

Sheep Farmer

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2016

A NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION



**NSA DEFENDS SHEEP
IN FLOODING DEBATE**

**FIRST NSA VOUCHER GIVEAWAY
WINNERS**

**EXPLORING THE FARMER-VET
RELATIONSHIP**

**MEET THE 12 NEW NSA
NEXT GENERATION
AMBASSADORS**

**ALL SET FOR
LAMBING 2016**



your business your future



MAINTAIN CONDITION DURING PREGNANCY



TYPICAL DAILY COSTS
3-5p PER EWE

EXTRA HIGH ENERGY

- ✓ Maintain ewe body condition.
- ✓ Consistent lamb development throughout pregnancy.
- ✓ Enhances ewe milk production.
- ✓ Weatherproof.
- ✓ Research proven in the UK and around the world.



+44 (0)16973 32592
info@crystalyx-global.com
www.crystalyx-global.com

Follow Crystalyx UK



EU in-out debate shows farming must be seen as part of UK culture

The debate over our future relationship with the European Union is hotting up and I can see us, at some point not too far in the future, being somewhat shocked that a decision which will have such a profound effect on our future will have been based on scant knowledge, hunches and a voting majority that won't even give farming and food a second thought.

Given that in-or-out is likely to result in very different farming directions in years to come, what can the farming vote do to secure its future success? Burying our heads in the sand is definitely not the answer. While we may be small in terms of voting numbers, we have to make sure all voters consider the effect on farming and food. And in order to understand that, all of us surely have a right to know how any 'new deal' would affect farming and what life after an exit would be like.

In or out, there is one thing that is constant – the need to make agriculture a bigger part of our culture in Britain than it currently is. If people understand it and value it then they will want to see it secured, and the politicians and Treasury may be convinced.

Gaining support

Progress has certainly been made over the last decade. Farm events such as Open Farm Sunday, the rise of farm shops and farmers' markets, lots more television coverage about cooking, food and where food comes from, and more positive media coverage in general have all played their part. No one could dispute that we are in a better place than we were a decade or more ago – but given the power and influence of 'armchair environmentalists' we need to create a similar army of 'armchair agriculturalists' (and even convince some of the environmentalists to join it). We need to ensure these people understand the good that farming sheep brings.

We could do worse than to consider the word 'agriculture' as the word that describes what we do. I cannot think of any other industry (apart from horticulture and aquaculture, and there are obvious connections with these) that is blessed with the inclusion of the word 'culture'. Culture is a word that conjures up a complete sense of being and connection with the people, the provision of food which is the most essential ingredient of life, our environment and world around us. It does not detract from the fact that we



have to be business-like, be an industry, be commercial. We should still embrace technology and aim to advance – that is the world we live in and there is nothing wrong with the basics of commerce and trade. But this concept of culture is a massive strength for us and something I feel we should recognise and talk about more, as well as making sure that what we are talking of is backed up by reality. Whoever our political masters are in years to come, and whether their desks are in Brussels or Westminster, they too should be expected to understand and respect the breadth, depth and importance of what we do.

Flooding debate

An example of the exact opposite to this was when, very sadly, one of our more notorious and radical environmentalists leapt on the bandwagon within days of the severe flooding in the north of England to claim, yet again, it was the sheep on the hills that were the cause of the problem. Such ridiculous and unsubstantiated claims did him no favours at all, and NSA quickly press released the fact that recent increases in flooding episodes happened to be at a time when sheep numbers have been at an all-time low. Furthermore agri-environment schemes have reduced the numbers of sheep in the high uplands even more.

It may be simplistic, but anyone with any knowledge of soils will know the high organic matter soils of the uplands tend

not to tread and compact due to grazing, still retaining their sponge-like properties. If such weather conditions are to become more regular then the solutions need to be locally identified and holistic in nature – more on this on pages 12 and 14.

Looking to the year ahead, and regardless of what happens with our membership of the EU or with climate change, I wish all the very best for the future to Julie Sedgewick. She will be retired this month after many years working for the NSA and in particular her beloved NSA Northern Region – and it is fitting that she has been recognised by being awarded the coveted George Hedley Memorial Award for services to the sheep industry – more on page 3.

Finally, having been through the applications for the NSA Next Generation Ambassador intake for 2016 – see pages 50-53 for the selected individuals – the quality of young people entering our industry suggests to me that the future is potentially bright indeed. Sobering too, the responsibility we hold to make sure they have chances and opportunities to succeed well in the years to come.

Contents

- 2 News round-up
- 4 NSA reports: Devolved nations
- 6 NSA reports: English regions
- 8 NSA Sheep Event preview
- 9 Final EID stick reader giveaway
- 10 First voucher giveaway
- 12 NSA reaction to recent flooding
- 16 Latest action on dog worrying
- 18 What way for prices in 2016?
- 20 Progress for NSA Make More of Mutton
- 22 Options for predator control
- 26 FARM FEATURE: NSA NI Region Chairman Campbell Tweed
- 26 Sheepdog trailing profile
- 29 Sheepdog trailing profile
- 32 SPECIAL SERIES: Fourth article looking at farmer-vet relationships
- 34 Moredun latest
- 36 Reducing neonatal lamb deaths
- 38 Nutrition at lambing time
- 40 Taking the 2016 SCOPS challenge
- 42 Preparing for the coccidiosis threat
- 44 Options for rearing surplus lambs
- 46 Grass and forage management
- 48 British Wool latest
- 50 NSA NEXT GENERATION: Meet this year's Ambassadors

National Sheep Association

NSA Head Office

NSA, The Sheep Centre, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR13 6PH. Call 01684 892661 (Monday-Friday 9am-5.30pm) or go directly to one of the team below.

