

NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION



# SCOTLAND

WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY

*magazine*



## HIGHLAND SHEEP 2017 EVENT UPDATE

SCOTSHEEP & RHS : RE-WILDING : MARKET REVIEW : NEW ENTRANTS AND  
2016 REVIEWS : SCOTLAND : AND OUTLOOK : NEXT GENERATION

Winter Issue 2016/2017

[www.nsascotland.org](http://www.nsascotland.org)

# ON THE ROAD!



**Our ROADSHOW is coming to a town near you.**

**6:30pm for Steak Pie.**  
**Meeting starts at 7.00pm**  
**BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.**  
**Please RSVP as requested in the venue details.**

**Moffat** Wednesday 30th November  
Best Western Moffat House Hotel,  
High St, Moffat, DG10 9HL  
RSVP to: Carrs Billington  
Ian Powley 07889 458252 or 01461 202772  
or ian.powley@carrs-billington.com

**Lauder** Tuesday 13th December  
Carfraemill Hotel,  
Carfraemill, Lauder, TD2 6RA  
RSVP to: Carrs Billington  
Christine Grant 01835 850250  
or christine.grant@carrs-billington.com

**Thurso** Tuesday 17th January  
Weigh Inn Hotel & Lodges,  
Burnside, Thurso, KW14 7UG  
RSVP to: W & A Geddes  
Ewan McKenzie 07831 241674 or 01955 602207



## 'Opportunities for Scottish Lamb'

**Speakers:**

**George Milne**  
NSA Scotland – Policy and Politics, Issues affecting the Sheep Industry.

**Stuart Ashworth**  
QMS – Scotch Lamb, Factors Affecting Price and Demand.

**Euan Hart**  
Caltech CrystalLyx – Improving Output through Nutrition and Management.

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FRONT COVER: Valais Blacknose Sheep on a wintry day at Mains of Inverourie, Tomintoul. Picture Supplied by Raymond Irvine.



**PUBLISHED BY**  
Kinroy Design, East Yorkshire  
T: 01430 266068  
M: 07921 728235  
E: hello@kinroydesign.co.uk

**DESIGNER**  
Tom Kinroy  
E: tom@kinroydesign.co.uk

**EDITORS**  
Maimie Paterson  
NSA Scotland Treasurer  
and Euan Emslie

**CHAIRMAN**  
Sybil McPherson  
T: 01838 200218  
M: 07796 018528  
E: brackleyfarm@gmail.com

**DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**  
George Milne  
T: 01334 472403  
M: 07496 979802  
E: george.nsa@btconnect.com  
A: NSA Scottish Region, Kinaldy,  
St Andrews, Fife, KY16 8NA

**EVENT'S ORGANISER & SECRETARIAT**  
Euan Emslie  
T: 01430 441870  
M: 07718 908523  
E: euan@nsascotland.org

**ADVERTISING ENQUIRES**  
Euan Emslie



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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Sybil McPherson

Welcome to NSA Scotland's magazine which I hope you will find interesting and informative. It gives a brief insight into the activities in which NSA participates and to the policy work with which we are involved. Contained in the following pages... Scotsheep 2016 which was a fantastic event, enjoyed by many, hosted by the Campbell family and their dedicated staff and generously supported by RBS and other sponsors to whom we are extremely grateful. The Royal Highland Show, where we focussed on encouraging the public to consume more lamb, and were fortunate to have the participation of Stewart McClymont, an inspirational and enthusiastic butcher, and Chris Trotter a chef with outstanding vision for lamb dishes. We hosted a variety of sheep breeds and trade stands and provided the opportunity for members and others to discuss issues with NSA.

The Scottish region is fortunate to have a committee made up of sheep farmers from many different types of enterprises, representatives from breed societies, vets and auctioneers. This I believe puts us in a great position to proportionately and accurately represent the Scottish sheep industry. Recently, videos highlighting tup fertility, lamb dressing and lamb promotion have been made by volunteers whose dedication and inspiration has meant that members throughout Scotland can benefit from specialist knowledge.

It is probable that every Chairman's report has begun in a similar vein, talking about the impact of the weather, the current situation with price etc, but I believe that this year has presented us with challenges which have not arisen before. The unforgivable shambles which has continued surrounding the payment of BPS, LFAS, Agri-environment, SUSS schemes etc has had a huge

impact upon us the recipients, and the subsequent knock-on effect to the wider related businesses. Unfortunately, despite a change of Cabinet Secretary, and numerous assurances of improvement, the entire payment system appears to remain in a totally unacceptable state of chaos. We will continue to highlight the ongoing difficulties to those responsible. Considerable time and effort has also been spent on discussions on proposed Lynx re-introduction and the increasing impact of Sea eagle predation, and many other issues of concern to the sheep industry. And then as Scotland basked in sunshine on the 23rd of June the unexpected happened, the UK voted to leave the EU.

Decisions made in 2016 will undoubtedly change the future path of our industry and it is crucial that the views of NSA are included in discussions throughout the Brexit process, we share many challenges

and must help secure the best possible deal for our members by agreeing what priorities are for the future and by seizing every opportunity to influence those involved with negotiations

We need to use Brexit negotiations as an opportunity to ensure that trade, regulation and future support is at the top of the agenda as discussions unfold. We will emphasise that lamb needs to continue to have access to our important European markets and that negotiations should continue to gain vital new markets across the world. That regulation is proportionate, compliant and devoid of current 'gold plating' is crucial and that future support is directed at active farmers by an appropriate, fair and achievable method. We need an agricultural policy that helps deliver long term confidence, stability and food security for the sheep sector that

reflects geographical and enterprise variations.

We have an opportunity to help shape the future for a profitable and productive sheep industry and we need to use every route possible to ensure that we are part of the discussions and are in a position to influence a satisfactory outcome.

During the next few months we will again, in conjunction with Caltech, hold road shows around the country which gives the opportunity to connect with sheep producers. Plans are already underway for Highland Sheep 2017, generous and enthusiastic hosts and a great venue make 31st May a must for your diary. May I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to those who have devoted their time and considerable effort throughout the year for the benefit of NSA Scotland and its membership. I wish you well for the future, as the tups go out and another year begins.

# DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

We started our year in February with the Scottish region AGM when widespread concerns centred on farm support payments and when they would be received. It then proved to be a long drawn out, painful process for farmers and one which could not be repeated.

As of mid-October, Scottish Government announced that 18,268 businesses out of 18,327 potential BPS eligible claimants had been fully paid although the final LFASS payments were still being processed, but I would hope they are banked by the time you read this report.

Obviously the IT system has not been fit for purpose, but having recently had a land inspection I would suggest that the level of detail that has been adopted by the Scottish Government is far too precise and made any mapping exercise a complete nightmare.

Recognising that the IT problem was going to continue, the Scottish Government announced a loan scheme for this year's BPS payments with 80% of the value paid in November. So far the scheme has been taken up by about 12,000 farmers. This loan scheme was welcomed and the funds were very much needed.

At a stakeholder meeting held at the beginning of November, it was confirmed that LFASS funding for Scotland will be guaranteed until we officially leave the EU. This is vitally important for farmers that receive LFASS and a welcome announcement that funds will continue until exit date.

Brexit talks are gaining momentum and the Scottish Region Committee will be holding meetings at the end of November and in December. There will never have been a more important time for us to shape an industry for the future. Politicians at all levels are offering that option for the industry, so it is up to us to agree where we would like to see our sheep industry in 20 years. Timescales may be uncertain but we can only work with what we know at the moment which is Article 50 being activated in March 2017 and an exit by 2020.

Trade will be most important as 96% of UK lamb exports go to EU countries. Tariffs and quotas will be negotiated and we must ensure that politicians and Government officials are made well aware of the importance and the many benefits that the sheep industry delivers. We cannot afford to have lamb exports used as a bargaining chip.

Rules and regulations must also be scrutinised during this process, including the way support will be delivered following an exit date. NSA intends to be at the forefront of securing a budget for future support and a mechanism for delivering support directly to the active producers. BSE-negligible risk status has been applied for to the EU by the Scottish Government and although this will be a long process, at least it is underway with a possible outcome in May 2017. We must ensure the removal of SRM controls, along with the need to split sheep carcasses. This may also assist Scotland in attracting potential new markets ahead of the rest of the UK.

In all, its going to be busy time but I feel we must look at it as an opportunity and a challenge for our industry. We need to be in the driving seat and take every opportunity to put out a clear message for the long term benefit of our industry.

Lamb prices this year have helped restore confidence in the breeding sector and we must work hard to make sure that confidence is maintained over the coming years. Opportunities are there for sheep farmers with several commenting to me that they have invested in more or new breeding flocks. This will result in more lambs in the system next year and again NSA will need to work closely with QMS, and others, to be ahead of the game in trying to influence the consumer and the supply chain to support our product.



