General Event Information

Venue
Fearn Farm, Fearn, Ross-shire, IV20 1TL

Date
Tuesday 9th June 2015
Opening Time - 9am to 5pm

Where to Stay
Website www.visitscotland.com
Website http://www.tain.org.uk/accommodation-g.asp?catid=18

How to find Fearn Farm
From the North or South - using the A9, turn onto the B9165. Follow the signs to NSA Highlandsheep from there.

Dogs
Only assistance dogs will be permitted

Disabled Facilities
Car parking and toilets available on site

First Aid
Qualified first aid staff are available at the event

Food
Local produce from various outlets and ice cream will be available, along with a licensed bar

Information Point
Please ask at the event office

Cash Machine
Public Telephone
Not available
Not available

Toilets
Ladies and gents toilets, including disabled facilities, are available.

Admission
Adults £12
NSA members & Agricultural students £6 (on production of 2015 membership card, one card, one reduced entry)
Children under 16 free
International visitors free on production of passport
Group Bookings of more than 10 booked and paid for in advance with the organiser £7.20

Event Organisers
National Sheep Association –Scotland

Organiser
Euan Emslie, 3 Briar Close, Newport, Brough, East Yorkshire, HU15 2QY
Tel: 01430 441870, Mobile: 07718 908523
Email: euan@appliedremedies.co.uk

Website
www.nsascotland.org
Ceud mile failte - a hundred thousand welcomes

by Sybil MacPherson, Chairman, NSA Scotland

NSA Scotland extends a warm welcome to visitors attending NSA Highland Sheep 2015 to be held at Fearn Farm, Tain, Ross-shire, on June 9.

Following the success of our inaugural event held two years ago at Dingwall Mart, it became overwhelmingly obvious that there was a real appetite to hold a Highland Sheep event again in an area of Scotland which is often overlooked because of its location.

That is despite the fact that livestock of the highest quality are bred and reared in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

NSA Scotland is delighted that the Scott family has agreed to host this year’s event at Fearn and we are grateful to John and his team for the opportunity to use their fantastic farm to welcome visitors to what will undoubtedly be an event not to be missed.

The quality of the stock on show (the cattle as well as the sheep), the management of productive grassland and a focus on how to farm successfully in the future of decreasing support payments, means that there will be plenty to interest all involved in every aspect of sheep production.

We are, as always, extremely grateful to our sponsors for their generous support and to the large number of sheep breed societies, educational and advisory organisations and commercial companies who have booked trade stands and will be available on the day to provide information and advice on a huge range of subjects relating to the sheep industry.

The focus on locally produced food is a theme for the event and carries great possibilities to inform the public of the importance and benefits of using local produce for a wide range of reasons, not least of which is the quality of the food which we produce on the doorstep of consumers in Scotland.

Sincere thanks to Euan Emslie, NSA events organiser, and to the enthusiastic and active members of the organising committee who have willingly contributed their time and knowledge to help organise the many activities which will be held at the event.

I look forward to welcoming you to Fearn and hope you will enjoy a memorable day, taking away information, inspiration and enthusiasm to benefit all aspects of our industry.

Sybil MacPherson

NSA Highland Sheep 2015 Organising Committee

NSA Scotland and Event Chairman: Sybil MacPherson
Host Farmer: John Scott  Event Organiser: Euan Emslie  Press Officer: Eddie Gillanders

Members: Stuart Annand; Jason Ballantyne; Andy Barr; Michael Blanche; Shona Brown; Willie Budge; Ewen Cameron; Joyce Campbell; Donald Fraser; Rod Gillies; Derek Hanton; Marie Hay; Kevin Hunter; Martin MacDonald; Nikki Mackay; John Mathieson; Jock McKenzie; George Milne; Paco Morera; Ben Ockenden; Mairmie Paterson; Scott Renwick; Lucy Rogers; Duncan Scott; Martin Scott; Stephen Sutherland; Ian Tolmie; Daniel Urquhart

Strong industry support for NSA Highland Sheep

More than 80 trade stands and 20 breed and individual breeder demonstrations have been booked for NSA Highland Sheep.

The event, which is expected to attract a huge gathering of sheep farmers from all over Scotland to the Highlands, is being organised by the Scottish Region of the National Sheep Association and hosted by UK Sheep Farmer of the Year, John Scott, and his family.

Mainline sponsors confirmed for the event are British Wool Marketing Board, Caltech Crystalyx, Campaign for Wool, Clydesdale Bank, Dingwall and Highland Marts, Dunbia, Innovis and Shearwell Data, as well as other national and local companies, including Quality Meat Scotland, who are supporting the event.

Genetics, husbandry and grassland management and the need to increase productivity and profitability to reduce sheep farmers’ dependence on subsidy, will be a major focus of the event.

Features will include a farm tour, practical demonstrations, educational exhibits, seminar/soundbites, sheep dog trial and Young Shepherd of the Year competition. The action-packed day will finish with a show and sale of ewe hoggs.

“The first NSA Highland Sheep event at Dingwall Mart two years ago was a huge success and we expect this year’s event, with the added attraction of viewing the UK’s top sheep enterprise, to be even better,” said NSA Scotland chair person, Mrs Sybil Macpherson.

“We are delighted with the support the event is attracting from the trade and breed societies which will make it a great day out for sheep farmers.”

Mrs Macpherson said it was a crucial time for the sheep industry with CAP reforms and the implementation of the new support regime in Scotland causing a great deal of uncertainty.

“NSA Highland Sheep will give sheep farmers the opportunity of catching up with all the latest developments and technology in the industry and help them face the future with confidence,” said Mrs Macpherson. “Fearn Farm is an outstanding example of what can be achieved by the application of modern genetics and making the best use of grassland.”