Phil Stocker - NSA Chief Executive
pstocker@nationalsheep.org.uk

Julie Jennings - Association Secretary/PA to Chief Executive. julie@nationalsheep.org.uk

Helen Breakwell - Bookkeeper/PA to Chief Executive. hbreakwell@nationalsheep.org.uk

Joanne Briggs - Communications Manager & Sheep Farmer Editor
joanne@nationalsheep.org.uk

Hannah Park - Communications Officer
hannah@nationalsheep.org.uk

Laura Williams - NSA Technical Support Officer
laura@nationalsheep.org.uk

Gill Callow - Membership Secretary
gill@nationalsheep.org.uk

Charlotte Underwood - Membership Recruitment. charlotte@nationalsheep.org.uk

Helen Davies - Corporate Relations & Sheep Farmer advertising
helen@nationalsheep.org.uk

Find us at www.nationalsheep.org.uk. Follow us on [Twitter @natsheep](#) and like us on [Facebook /natsheep](#)

NSA is a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in England (No. 37818) and a Registered Charity in England and Wales (No. 249255) and Scotland (No. SC042853). VAT No. 273 3469 44

Sheep Farmer

February/March 2016

Vol. 35, No 1 ISSN 0141-2434

A National Sheep Association Publication, published by NSA with design and production services provided by Ladies in Print.

Ladies in Print

Email: ladiesinprint@outlook.com
Tel: 01684 899255

The front page picture of a Suffolk cross ewe and her Texel cross lambs is provided by professional photographer Robert Smith, taken on the Northumberland farm of A. and C.L. Bell and Sons, Hexham.

Paper is FSC® certified. It is sourced from responsibly managed forests.



No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or shared in any form (be in electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without prior consent of NSA. Every care is taken when compiling this magazine and NSA and Ladies in Print take no responsibility for errors and omissions arising from publication. Views expressed and information contained in Sheep Farmer are not necessarily those of NSA or Ladies in Print and neither party cannot be held responsible for any reason arising from them. Neither NSA or Ladies in Print endorse any services or products advertised in this issue.

NSA Office Holders

His Grace the Duke of Montrose
Honorary President

Samuel Wharry
National Chairman
07803 270020
samuelwharry@tiscali.co.uk

Central

Richard Wheeldon
Regional Chairman
07540 945768
richardalison@sky.com

Cymru Wales

Paul Wozencraft
Regional Chairman
01597 810552
07775 338985
wozencraft963@btinternet.com

Eastern

Dan Phipps
Regional Chairman
07836 590996
07836 287281
dhipps@darley.co.uk

Marches

Kevin Harrison
Regional Chairman
01179 323441
07900 056562
marches@nationalsheep.org.uk

Northern

Greg Dalton
Regional Chairman
01388 537415
07546328241
ggregdalton@aol.com

Northern Ireland

Campbell Tweed
Regional Chairman
07802 835355
campbelltweed@aol.com

Scottish

Sybil Macpherson
Regional Chairman
01838 200218
07796 018528
brackleyfarm@gmail.com

South East

Andrew Barr
Regional Chairman
01273 858563
07768 867124
a.baabaa@hotmail.co.uk

South West

Bryan Griffiths
Regional Chairman
01769 560393
07779 465729
bryan.southcott@btconnect.com

Kate White

Regional Secretary
01823 672341
07736 371640
kate@nationalsheep.org.uk

David Gregory
Honorary Treasurer

Mike Credland
English Committee Chairman
07836 341496
mj.credland@btinternet.com

Anne Payne

Regional Manager
01142 883241
bobandanne@handbanktextels.wanadoo.co.uk

Helen Davies

Regional Development Officer
01938 590535
07976 803066
helen@nationalsheep.org.uk

Jonathan Barber

Regional Secretary
01953 607860
07712 659262
jonathan@ceressolutions.co.uk

Dyana Webb

Regional Secretary
07971 409259
dy@nationalsheep.org.uk

Julie Sedgewick

Regional Manager
01325 314650
07836 773888
jas@nationalsheep.org.uk

Edward Adamson

Regional Development Officer
02893 366225
07711 071290
edward.adamson1@gmail.com

George Milne

Regional Development Officer
01334 472403
07831 511330
george.nsa@btconnect.com

Bob Blanden

Regional Manager
01666 860308
07860 689391
bob@nationalsheep.org.uk

News Update

Annual Regional Meetings

This is a final reminder that many NSA Annual Regional Members Meetings are being held in the next couple of weeks. NSA Central Region held its meeting just after Sheep Farmer went to press and will be reported on in the next edition. The forthcoming meetings are:-

NSA South East Region, as part of a Sheep Health Conference, 5pm on Wednesday 17th February at Surry Vet School, Guilford, Surrey, GU2 7AL.

NSA Scottish Region, 2pm on Wednesday 17th February at the Edinburgh Marriot Hotel, 111 Glasgow Road, Edinburgh, EH12 8NF. To be followed by guest speakers and an annual dinner.

NSA Cymru/Wales Region, 2pm on Thursday 18th February in Hafod y Hendre, Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells, Powys, LD2 3SY. To be followed by guest speakers.

NSA South West Region, 7.30pm on Thursday 18th February at the Stockmans Restaurant, Exeter Market, Matford Business Park, Exeter, EX2 8FD. To be followed by guest speakers.

NSA Northern Region, 7.30pm on Thursday 25th February at the Tynedale Function Suite, Hexham Auction Mart, Tyne Green, Hexham. To be followed by guest speakers.

More on the business to be conducted at each meeting, plus details of speakers, at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events.

£2,000 funding awards

All NSA members based in the UK, as associate members of Moredun, are eligible to apply for the 2016 Moredun Foundation Awards.

Applications are now open for the awards, offering funding to support innovative projects and individuals with an interest in livestock health and welfare.

The awards scheme replaces the Moredun Foundation Scholarships and sees the funding available per project rise to £2,000. Projects are open to individuals over the age of 18 living in the UK and may involve work experience, travel or collaborations with science or the arts.