George Milne

## GEORGE'S DIARY

- 27.04.16 Sheep Vision Group Meeting
- 02.05.16 The James Hutton Institute Meeting, Glensaugh
- 06.05.16 Animal Health & Welfare Stakeholders Meeting
- 06.05.16 NSA Scotsheep 2016 Committee Meeting
- 11.05.16 George Eustice Meeting, London
- 17.05.16 QMS Conference
- 19.05.16 IAAS 90th Anniversary Lunch
- 23.05.16 NSA Scotland Committee Meeting, Stirling
- 26.05.16 Sheep Vision Group review Meeting, Perth
- 01.06.16 NSA Scotsheep 2016
- 02.06.16 Lynx Meeting, Cumbria
- 06.06.16 British Deer Society Meeting re Lynx
- 08.06.16 NSA UK Development Officers Meeting
- 14.06.16 NSA - UK Policy & Technical Committee, Birmingham
- 15.06.16 Animal Health and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Stakeholder Meeting
- 16.06.16 ANC Workshop
- 21/24.06.16 NSA Scotland Marquee Royal Highland Show
- 29.06.16 CAP Stakeholders Meeting
- 30.06.16 Sheep and Trees Integration Meeting
- 04.07.16 NSA Regional Managers Meeting, Birmingham
- 05.07.16 Sheep and Trees Integration farm visit, Lochdochart
- 06.07.16 QMS Lamb Group Meeting
- 20.07.16 CAP Stakeholders Meeting
- 26.07.16 NSA Sheep Event, Malvern
- 29.07.16 Livestock Health Scotland Meeting
- 17.08.16 NSA & BDS Meeting re Lynx, St Boswells
- 22.08.16 Sheep and Trees Integration event, Blair Atholl
- 23.08.16 NSA Scotland Committee Meeting, Stirling
- 25.08.16 CAP Stakeholder Meeting Edinburgh
- 31.08.16 Sheep Vision Group Launch, Grantown on Spey
- 01/09/16 Climate Change Stakeholder Meeting
- 06.09.16 NSA - UK Policy & Technical Committee Meeting, Birmingham
- 07.09.16 UK Livestock Group Meeting on Brexit, Birmingham
- 05.10.16 Farmstock Lamb Supply Chain Conference
- 06.10.16 SRUC annual dinner
- 25.10.16 UK Livestock Group Meeting on Brexit, Birmingham
- 26.10.16 Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Scotland Workshop
- 28.10.16 NFUS Meeting on Brexit
- 31.10.16 Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholder Meeting, Edinburgh

## NSA Scotland Officials



Chairman  
SYBIL MACPHERSON



Vice Chairman  
BILLY RENWICK



Treasurer  
MAIMIE PATERSON



Secretariat & Events Organiser  
EUAN EMSLIE



Development Officer  
GEORGE MILNE

# NSA SCOTLAND/CALTECH CRYSTALYX ROADSHOW OPEN MEETINGS WINTER 2016/2017

*Our ROADSHOW is coming  
to a town near you.*

## NSA SCOTTISH REGION AGM & DINNER

AIRTH CASTLE HOTEL & SPA,  
AIRTH, STIRLINGSHIRE, FK2 8JF

**WEDNESDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 2017**  
OPEN TO MEMBERS AND NON MEMBERS

AGM Starts at 4.00 pm

### AGM AGENDA

1. Welcome.
2. Apologies.
3. To approve the minutes of the last ARMM (AGM) held on the 17th February 2016.
4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes.
5. Chairman's report by Sybil MacPherson.
6. Treasurers report by Maimie Paterson.
7. Development Officers report by George Milne.
8. Election or re-approval of Office Bearers and representatives.  
Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Treasurer  
NSA National Policy & Technical committee representative  
(Hamish Waugh served two of three years)  
NSA National Finance & General Purpose committee representative  
(Hamish Waugh served one of three years)
9. Nomination or re-approval of the region's Trustees/Directors.  
(Sybil MacPherson served two of three years)  
(Billy Renwick starts in January 2017 one of a three year term)
10. Election of NSA Scotland new committee members and endorsement of current committee members.
11. AOCB.

### DINNER

7.00pm for 7.30pm Dinner. After dinner speaker – To be confirmed  
Evening entertainment - To be confirmed

Tickets can be purchased for the dinner at £30 + VAT up until the 6th February 2017.  
Accommodation can be booked directly with the hotel on Tel No: 01324 832933  
using the promotional code 1502NSA - £79.00 Bed & Breakfast, single occupancy/  
£99.00 Bed & Breakfast, twin or double occupancy (A block of rooms have been  
held at this rate until 11.01.17).

Further details, copies of proxy notices and dinner tickets are available from:  
Euan Emslie: NSA Scottish Region Secretariat  
T: 01430 441870 M: 07718 908523 E: euan@nsascotland.org

NSA Scotland is once again holding a series of roadshow meetings in conjunction with Caltech Crystalyx, Carrs Billington and W & A Geddes Ltd, with the theme 'Opportunities for Scotch Lamb'. Booking is essential as each meeting will commence at 6.30pm with a steak pie supper and we aim for a 7pm start. The meetings are open to any sheep farmer within Scotland. (See advert on meetings on Inside front cover of this magazine).

### SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

**GEORGE MILNE**, NSA Scotland - Policy and Politics, Issues affecting the Sheep Industry.  
**STUART ASHWORTH**, QMS - Scotch Lamb, Factors Affecting Price and Demand.  
**EUAN HART**, Caltech Crystalyx - Improving Output through Nutrition and Management.

*'Opportunities  
for Scottish  
Lamb'*

### MOFFAT - WEDNESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER

**BEST WESTERN MOFFAT HOUSE HOTEL, HIGH STREET, MOFFAT, DG10 9HL**

Those interested in attending this meeting should register with:

Ian Powley, Carrs Billington Tel: 07889 458252 / 01461 202772 or email: ian.powley@carrs-billington.com

### LAUDER - TUESDAY 13TH DECEMBER

**CARFRAEMILL HOTEL, CARFRAEMILL, LAUDER, TD2 6RA**

Those interested in attending this meeting should register with:

Christine Grant, Carrs Billington Tel: 01835 850250 or email: christine-grant@carrs-billington.com

### THURSO - TUESDAY 17TH JANUARY

**BEST WESTERN MOFFAT HOUSE HOTEL, HIGH STREET, MOFFAT, DG10 9HL**

Those interested in attending this meeting should register with:

Ewan Mackenzie, W & A Geddes Tel: 07831 241674 / 01955 602207 or email: ewan.mackenzie@wandageddes.co.uk

### NSA SCOTLAND & CALTECH CRYSTALYX "GETTING FIT FOR THE FUTURE" ROADSHOW 2015/2016 MEETINGS REPORT

NSA Scotland & Caltech - Crystalyx with various agricultural merchants staged their winter 2015/2016 Roadshow with the theme "Getting Fit for the Future". There were eight meetings held in late January and early February, at venues from Castle Douglas to Lerwick. Between 30 and 70 sheep farmers attended each meeting and enjoyed supper. The speakers included George Milne, NSA Scotland Development Officer, Sybil MacPherson, NSA Scotland, Chairman, Euan Hart, Caltech Crystalyx, Billy Kyle, Elanco Animal Health & George Purves, United Auctions who spoke about and engaged the audience in topics that included the work that NSA Scotland do for the sheep farmer during the year, nutrition, animal health and marketing.



Sybil MacPherson addresses audience at Oban meeting



Euan Hart answering questions from the delegates at Oban meeting



Billy Kyle addresses audience at Oban meeting



George Milne addresses audience at Stirling meeting



Some of the delegates who attended the Stirling meeting



# ROADSHOW

# NOTICEBOARD

## NSA Weekly Email Update

If you are an NSA member one of the membership benefits is NSA's weekly email update. If you are not receiving this useful weekly newsletter, summarising the week's news, updating you on NSA activity and providing a reminder of key dates, please send your email address to [membership@nationalsheep.org.uk](mailto:membership@nationalsheep.org.uk) and we will add you to the mailing list. We also email NSA Scotland members about events and meetings. So email us to today with your name, address and membership number if you know it, to be kept up to date.

## NSA Scotland, Scotsheep & HighlandSheep Websites

Find more information out about what NSA Scotland are doing for you as a NSA member and for the Scottish sheep industry as a whole. [www.nscotland.org](http://www.nscotland.org)

## NSA Scotland Videos

During the year NSA Scotland produced two videos to help you the sheep farmer on "What to look for and how to manage rams for breeding" & "Dressing the wool on a lamb for presentation in the sale or show ring". These can be viewed on YouTube and searching for NSA Scotland.