The Scott’s are one of five farming families in Scotland whose activities over the year are being followed by a BBC2 camera team for a 12-programme series of On The Farm to be screened next year.
Sponsors & Acknowledgments

National Sheep Association Scotland would like to thank the following for their generous sponsorship and support

Hosts
J Scott & Partners

Mainline Sponsors
British Wool Marketing Board - Caltech Crystalyx - Campaign for Wool - Clydesdale Bank - Dingwall & Highland Marts - Dunbia - Innovis - Shearwell Data and supported by Quality Meat Scotland

National Sponsors

Local Sponsors
East Coast Viners - Easterross Vets Ltd - VG Energy Ltd

Sheep Dog Trial
Sheep Shearing

Supported by - British Wool Marketing Board

Stockjudging - Galloway & MacLeod Ltd
Young Shepherd of the Year

Seminars/Soundbites - SRUC

Farm Tour
Portequip - Watson Seeds - DLF Trifolium - SAC Consulting - Innovis

School Children - RHET

Show & Sale of Ewe Hoggs - Algo - Bank of Scotland

Others
Niall Bowser Livestock Equipment, Algo, Black Isle Farmers Society, Sutherland Agricultural Society, Dingwall & Highland Marts, Suzuki GB PLC, Frank Nicoll Farm & Garden Machinery. Catering Companies, Young Farmers, Judges, Seminar speakers, stewards, others too numerous to mention and finally the NSA Highlandsheep 2015 Organising Committee for all their hard work.

Programme

9.00am Event open to public.
9.00am Judging of Best Sheep Breed Society Stand and Best Indoor and Outdoor Trade Stands.
9.00am - 3.00pm Young Shepherd of the Year Competition.
9.00am Show of Pair of Ewe Hoggs in pens.
9.00am - 5.00pm Sheep Breed, Commercial, Educational stands open to the public.
9.00am - 5.00pm Demonstrations - Crook making, sheep dressing and spinning demonstrations.
9.00am - 3.00pm Stockjudging Competition. Prizes sponsored by Galloway & MacLeod.
9.00am - 3.00pm Sheepdog Trial.
9.00am - 3.00pm Farm Tour.

10.00am Official Opening (Seminar Building)
Introduction by Sybil MacPherson, NSA Scotland & Highlandsheep 2015 Chairman
Official Opening by Jim McLaren, Chairman of Quality Meat Scotland.
Presentation of NSA Scotland Silver Salver and Best Trade Stand award ceremony.

11.00am - 12.00 Noon Soundbites (Seminars - See separate timetable).
11.15am Sheep Shearing Competition heats.
1.00pm - 2.00pm Soundbites (Seminars - See separate timetable).
3.30pm Sheep Shearing Competition finals.
3.30pm - 4.00pm Presentation of prizes for Stockjudging, Sheep Dog Trial and Young Shepherd of The Year competitions (Seminar building).
4.30pm Sale of Pair of Ewe Hoggs (Seminar building).
4.15pm Presentation of Sheep Shearing Competition prizes (Seminar building).
5.00pm Event closes to public.

Soundbite/Seminar Programme
Chairman: George Milne, NSA Scotland Development Officer

11.00 - 11.15 “How to pass the flock to the family not the taxman” - Margaret Campbell, LLB CA ATT CTA, Director, General Practice, Johnston Carmichael.
11.30 - 11.45 “Breeding sheep fit for the Future” - Dewi Jones, CEO, Innovis.
11.45 - 12.00 “Where’s the market for Lamb” - Stuart Ashworth, Head of Economics Services, Quality Meat Scotland.
13.00 - 13.15 “How to pass the flock to the family not the taxman” - Margaret Campbell, LLB CA ATT CTA, Director, General Practice, Johnston Carmichael.
13.45 - 14.00 “Where’s the market for Lamb” - Stuart Ashworth, Head of Economics Services, Quality Meat Scotland.
Passionate

He is passionate about sheep farming and lays a great deal of emphasis on genetics, husbandry, grassland management and marketing to improve the productivity and profitability of his 4200 commercial and pedigree ewes and reduce the farm’s dependence on subsidy.

“Our biggest challenge is our own mindset. We have become a generation of farmers whose aim has been to maximise subsidy,” he says.

“We must now focus on lifting profitability by improving the factors we can control, such as raising scanning percentages, reducing lamb losses and winter feed bills and managing and utilising grass more effectively.”

This will be the main focus of NSA Highland Sheep which is a new event in Scotland held for the first time two years ago at Dingwall. The event is set to draw a large attendance of sheep farmers from all over the country.

The upbeat themes running through the event will include improved performance, profit from grass and the encouragement of new entrants with a view to helping reverse the decline in Scotland’s national sheep flock over the past decade.

Features will include a farm tour, trade stands, practical demonstrations, educational exhibits, seminars on practical themes, sheepdog trials and shearing and stockjudging competitions.

Major feature

The event will also host Scotland’s Young Shepherd of the Year competition and a major feature at the end of the day will be a show and sale of ewe hoggs of various breeds which was such a success when held for the first time two years ago at Dingwall and again last year at NSA Scotsheep.

But the opportunity to view the UK’s top sheep flock is likely to prove the main attraction for many farmers and is set to draw a large attendance of sheep farmers from all over the country and again last year at NSA Scotsheep.

Visitors will be inspired by Mr Scott’s commitment to the sheep industry and his positive approach to managing his sheep flock. Expansion over the past three years has seen a doubling of the acreage farmed and the flock has expended three-fold.

The farming enterprise extends to just over 1000 acres at Fearn with a further 300 acres of grazing rented five miles away and various seasonal and contract farming grazing agreements.

The opportunity was taken in 2012 to rent 2600 acres of rough grazing in Sutherland which supports 900 Cheviot and Cheviot cross ewes and hoggs and 70 Luing suckler cows.

Fearn Farm itself is a low lying farm and 70 Luing suckler cows. Farms in the area are bred pure and the rest put to Texel, Beltex and NZ Suffolk.

The flock is derived from an extensive ET programme which will see the flock grow to 300 ewes in the first three years of the programme.

“We are looking for a different type of Cheviot Mule which is prolific and hardy but produces a superior carcase,” John explains.

Ease of lambing

The New Zealand Suffolk is a breed which has been heavily selected for ease of lambing and vigour. The flock has been built up quickly by embryo transfer.

“They can cover more ewes and produce more live lambs than some of the traditional breeds,” John says.

“They are lighter boned which enables hoggs to be tupped successfully. We have been run as a mixed unit. Cropping has been cut back significantly in recent years as a result of the spread of enterprise proving more profitable than barley and now accounts for only 300 acres, comprising 200 acres spring barley, 20 acres oats and 80 acres winter barley, which is followed by stubble turnips for winter grazing, plus 10 acres of swedes. An area of land is let out on an annual basis for potatoes. Most arable work is undertaken by contractors.

