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### **Rare Breeds Survival Trust ReGENERation Appeal – National Gene Bank**

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) is delighted to announce that its project to collect sheep semen for the National Gene Bank has reached a milestone of 20,000 straws. The number of straws collected has risen year on year since the scheme was launched after the Foot and Mouth epidemic of 2001.

“We realised that more needed to be done to conserve the genetic resources of our rare breeds”, says Dr Dawn Teverson, RBST Conservation Officer. “If live animal numbers were reduced to an unsustainable level by disease, then semen collected as part of this project could be used to save a breed from extinction”

“The aim of the Appeal is to collect from 25 males from each of the RBST Watchlist breeds, in order to represent the widest genetic diversity available in the current population. The RBST is ***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 in the National Gene Bank”.

“We are delighted and encouraged by the commitment from rare breed owners”, continued Dr Teverson. “As many rams as possible from each breed listed on the RBST Watchlist need to be volunteered as some may be related, and some may not produce viable semen”.

Most of the semen collected will be kept in a permanent National Gene Bank or used in conservation breeding programmes. Some will be available to the owner, and stored on their behalf by RBST free of charge.

Owners interested in taking part in the project can start the process by passing their details onto their breed society or directly to RBST.

For more information please contact Claire Barber or Dawn Teverson at RBST, Tel: 024 7669 8762 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)

#### **Ends**

Notes for editor

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) is a charity established in 1973. It works to conserve more than 70 breeds of native farm livestock. The charity is funded entirely by membership subscriptions, donations and legacies.

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