



## :farmers sessions ~

:alex brewster ~

Soil Farmer of the  
Year 2021

:Livestock and  
Arable, Pitlochry ~  
150 lambs treated



Alex and team leader  
Kit Marshall were both  
enthusiastic about  
trying Clips to replace  
their current methods  
of castrating older

lambs. They needed a legal option, ideally bringing other  
benefits. They were happy to continue using their existing  
system on tails.

:operation ~

Fitting Clips was as quick to Kit and his team as ringing. He also  
discovered a new way of using ClipFitter which demonstrates  
the joy of working with farmers when you let them develop  
methods that suit them and their handling systems.

:tail-docking and :castration ~

They did use clips on some tails and found an  
immediate benefit –almost invisible scars on the tips  
(right) compared to the occasional visible bones with  
their current method. Castration scars too were clean  
and tight (centre) compared to rings (left).



Most importantly Rotmell used our latest water  
soluble clip which, in rain disappears without residue.  
It performed identically to standard plastic clips which  
is excellent news for the future. They degrade in weeks  
and not decades but will need a clip fixing re-design.

:conclusion ~

As always the natural and un-distressed behaviour of  
lambs after castration was so noticeable to all involved.

The key benefits for Rotmell were the legality of the  
ClipFitter system for older animals, the recovery from  
these invasive procedures, the improved scarring and  
the potential for DLWG improvements with no sacrifice  
in speed of operation.



:june 2022 ~



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:david mactaggart~

FW Sheep Farmer of the Year 2006

:hallrule hawick scottish borders~

> 500 lambs treated

“You are definitely onto something Brian” is David’s famous line – re-affirmed this year as he and his team of Una Cameron & George Bain insisted on using ClipFitter again. They have been part of its development since 2019.

David has never doubted the clips’ welfare benefits but using it efficiently on his handling system has been the challenge. It sounds very simple but once our Engineer, Brian Falconer, had demonstrated a better technique, Una was flying, fitting one Clip every 10 seconds.

David explains “Farmers have to realise that they must forget how they used their previous tools – ClipFitter has an open jaw so you aren’t trying to pop the balls upwards using the applicator to press down – you simply grab the balls with your free hand and slip the open clip under them to close; we now know that it’s just as fast !”

:tailing~ in 2022 was carried out easily (see pic) on ewe lambs half way down the chute, and tup lambs at the exit.



:castration~ was also performed at the same midway station. With the correct setting of the guide rails to suit the size of lambs, it was very efficient with the new technique and testicles were at the ‘right height’ above the rails. Lamb weights were generally under 15kg so the mid-size clip fitted well.



:conclusion~ The obvious effects on lamb recovery were so immediate that David and Team elected to fit Clips for much of the 2022 season. “We were moving lambs in and out of fields at pace, with no stragglers or distressed lambs – a rare sight and our work was done much more quickly. We will continue to use ClipFitter in future years”

:may 2022~

# “With a Little Help from our Friends”



We received a great many Invitations to trial ClipFitter on Farms over the last two or three years and these farmers are just some not featured elsewhere but to whom we are most indebted.



They gave us lambs from a few days old to 3 months old and handled them in a variety of ways. We realised that ‘age’ is not necessarily the best criteria for choosing the right clip or fitter – more its weight. At the same age breeds vary as do singles and twins.

Handling methods and equipment influence our system - not by much given the right attitude – and have all been ‘mastered’. These experiences have re-enforced what we knew, that ClipFitter

is not limited to any one way of handling, or weight of lamb.



Although whole families got involved sometimes, single handed operators managed fine by themselves or with regular helpers.

We developed our own Lamb Cradle to fit little and large lambs and to conduct any operation you like – even foot trimming!



ClipFitter needs some space to work, a little more than other tools and methods, so lamb control is not just useful but important.

The need to see what you are doing is something we had to remind new users to be aware of. There **MUST** be clear clip space beyond the skin to be crushed – to allow it to flatten and stretch. About one third of the clip should be ‘empty’ before you squeeze the handles and that is very important!



Some people took to ClipFitter like ducks to water and others didn’t, but application times of 10 to 30 seconds were typical.

The versatility of ClipFitter shone through as there was nothing that we couldn’t tackle as we all adapted.

Farmers found us on forums or social media, or by grapevine. We approached relatively few directly or cold.



All our early adopters, young and less young, are leading the way and we are indebted to them.



I often describe ClipFitter as the mechanical, “Landrover Defender” approach to pain limitation. Well, here it is !  
Enjoy our latest session report.

Project managed and sponsored by

EST 2016  
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# ClipFitter™

CASTRATION AND TAILING SYSTEM

:farmers sessions ~



*Fit Clips not Rings*  
(for the sake of all lambkind)