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# BANKHOUSE IS AGRISCOT 2016 SCOTTISH SHEEP FARM OF THE YEAR

Congratulations go to NSA members the Lofthouse family who farm at Bankhouse farm, near the village of Stow in the Scottish Borders, The farm was announced recently as the AgriScot Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year 2016.

The Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year award, which is sponsored by Thorntons Solicitors, was first awarded at AgriScot 2015 and is now a firm fixture for the farm business event.

Hamish Dykes, a Director of AgriScot, who along with Rhidian Jones and Richard Blake, visited Bankhouse as part of the award assessment process, commented:

"Following the success of the inaugural year of SSFOTY in 2015, we were delighted to receive over 20 nominations for this year's award.

"From those nominated farms, there can, as ever, be only one recipient of the Sheep Farm of the Year title. Bankhouse scored exceptionally highly on our assessment score sheets and well deserves the title of Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year.

"Bankhouse is relatively small in comparison to other livestock farms in the area, but Graham Lofthouse, his parents Wilma and Bert and wife Kathleen certainly know how to get the most out of their business,

running 439 ewes plus ewe lambs, and 72 suckler cows on less than 300 upland acres."

The sheep at Bankhouse are a home-bred easy care flock, with the objective for the ewes being to produce lambs equivalent to their own body weight at weaning. The assessors were very impressed by Graham's knowledge and control over his costs of production, his attention to detail and his ability to generate profit without subsidy.

The assessors also noted that Bankhouse had been subject to challenges in the recent past, with loss of land and restricted access to land because of the new Borders Railway. Graham and his family had worked hard to minimise the impact of these challenges on their rotational grazing regime and on their livestock.

Hamish Dykes said "In an era where we are always told that big is best and expansion is key, Bankhouse turns this on its head and proves that a profitable sheep enterprise, and a viable income, can

be generated from a smaller farm. The Lofthouse family well deserve this award."



Graham & Kathleen Lofthouse receiving their award from a representative of Thorntons and Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing



Graham Lofthouse of Bankhouse Farm

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# NSA HIGHLANDSHEEP 2015 REPORT

Sheep farmers from throughout the Highlands and Islands and further afield, anxious to glean the latest technical information to improve the physical and financial performance of their flocks, descended on Fearn Farm at Tain in the North of Scotland on June 9 for NSA Highlandsheep 2015.

Host farmer was John Scott, Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer of the Year in 2014, with his family runs 4200 pedigree and commercial ewes on 1000 acres at Fearn, and other nearby grazings.

John is the fourth generation of the Scott family to farm at Fearn and is passionate about his sheep enterprise, laying a great deal of emphasis on genetics, husbandry, grassland management and marketing to improve productivity and reduce the farm's dependence on subsidy.

[www.nsascotland.org](http://www.nsascotland.org)

Below: Dingwall & Highland Marts conducting the sale of pair's of ewe hoggs



Opening Ceremony at event



Irene & James Fowle with their first prize pair of Suffolk ewe hoggs which sold for the top price on the day of 750gns each



The Scott Family



Young Shepherd of Year competitor carrying out one of the tasks



Busy breed society stands at event

# ROSS-SHIRE FARM VENUE NSA HIGHLAND SHEEP 2017

National Sheep Association Scotland's biennial sheep event in the Highlands is to be held on a Ross-shire farm next year. NSA Highland Sheep 2017 will be hosted by the Clark family at Kinnahaird Farm, Contin, Strathpeffer, on Wednesday, May 31, with Harbro Ltd as the major sponsor of the event.

"It is a great honour and privilege to be asked to host this important event for the sheep industry in the Highlands and we look forward to working closely with the local organising committee to make the event a great success," said Amy Grant, who is a partner in the family farming business with mother, Dorothy, and sister, Sheena (who works in London), trading as John P Clark Ltd.

This is the third Highland Sheep event held by NSA Scotland following the inaugural event held at Dingwall Mart in 2013 and last year's event hosted by the Scott family at Fearn Farm, Tain.

"We are delighted that the Clark family has kindly agreed to host next year's Highland Sheep. Kinnahaird Farm will be an ideal venue for the event," said Sybil MacPherson, Chair of NSA Scotland.

"The previous two events were highly successful and attracted a

large attendance of sheep farmers from all over the Highlands and further afield and I'm confident next year's event will be equally successful." Kinnahaird Farm extends to 900 acres and carries a flock of 400 North Country Cheviot x Mule and Texel cross ewes which are crossed with Charolais x Beltex and Charollais x Texel rams, with all progeny finished on the farm and sold at Dingwall Mart.

"The sheep flock is a very important part of our farming enterprise and we are currently engaged in a number of innovative projects to improve the performance of the flock through both better genetics and nutrition," said Ms Grant.

The Kinnahaird herd of pedigree Limousin cattle, three-times winner of the Scottish Limousin Club's small herds' competition, has recently been sold to concentrate

on the commercial beef enterprise comprising a suckler herd of 160 mostly Simmental cross cows which are crossed with Simmental and British Blue bulls with heifers put to the Limousin. Forward stores are sold at Dingwall each year with heifer calves going to the High Health breeding heifer sale and 25 retained each year as replacements.

The local organising committee met for the first time in early October to plan the event, when Brenda MacIntyre, Findon Mains, Culbokie was unanimously appointed as event Chairman.

Features of the event will include farm tour of Kinnahaird showing the quality of the stock as well as grass management, with a field already sown with demonstration plots of different varieties of seed. Other popular attractions will include commercial, educational and sheep breed stands, seminars, stockjudging, Young Shepherd of the Year and



From Left: Amy Grant (Host Farmer), Brenda MacIntyre (Chair of local Organising Committee) & Sybil MacPherson (Chair of NSA Scotland) at first organising committee meeting

sheep dog trial competitions and practical demonstrations of sheep shearing, butchery/cookery, crook making, sheep dressing and wool spinning.

Another feature, which proved highly successful at the last NSA Scotsheep and the two NSA Highlandsheep events held in the Highlands, will be the show and sale of pairs of ewe hoggs which will be eagerly anticipated by potential buyers.

Further information about the event, including trade stand applications and opportunities for sponsorship, can be obtained from Euan Emslie, NSA Scotland Events Organiser on 01430 441870 or 07718 908523 or at [euane@nsascotland.org](mailto:euane@nsascotland.org)

## SHOW & SALE OF PAIRS OF EWE HOGGS

Entries from breeders of the following breeds are now being accepted for this unique show and sale to be held at NSA Highlandsheep 2017

Class 1 - Mules, Class 2 - North Country Cheviot (Hill), Class 3 - North Country Cheviot (Park), Class 4 - Scottish Blackface, Class 5 - Suffolk, Class 6 - Texel, Class 7 - Any Other Native Breed, Class 8 - Any Other Continental Breed, Class 9 - Any Cross Bred.

## NEXT GENERATION SHEPHERD OF THE YEAR

Do you work with sheep? Are you motivated by working with sheep? Do you enjoy working with sheep? If so and you have left school and are the age of 26 or under on Wednesday 18th July 2018, why not enter the Next Generation Shepherd of the Year competition. The competition is designed to test your practical skills and practical knowledge used in your every-day work with sheep, as well as your broader knowledge of the sheep industry throughout the UK and Europe, including the various sheep breeds. The competition offers the NSA Highlandsheep rose bowl and a cash prize of £300 to the winner, with £200 going to the runner-up and £100 for third place. The highest placed competitor under the age of 21 will also receive a prize of £100.

Further Details and Entry Forms are available from Euan Emslie, NSA Highlandsheep Organiser  
Tel: 01430 441870 Mobile: 07718 908523 Email: [euane@nsascotland.org](mailto:euane@nsascotland.org) or [www.nsascotland.org](http://www.nsascotland.org)

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## OVINE PULMONARY ADENOCARCINOMA (OPA OR JAAGSIEKTE)



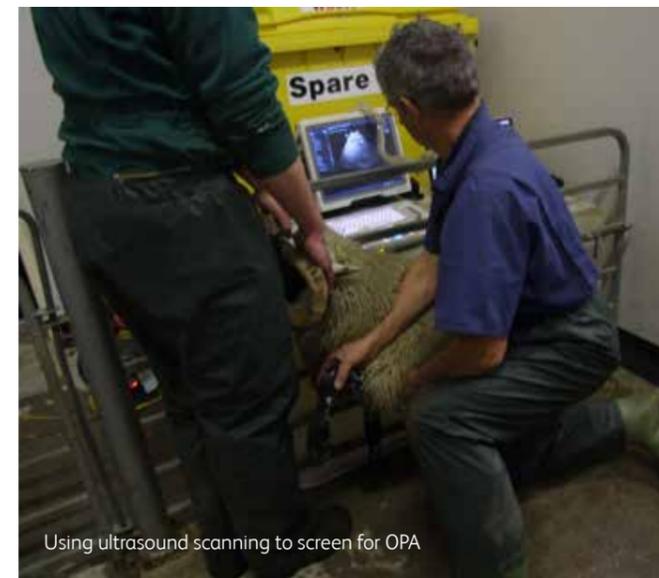
OPA is often described as an iceberg disease as only a small proportion of cases are ever reported or seen by vets. Some flocks suffer very large losses with more than 20% of adult sheep dying of OPA in one year, although most affected flocks lose 1-5% of sheep to OPA every year which is a continuous drain on profitability as well as an issue of animal welfare. Even though the majority of flocks probably do not have OPA, the disease is considered by many to be a major threat to the sheep industry.