Moredun hopes the scheme will encourage innovative and diverse projects, support personal development and contribute to its mission to improve health and welfare. NSA supports the idea of members applying to fund short-term projects to

NSA team expands

NSA is delighted to welcome a new member of staff to the Head Office. Laura Williams (pictured) has joined as NSA Technical Support Officer, working for three days a week on technical reports and papers. This work will reinforce policy areas that NSA is active in, ensuring our arguments are always backed up with technical information. Laura's addition to the NSA Communications Team will also ensure members have access to useful and relevant information and support.



benefit individual businesses and the wider industry.

The closing date for applications is Monday 29th February, with successful applicants to be notified in writing by Thursday 31st March. More at www.moredun.org.uk/award, and more from Moredun on pages 34-35.

Wool bedding giveaway

Depending on how quickly your postman gets this edition of Sheep Farmer delivered, you may just receive this before the NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair on Friday 5th February. If so, you may wish to make your way to the NSA stand to enter



Outstanding contribution to the sheep industry rewarded

With a career spanning more than 25 years, Julie Sedgewick has been announced as the 2015 winner of the highly regarded George Hedley Memorial Award for outstanding contribution to the sheep industry.

Be it breeding, showing or promoting sheep, Julie has dedicated much of her life to the industry and will step down as NSA Northern Region Manager after 27 years' service later this month. Her career began shortly after she left school, taking the lead in unofficially promoting the North of England Mule breed. From there she was asked to take on the role of Oxford Down Sheep Breeders' Association Secretary and, in 1991, Suffolk Sheep Society Promotion Officer.

She then began her involvement with NSA and, in 2001, took on the job of coordinating the NSA public-facing hub at the Royal Highland, Royal and Royal Welsh shows. By 2004 she was co-organiser of NSA Scot Sheep and then the NSA Sheep Event. A couple of years later she became sole organiser of NSA Sheep and can arguably be credited with the renaissance of this event.

Julie says: "It was a great honour to have even been nominated for this prestigious award, and to have won it is just so exciting. To win an award for



being involved with something that I have a great passion for is even more special. I must thank my family and the many sheep farming families whose help and support over the last 25 years has enabled me to achieve what I have."

Julie will be formally presented with the award at the NSA Sheep Event in July. Nominations for the 2016 award will be accepted later this year.

into a free prize draw for a 100% British wool bedding set from the Wool Room (pictured). The set is one of five that NSA is delighted to be teaming up with the Wool Room to offer through the year.

Another three sets will be given away to people who enter a draw on the day at NSA Scot Sheep (Wednesday 1st June), NSA South Sheep (Tuesday 7th June) and the NSA Sheep Event (Wednesday 27th July). The fifth and final set is an open draw running on the NSA website and at all non-NSA events that we attend through to the Welsh Winter Fair in late November.

Enter online, and find full terms and conditions, by going to www.nationalsheep.org.uk and clicking on the Wool Room link.

Scholarship findings

The Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust has contacted NSA to say all the reports by this year's scholars have now been filed and are available online. There are three of particular interest to the sheep sector - James Drummond (an NSA Next Generation Ambassador) on optimising ewe performance for a productive sheep enterprise and a high quality finished lamb; Jenifer Hunter on growing and

marketing fine wool in native colours; and Mark Miller on all-winter grazing for sheep.

Go to www.nuffieldscholar.org/scholars to read the reports and view videos of scholars presenting their findings at the Nuffield Annual Conference.

NSA Lambing List

Each year NSA facilitates a Lambing List aimed at connecting sheep farmers looking for help at lambing time with veterinary and agricultural students looking to complete work experience. We are thrilled that the popularity of the list has continued to grow, but this has meant an increasingly long list of members advertising to students. Although an individual's advert will automatically drop off the website once the start date of their lambing period has passed, NSA would like to remind members it is possible to take down an advert before the start date arrives by notifying NSA Head Office. This will also prevent you being contacted should a position already have been filled. Members who have advertised on the Lambing List but have now found a student for the position are therefore encouraged to notify us using the contact details on page 2.

NSA reports – devolved nations

NSA Cymru/Wales Region

By Helen Davies, Development Officer



We are looking forward to our Annual Members Meeting on Thursday 18th February, 2pm in Hafod y Hendre on the Royal Welsh Show Ground. A copy of the NSA Cymru/Wales Regional Report is included with this magazine for members in Wales, which details the agenda.

Hill farmer Gareth Wyn Jones, who is steadily becoming one of the most well-known faces in North Wales, will be one of our speakers. He will tell us about how he sees the future of the sheep industry in Wales, alongside vet Joseph Angell speaking on contagious ovine digital dermatitis and George Gough and Georgie Radmore describing their experiences as NSA Next Generation Ambassadors in 2015.

The major change for Wales for 2016 is the launch of EID Cymru, which is now up and running. Please make sure your paper licences are now sent direct to EID Cymru – and remember the non-EID slaughter tag has not been permissible for use since 1st January 2016. Lambs intended for slaughter before 12 months of age will require a single EID tag, with full EID for everything else.

Responses have been sent in for the Welsh Government's on-holding identifiers and associated livestock movements consultation, together with thoughts on the introduction of quarantine units as an alternative to the six-day standstill. NSA Cymru/Wales Region's response highlighted that, while we agree with the need for effective biosecurity, we are seriously concerned the proposed quarantine unit requirements are so onerous there would be little take up.

Proportionate steps

This was picked up at a face-to-face meeting between NSA Cymru/Wales Region committee members, NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker and Welsh Government Chief Vet Christianne Glossop. We used this opportunity to explain that the industry accepts the need to be more risk averse and to consider biosecurity and health seriously, but that this has to be in a way that is proportionate and relevant.