Stocking comprises 3300 cross ewes and hoggs in Easter Ross including 150 pure Texels, 50 New Zealand Suffolk and 80 Aberfield, as well as 130 suckler cows, including a pedigree herd of 65 Beef Shorthorn. Bulls from the herd have sold for up to 10,000gns at Stirling in February with three from the herd averaging £7525.

Best genetics

Mr Scott has searched far and wide for the best genetics to improve his sheep. The best of the Cheviot ewes are bred pure and the rest put to Aberfield rams while cross-bred ewes go to the Texel, Beltex and NZ Suffolk.

The only flock of Aberfield in Scotland can be found at Fearn and Mr Scott has been impressed with the breed so far as a potential sire of hardy, prolific ewes from hill flocks. The breed is a hybrid of Texel and Bluefaced Leicester which has been developed by genetics company, Innovis, and the Fearn flock is basically a multiplier flock for Innovis.

The flock is derived from an extensive ET programme which will see the flock grow to 300 ewes in the first three years of the programme.

“We are looking for a different type of Cheviot Mule which is prolific and hardy but produces a superior carcase,” John explains.

Innovation and genetic improvement will be focus of HighlandSheep 2015 host farm

All roads will lead to Easter Ross on Tuesday, June 9, as sheep farmers from across the UK as well as the Highlands and Islands make their way to Fearn Farm, Tain, for NSA Scotland’s Highland Sheep 2015 event.

Host farmer, John Scott, who farms with his wife, Fiona, and parents, James and Janet, is widely acknowledged as one of the most progressive and innovative sheep farmers in Scotland and this was recognised last year when he was named Farmers Weekly UK Sheep Farmer of the Year.

John is the fourth generation of the Scott family to farm at Fearn and is motivated, like previous generations of the family, by a desire to leave the farm in as good condition, if not better, than when his father handed over the management of the farm to him.
(continued from previous page)
don't use them too much on hogg where our preference is the Southdown.

“Grades with the New Zealand Suffolk may not be as good as using a Texel or traditional Suffolk but I get more lambs to grade R3L faster, producing more kilos per hectare and that is what I’m after.”

Improvement

A large number of crossbred ewes are used as embryo recipients with up to 700 embryos implanted each year to speed up the genetic improvement of the flock.

Pedigree sheep are lamb at Fearn from March 1 onwards and commercial ewes from March 20 with lambing on outlying farms delayed until April.

ECV rolls and protein nuts are fed to both ewes and lambs and Crystalyx mineral buckets are used on the outlying farms where there is a lot of roughage.

John works with Norvite for input on his nutritional plans and rations. The Crystalyx Extra High Energy block, a naturally hardened 16MJ ME, 12% protein feed lick, is fed to ewes prior to tupping as a flush and to provide key trace elements at all stages of pregnancy and lactation.

“I like the flexibility which the Crystalyx block offers which is the key to making our system work best,” says John. “It provides the nutrients to complement forage and is proven to improve forage utilisation which is a big focus for us.

“The blocks make for a really easy feeding system as they are robust and withstand the weather. We can leave blocks out with the ewes and know they are getting the energy they need.

Keep it simple

And he adds: “It’s very easy to over-complicate farming systems and this tends to lead to high costs. By keeping the system simple, we can focus on keeping costs per day down and making the systems as efficient as possible.”

Average scanning percentage this year was 168% but this is something John is determined to improve through better breeding.

“Selecting for prolificacy is a priority and I’m confident we can soon lift lambing percentages compared to the hill Cheviot,” he says.

Lambs at Fearn are creep-fed from seven days. Most are sold for slaughter at 20kg deadweight but some are sold store depending on market conditions.

Great emphasis is placed on grassland management to match stock and grass availability and rotational grazing is being introduced this year to maximise the potential of grass. One batch of 800 ewes is already being rotated regularly on six similarly-sized fields on one of the outlying farms and electric fencing is planned at Fearn to create paddocks.

The Cheviot ewes on the Sutherland grazings are run on a low-input system and lamb outside. The nucleus of the ewes are bred pure and the remainder put to Aberfield sires and draft ewes to the New Zealand Suffolk.

Attention to detail includes the recording of all the sheep flocks. It is a lot of work but EID helps and is an important tool to weed out any under-performing ewes or rams.

Around 90% of the shearing lambs sold each year from the Texel flock are in the top 5% of the breed and an innovation over the past two years has been a move away from selling rams at auction sales to selling them unpushed at a sale on the farm.

Last year’s sale averaged over £700 for 70 head and John expect to have more than 100 forward at this year’s sale on August 28.

Fit-for-purpose

“We used to spend a lot of money on feed, fuel and dressing sheep to take them to auction sales,” says John. “The focus now is on fit-for-purpose rams which we produce from forage and sell unfed and undressed under the "Great From Grass" title.”

The business has also diversified into renewable energy with electricity generated by two 20kW turbines being sold to a nearby refrigerated potato store and a biomass burner installed to provide heat for grain drying as well as three houses, including the farmhouse.

The Austrian wood chip boiler system, installed by Highland Heat and Power, is located in the boiler house next to the drying floor. The adjacent wood chip hopper is fitted with a 4m leaf spring agitator and the buildings served by a network of pre-insulated underground pipework, with heat exchangers, heat meters and control valves at each building and the grain dryer.

Wood chip is being sourced locally but it’s proposed to replace this with timber dried and chipped on site.

John manages this large farming enterprise with the assistance of his father and three staff. Students – often New Zealanders – are taken on to help at lambing time. Staff are Martin Scott and Ben Ockenden with Gary Macdonald overseeing the Sutherland enterprise on a “full-time part-time” basis.

Great team

“We are fortunate that our business provides economies of scale but this is only possible because we have a great team with the right skill set to make it work,” he says. “We have had to look for the right breeds with the right systems on the right farms.”

He exudes confidence about the future and sees opportunities for further expansion, despite already trebling the flock over the past three years.

