



Lenice Bell

Busy academic finds time to hand clip

There aren't many diaries as crowded as Lenice Bell's, but she still manages to hand clip her Shetland flock and sort the wool by colour before she sends it for processing.

When it comes back to her 40-acre farm at Waterbeck, Lockerbie, scoured and carded in all the separate colours, much of it goes to her friend Kate Sharp who spins and knits scarves, hats and bootees which are sold at farmers' markets and fibre fairs along with products sourced from the Natural Fibre Company.

She is regular visitor to the Cockermonth Woolfest in Cumbria with Shetland skins, fleeces and carded wool and supplies several craft outlets and internet customers.

In addition she is the Shetland Sheep Society's publicity officer, a member of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and is a keen horse-woman recently ridding over the Andes raising money for the Anthony Nolan Trust.

It might be more logical for Lenice to work with cotton rather than wool as aged four she moved from her native Yorkshire to Preston in Lancashire where the former was king.

She left school at 16 and worked as a textile laboratory technician completing an ONC in science and a TEC in textiles.

After her two children had grown up and produced four grandsons, in 1996 she and her husband Chris moved from their smallholding in Ayrshire to a 40 acre farm at Waterbeck,

Lockerbie in south west Scotland. They have coloured Shetlands, Irish Moiled cows, a Shire broodmare and her three TBx sons.

In 2001, just after Lenice had completed her ONC and HND in agriculture and farm management, her farm was caught up in foot and mouth disease.

She worked with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, the National Sheep Association and other stakeholder groups to persuade the UK Government and Scottish Executive to allow specialist exemptions from the three-kilometre cull policy which was adopted in April 2001.

Lenice lost 96% of her stock in the cull and went back to college in Preston, this time for a part-time agriculture degree.

Not only did she get a first, but in 2004 became the Royal Society of England's Agricultural Student of the Year and won the president's prize for presenting her dissertation at the British Society of Animal Sciences conference at York University.

Lenice continued the research and with the Scottish Agricultural College and University of Edinburgh is presenting a paper at the Easter Bush Research Consortium conference.

For more information contact:
Cauldronlea, Gair, Waterbeck,
Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire, DG11 3AQ
Telephone: 01461 600678
E-mail: lenicebell@hotmail.com