OPA results from infection with a virus which causes cells in the lung to become cancerous. These cells then produce more virus which can infect new areas of the lung or new sheep. OPA spreads between sheep in air and also in milk or colostrum. Sheep with OPA become thin with increased respiratory effort. They may survive for many weeks after the signs of disease appear or may die suddenly. Sometimes large amounts of clear or frothy fluid may come from the affected lungs appearing as discharge from the nose. This fluid contains large quantities of virus

so it is important to remove these sheep and disinfect this material. Early stage OPA cannot be clinically diagnosed as the tumours are too small to cause breathing problems even though they are able to produce virus which can infect other sheep. Moredun's current OPA research is predominantly aimed at developing tests to diagnose early OPA in order to enable test-and-cull in affected flocks, to provide assurance that sheep to be purchased do not carry the disease and eventually to eradicate OPA. One project aims to develop tumour serum biomarkers

to diagnose OPA. Another project, collaborating with Biobest, has shown that OPA can be detected from nasal swab samples and that this test may be useful in the context of a Flock Health scheme. Thirdly, we are working with Dr Phil Scott (previously R(D)SVS, now Capital Veterinary Services) to establish the efficacy and limitations of using trans-thoracic ultrasound to screen for OPA. Ultrasound can reliably detect OPA tumours of 2cm or more at the ventral surfaces of the lungs. We have already demonstrated diagnosis of OPA at an earlier stage

than is possible from clinical signs but we also know that ultrasound cannot detect the very smallest tumours and will never be able to guarantee that a sheep is free of OPA. We are now working to determine whether screening flocks over several years and removing all sheep identified with OPA will successfully reduce or eliminate the disease in these flocks. Other aspects of our research include studies on how the virus is able to cause OPA and whether we can identify genes associated with susceptibility or resistance to OPA in sheep.



Using ultrasound scanning to screen for OPA



The typical OPA signs of weight loss and increased respiratory effort after exercise and at rest could apply to many other diseases. Post mortem examination of the lungs is necessary for disease confirmation. In these lungs the dark areas are tumour. The affected right lung is much larger than the left.



Moredun's research on OPA is funded by the Scottish Government, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, AHDB, HCC - Meat Promotion Wales, Biobest Laboratories Ltd. & Animal and Plant Health Agency

For more information contact Dr Chris Cousens or Dr David Griffiths  
Moredun Research Institute, Pentlands Science Park, Edinburgh, EH26 0PZ. Tel 0131 445 5111.

[www.moredun.org.uk](http://www.moredun.org.uk)



For more information contact Jonathan Guy  
T 01886 880482  
M 07866 607466  
E [jganimalhealth@aol.com](mailto:jganimalhealth@aol.com)  
W [www.jganimalhealth.com](http://www.jganimalhealth.com)

# NSA SCOTLAND MARQUEE HUGE SUCCESS AT THE ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW

The NSA Scotland marquee located in a prominent site is one of the largest promotional marquees, if not the largest, at the Royal Highland Show. It is regarded by the Highland show Directors as a main attraction for the 180,000 plus visitors attending the show over four days.

This year the Scottish Committee and office bearers did a fantastic job in putting on a great display. The marquee included sheep breed stands, British Wool Marketing Board, fleece competition, Moon's high quality woollen fabrics, tag manufactures and the Tweed Forum with their working model showing the importance of an active integrated farming system for the reduction in water pollution. Live displays included stick making, spinning, lamb butchery, cooking and tasting, and a lamb dressing competition for the younger generation.

A new business area was created this year which proved very successful allowing members and guests to sit and have a coffee and catch up with the NSA office bearers on duty. The

marquee was constantly busy over the four days and has to be one of the best opportunities for us as a sheep industry to connect with the public. An added attraction this year came from Sybil and George MacPherson stars of "This Farming Life", when Sybil once again shaved off George's beard in the main sheep ring. This raised an amazing £4,000 plus and they are still rising for the Macmillan Cancer Support charity.

## LAMB TASTING AT THE ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW

Following the success of last year when we did lamb tasting on a relatively small scale, this year the

NSA Scotland Committee decided to up the heat. Picking the theme of "Simple Easy BBQ lamb", we demonstrated how easy and versatile lamb is to put on the BBQ. With the assistance of the Scottish Craft Butchers, Stewart McClymont butterflied a leg of lamb and spoke about the benefits of Scotch lamb. The butterflied leg was then BBQ'd to show how simple it is to cook a large cut of meat to feed several people. Chef Chris Trotter spoke about the many benefits of using Scotch lamb and dished up salsas and sauces to go with the delicious tasty cuts for the public to sample. This was carried out each morning for three days. In the afternoon for 2 hours each day Chris, with the assistance of NSA Scotland

Committee members cooked up a huge variety of different lamb cuts including lamb leg steaks, lamb chops, rack of lamb and lamb kebabs. All these cuts had been donated by Aldi. During the three days of cooking we served samples to the public who really connected with the live butchery and cooking demonstrations.

## NSA SCOTLAND SILVER SALVER AWARD

The BBC is this year's recipient of the NSA Scotland Silver Salver which is awarded annually in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the

Scottish sheep industry. BBC TV's 'This Farming Life' proved to be a huge hit with the non-farming public who were given a taste of the highs and lows experienced by the five farming families who took part. NSA Scotland Chairperson, Sybil MacPherson, who featured in the series with husband George said, "We recognise and appreciate the enormous benefit we feel has been achieved by the phenomenal success of 'This Farming Life'. It connected farmers and the public and informed them about what goes on behind the scenes on farms all over Scotland." The award was presented on the Saturday afternoon in the NSA Scotland marquee at the Royal Highland Show to Samantha MacPhee and Alison Pinkney from the production team at the BBC.

## NSA SCOTLAND MARQUEE AT 2017 ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW INVITATION

NSA members, farmers and the general public should make a point of visiting the marquee at the show from Thursday 22nd to Sunday 25th June and see what activities are on and find out more about what NSA Scotland is doing on behalf of the sheep farmer.



Sybil clipping George's beard for charity



BBC is this years recipient of NSA Scotland silver salver



## DAVID MOIR WINS THE NSA SCOTLAND/RHASS LAMB DRESSING COMPETITION

As part of its commitment to the next generation of sheep farmers, NSA Scotland staged a lamb dressing competition in conjunction with the Young Farmers on the Sunday afternoon of the Royal Highland Show, where 10 to 26-year-olds competed in two classes to show their skills at presenting a sheep for a show or sale.

### RESULTS:

Overall winner and recipient of the Michael Dun Memorial Perpetual Trophy – David Moir, Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire.

### SENIOR CATEGORY: 17 – 26 YEARS

1st Louie Van Jaffen, Carlton in Cleveland, North Yorkshire. Junior

### JUNIOR CATEGORY: 10 – 16 YEARS

1st David Moir, Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire

2nd Angus Dun, Gilston, Midlothian

3rd Angus Weir, Blainslie, Galashiels

4th Finn Christie, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire



Fergus Ewing with Sybil MacPherson & Billy Renwick



Lamb tasting within NSA Scotland marquee



# RECORD ATTENDANCE AT SUN-BAKED NSA SCOTSHEEP 2016

Glorious sunshine throughout the day attracted a record attendance of sheep enthusiasts from across Scotland and the North of England to NSA Scotsheep 2016 on June 1.

Visitors enjoyed a packed programme which included the opportunity of viewing one of Scotland's leading sheep farms, 43 breed exhibits, 150 trade stands, Scottish Young Shepherd of the Year competition, a range of demonstrations, stockjudging, sheepdog trials, sheep shearing competitions, including an England v Scotland test match which was won by Scotland and a comprehensive seminar programme.

The event was held on the iconic sheep farm of Blythbank, West

Linton, Peeblesshire, part of the Campbell family's extensive Glenrath farming empire, which includes 10,000 ewes on several farms from the Blackface on the hills to the Scotch Mule on the lowground where lambs by terminal sires are finished on grass. Major sponsor of the event was Royal Bank of Scotland. Glenrath is also the UK's largest producer of free range eggs, selling 1.5 million eggs a day to the major supermarkets, and host farmer, Ian Campbell, had a strong message to the 5,000 sheep farmers attending

the event.