At the same time as this meeting with the Welsh Government, regional representatives also met with Food Standards Agency Wales to talk about the potential for getting UK approval for legal smokies production. FSA Wales is being proactive in this area, but there is still a long way to go before European approval might be given. The need for changes on carcass splitting and TSEs regulations was also reiterated to FSA once again.

If you plan to attend the Annual Members Meeting on Thursday 18th February please inform Helen Davies, using the contact details on page 2. Also please contact Helen if a Regional Report (pictured) is not included with this Sheep Farmer mailing, or you live outside of NSA Cymru/Wales Region and would like to request a copy.



NSA Northern Ireland Region

By Edward Adamson, Development Officer



In Northern Ireland the December and January weather was no better than other parts of UK with a continual battering and regular downpours from storms Desmond, Eva and Frank. As you read this hopefully the damage caused will have subsided, although mopping up and repairs will take much longer.

No one could have imagined after the autumn we had that winter would have delivered such a soaking. Those with early lambing flocks will be under quite a bit of pressure, as housing in damp conditions requires a lot of bedding and hygiene cannot be compromised where young lambs are concerned.

The New Year is always a time for looking both backwards and forwards, but in the volatility that we find ourselves in it is probably best just to look at ways that we can help protect ourselves from the financial ups and downs that are becoming the norm. We would be better to look at efficiencies within our own farms, as this is the only place we really have any control.

Our Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) have taken the initiative to organise an 'Optimise Agriculture Conference' to be held in Templepatrick, County Antrim, at the end of January. They hope this will be an opportunity for guest speakers to share their knowledge with their members and the wider agricultural community through a series of farm visits and workshops. I will be delivering one of these workshops, hoping to explain and help people to understand performance recording and EBVs in relation to their own flocks.

Business development

Those of you who applied to be part of the new business development groups in Northern Ireland should hopefully have heard if you have been successful and accepted into a group. As yet, industry has little knowledge of exactly how these groups will work but we hope members will be able to influence the path and direction they take.

The way in which a number of cross compliance rules relating to the identification and registration of cattle and sheep and goats are implemented changed from 1st January 2016. Now, any flock keeper selected for inspection will be required to present all of their sheep and/or goats to the cross compliance inspector, who will initially select 60 animals for inspection. The inspector will examine the animals to ensure they have been correctly tagged and check the holding register to ensure that proper records are being kept. If a significant number of animals are not properly tagged, potentially all animals in the herd/flock will be inspected to satisfy the requirements of EU law.



Campbell Tweed (pictured) took the role of NSA Northern Ireland Region Chairman towards the end of 2015. His farm is featured on pages 26-28.

NSA Scottish Region

By George Milne, Development Officer



Like every region across the UK, I have to start by saying that Scotland suffered from the continuous rainfall

for the first two weeks of 2016, including flooding in areas that have never been flooded before.

Sheep have never had dry backs for about three weeks now and, as I write and scanning is about to begin, we will have to wait and see what the consequences of this wet weather will have on lamb numbers.

The shift to area payments for Scottish farmers is proving to be a long, drawn-out, complicated process. So far I only know of one sheep farmer that has received his payment, and that of course was only 75% of the Basic Area Payment. There is a lot of work to be done if we are all going to receive payment by the end of March.

NSA Scottish Region is very pleased to have run a series of roadshow meetings in conjunction with Caltech Crystalx, covering eight different locations across Scotland from Castle Douglas to Shetland in January and early February. Depending on when you receive this magazine, you might just make the meetings at the tail end of the series – see our website for details. The roadshow has given NSA a great opportunity to see sheep farmers the length and breadth of the country.

Butchery demo

We are also very pleased to continue our ongoing relationship with the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders, who have kindly agreed to sponsor our Annual Members Meeting on Wednesday 17th February in Edinburgh. They will be delivering a butchery demonstration after the meeting and providing the lamb for the main course at our annual dinner. Plans are also in place to have a series of lamb tasting events this year, following the success of last year's event in Perth city centre.



NSA Scottish Region is looking forward to another enjoyable annual dinner, following in the footsteps of the event in 2015.

An important decision for the Scottish Government this year will be deciding the criteria for the shift from LFASS to ANC. Stakeholder meetings are well underway with a proposed wider group meeting being arranged this spring. There is no doubt there will be winners and losers as a result of the change, and we will need to make sure money is targeted at the active hill farmer.

Let's hope 2016 improves quickly, and that we have a year of better prime lamb prices. Some dry weather would be very much welcomed by everyone.

Details of the NSA Scottish Region Annual Members Meeting and Dinner are available at www.nsascotland.org, as well as the final roadshow dates.



Protect your flock and future profits

- Effectively kills fluke from seven weeks to adult
- Kills triclabendazole-resistant fluke
- Effective wormer
- Only 28 day meat withhold in sheep

Convenient dual species injection for cattle and sheep



Closamectin
SOLUTION FOR INJECTION FOR CATTLE & SHEEP

Order today!

www.closamectin.com

Please read the product data sheet and seek advice before use. The dosing programme should be established by a veterinary surgeon or suitably qualified person. Manufactured and distributed in the UK by: Norbrook Laboratories Ltd, Station Works, Newry, Co. Down, BT25 6AP. Distributed in GB by: Norbrook Laboratories (GB) Ltd, 1 Saxon Way East, Oakley Way Industrial Estate, Cobey, Nr18 9EX. Legal Category: POM-VPS. Closamectin Solution for Injection for Cattle and Sheep contains 0.5%w/v (5mg/ml) Ivermectin and 12.5%w/v (125mg/ml) Clofazimine. 3583-LAS3-v1-UK-06/07/16

Norbrook
www.norbrook.com

Providing fast, effective treatment for Twin Lamb Disease



Place your order today!

LIQUID LIFE AID

KETOSAIID

Liquid Life Aid Oral Solution Legal Category: POM-VPS Ketosaid 99.96% w/v Oral Solution Legal Category: POM-VPS

NSA Reports – English regions

Central

By Anne Payne, Manger
Our thoughts and best wishes are very much with those who are struggling with the floods and their aftermath.