“The likelihood is we could go further,” he says. “I’ve seen the success of contract farming in arable operations and I think this has merits in livestock enterprises too.”

Judges impressed

John’s success in being awarded the UK Sheep Farmer of the Year title last year is well deserved. He impressed the judges with his technical and financial acumen and use of new technologies and genetic advancement in his sheep flock. But he was quick to acknowledge the support he receives from family and staff.

“Winning this award is a reflection on the hard work and dedication of the whole team at Fearn Farm and without the support of both my family and our hard working staff none of this would be possible,” he says.

The judges said John was a “clear winner” due to his focus on maximising grass use and improving genetics in tandem.

“This clearly demonstrates an understanding of the drivers of profitability for his business,” was the judges’ comment.

As a board member of QMS and chairman of the Scottish Sheep Industry Group, John is committed to encouraging the development of a sustainable sheep sector.

NSA Highland Sheep 2015 will show the way.

Norvite now Crystalyx distributors

Norvite is among a number of selected merchants who are the new distributors of Crystalyx in the North and North-east.

“We are delighted to have been awarded the opportunity of becoming a distributor for Crystalyx,” said Norvite technical director, David McClelland.

“We take great pride at Norvite in manufacturing market leading mineral supplements and feeds. We apply this standard to all the products we source and Crystalyx is a market-leading brand with a proven track record, as industry-leading farmers like John Scott will attest.”
2 Beltex Sheep Society
Lane Farmhouse, Crooklands, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7HN.
Tel: 015395 67973
Email: beltex.sheep@btconnect.com
www.beltex.co.uk
Beltex sheep are one of the leading prime lambs with maximum killing out percentages. Distinctive large double muscle hindquarters improve carcass quality.

9 Blackface Sheep Breeders Association
Woodhead of Mailer, Perth, PH2 0QA.
Email: aileen@scottish-blackface.co.uk
www.scottish-blackface.co.uk
Blackface sheep are the most numerous pure breed in the UK. The original easy-care, adaptable hill and upland breed.

5 Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders Association
Riverstone View, Warwick Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2BS.
Tel: 01228 588022
Email: info@bluefacedleicester.co.uk
www.bluefacedleicester.co.uk
The Bluefaced Leicester - the only sire of the “UK Mule” famous throughout the United Kingdom for its prime lamb production.

16 Dorset Horn and Poll Dorset Sheep Breeders Association
Agriculture House, Acland Road, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1EF.
Tel: 01305 262126
Email: dorsetsheep@xinhmail.com
www.dorsetsheep.org
If you want a breed with a natural prolificacy all year round to fit any farming system, then choose a Dorset.

6 Highland Mule Breeders Association
Hillside, Clashardoran, Beauty, Inverness-shire, IV4 7AN.
Tel: 01463 870508
Email: winnietilhillside@btinternet.com
www.highlandmulebreeders.co.uk
Most popular terminal sire chosen by producers, excellent convertor of forage, vigorous lambs improving health, development and growth rate. Robust and versatile sought by producers in farming in diverse climates.

15 Zwartbles Sheep Association
Stickie Heather Farm, Corntill on Tweed, Northumberland, TD12 4XG.
Tel: 05603 466631
Email: secretary@zwartbles.org
www.zwartbles.org
Large framed, prolific, milky, maternal sheep with fast growth rates and low fat carcases. Characteristics also desirable for cross breeding.

19 Ayrilland Beltex
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www.easyrams.co.uk
EasyRams are the UK’s only breeders of pure NZ Suffolk’s, Texel’s and Suffolk BFL shearing rams. We have 500 rams for sale in 2015.

22 Suffolk Sheep Society
Unit 19, Ballymena Business Centre, Ballymoney, Co Antrim, BT42 1FL.
Tel: 02840 537811
Email: scotchmuleassociation@yahoo.co.uk
www.scotchmule.co.uk
The Scotch Mule sheep - a hardy, prolific and maternal sheep easily maintained in all seasons. Bred on the hills of Scotland to survive in any conditions all over the UK.

20 Hampshire Down Sheep Breeders Association
Rickyard Cottage, Denner Hill, Great Missenden, Bucks, HP16 0HZ.
Tel: 01494 488389
Email: richard@rickyard.plus.com
Web: www.hampshiredown.org.uk
Hampshire Down - the terminal sire for easy-care lambs: quick to suckle, robust, hardy, finishing quickly off grass with no concentrates.

10 Texel Sheep Society
4 Street, NAC, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, CV8 2LG.
Tel: 02476 686629
Email: office@texel.co.uk
www.texel.co.uk
Most popular terminal sire chosen by producers, excellent convertor of forage, vigorous lambs improving health, development and growth rate. Robust and versatile sought by producers in farming in diverse climates.

20 Hampshire Down Sheep Breeders Association
Rickyard Cottage, Denner Hill, Great Missenden, Bucks, HP16 0HZ.
Tel: 01494 488389
Email: richard@rickyard.plus.com
Web: www.hampshiredown.org.uk
Hampshire Down - the terminal sire for easy-care lambs: quick to suckle, robust, hardy, finishing quickly off grass with no concentrates.
service benefits sheep and beef businesses.

45 Landy Pressure Washers (Lambert & Dyson)
Landy Works, Keighley Road, Skipton, BD23 2TA. Tel: 01756 794291 post@landypressurewashers.com www.landypressurewashers.com The Landy range of P.T.O. powered pressure washers, including drain jetters, tank mounted and pressure washer accessories. Mainline delivery included.

90 Luing Cattle Society Ltd
Mount Blair, 10 Manor Gardens, Blairgowrie, PH10 6JS. Tel: 01250 872897 secretary@luingcattlesociety.co.uk www.luingcattlesociety.co.uk Luings – A hill/upland breed developed as a sustainable suckler cow for the commercial beef industry. A profitable suckler cow.

33 MacGregor Industrial Supplies
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40 McLaren Tractors Ltd
Strathpeffer Road, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9NF. Tel: 01349 867521 samferguson@mcleantractors.co.uk Web: www.mcleantarctors.co.uk McLaren tractors are the official dealers for Valtra, Zetor, Polaris ATV. We are here to source any types of farm machinery.