"We are learning from our experience in the egg industry that consumers want eggs from high welfare hens which are free to roam and not routinely administered with antibiotics," said Mr Campbell.

"We have found that some consumers are willing to pay a £1 a dozen more for eggs from high welfare hens which look and taste the same as other eggs. Beef and sheep producers enjoy the same advantages of natural production on grass. They could learn from our

experience and earn a premium by promoting the high welfare behind Scotch beef and lamb."

The aim at Blythbank is to produce as much red meat as possible from grass and feed as little grain as possible. In Mr Campbell's experience, the Scotch Mule is the most profitable ewe for the lowground farm, producing an average of 1.75 finished lambs per ewe, finishing on grass at 19kg deadweight and meeting specification for conformation and leanness.

RBS Chief Executive, Ross McEwan, who opened the event, highlighted the importance of agriculture to Scotland with sheep playing a key part in maintaining the fabric of the countryside.

Like any business, farmers needed to keep developing and growing their enterprise and RBS, with 30 agricultural specialists in Scotland, was keen to help. The bank's lending to farmers had increased by 7% in the first quarter of this year. More than £19 million of bridging funding had also been loaned to 800 farmers to tide them over following the delay in the payment of EU support from the Scottish Government.

He congratulated the Campbell family on the success of their business, which RBS had supported as the company's banker since 1961, and said the high technical and financial performance which the business had achieved was an

example to the rest of the industry. High productivity was the key coupled with effective marketing and producing what the market wants.

Warm tribute was paid to RBS and its staff by Sybil Macpherson, Chair of NSA Scotland, who also thanked the Campbell family for providing an "outstanding venue" for NSA Scotsheep.

"It was a fantastic day with a perfect venue, superb weather, great support from our sponsors and trade stand holders, particularly RBS, a hard-working local organising committee under Scott Somerville, and a huge attendance," said Mrs Macpherson.

Scotland's new Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity, Fergus Ewing, was a welcome visitor to the event, and said his priority since his appointment 10 days earlier following the Scottish Parliament elections was to fix the flawed IT system which had been the

cause of delayed support payments to farmers.

"Most farmers have received 80% of the payments due to them and the computer problems are either already fixed or in the course of being fixed," he said. "I know the delays have put many farmers in a difficult financial position and caused anger

and frustration. But we are fixing it as a matter of priority."

Representing a rural constituency as an MSP for 17 years, he had a keen appreciation of farming and the rural sector. Farmers did not get the credit they deserved producing food for the nation, which was their primary role.

## COMPETITION RESULTS

### YOUNG SHEPHERD OF THE YEAR

- 1st David McLean, Berwickshire
  - 2nd Kelly Blackwood, Biggar
  - 3rd Billy Gray, Galston
- Highest Placed Under 21 – Billy Gray

### INVITATIONAL SHEEP DOG TRIAL

- 1st Angus Jardine, Hawick with Elsie
- 2nd George Gardiner, Lesmahagow with Meg
- 3rd Bobby Henderson, Heriot with Skid
- 4th Julie Hill, Heriot with Syd
- 5th Brain MacFarlane, Biggar with Jack
- 6th David Wallace, West Linton with Bhoys

### SHEARING COMPETITIONS

Scotland v England Test Match

Winners: Scotland Runners up: England

### DISTRICT CHALLENGE

- 1st Peeblesshire - Scott Wilson, Stuart Davidson & Claire Wilson
  - 2nd Fife - Callum Shaw, Alister Shaw & Isla Shaw
- Cleanest/Best shorn sheep – Simon Bedwell, Ross-shire

### SUPERSHEER

- 1st Callum Shaw, Dunfermline
- 2nd Adam Berry, Kendal
- 3rd Anthony Rooke, York
- 4th Hamish Mitchell, Scotland

### SCHOOL CHILDREN WOOL POSTERS

- 1st Walkerburn Primary School
- 2nd Walston Primary School
- 3rd Broughton Primary School

### OPEN STOCKJUDGING

- 1st Robin Blair (Winner of £300 sweepstake)
- 2nd Ryan Brotherston, Tommy McPherson & Euan Orr (Tied)
- 5th Jaz Swinton

## TRADE STANDS

### BEST BREED SOCIETY

- 1st Blackface Sheep Breeders Association
- 2nd Scotch Mule Association
- 3rd Lleyn Sheep Society

### BEST INDOOR STAND

- 1st Logie Durno Sheep
- 2nd Shearwell Data
- 3rd TC Whiteford

### BEST OUTDOOR STAND

- 1st Galloway & MacLeod
- 2nd Niall Bowser Livestock Equipment
- 3rd Stewart Agricultural

## SHOW & SALE OF PAIRS OF EWE HOGGS

34 pairs of ewe hoggs which were judged in the morning were put up for sale in the late afternoon of the event. United Auctions, who were also a mainline sponsor of the event conducted the sale. A strong class of Bluefaced Leicester hoggs was won by M/s W H Sharp & Son, Newbigging Walls, Lauder and sold at 400gns. A top bid of 1200gns came for the third prize pair from J Wight & Sons, Midlock.

First prize pair of North Country Cheviot Park ewes hoggs from Roderick Runciman, Allanshaws sold at 1000gns to A Jones, Bankfarm, Wales.

The Blackface section first prize winners from J Wight & Sons, Midlock sold at 750gns with the second placed pair from Glenrath selling at 250gns.

Texel first prize winners from Donna Williams, Blacket House, Eaglesfield sold at 550gns to J & F Park, Troon.

The Beltex class was won by Stuart McCormack, Wester Deans and sold for 400gns to A Morton, Lochend Farm, Denny.

The Poll Dorset first prize pair from James Royan, The Granary, Duns sold for 250gns to G Todd, St Clements Wells Farm, East Lothian.

South Country Cheviots sold well to top of 220gns to M/s Pugh, Bridgend, South Wales.

A strong class of Scotch Mules were topped at 160gns by G Allan, Bogside, Ochiltree for his second prize pair.

The Shetland pair of ewe hoggs from Joan Brunton, Haddington sold for 70gns.



Opening Ceremony Speakers & Guests

(L to R) Fergus Ewing MSP (SG Cabinet Secretary), John Campbell OBE (Host Farmer), Ross McEwan RBS Group Chief Executive (Opened Event), Ian Campbell (Host Farmer), Scott Somerville (Event Chairman) & Sybil MacPherson (NSA Scotland Chair)



Show & sale of pairs of ewe hoggs



Farmers enjoy the good weather



Farm tour at Blythbank

# MAKING IT HAPPEN

## MARK AND HARRIET DONALD

Mark and Harriet Donald have been farming on their own account since 2013 as tenants of the Forest Enterprise Scotland's 165-acre Rhynaclach Farm, near Aberfoyle. It's the latest chapter in a story which began when they were given a week's notice to quit rented grazing in Aberdeenshire in the middle of winter. Mark was a self-employed shepherd, while Harriet was in the process of completing her post-graduate RICS studies. Based at Tarland, the couple had built up a small flock of 75 ewes which they ran on parcels of seasonal grazing spread out over a large area.

Like many others in the same situation, the lack of land, buildings, security, and the consequent inability to plan ahead was preventing them from fulfilling their hopes of developing their own farm business. The couple had looked at council-owned tenanted farms in England and Wales but none proved suitable, and competing against established farmers for scarce local tenancies proved to be futile. The couple's first application for a Forestry Enterprise Scotland 10-year tenancy for new entrants, was unsuccessful but it provided insight and experience of the process which proved invaluable, and in 2013 they finally secured the tenancy of Rhynaclach.

Their flock now numbers 508 ewes and an additional 55 acres of seasonal grazing is rented to accommodate the growing enterprise. The majority of the ewes are Lleyn and Lleyn X which run with Lleyn and Texel tups. 'We like the Lleyn because they're not too big, easy

kept, and rear more lambs,' says Mark. 'They're thrifty and prolific with great mothering ability.' Lambs not kept for stock are sold through the fat and store rings. In addition, a flying flock is run with Suffolk tups and these ewes are sold with lambs at foot the following Spring. Their pride and joy is the 50-strong flock of North Country Cheviot ewes purchased from Stornoway breeder Neil McLeod. 'The plan is to develop a high quality pedigree enterprise to supplement the commercial flock,' says Mark. The couple find EID useful for their own performance recording. As Harriet says, 'We can easily identify the ewes which are performing and those which are not and we use the information to select flock replacements. We're working on a very tight budget and there's no room for passengers!'

'The farm is just too wet for big numbers of cattle', says Mark, 'but some day we'd like a small herd of Herefords. We take in some young cattle for over-wintering and that

brings in some extra income. They're still in the sheds in March so we put the lambing back 3 weeks to accommodate them.'