We are very aware of how lucky we are (and how unlucky others have been) that we haven't suffered the devastations to farming businesses that have been witnessed, especially in Northern England and Scotland. The mild wet weather has meant that, with the grass still growing, members are saying they've never before been offered so much winter grazing and so early in the season. But others are saying that with so many miserable, wet sheep they have been bringing some in earlier than usual ahead of lambing, to prevent too much condition loss.

Sarah Seales, our 'resident vet' on NSA Central Region Committee, is warning of cobalt deficiency becoming an issue to be aware of when looking ahead to lambing. There have been significant numbers of lab reports showing this over the last year, and the rain could add to the problem due to leaching of cobalt from the soil.

For those with sheep in upland areas, as well as the exceptionally wet weather, the unseasonal mild weather has resulted in early signs of mating behaviour with grouse chasing each other about, ducks and drakes getting together etc. All this has reactivated the debate about the alleged overgrazing of the moors. Those who farm in these areas feel it is easy to blame the shepherd and his sheep but are adamant the moors are well-managed – they have to be. If anything, sheep farmers argue that in some areas the moors and hills are often under-grazed now and it's much harder to gather because of the undergrowth.

With the recent lack of sunshine affecting everyone's mood, here's hoping

Focus on youthful shepherds in NSA Eastern Region



Building on the success of the biennial NSA Youthful Shepherd Event (pictured), NSA Eastern Region is now planning Youthful Shepherd Focus Groups.

for a successful lambing for all, a quick recovery from the recent devastation, a commitment from the Government for better flood defences, better prices in the coming months and a less stressful year for sheep farmers – not much to ask!

Eastern

By Jonathan Barber, Manager



As you read this we will likely be in the final throws of quite an amount of effort going towards the NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair, held at Melton Mowbray Livestock Market on Friday 5th February.

We have a number of other events and meetings planned for the spring and summer too. The region will soon be launching the formation of a Youthful Shepherds Focus Group, which is aimed at the 18-30 age group who are interested in sheep and is an initiative of our Vice Chairman Ewan Cumming. Ewan wished to pursue this having been an NSA Next Generation Ambassador in 2015.

We will begin the groups in Norfolk and Suffolk but all are welcome to come along and join. The aim will be to bring together young people with an interest in sheep for an informal gathering to discuss topical subjects, swap ideas and thoughts, listen to leaders in the industry and generally draw inspiration, ideas and to stimulate debate and help their business and career development. Participants can work with or have an interest in sheep at any level. The launch meeting date is yet to be set, but will take place in May at Goldolphin Stud in Newmarket.

If you are interested in joining the Youthful Shepherds Focus Group please send me an email with your interest and what you would like the group to deliver (within reason!) – find my contact details on page 2.

The region has also been provisionally invited to visit the Elveden Estate, Suffolk, to see the late lambing Blackface sheep flock out on the heathland and some others elements of this wonderful estate, including the South Devon herd, beef finishing unit and onion production and storage system. This is guaranteed to be a great afternoon and the date for your diaries in Wednesday 15th June.

Marches

By Kevin Harrison, Chairman
Happy New Year to our regional members old and new. It seems the region is going from strength to strength with membership increasing month on month. A big thank you for supporting us so we can support you.

The end of the year and the start of this year doesn't seem to have come and gone without its issues. Poor weather, dog attacks and late single farm payments have all gone into the mix. Sheep worrying

by dogs is one of those issues that affects me greatly and many more of you. As I sit writing this I have two ewe lambs in the shed struggling to recover from injuries from a recent dog attack, and I'm still waiting for the police to visit five days after the event. There seems to be huge regional variances in the response of the police to rural crime. We appear to go on and on about dogs worrying sheep and, despite the best efforts of NSA and associated work by Farmers Guardian, things never seem to improve. I guess all we can do is keep on reporting incidents so that the real severity of this issue is recorded.

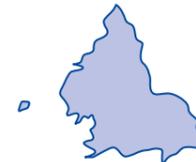
On a more positive note, the region held a joint meeting with AHDB Beef & Lamb in January. The meeting was at full capacity and speakers included AHDB's Clive Brown giving us a market update. It's always great to listen to what Clive has to say about the global market and how world trade affects our lamb price – it was just a shame the news he was giving us was not quite as optimistic as we would like! But he did highlight again how important the trade into China could be for us.

Another timely speaker was Laura Green who presented findings from her Warwick University research into ewe mastitis. The discussion seemed to create as many questions as it did answers, but we all went away with tips to consider for reducing mastitis in our ewe flocks. A big thank you to both Clive and Laura.

I wish all members a kind spring and a successful lambing.

Northern

By Julie Sedgewick, Manager



A reminder to our members that the NSA Northern Region Annual Members Meeting will take place on Thursday 25th February at the Tynedale Function Suite, Hexham Auction Mart, Tyne Green, Hexham, at 7.30pm.

An insert is enclosed within this edition of Sheep Farmer going to Northern Region members, which contains the agenda and minutes of last year's meeting. After the formal business, our speakers will include Steve Dunkley, AHDB Beef & Lamb Senior Regional Manager North East, and a 2015 NSA Next Generation Ambassador from our region, Thomas Carrick, who will be giving a presentation on the project. Phil Stocker, NSA Chief Executive, will also be giving an update on the work of NSA.

This is my last report for Sheep Farmer on behalf of NSA Northern Region. I retire at the Annual Members Meeting having originally been taken on as regional secretary in February 1989. I want to thank all of the members and of course 'my boys' on the regional committee as,

New manager for NSA Northern Region



Julie Sedgewick (left) retires at the end of this month as NSA Northern Region Manager and will be replaced by Heather Stoney-Grayshon (right).

without you all, the job would not have been as easy.