10 Minups Limited
Road One, Industrial Estate, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 3RG. Tel: 01606 556161 Email: sales@minups.co.uk www.minups.co.uk Minups manufacture and supply a wide range of cost effective, high quality feed supplements, formulated to help improve livestock performance and profitability.

79 Moreudon Foundation
The Moreudon Foundation, Pentlands Science Park, Bush Loan, Penicuik, EH26 0PZ. Tel: 0131 446 5111 Email: info@moreudon.org Web: www.moredon.org.uk Visit the Moreudon stand for free practical information and literature on a range of sheep health issues.

63 MSD Animal Health
Walton Manor, Walton, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK7 7AJ. Tel: 01908 685685

Email: vet-support.uk@merck.com www.msd-animal-health.co.uk MSD Animal Health produces a wide range of sheep vaccines including Scabivax™ Forte, Heptavac-P Plus®, Ovicur-P Plus®, Enzovax and Toxovax. Visit our stand to discuss the Sheep Lameness Reduction Programme and Footvac.

68 Natural Stockcare Ltd
Unit 1B, Willows Business Centre, Newburn Bridge Road, Blaydon-on-Tyne, NE21 4SD. Tel: 0191 264 5494 Email: info@naturalstockcare.co.uk Web: www.naturalstockcare.co.uk Natural Stockcare manufacture to the highest quality standard ensuring our first class products match the requirements of our BSI-ISO 9001:2008 Certification.

75 NFU Mutual, Dingwall
2 Mayfield, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9ST. Tel: 01349 866234 gareth.vaughan@nfmutual.co.uk www.nfmutual.co.uk/dingwall Leading rural insurer. Providing advice on your insurance, health and safety, and financial requirements from our office in Dingwall.

50 Niall Bowser - Livestock Equipment
Lerrosck Farm, Argyat, Dounie, Perthshire, FK16 6JE. Tel: 01786 841373 Email: niallbowseruk@yahoo.co.uk www.nappa.co.uk Scottish distributor of Rappa mobile sheep yards. UK distributor of Perkinz Drenchmaster sheep handling clamps and Vetmarker lamb docking chutes.

91 Norbrook Laboratories Ltd
1 Saxon Way East, Oakley Hay Industrial Estate, Corby, Northants, NN1 9EX. Tel: 01536 741147 gemma.garner@norbrook.co.uk www.norbrook.com Norbrook is a word leader in the veterinary pharmaceutical industry; working closely with the agricultural industry to enhance animal health and productivity.

67 Novite Animal Nutrition Ltd
Warehouse, Insh, Aberdeenshire, AB52 6YD. Tel: 01464 831261 Email: johnstone@novite.co.uk www.novite.co.uk Committed to serving the Scottish livestock sector for over 40 years, as specialists in animal nutrition.

72 NSA Scotland
Kinaldy Farm, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 8NA. Tel: 01334 472403

Email: george.nasa@btconnect.com Web: www.nasascotland.org NSA represents the views and interests of sheep producers throughout the UK. It is funded solely by its membership and its activities involve it in every aspect of the sheep industry.

93 Osmonds
Bradeley Green, Tarporley Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 4HD. Tel: 01948 668100 Email: info@osmond.co.uk www.osmond.co.uk Osmonds offer a wide range of products, including colostums and digestive supplements; shampoos and show products for sheep, cattle and other animals. Trade enquiries welcome.

81 Quality Meat Scotland
The Rural Centre, Inglston, Newbridge, Midlothian, EH28 8NZ. Tel: 0131 472 4040 Email: info@qmscotland.co.uk www.qmscotland.co.uk QMS is the public body responsible for helping the Scottish red meat sector improve its efficiency and profitability, and maximise its contribution to Scotland’s economy.

49 Ritchie
Carsiewview Road, Forfar, Angus, DD8 3Ll. Tel: 01307 462271 Email: info@ritchies-uk.com www.ritchies-uk.com Manufacturers of livestock handling, weighing and feeding equipment also grassland machinery.

42 Robertsonsof Tain Ltd
Shore Road, Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1H. Tel: 01862 892276 service@robertsonsoftain.co.uk www.robertsonsoftain.co.uk Suppliers of Honda ATV’s, Logic attachments for ATV’s and sheep and livestock trailers.

46 Roxan Developments Ltd
Phraseni Mill, Dundale Road, Selkirk, TD7 5DZ. Tel: 01750 22940 Email: sales@roxan.co.uk www.roxan.co.uk EID sheep tagging system for slaughter or breeding sheep. Roxan Tagfaster dispenses 20 batch tags or 10 sets of coloured twins.
HIGHLAND SHEEP 2015

IF YOU’RE NOT AN NSA MEMBER, YOU’RE MISSING OUT!

Would you like to join these lucky sheep farmers who each won a Shearwell EID stick reader kit and mobile phone app worth £860? Then you need to be in the prize draw by becoming a member of NSA TODAY.

Already a member? You can be entered into the draw too, just by recommending a friend or neighbour who signs up as a new member. There is no limit to the number of entries per existing member, and the sooner you enter the higher your chances of winning.

Why NSA? As the only UK-wide organisation providing a voice for sheep farmers, NSA offers a wealth of information to members through publications, online and at events. NSA’s regional committee structure means members can get in touch on any matter – they share your opinions with national and devolved committees and are offered to support you – your voice is heard. Each and every member helps to, not only fund NSA in delivering its support of sheep farmers and the sheep industry, but to provide a stronger mandate to represent the interests of both Government’s throughout the UK.

NEED A NEW PAIR OF WELLIES?!

All visitors to NSA Highland Sheep today could win a brand new pair of Dunlop wellies.

Simply register for the free prize draw at the NSA stand today – and remember to tell us what your foot size is! We will pull one winner from the hat at the end of the day and arrange delivery of your choice of new footwear to your address.

You can choose between a traditional working boot or a new outdoor performance boot with leather trimming. Both utilise Dunlop’s Porof Tex technology, offering warmth, durability, lightness and comfort.

One visitor to NSA Highland Sheep TODAY WILL WIN a pair of new wellies; open to NSA members and non-members.

Could you be next? These lucky members each win a £860 EID stick reader kit in the NSA membership prize draw.