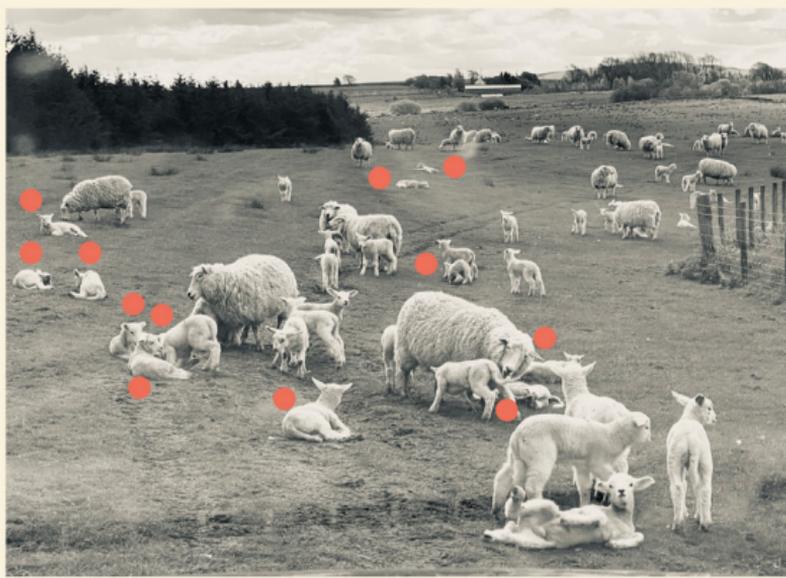
Developed as a humane alternative to Ringing using the same principles as a **Burdizzo**

It simplifies the clamping process, fitting a Clip in a way that disables these vital cords

- a) Nerves - to put an immediate stop to pain
- b) Sperm tubes - to castrate
- c) Blood vessels - start the process of removal of tail or scrotum.

:rings ~

● in pain



:clips ~



It is important to note that very significant pain mitigation is achieved mechanically with no needles or drugs. It is also permanent and immediate and demonstrated conclusively in scientific trials carried out by SRUC in 2018 and 2022. Fitting Clips requires only the same placement skills as ringing. The following, and many more, farmers have seen the results for themselves in sessions over the last two years.

*Handwritten signature*

I know which one I prefer!

whose choice is it ?



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## :farmers sessions ~

Shona & Bruce Duncan, Lands of Drumhead offered us



the chance to venture to the limits of our legal standing in Scotland and help castrate their :Scottish Blackface~ Lambs. If Clip-Fitting was extreme, so were the lands they farm within the Trossachs National Park. Late gatherings from some of the highest hills by



Loch Lomond and beyond are an extreme example of hill farming at its toughest. No practical legal methods have ever been available for farmers like the Duncans to let them legally castrate older lambs; tailing is not necessary.



So they were delighted, not to say super-keen, to use ClipFitter when they discovered it on Niall Bowser's stand at the Royal Highland Show.

Very few opportunities like this arose this 2022 season, so we had to develop extra large Clips and Fitter prototypes quickly, which worked as well as could be expected.

Unless Farmers like Shona and Bruce invited us to push the boundaries no progress would be made or we would have to wait years for scientific trials to point us in the right direction.





## :farmers sessions ~

:Lamb handling ~ at that weight was a challenge and although castration is often done with lambs on their



backs on the ground, it is not a good approach for ClipFitter. They need to be raised and very 'accessible'.

Manual lifting was hard-going so some form of cradle was preferred – possibly our own Lamb Cradle !

:tailing ~ is not carried out on Blackies all that often so :castration ~ was our challenge. Our system needs to have space for skin to flatten and stretch so a full clip before closing is not going to work.

If there was a failing this year it was to misjudge the scale and rigidity of clip required to crush and contain the full width of a very large scrotum.



Our standard materials produced immediately undistressed lambs which was the aim, but their condition and thriving over the following 2 or 3 weeks was no better than rings. We had hoped for more, but we all want to try again next year!

:august 2022 ~





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**:farmers sessions ~**



**:callum and duncan hume ~**

**South Country Cheviots**

**:sundhope yarrow scottish borders ~**

**140 lambs treated**

**“undoubtedly we all saw a marked improvement  
in behaviour post marking”**

The clamping operation was straightforward for me with relatively big hands - I could close it single-handed. Loading clips was quick too although a little slower than fitting a ring.



**:tail-docking ~**

Tails came off surprisingly quickly. I almost thought something was wrong to begin with! No blood either.

**:castration ~**

Easy single handed operation for me. I checked clip positioning carefully - it's basically the same skills as ringing, and it seemed easy to slide the clammer under the balls. We used our hands to keep skin clear at the top of the clammer jaws.

Sacks came off in the usual time - with normal scarring. We only ever found a couple of discarded clamps on bare ground despite processing 140 lambs.

**:conclusion ~**

The result was good with the clamps and the experience was actually very interesting ! Your new double-decker plier looks good too !



**:may 2021 ~**



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:hamish waugh ~

NSA National Policy & Technical  
committee

:effgill langholm dumfriesshire ~

200 lambs treated

"I will start by saying how impressed I was with  
the system"

"I have absolutely nothing bad to say about the  
concept, however, a little tweaking of the mechanics  
will I am sure bring about a tail docking and castrating  
system that will be embraced by the sheep world,  
and in particular by flock-masters who farm in a hill  
environment where it is just not feasible to do the job  
in the time required.

:tail-docking ~

Docking tails with the prototypes worked very well  
and absolutely no hiccups whatsoever, for peace of  
mind when closing the pliers I gave a little up and  
down movement with my hand to ensure a) the wool  
was parted and b) that the clips were going to close in  
between two vertebrae in the tail.

:castration ~

As for castrating again  
the concept is very novel  
and has the potential to  
be a great step forward  
in welfare. Mechanically  
one or two tweaks will  
be needed to make it the  
success it deserves to be."



Taken directly from  
a letter sent to us by  
Hamish.



:may 2021 ~