After interviewing several very capable candidates for my successor, I am delighted to state that Heather Stoney-Grayshon from Pateley Bridge, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, has been taken on as the new NSA Northern Region Manager and NSA North Sheep Event Organiser. One of Heather's first jobs will be to organise a shortlist of suitable farms for NSA North Sheep, due to be held on the first Wednesday in June 2017, in the County Durham area.

Julie is the 2015 recipient of the NSA George Hedley Memorial Award, which was announced in January. See page 3.

South East

By Bob Blanden, Manager



The NSA South East Annual Members' Meeting is to take place on Wednesday 17th February, at the University of Surrey Veterinary School. We will be having a Sheep Health Conference, in conjunction with the university, on the same day. Four speakers will be attending and full details can be found on the insert enclosed with this edition of Sheep Farmer (for South East members) and on the NSA website at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events.

Following a tour of the post mortem facilities within the University's Veterinary School, the speakers will cover subjects including common toxicities in sheep, interesting pathology cases from the post mortem service, sheep parasites and feeding ewes pre and post lambing. Hot food will also be provided before attendees depart.

NSA South East Region has fortunately obtained generous sponsorship, for which we are most grateful, so members will be able to attend without charge. However, if you would like to attend, please register with me as soon as possible as there are a limited number of places. Contact me by

email on bob@nationalsheep.org.uk and you will be sent a booking form for your completion and return.

Arrangements for NSA South Sheep 2016, to be held at Pythouse Farm on Tuesday 7th June, are progressing well. We are also arranging seminars and workshops with the Next Generation of sheep farmers in mind. More details will be published in the next issue of Sheep Farmer magazine.

South West

By Bryan Griffiths, Chairman



Towards the end of 2015 antibiotic resistance made the headlines. There is an understandable belief amongst sheep farmers that we have little to fear. Sheep are, after all, generally extensively grazed outdoors with little use of antibiotics. However, many indoor lambing flocks, mine included, routinely treat lambs at birth to prevent infection. As with many issues it is easier to throw up questions than answers: which drugs are used, what are the risks and benefits of treatment, and so on? In the coming year there may be an opportunity and a challenge for NSA to defend our industry's credentials, and hopefully help limit the level of restrictions on drug use already seen in some countries.

As this is my last report as regional chairman I would like to thank the committee and members for their support over the past two years. I leave you with an invitation to the NSA South West Region Annual Members Meeting at Exeter Livestock Market on Thursday 18th February.

The formal business will be followed by a presentation from Craig Finch of Beef and Lamb New Zealand. In the wake of the controversy surrounding AHDB Beef & Lamb lamb promotion in 2015 I hope members take the opportunity to learn a little more about how the Kiwi equivalent is operated and funded.

Full capacity for NSA Marches Region evening meeting



A joint NSA Marches Region and AHDB Beef & Lamb meeting in January pulled a full capacity crowd to the meeting room at NSA Head Office, Worcestershire.

NSA Sheep 2016 'added value' sees free entry for all members

NSA and an enthusiastic organising committee are forging ahead with exciting plans for NSA Sheep 2016.

Having decided on an event theme of 'adding value to the sheep industry', it is only right to add value to NSA membership packages too. Therefore NSA members will not have to pay a penny to gain entry into the event on Wednesday 27th July, held at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire. Non-members will be £15.

Phil Stocker, NSA Chief Executive, says: "NSA is keen to add value to membership



NSA Sheep 2016 will build on the success of the 2014 event.

The first farm tour is to the home of Stuart Morris, who breeds 1,000 pedigree ewes on a 350-acre upland farm. His commercial sheep farming enterprise also includes mutton production to supply local buyers and restaurants.

The second farm tour is to visit Colin Pugh. The Pugh family run sheep, beef and arable enterprises, including potatoes, over 500 acres of owned and 500 acres of rented land. The farm is home to 950 breeding ewes, predominantly Texel Mules, and 130 Saler cross suckler cows.

The tour will start and finish at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire, on Tuesday 26th July. A pre-event Sheep Industry Dinner will also be held that evening, with an excellent three-course dinner (including lamb, of course), entertainment and a wonderful night of meeting people involved in the sheep sector.

The farm tour is £25 per person; book with Field Farm Tours via www.sheepevent.org.uk/attractions. The pre-event Sheep Industry Dinner is £30+VAT per person; book with NSA at www.sheepevent.org.uk/tickets. The farm visits are subject to change without notice where unforeseen circumstances arise.



Farm tours will be a new feature of this year's event, held the day before NSA Sheep 2016.

packages and one way we've done this is by offering free entry to NSA Sheep 2016. We hope everyone involved in the sheep sector will take advantage of this – and also take up the theme of adding value to their own businesses as they enjoy the features of the event.

Tackling volatility

"The sheep sector is not exempt from increasing global volatility, so it is more important than ever to ensure your system is working to achieve the best possible output. NSA Sheep 2016 will focus on how the sheep industry can add value to help protect against unstable prices."

Leading sheep industry experts, along with more than 250 trade stands, will be in attendance to deliver the latest information and advice, with a programme of free technical seminars, demonstrations and workshops scheduled through the day.

In line with the theme and new for this year, NSA will also be running a day of farm tours prior to the event. Phil explains: "The farm tour day on Tuesday 26th July is a fantastic addition. It gives people the opportunity to go on farms and see how other producers are adding value to their

New website

There is an exciting new website for NSA Sheep 2016 – check it out at www.sheepevent.org.uk.

It includes lots of information about the event and will have even more added in the coming weeks as the seminar timetable is confirmed and workshops and demonstrations are added.

The website is set up to take exhibitor bookings online for the first time, so if you are involved in a company or organisation that would like to take a trade stand at NSA Sheep 2016 please visit the "Exhibitors" tab. Or for more information, contact details for Helen Davies, Event Organiser, can be found on page 2.

sheep enterprises at a practical level."