Email: stfa@tfsascotland.org.uk
www.tfsascotland.org.uk
STFA offers Scottish tenant farmers a unique representative lobbying and advisory service with a free legal helpline run by tenants for tenants.

STFA (Scottish Tenant Farmers Association)
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Tel: 01408 633275

80 SRUC/SAC Consulting
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Email: information@sruc.co.uk
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Experts from the various divisions of SRUC will be on the stand to discuss improving farm business output under the new CAP.

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Watson Seeds is a privately owned Scottish grass company marketing its award winning Castle Mixtures across Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales.
A multi-breed show and sale of pairs of breeding ewe hoggs, which was a highly successful innovation at NSA Highland Sheep in 2013 and at NSA Scotsheep last year, is to be repeated at this year’s NSA Highland Sheep 2015 event.

The sale will be open to ewe hoggs born in 2014 with either MV or non-MV accreditation and classes will be offered for eight breeds of Mules, North Country Cheviot (Hill), North Country Cheviot (Park), Scottish Blackface, Suffolk, Texel, any other native breed and any other Continental breed.

The entry fee is £25 per pair (plus VAT). Prize money of £50 for a first, £25 for second and £10 for third is on offer. Closing date for entries is Friday, May 29.

All sheep entered for the show must be offered for the sale which will be conducted by Dingwall and Highland Marts Ltd. It will be held at the end of the day starting at 4.30pm.

The judges are Billy Macpherson, Blackford, Croy, Inverness (Mules, Scottish Blackface and any other native breed), Alan Mackay, South Balkeith, Tain (NCC (hill) and NCC (park) and Alister Mackenzie, Whitebog, Fortrose (Suffolk, Texel and any other continental breed).

Last year’s sale at NSA Scotsheep achieved a complete clearance with a top price of 1800gns each for a pair of Texel ewe hoggs from Robbie Wilson, North Dorlaithers, Turriff, with North Country Cheviot (Park) selling to 1200gns and New Zealand Suffolk to 1100gns.

“The sale has been very successful over the past two years, attracting huge ringside interest, and will give buyers a rare opportunity to source high quality breeding stock of the major sheep breeds in Scotland,” said NSA Scotland chairman, Sybil Macpherson. “Entries for the show and sale may have to be limited and I would urge prospective exhibitors to start thinking about what they might want to enter and get their entries in early.”

Opportunity for youngsters to compete for Scotland’s Young Shepherd of the Year

Young shepherds, farm workers, students and other farming youngsters with an interest in sheep have until May 22 to enter a competition to select Scotland’s Young Shepherd of the Year award which will take place at NSA Highland Sheep on June 9.

The competition is open to youngsters who have left school and are under the age of 26 on June 29 and have qualified for the minimum BWMB Blue Seal Certificate for sheep shearing and wool handling. Entry for the competition is free.

The winner will receive the NSA Highland Sheep Rose Bowl and a cash prize of £300 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.

“If you have competed before, we would love to see you again and first-time competitors are equally welcome,” says organiser, Dave Turner, former head of agriculture at SRUC Oatridge. “There are no restrictions on how many times you compete, other than age.”

The competition is designed to test competitors’ practical skills and practical knowledge used in everyday work with sheep, as well as broader knowledge of the sheep industry throughout the UK and Europe, including various sheep breeds.

For further information on the breed contact:-
Aileen McFadzean
TEL: 07768 820405
www.scottish-blackface.co.uk
The importance of quality protein in enhancing lambing performance

by Dr Lorna MacPherson, Ruminant Nutritionist, East Coast Viners Animal Nutrition.

With lambing over with for another year, it is worth reflecting on the performance of the flock and how your feeding regime and feed quality measured up to current recommendations on supplying quality bypass protein to ewes in the pre-lambing period.

As ewes are fed concentrate for a relatively short period of time in the year, it is important to get nutrition correctly according to ewe condition and the number of lambs carried and being nursed.

How much a ewe can eat is the main limiting factor affecting nutrition. Dry matter intake of a ewe is typically between 1.5-1.8kg, reducing by as much as 30% in the last six weeks of pregnancy.

**Crucial**

Dry matter intake can also be affected by body condition, lameness, feed palatability, amount and type of dietary fibre, water intake and dietary water content. It is therefore crucial the feed provided in the pre-lambing period is of the highest nutritional quality, with protein and energy being the two most important nutrients.

Since the AFRC (Agriculture and Food Research Council) Energy and Protein Requirements of Ruminants was last published in 1993, researchers are now suggesting a 20-30% increase in protein requirements. This is due to genetic improvement of breeds and the demands from foetal and wool growth, colostrum production and maintaining a health immune system.

Dietary protein can be broken down into RDP (rumen degradable protein) and DUP (digestible undegradable protein), which bypasses the rumen and is digested and absorbed in the small intestine.

Dietary protein is crucial for udder development, a healthy immune system, milk/colostrum yield, increased egg production. Although RDP is essential for rumen health and function, it does not have the same beneficial effects on the above mentioned production traits during the latter stages of pregnancy, compared to DUP.

A widely accepted rule of thumb is to supply 50-75g of DUP from three weeks before the first ewes lamb. This can be achieved by feeding the ewe 100g of soyabean meal per lamb carried or 50g per day per lamb carried of Sopralin or an equivalent product.

Soyabean meal that has been heat treated (Sopass) or formaldehyde treated (Sopralin) significantly increases the percentage of DUP in the crude protein. The crude protein content of soyabean meal contains 45% DUP but over 90% of the protein in Sopralin is undegradable, therefore it can be fed at half the rate of soyabean meal to provide the same level of bypass protein.

At ECV, we consider nutritional quality to be a major consideration when our sheep feeds are formulated for the lambing season and we do not solely formulate using a least cost approach.

Our highest energy (13ME) sheep feed, XL Ewe 18% Rolls + Amino Green, contains DUP from a range of sources such as distillers dark grains, soyabean meal and Amino Green.

**Rumen health**

While soyabean meal is considered to be one of the best vegetable protein sources in terms of its digestible amino acid profile, wheat and maize distillers dark grains also contain good levels of DUP, as well as being high in energy, very palatable and contain good digestible fibre for rumen health and milk fat content.