Mark continues as a self-employed stockman and shearer while Harriet now works as the Land Use Manager for the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority heading a team of five advisers. 'The farm and business are the ideal size for us to grow a business, given our current work commitments', she says. 'Our team includes our landlord, our CA, the bank manager and auctioneers. They are crucial to the success of our business!'

They are concerned that the current Land Reform debate will result in the decimation of the few remaining opportunities for new entrants, and for the tenants like themselves who have to hand the keys back at the end of 10 years and move on to another farm. 'Landlords are getting a bad press but you have to look at it from their point



Mark and Harriet Donald

of view. If they become risk-averse and reluctant to let land many younger generation hopefuls might never have the opportunity to farm.'

Mark and Harriet offer sound advice to would-be farmers. 'It's vital for young people planning a career in farming to acquire non-farming skills. Be computer-literate. Get some experience of interviews. Develop business skills and attitude and don't be afraid to change your ideas. Learn from industry workshops and listen. When you fail, ask why and listen to advice. Make your plans, but be ready to adapt to make things work. Accept that things don't go according to plan, and there's no magic bullet to make the bad days better. It isn't easy, but if you want it badly enough you do what it takes to make it happen.'

# NSA NEXT GENERATION

## AMBASSADORS



NSA Next Generation is dedicated to encouraging and supporting the sheep farmers and service providers of the future, with a vital element of this being the NSA Next Generation Ambassadors. Launched in 2014, the initiative sees 12 individuals with a connection to the sheep sector selected annually to take part in five technical and personal development sessions spread through the year. The five delivery sessions are set to challenge the group to think objectively about their own businesses and the wider farming industry and involve a mix of classroom activities, practical sessions, farm walks and site visits. Each intake sees Ambassadors selected from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, so the initiative provides a great opportunity to meet likeminded people throughout the UK, as well as key people within the sheep sector.

Applications to become a member of the 2017 NSA Next Generation Ambassador Group open on the Friday 18th November 2016 and run through to mid-December 2016. Further information and application forms are available from the NSA Next Generation website at [www.nsanextgeneration.org.uk](http://www.nsanextgeneration.org.uk). Three groups have been selected since the initiatives launch. Here, we preview NSA Next Generation Ambassadors from Scotland in the most recent 2015 and 2016 groups:-

### Lynn Allison (24)

is an NSA Next Generation Ambassador from Newton Stewart. She graduated from the Scottish Agricultural College in July 2014 and is now helping on the family farm, establishing her own flock and working in the local livestock market in Newton Stewart and currently runs 30 Scottish Blackface ewes of her own. Lynn spent some time in New Zealand several years ago and says she is keen to visit again in the future, believing there are lessons to be learnt from New Zealand in terms of farming without subsidies, but at the same time understands the importance of a payment system for farmers at home.



2015 Ambassador

### Jamie Laurie (22)

is an NSA Next Generation Ambassador from Lockerbie. With an endless list of plans for the family farm at Lockerbie, Jamie is a partner with his parents on the tenanted farm and keen to exercise potential improvements with the 1,400 sheep and 130 sucklers. The breeding is predominantly South Country Cheviot, Easycare and (decreasingly) Highlander. Some Cheviots Mules are produced for sale as breeding females and other Texel cross progeny sold finished or as stores. Jamie would like to move to more of a closed flock and is already breeding his own Bluefaced Leicesters and would also like to use more Shetland ewes.



2016 Ambassador

### Michael Ritch (25)

is an NSA Next Generation Ambassador from Inverurie. Michael returned to the family beef and arable farm four years ago and, having encouraged his father and grandfather to buy an extra block of nonarable land with no buildings, breeding sheep has recently become a new enterprise for the business, although store lambs had always been bought in, for finishing on grass and turnips. Michael has now established an outdoor lambing, low input multiplier flock for the Logie Durno brand. He is enthusiastic about the flock and keen to increase numbers and improve grazing management.



2016 Ambassador

### Clarke Hibberd (26)

is an NSA Next Generation Ambassador from Inverurie. He has showed no let up in calving himself a niche in the sheep sector, building up a run of 4,000 ewes in his first year as a shearer. Having begun shepherding for a 600 ewe flock, Clarke later went self-employed and added additional contract shepherding as well as shearing work on top of managing the original flock. Looking ahead, Clarke says his aim is to secure a farm tenancy or share farming agreement in the future as an addition to his contracting work.



2015 Ambassador

NSA NEXT GENERATION



# FARMER INTERVIEW WITH GRAEME SINCLAIR OF CROOKSTON, HERIOT, MIDLOTHIAN

The Sinclair farming partnership, who are tenants of Lord Borthwick, at Crookston Farm is very “weel kent” in farming circles everywhere. Jimmy Sinclair and his son Graeme have a reputation for being uncompromising when it comes to producing prime lambs to supply the demands of the marketplace. Jimmy Sinclair has played a leading role in NSA Scotland for many years with great success. We thought this would be a good opportunity to hear some views from the other half of the successful partnership. We caught up with Graeme lately and asked him a few topical questions.

**Q. Brexit. Are you looking forward to the future?**

A. “The main thrust of our business here at Crookston is to produce prime lambs to supply the market here in the UK and in the EU. There is definitely a premium to be gained at the moment if a lamb is attractive to those consumers who are living on our doorstep on the other side of the English Channel. I am concerned there is potential for trade tariffs to be put in place between the UK and the EU this could jeopardise that premium market. Short term there has been some benefit but in the medium to long term I’m not convinced the UK’s sheep farmers will benefit from Brexit”.

**Q. Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs). What are your thoughts?**

A. “I would have to confess that I have never given it much thought - although Dad and I have talked about it in the last year or so. We tend to go for rams that ‘catch the

eye’. My own personal preference is to go for an animal that is ‘extreme’ in terms of how it looks. I guess it boils down to the fact that we sell the top end of our lambs in the auction ring down at St Boswells market where the buyers will go for what catches their eye. The auction ring is a very competitive place where sellers have to compete with other sellers and the buyers have to compete with other buyers. It seems like a very good recipe to drive improvement”.

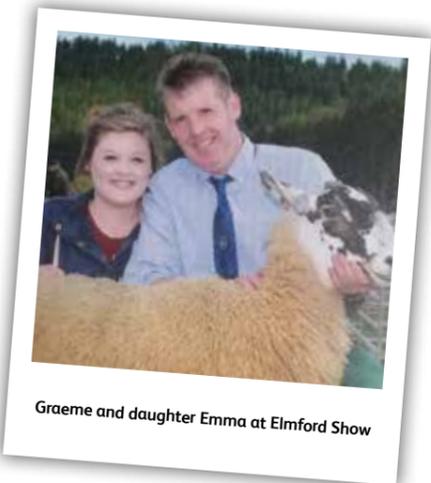
**Q. Valais Blacknose sheep are making the headlines at the moment. What do you think about those sheep?**

A. “The truth is they are causing problems in my house. My daughter is pining to own one! I made some enquiries to buy one for her and it was all making sense until we got down to the nitty-gritty. How much are they? After I found out how much they cost it was a case of - try asking grandad if he’ll buy you one.

Can’t really tell you what Grandad Jimmy said when he found out how much they were”.

**Q. Area payments versus the old headage payments. Are area payments right for the UK now that we are leaving the EU?**

A. “I would have to say that I didn’t think area payments were the right way to go. However, the UK Government still believes that farming must be supported in some way, which is always something I suppose. We are fortunate here at Crookston in that we have some great natural habitats that are ideal for wildlife but we also have some very productive farmland. When support was geared towards maximising production we could make that productive farmland work harder. Food security could become a priority when we leave the EU. There may come a day when the tide will have to turn towards production again”.



Graeme and daughter Emma at Elmford Show

**Q. Freak weather events seem to be more common nowadays. Is it human interference and possibly farming that is contributing to this modern phenomenon?**

A. “If you had asked me that question twenty years ago I would have said – have you lost your mind completely? Now I’m not so sure. A plume of thick black smoke was considered to be a sign of a conscientious farmer keeping his farm tidy at one time. Now we speak to friends who have travelled abroad to places in the world where glaciers are disappearing. We also turn on the television every day to see floods engulfing towns and villages all over the world. At a local level, even in my

lifetime, I’ve noticed a change in the amount of wind and rain that we get here at the farm. I wouldn’t lay the blame completely at the feet of farming. You would question whether one farmer burning a little plastic and the odd tyre years ago could change the world’s weather. But, now I’ve reached the stage of thinking that hundreds of thousands of farmers burning a little plastic and the odd tyre years ago might have contributed along with many other industries to messing with the world’s climate”.

