Ormiston, and Belfast. However, if the ram is accepted for the NSP Semen Archive then transport will be arranged for the ram at no cost to the owner or RBST.

If you are interested in joining the project, and being instrumental in the security of the existence of your breed pass your details onto your breed society or directly to the RBST. This should include your name, address and telephone number, and the details of your ram – breed, name, ID, 3 generation pedigree and also when in the next 6 months he is not available to the collection centre. Please state whether the ram is MV accredited or not. Once the details have been checked, and your ram accepted, the collection centre will contact you to arrange a date for collection. 30 days after your ram returns home, RBST pays for the cost of a veterinary inspection. This inspection report will accompany the semen when it is moved to the National Archive.

For more information please contact Claire Barber or Dawn Teverson at the RBST 024 7669 6551 or e-mail: [claire.barber@rbst.org.uk](mailto:claire.barber@rbst.org.uk) or [dawn.teverson@rbst.org.uk](mailto:dawn.teverson@rbst.org.uk)

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Notes for Editors

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust is a charity established in 1973. It works to conserve over 70 breeds of native farm livestock.

Photographs are available if required to accompany the story.

For further information contact the Fundraising & Publicity Officer, Paula Mayfield, RBST, Stoneleigh Park, Nr Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG. Tel: 024 7669 8764 or e-mail [paula@rbst.org.uk](mailto:paula@rbst.org.uk)