Amino Green provides benefits in udder development, colostrum and milk yield and lamb birth weights. It is a combination of soya bean meal, rapemeal, potato protein and prairie meal which has been specially treated to increase the DUP level and is similar to fishmeal in terms of its amino acid composition and protein quality.

By feeding 1kg of ECV XL Ewe 18% Rolls + Amino Green, the same level of DUP is provided as feeding 1kg of a home mix containing 250g soyabean meal, 700g barley and 50g mineral.

Therefore, when comparing different feeds, don’t only look at the overall crude protein level but assess the sources of protein and whether there is adequate DUP from raw materials such as soyabean meal, distillers dark (continued on following page)
Visitors to NSA Highland Sheep 2015 will be able to enjoy a gastronomic treat of mouth-watering Moroccan burgers made by a local butcher with Scotch lamb.

The local delicacy, flavoured with tasty Moroccan spices and apricot, onion and coriander, is proving a hit for tasty Moroccan spices and apricot, onion and coriander, is proving a hit for local butchers, Ormiston and Watt Ltd of Bonar Bridge, and is a key product in a campaign by Highland Sheep host farmer, John Scott, to re-connect local consumers with local food.

“Modern trends in food shopping, particularly the spread of supermarkets, has broken the important link between local people and their farming community,” says Mr Scott, who runs 4000 ewes at Fearn Farm and on the hill farms of West Garty and Kilmote in Sutherland.

**Expansion**

“I would like to see this link re-established by local butchers and other retailers promoting locally-produced food. It is proving a great success with the Bonar Bridge butchers and I strongly believe what we are doing could be replicated across Scotland. Customers like the thought of buying their lamb, beef and pork from local farms where full traceability is guaranteed.”

Local farmer, Sandy Watt, set up the butchery business two years ago in partnership with his cousin’s husband, Stuart Ormiston, who worked as a butcher in Peebles, to buy the Bonar Bridge business from the previous owners, who were retiring, and to promote Aberdeen-Angus grass-fed beef from his prize-winning herd of 40 cows on the family farm of Swordale, which he hopes to expand to 60 in the near future.

“The Moroccan burgers are proving very popular with our customers and proved a great success when we provided the catering at the International Sheepdog Trials when they were held at Fearn Farm last year,” says Mr Watt.

Mr Scott supplies lambs to the Bonar Bridge shop from his flock of Texel cross sheep throughout the lamb marketing season and at other times of the year locally-produced lamb and hogget is procured from meat wholesalers, Munro’s of Dingwall.

**Gastronomic treat for visitors to HighlandSheep 2015**

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**Expansion**

“The shop enjoys a thriving retail trade as well as supplying local hotels and hunting lodges. Catering is also undertaken at local events which is helping to promote the high quality range of locally-produced lamb, beef and pork which is the hallmark of the retail business.

The shop is a member of the Scotch Beef Club and subject to regular inspections under Quality Meat Scotland’s quality assurance scheme.

(continued from previous page)

grains and protected protein sources such as Amino Green, Sopralin or equivalent products.

This information should be freely available from your feed manufacturer. This year we have had several enquiries from farmers wanting to include products such as Sopralin in their compound feed and this can easily be formulated into a custom roll/nut to provide the appropriate level of product and DUP depending on the desired feed rate.

Much of the focus on protein requirements has been in the pre-lambing period but don’t forget the demands on the ewe after lambing. The energy requirement of a ewe with twins increases by as much as 70% between late pregnancy and early lactation.

**Growth rates**

Some of the energy required after lambing will come from body reserves but no more than half a condition score should be lost during the first six weeks of lactation, otherwise milk yield can be significantly reduced, affecting lamb growth rates.

There is also a higher demand for high quality dietary protein when ewes are mobilising body fat in early lactation. Therefore, it can be false economy to reduce the quality of feed provided to the ewe after lambing just to save money on a cheaper product.

When feeding ewes post-lambing, take into account the number of lambs she is nursing. Ewes nursing twins will have higher nutrient requirements than those nursing singles, as they will produce 20-40% more milk. A good rule of thumb to meet these requirements is to feed ewes with single lambs once a day and ewes nursing twins, twice a day.

Good quality forage and even good lush spring grass alone can struggle to meet the nutrient requirements for ewes suckling multiple lambs and a 75kg ewe with twins needs up to 1.1kg of supplementary feed. Possibly more in hill flocks on poorer quality grassland.

Milk provides essentially all the lambs nutritional needs during the first month of life and a significant proportion during the second month of life. After 8-10 weeks it is more efficient to feed the lamb directly than to feed the lamb via the ewe.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of sheep nutrition, please visit East Coast Viners Animal Nutrition on our stand at the NSA Highland Sheep event.
Sheep farming plays a very important role in the economy of Highland Scotland. The region is home to about 14% of Scotland’s breeding ewes and about 12% of the lamb crop.

The impact of the 2005 CAP reform has been significant for sheep farming in the Highlands contributing towards a decline of around 25% in breeding ewe numbers and 16% fewer holdings keeping breeding sheep than did in 2004.

The potential impact of the current reforms remains finely balanced but hopefully the proposed actions and coupled support for hoggs will help to stabilise numbers or, even better, reverse the decline.

However, of equal or greater importance is the economic performance of sheep enterprises. Evidence from the QMS enterprise profitability work shows that economic performance has improved in recent years. But extensive hill flocks, typical of much of the Highlands, with their lower prolificacy and dependence on store lamb sales, continue to find it hard to achieve profitability.

This illustrates the importance not only of Single Farm Payment but also less favoured area payments to securing sheep farming activity. Sheep farmers in the area will be taking a keen interest in the process that will see LFASS replaced by a new measure to support Areas Facing Natural Constraint by 2018 as required by the European Commission.

Expansion

More immediately, though, it is the day-to-day movement in market prices and opportunities that affect the future of the business. The fall in prime hoggs prices in recent weeks is a concern, particularly as some of these hoggs may well have been bought from the Highland region store sales last autumn. What the current market does illustrate is the significance of four key building blocks of a viable sheep sector, namely: lamb quality; consumer demand; exchange rates and market access.

The number of lambs reaching the market at weights above 45 kg liveweight has increased in recent years and over the past four months, averaged around 27% of the total compared to 23% last year and 18% two years ago.