**Q. Community Benefit cash given to community groups that are close to wind farms. Is it making a difference in your area?**

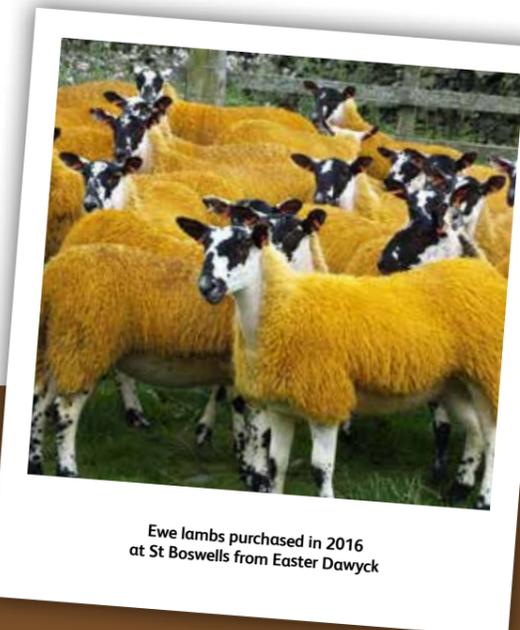
A. “I’m not entirely sure that the benefit is being spent to enhance the

lives of those who live in the sparsely populated areas closest to the wind farms. The focus of the investment is usually in the more densely populated areas that are very often far away and out of sight of the turbines. Poor broadband is certainly a problem in our area and thus far community benefit has done little to improve the service that we get here on the farm. Creating amenity areas of woodland for local residents to enjoy is another contentious area. At first glance these areas can provide shelter for the farmer but at the same time these areas attract dog walkers. They don’t all have a copy of the countryside code in their back pocket when they arrive! Most dog owners are responsible but it’s the one or two that are not that spoils things for everyone”.

**Q. If you won the lottery this weekend what piece of new kit for the farm would you treat yourself with?**

A. “I’ve always had a hankering for a Range Rover Sport but I guess that’s not what you mean by a piece of farm kit. More shed space never goes wrong in my opinion but that is hardly a treat. We recently invested in a Ritchie Combi Clamp. It certainly takes the hard work out of routine tasks that we do to our sheep - even Dad uses it when he thinks no one is looking. If all our numbers and the bonus ball came up then I’d go for the Rolls Royce of sheep handlers. One of those ones that have

conveyor belts that bring the sheep towards you would be a treat. I’m just not so sure it would be me that would operate it”?



Ewe lambs purchased in 2016 at St Boswells from Easter Dawyck

CROOKSTON IS AN UPLAND FARM OF 2,000 ACRES  
 550 MULES  
 550 TEXEL X MULES  
 300 PURE BLACKFACE  
 200 BLACKFACE EWES CROSSED WITH BFL  
 15 BFL EWES  
 6 BELTEX EWES  
 80 LIMOUSIN X COWS PUT TO CHAROLAIS BULL  
 6 PURE CHAROLAIS COWS  
 60 BOUGHT IN STORE CATTLE

## FACTS & FIGURES



# MARKET REVIEW AND OUTLOOK



Stuart Ashworth  
Head of Economics Services, QMS

After a poor start to the marketing of the 2016 lamb crop, farmgate prices have held much firmer than last year, and at the time of writing are some 17-18% higher. Producers will be hoping that this trend continues for the remainder of the marketing year. So what has influenced current prices?

Slaughter statistics show weekly UK slaughtering's to have been running lower than last year through July and August and auction sales indicate that that pattern continued into early September but that numbers have picked up as October approached.

Slaughtering's during June were ahead of last year but when the number of these lambs that graded better than R3L is considered it appears that these lambs were not as well finished as in previous years. As the supply tightened during July and August the proportion of lambs grading R3L or better improved in comparison to earlier years and farmgate prices ran ahead of year earlier levels. So market prices have reflected volumes and quality. They have also reflected the weakening of Sterling against the Euro. Following the Brexit vote at the end of June Sterling moved from a position of being 5% weaker than a year ago before the vote to 18% weaker shortly after the vote. Converted to Euro UK lamb prices are, currently, slightly lower than a year ago while many European producers, for example the French and Irish, are getting slightly more. Clearly then exchange rate movements have supported farmgate prices post Brexit, but so too has the slow arrival of prime lamb into the market.

Look forward over the remainder of the 2016 lamb crop year what factors are going to play on the market? Currency may be the easiest to comment on. Confusion over Brexit and the process of

withdrawing from the European Union remains and leaves industry and money markets in a state of limbo which is unlikely to offer any significant support for Sterling. Consequently Sterling is likely to remain weak against the Euro and some market analysts think the pound has further to fall.

However, while Sterling may remain weak, making Scottish and UK lamb competitive in the European market, we still need consumers to buy our product. This remains a challenge in some European markets, France for example has seen sheepmeat consumption sliding for some years, but opportunities do exist in some north European markets. Our home market is also challenging. Lamb is an expensive protein but aggressive retail pricing has helped UK consumption increase slightly over the past twelve months and there have been some particular bright spots. Sales of lamb chops, steaks and ready meals containing lamb have increased strongly but lamb roasts have declined in volume of sales over the past twelve months. Furthermore, Scottish consumers have increased their consumption of lamb more than the UK as a whole. Nevertheless, because of aggressive retail pricing, margins in the supply chain beyond the farm gate continue to be under pressure.

However, the biggest influence on the market place over the next six months will be one of basic supply. Lower slaughtering's through the summer and repeated comments

about slow lamb growth point towards a build-up of lambs on farm. At the time of writing, Scotland's June census has not been published, but results from England and Northern Ireland both show a modest increase in the size of the lamb crop and Scotland is unlikely to be any different. The supplementary questions are how many of these lambs will be retained for breeding? How many will be carried over into 2017? And what will happen to carcase weights?

If the shortage of lambs currently in the market is due to slow growth rates we may find some catch up and pre-Christmas sales of lambs may be further ahead of last year's levels than post-Christmas hogg sales. So far this year carcase weights have been lower than last year and if that continues the overall volume of lamb meat may not increase even though numbers killed will and consequently pressure on market prices may be less intense than the change in numbers may suggest.

Lower lamb meat production earlier this season has been partially offset by an increase in ewe and ram slaughtering's since June which may continue based on a December census that suggested the UK breeding flock was slightly larger. Normal replacement rates among a larger ewe flock would push ewe slaughtering's up slightly during 2016-2017. An increase in hogg numbers reported in the June census for England and Northern Ireland would allow breeding flock numbers

to be maintained even if ewe slaughtering's increased slightly.

Reports from New Zealand point towards a smaller New Zealand export kill during 2016-2017 and although they will supply product to the UK and Europe these supplies may not be materially different from last year even a though New Zealand has not made full use of its tariff free quota for a number of years. Meanwhile, Sterling weakness will reduce the price competitiveness of New Zealand supplies, currently while NZ farmgate price is little changed year on year in NZ\$ it is 21% higher in Sterling terms.

In conclusion, the remainder of the 2016 lamb crop year is likely to be slightly better supplied with slaughter sheep but that may not increase the volume of sheepmeat.

The retail market remains challenging in the UK and in many parts of Europe with consumption under some pressure and sensitive to retail price movements not only of lamb but of competing proteins. The weakness of Sterling is likely to support farmgate prices at a higher level than they were last year by making imports more expensive while making the UK price when quoted in Euros lower than last year and helping to support exports into key European markets.

# FARMSTOCK LAMB SUPPLY CHAIN CONFERENCE BY GEORGE MILNE NSA SCOTLAND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Recently I attended a conference organised by Farm Stock (Scotland) Ltd covering the lamb supply chain. Ian Watson, Chairman of Farm Stock welcomed the large gathering of delegates to the event held in Edinburgh. Attendees covering the whole supply chain heard some excellent thought provoking speeches from a line-up of top quality speakers. They included Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Environment and Connectivity, Marcus Maxwell, farmer and Director of Galloway Lamb who carries 2000 breeding ewes, Jonathan Birnie, Head of Agriculture & Research at Dunbia, James Parsons farmer and Chairman of Beef & Lamb New Zealand and Steven McLean, Head of Agriculture at M&S and Nathan Ward from Kantar Worldpanel.

One important announcement on the day was delivered by Steven McLean, who said that all lamb in Scottish stores will be sourced from Scotland throughout the entire year, replacing New Zealand lamb from January through to May. This would amount to an extra 26,000 lambs needed. He said Scotch lamb had a good message and it really works well for them in store. This is a welcome announcement for the Scottish sheep industry and a real commitment from M&S that they totally support Scotch lamb and the way it is reared and produced. M&S must be congratulated for making this important change and Scotland is in the ideal position to supply lamb throughout the year with many hill lambs just reaching its best eating quality when it is required to fill the gap where NZ lamb was previously used.

The Cabinet Secretary outlined what the Government could do for the industry including following up talks on opening up the US market to Scotch lamb which may well happen in the spring of 2017. He will progress the application for BSE negligible status for Scotland and continue to seek alterations to the current rules to allow the levies on Scottish-bred lambs slaughtered south of the border to be returned to Scotland. He also confirmed that he would act on recommendations from the recently produced Sheep Review Paper and would not allow it to collect dust as has happened with previous documents.