The farm tour day on Tuesday 26th July will take in two local sheep farms. There is also the pre-event Sheep Industry Dinner that evening for people to enjoy – see panel.

NSA members must present a valid membership card to secure free entry to NSA Sheep 2016; one free entry per membership card, even if membership held in joint names.



Last stick reader heads to Wales

The twelfth and final EID stick reader kit given away in the NSA 2015 membership recruitment campaign went to North Wales just before the Christmas break.

Kristian Mitchell says he felt 'lucky and privileged to be the last person to win this impressive prize' and is looking forward to using it on his growing flock.

His interest in sheep farming stemmed from helping out his uncle when he was younger, and how now flourished into a businesses based on renting blocks of permanent pasture from family and friends around Holywell, Flintshire, North



Kristian Mitchell (right) receives his new kit from Helen Davies of NSA Cymru/Wales Region at Welshpool Market.

Wales. Mr Mitchell also works full time for Flintshire County Council and helps out at a local dairy farm during busy periods and most weekends.

He says his new reader kit will allow him to be more efficient at keeping performance records on his 50 Welsh Mule and Lleyl ewes, particularly as he moves towards a closed flock in the future. Mr Mitchell explains: "Due to the poor price of lamb this season, I have kept more ewe lambs back for breeding, I lamb these as hoggs to try and keep replacement costs down. I also try to keep performance records for all my ewes, to ensure no ewe lambs are kept back from those with a poor performance record."

Useful membership

"I joined NSA because of the informative and interesting information it provides on the ever-changing sheep industry. I found the NSA Next Generation website particularly helpful, due to the information it provides for young people wanting to get a foot in the sheep farming industry. As I've experienced myself, it's really hard to get started independently and I've found the range of innovative ideas it covers on

Giveaway winners

The 12 lucky recipients of a Shearwell Data EID stick reader kit in 2016.

1. Tom Bird, Derbyshire.
2. Will Howells, Shropshire.
3. Chris Mallaber, Staffordshire.
4. Ian Andrews, Dorset.
5. Harry Frederick, Kent.
6. Alex Pyke, Shropshire.
7. Tom Clarke, Devon.
8. James Alexander, County Antrim.
9. Andrew Dickin, West Midlands.
10. William Abraham, County Amagh.
11. John Odie, Shetland.
12. Kristian Mitchell, Flintshire.

Meet them all in the "Winners" section at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/draw.

new technologies inspirational in terms of pushing my sheep enterprise in the right direction."

Now the chance to win a stick reader kit has expired, the NSA 2016 membership recruitment campaign is giving away three £200 vouchers every other month through the year.

See pages 10-11 for details, or visit www.nationalsheep.org.uk/draw.

Free UK Next Day Delivery On Orders Over £100

Ewe Truss

Helps in preventing a prolapse or holding back a replaced uterus



Price:

£12.49 for 1 - 9 units

£10.99 for 10 - 99 units

£8.99 for 100+ units

All prices exclude VAT

- Allows ewe to lamb normally
- Applies pressure on key points
- Made from rot resistant nylon webbing and leather with quick release buckles
- Fully washable
- Made in Britain by Connell of Sheffield

BUY AT THESE LOW PRICES - TODAY!

Buy Brand Tools
QUALITY TOOLS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL

0114 251 3535

sales@buybrandtools.com

<http://www.buybrandtools.com/acatalog/ewe-truss-lambing-harness.html>



Three members win £200 vouchers in first NSA free prize draw of 2016

Luck was on the side of three NSA members when they were rewarded a £200 voucher each for recommending a family member or friend to join NSA.

NSA has teamed up with Fecpak^{G2}, Cox Agri/Ritchey and JG Animal Health to give away three £200 vouchers in a free membership recruitment prize draw giveaway every other month in 2016. While new NSA members are automatically entered into the draw, existing members who have recommended a friend or neighbour to sign up to NSA also go in – and by complete chance it was three existing members who were first out of the hat in the first draw of this year.

Lucky winners

Two of the vouchers, one for Fecpak^{G2} and Cox Agri/Ritchey, have made their way to NSA Scottish Region members Sue Francis and Caroline Nelson, while the third, for JG Animal Health, goes to NSA Cymru/Wales Region member Gloria Jones.

Ms Francis, who farms in Argyll, West Scotland, says investigating drench efficacy within her flock of North Country

Sue Francis, Argyll

“I started my flock in 2004 with 20 North Country Cheviot ewe lambs, which came from Durness in the Scottish Highlands. I now have 230 ewes, which I mostly breed pure,” explains Ms Francis.

“The North Country Cheviot breed impressed me with their quiet, calm efficiency in the face of adversity, with their tight skins, good mothering and relatively small feed bill.”

Mrs Francis will start lambing from Mid-march. She continues: “I have been tagging lambs at birth and recording parentage and any problems which arise. I tend to keep most tup lambs entire and will sell most of them as shearlings, while I keep females as replacement for my own flock”.



Five more chances to win £200 in 2016

NSA is giving away a total of 18 £200 vouchers between 1st December 2015 and 4th November 2016.

Anyone who qualifies for the draw but is not lucky enough to win the first time has their entry rolled over to the subsequent draws, and there is no limit to the number of entries existing members have – so the more new members you

recommend the better your chances.

For the easiest way to qualify as an existing member, simply add your membership details to the bottom of the form opposite and pass it to a friend or neighbour who is not yet part of NSA.

Terms, conditions and membership application forms at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/draw.

Cheviots is something she has been considering for a while and describes her win as the ‘perfect opportunity’ to allow Fecpak^{G2} to help her do that. Suffolk breeder Mrs Nelson, based at Kelso, Scottish Borders, will similarly be putting her £200 Cox Agri/Ritchey voucher to good use, in purchasing some much sought-after show and sale equipment. Mrs Nelson attends around five agricultural shows each year, which included NSA Scot Sheep in 2014, where her top prize winning pair of Suffolk gimmers sold for

1,800gns. Everyday necessities, including new waterproofs, are also on the list.