Similarly, over the same period, the proportion of lambs falling into carcass grades of R3L or better has fallen by a couple of percent. Depending on conformation, lambs fainter than an 3L grade can trade at 5 - 10 p/kg liveweight, or more, less than an 3L grade. Lambs poorer than R conformation can be similarly penalised. Skillful drawing of lambs for slaughter can then impact on revenue received.

Turning to consumption, and not withstanding a useful growth in consumption at Easter, UK consumption of lamb has struggled to match year earlier levels in the first quarter of 2015. Although there has been growth in sales of lamb mince and shoulder roasts, leg roasts and chop sales have slipped.

Expansion

Similar consumer behaviour has been reported from France. Carefully coordinated promotional and advertising activities at home and abroad can simulate demand. For example, QMS’ autumn Scotch Lamb campaign drove fresh retail sales in Scotland up by more than 10%. However these activities are expensive and with a limited budget, QMS can only run a limited promotional programme.

Strong competition expected in Inter-district sheepdog trial

An invitation sheep dog trial between six teams from the Highlands and Islands and a team from Aberdeenshire will be one of the features sure to attract tremendous interest at NSA Highland Sheep.

The trial is being organised by Scott Renwick, Clachan Farm House, Lochbroom, Ullapool, along with Hugh Munro from Inverness with teams from Caithness, Sutherland, Ross-shire, Inverness, Lochaber and Western Isles competing along with the Aberdeenshire team. There will also be a competition for young handlers.

It is hoped that each district will field at least five competitors and the average score of each team will determine the winning team who will be presented with an engraved rosebowl. Prize money will include £100 for the individual with the most points.

The competition will be judged by world final competitor, Peter Martin, Glen Lyon, and among those taking part will be the current world champion, Michael Shearer from Caithness.
The Scotch Lamb PG1 marketing campaigns which Quality Meat Scotland delivers on behalf of the Scottish red meat industry aim to communicate the exceptional taste and quality of locally-produced lamb.

The latest campaigns behind Scotch Lamb have also focused on how simple and quick it is to cook delicious, nutritious mid-week family meals with Scotch Lamb.

To do this we developed the edgy “Wham Bam Thank You Lamb” campaign which recognises the fact that we need to inspire and engage with younger consumers. The fact is that in 2014/15 almost 70% of shoppers purchasing lamb were aged 55 or over.

**Poor relation**

The reality is that lamb is the “poor relation” to beef in the shopping baskets of the typical Scot, with demand for beef at 5.48kg/head each year around seven times higher than demand for lamb (0.76kg/head) by Scottish consumers.

There is also huge scope to increase the volume of fresh lamb retailed in Scotland which is identified as of Scottish origin. Last year the retail market for lamb was worth around £35 million but the volume of lamb which was identified as Scottish origin was just 4042 tonnes.

Only 14% of the volume of fresh lamb retailed in Scotland carries a Scottish origin against 44% with a British origin and 24% with a New Zealand origin. Some of the lamb carrying the British origin label may have been born in Scotland but slaughtered in England or Wales so cannot carry the Scotch logo. In many cases British retailers are moving away from regional promotions, meaning their preference for logistical reasons is to use a British identifier.

**Scotch Lamb marketing focuses on speed and simplicity**

_A small per capita increase in lamb consumption in Scotland could transform the Scottish sheep industry._

This is why QMS’s promotional activities is focused on the Scottish market, explains QMS head of marketing, Laurent Vernet

In consultation with the industry, we have been focusing our promotional campaigns each year on the period between September and November which is typically the period when the greatest volume of lamb is reaching the market.

The duration and depth of the campaigns we deliver behind Scotch Lamb are directly linked to the levy collected i.e. the number of animals slaughtered in Scotland.

Our research shows that the main reasons behind the low consumption of lamb in Scotland are linked to how lamb is perceived by shoppers/consumers (old fashioned, with limited serve options) and lack of visibility in the shops.

**Delivering results**

We know that our marketing activity delivers results - each time we promote lamb in Scotland we support retail sales. Our most recent Scotch Lamb campaign helped to uplift sales by 11.3% (contrasting sharply with the position in GB over the same period which saw lamb sales decrease by 1.7%).

Independent research reveals that it was not only those who are lamb-eaters who bought more lamb than last year during the campaign period but also new consumers who don’t usually buy lamb even once a year.

It is estimated that an extra 28,800 Scottish households bought lamb between August and October. The research also shows that the increase of volume retailed during our promotional campaign was not driven by price promotion, as average lamb retail prices remained stable in Scotland during our campaign.

**Key objective**

A key objective of the campaign – aimed at more than 3.6 million people - was to encourage consumers to understand the versatility, simplicity and speed of cooking with lamb.

The three-month long activation featured billboard, press and radio advertising as well as on-line and in-store activity including 165 days of activity by Scotch Lambassadors in key retailers.

A new component was a “Love Scotch Lamb Weekend” which took place on August 23rd and 24th. The weekend, organised jointly by QMS, NFU Scotland and the National Sheep Association, saw sheep farmers heading into town centres and retailers to meet consumers and encourage them to sample top quality Scotch Lamb.

Historically, Scotland has consumed less lamb than other parts of GB. Around 4175 tonnes of lamb (worth around £35.6 million) is eaten each year in Scotland with about 44% of the population purchasing lamb at least once in the last year (versus 57.5% in Great Britain).

**Priority**

QMS prioritises its promotional activities to support lamb consumption in Scotland. As Scotland represents 8.3% of the British population, if Scottish consumers were to purchase 8.3% of the total volume of lamb retailed in Great Britain, it would mean Scotland would need to increase its consumption by a further 2300 tonnes of lamb (the equivalent of 261,000 lambs) each year.

The challenge the industry faces is that consumers have a poor opinion of Scotch Lamb PG1, which is trusted and rated highly by 85% of the Scottish population.

It is more that lamb is not on the shopper’s radar. Over the years space on retailer’s shelves has been shrinking making it more difficult for consumers to be tempted by making an impulse purchase of lamb.

Retail price has also been a barrier for consumers hit by the economic downturn, as lamb is one of the most expensive proteins available to consumers.