Mr Maxwell highlighted the need to pay more for what the market requires in order to encourage more lambs meeting specification. He also felt that improving shelf life for UK lamb was very important in order to compete with that of NZ.

Mr Birnie emphasised that we must produce what the consumer wants. Lamb must consistently eat well and be value for money. Consumers buy lamb because they like it not because it is cheap, it therefore must be a good eating experience. He forecast an ever increasing demand for lamb saying that in 2009 there were 1.8 billion middle class consumers in the world with that due to rise to 4.9 billion by 2030. He felt that there was a need to see the current grading system for lamb updated to better reflect the value of the most important cuts.

James Parsons spoke about the changes in NZ since the loss of support payments. He felt that NZ helped to keep lamb on UK shelf space throughout the year and that NZ was working at supplying a global market place. He felt that under Brexit the UK should do the same by supplying a global market when UK lamb is in peak season.

This was an excellent day covering a wide range of topics that could all improve the lamb supply chain and make it more efficient and profitable. It is up to us, farmers and organisations to use this information, incorporate it with Brexit talks to our advantage and seize opportunities that might arise to take our sheep industry forward and become more profitable.



James Parsons  
Chairman, Beef & Lamb New Zealand



Delegates at the conference



Ian Watson  
Chairman, Farmstock (Scotland) Ltd



Steven McLean, M&S with  
Andrew Grant, Vice Chairman,  
Farmstock (Scotland) Ltd



# SHEEP & TREES

'SHEEP AND TREES' MAY NOT BE FOR ALL SHEEP FARMERS BUT RECOGNISING THAT SOME FARMERS WERE INTERESTED AND THAT THEIR FARMS MAY BE SUITABLE NSA SCOTLAND HELD TWO SUCCESSFUL EVENTS UNDER THIS HEADING.

Lymiecleugh Farm, in the Borders, is owned by Sir Michael Strang Steel and contract farmed by Ian Hepburn. Guests were able to see where trees have been planted over recent years to assist with sheep management, making good use of the fences to create hill paddocks for better management and breaks for easier gathering. On the other side of the valley we could see blanket planting which devastated the entire valley and wiped out all the sheep. The contrast with the Lymiecleugh planting is stark. NSA is opposed to whole farms being bought and entirely planted. Integration of sheep and trees in areas which are suitable may allow some sheep enterprises to benefit from forestry.

Now that Basic Area Payments are secure for afforested land under the new Forestry Grant Scheme, there may be opportunities for farmers and landowners to consider planting trees to assist with farm management whilst also maintaining the same number of sheep on the holding.

## INTEGRATION OF TREES RAISES CASH FOR SHEEP ENTERPRISE

The second of NSA Scotland's 'Sheep and Trees' events took place at Mains of Fincastle Farm, Blair Atholl, Perthshire, by kind permission of host farmer Andrew Barber. More than 20 people attended the farm tour to see how the integration of sheep and trees which was initiated 40 years ago is now providing a financial return for the business. The 540ha farm, which also has 60ha of woodland, works comfortably with about 10% planting at any time, while maintaining sheep and cattle production. Three forestry blocks were viewed on the day. The first 35ha was being felled, providing a valuable income stream. The second was 16ha and due to be thinned soon. The third was a shelter belt of 10ha, which Mr Barber told visitors was particularly helpful for the sheep in the winter, saving £4-£5 per head on winter feed for breeding ewes.

The visit provided the ideal opportunity to see how sheep and trees can work together for a farm, not only maintaining sheep production but also now assisting in capital investment for the livestock enterprise. This balance between tree planting and sheep production is vital. Jo O'Hara, Forestry Commission Scotland commented "I have been lucky enough this year to attend both NSA Scotland's farm events exploring the value of integrating woodlands into farm businesses. I was particularly impressed by Andrew Barbour's calculations showing the direct impact of his woodlands on feed costs, through improved shelter. It was also interesting to see how he and his family were using their productive woodlands as part of the capital and tax management of their farm.

The important thing is to be really clear what your objectives are, and design your woodlands accordingly – for example, if you want a crop of timber, plant blocks bigger than 10 Ha with reasonable access; if you need shelter, think carefully about alignments and prevailing winds. The Scottish Government is very keen that more trees are planted, and farm productivity improves: small to medium-scale planting on hill farms helps to achieve both these outcomes, and the Sheep and Trees partnership will be continuing to work over the winter to identify ways in which this can be promoted further."



# RE-WILDING SCOTLAND

BY JA MACCUSBIC  
TORTARDER, STRUAN, ISLE OF SKYE

I've never been to the Isle of Mull, (more shame me!) I really should though, because if we are to believe SNH's blurb, the residents of this West Coast Island are very wealthy indeed. How? Well for the past number of years the presence of re-introduced Sea Eagles brings an annual windfall of £5 million to the local economy! Difficult to swallow if you are a crofter/ hill farmer, whose lamb crop gets decimated by Sea Eagle predation.

Re-introduced (without consultation), to the Isle of Rum in the 1970s, there was initially no problem with this massive predator. For SNH and RSPB though, progress wasn't rapid enough. More birds were introduced and so the problems for us began. SNH will report that there are only 100 or so nesting pairs in Scotland. What they won't or can't tell you, (because they've lost count) is the number of juvenile birds that inhabit our hills and glens.

A cautionary note here: As re-wilding madness starts to gather pace, Sea Eagles, Beavers, Wolves, Lynx, whatever. The ploy will be to introduce just one or two of these species to begin with, and if deemed "successful", our countryside will be infested before we have time to blink!

Here on the Isle of Skye, I and many others have had the misfortune to witness and suffer first-hand the devastation these birds can bring. Not only killing lambs in large numbers but wounding adult sheep so badly that they have to be destroyed. Here again SNH will trot out figures to say an eagle only eats x amount of grams of meat every other day, or can only carry x amount of kilos of prey in their talons. But the biggest problem is the number of lambs and ewes wounded that later die slow agonising deaths.

As an example, and there are many, the remotest hirsell here at Totarder was small, 500 acres carrying 120 ewes. Most years it scanned 100% and we speaned around 100 lambs give or take. Three Sea Eagles arrived in 2001 and in 2005 all the ewes were taken off that hirsell. The reason? 120 ewes scanned at 100%, number of lambs marked

early June, 47. Lambs speaned at the end of August, 17. Conclusion? Not viable! Our overall hill unit of 3500 acres that used to carry 850 ewes and home winter 200 hogs is now struggling to maintain a flock of 500 ewes, and 120 hogs, which we now winter on the mainland. I hate to think how many hogs would survive through to the spring, now that we have seven birds here!

This is a problem that no one understands, unless it is happening to them. I speak to many sheep farmers throughout the country and they are all very sympathetic, but I can tell from their expressions, the questions that they ask, and the solutions they offer, that they don't really understand what is happening. So if fellow sheep farmers don't understand I don't think those out with farming will ever understand either.

Several years ago a petition signed by over 100 crofters on Skye was sent to Richard Lochhead at Holyrood, no reply ever came back and on investigation we were told

that no such petition had been received. Possibly it had been "lost" in the post and after all there were thousands of correspondence arriving each day at Holyrood.

Don't you get compensation! I've been asked. Well yes, but you are not allowed to call it that. The Sea Eagle Management Scheme, reimburses crofters who can access it, to the sum of £1500 a year for 3 years. The money has to be spent on improved sheep husbandry i.e. feed blocks, extra gathering for dosing and improving pasture. Ok, it's better than nothing, but when you look at it - it goes nowhere near solving the problem, as none of these measures prevent the killings. The improvement the hill crofter can make with £1500 is minimal and producing an extra dozen lambs to feed sea eagles feels like an exercise in masochism.

But it's not only the shepherds and their sheep that are suffering, wild life and the environment are under pressure too. Ground nesting moorland birds, gone. Hills rank with heather three feet high as the sheep

stream off them down to the lower ground or worse still, the markets! In bye pastures overstocked as people try to protect as many lambs as they can within the confines of the hill dike or croft. Gone are the wild flowering hay meadows of the past, has anyone thought that this may be having an impact on the honey bees, of course it's easier to blame farmers and their pesticides.

What's the answer? Well clearly what's happening right now is not working, is not good enough and has to change - but how? Clearly the birds are here to stay. A call for a complete moratorium on any more birds being introduced would be a start, along with a restricted breeding program. Helping those who bear the brunt of this problem, i.e. hill crofters / farmers is more difficult. There is less and less money going into the "compensation pot" and as Sea Eagle numbers grow, naturally more and more people will apply. It's not a problem of our making, but we are the ones well and truly lumbered with it!



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