The third NSA member to win a £200 JG Animal Health voucher, Gloria Jones from Felindre, Swansea, says she is certain some high quality mineral drench will benefit the health of her flock. She runs purebred Welsh Mountains and Badger Faces on her father’s smallholding, alongside a commercial enterprise of 500 improved Welsh and Mule ewes and 100 ewe lambs jointly with her partner near Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire.

Gloria Jones, Swansea

Ms Jones, who manages her pedigree Welsh Mountain and Badger Face flocks alongside a commercial enterprise with her partner, says: “Around 200 Mule ewes are put to the Texel ram and lamb indoors in early March at 185%.”

Approximately three quarters of the Welsh ewes are pure bred to provide replacement ewe lambs, with the reminder put to a Bluefaced Leicester ram to produce replacement Mule ewe lambs. These lamb outdoors from 20th March, lambing at 160%.

“I have been an NSA member for many years now and strongly believe every sheep farmer should be, given that it specialises in looking after sheep farmer’s interests. I would have no hesitation in recommending other new members to join.”



Caroline Nelson, Scottish Borders

Mrs Nelson describes her interest in sheep, and Suffolks in particular, as beginning after rearing a few orphan lambs with a friend.

She says: “I’m steadfastly loyal to the Suffolk breed. Due to a number of factors, I keep the flock down to around 10 breeding ewes and their followers. Replacements are sourced from breed dispersal or genuine reduction sales. For a small flock such as mine, purchasing semen from proven, quality tups allows the desired genetics to be carefully sourced and thus avoid inbreeding. I maintain a good stock tup, but AI is also used and occasionally embryo transfer.

“Lambing is doors at the beginning the year to suit the breed’s preferred lambing pattern, and I consider it vital that these sheep are bred to suit the commercial market.”



NSA membership

Existing members can pass on this form to be in with the chance of winning a £200 voucher



NSA’s 2016 membership recruitment campaign is supported by JG Animal Health, Cox Agri/Ritchey Ltd and Fecpak^{G2} who are donating £200 vouchers for six draws in 2016. New members will automatically be entered into the draw when they sign up, and existing members can get one entry each and every time someone they recommend signs up to NSA. The earlier in the year you enter the draw, the more chances you have of winning.

Individual Subscription **£50**
Under 27’s Subscription **£25** (UK ONLY)
Eire, Europe and Overseas **£60** (UK £)

NSA OFFICE USE
CASH / CHEQUE / CARD

Paying by Direct Debit triggers a 20% discount in your first year.

(excluding Eire, Europe and Overseas members). Complete the Direct Debit form, pay by cheque (made payable to NSA) or call NSA Head Office to provide your card details.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

DOB: (if applying for Under 27 membership)

Please supply copy of photo ID e.g. passport, driving licence, YFC/student card.

Tel:

Email:

Supplying your email address will allow us to send you the Members’ Weekly Update, packed full of news and information.

Please state where you obtained this form from and your reasons for joining:

Your Sheep Enterprise

No of commercial breeding females?

No of pedigree breeding females?

No of bought-in store lambs finished per year?

NSA OFFICE USE

NSA **DIRECT Debit**

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to:
The National Sheep Association, The Sheep Centre, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR13 6PH
Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

Service user number
9 5 6 8 8 9

To: The Manager Bank/building society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Branch sort code

Bank/building society account number

Reference

Instruction to your bank or building society
Please pay National Sheep Association Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with National Sheep Association and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

Please use Gift Aid to make your subscription worth more to NSA. For every pound you give us, we could earn an extra 25p from the Inland Revenue. NSA will not claim Gift Aid on a new member’s first membership subscription payment.

Gift Aid Declaration: I want the National Sheep Association to treat all subscriptions I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as a Gift Aid donation. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

TO GIFT AID PLEASE TICK HERE...

Free prize draw to WIN a £200 VOUCHER to spend with one of these companies...

If an existing NSA member recommended you, they can also be entered in the draw.

Existing NSA Members name, membership number and postcode - required for a valid entry:



Contribution to Faecal Egg Count user subscriptions



Premier Sheep Mineral Drench



Leading brands including Heiniger, Prattley, Tru-Test and Sprayline

Full terms and conditions at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/draw



Contribution to Faecal Egg Count subscriptions



Premier Sheep Mineral Drench



Leading brands including Heiniger, Prattley, Tru-Test and Sprayline

Why sheep farming is key to UK flood solutions, not the enemy

By Phil Stocker, NSA

One of my first jobs for 2016 was to write to Liz Truss, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in response to some of the more outlandish flooding claims being made over Christmas and the New Year.

I explained that, in her role, I was sure she took a far more balanced view than some environmental commentators in their column inches – but that I also wanted to share some immediate views and ask that NSA be involved in relevant discussions on this very important subject going forward.

Our opinion is that climate change predictions present an extremely challenging future. We are clearly in a period of relatively rapid climate/weather change and, therefore, agree with measures to mitigate further change as far as we practically can. In fact we are of the opinion that sheep can play a positive role in this area.

All walks of life have to learn to adapt to this change in climate and weather conditions, which is a major challenge when one of the outcomes is weather volatility with a large level of uncertainty over what is around the corner. Sheep farmers are affected both directly and indirectly. As an example, we are already seeing evidence of sheep parasite life cycle patterns changing, presenting technical difficulties for farmers, and many sheep farmers will have suffered direct livestock losses through drowning and stock being washed away. Indirectly sheep farmers are affected too, by calls for changing land management in ways that will affect their businesses.



Christmas and New Year flooding in the North of England and Scotland has led to negative and unsubstantiated claims in the press about the role of sheep farming.

Following the Somerset floods of 2014 it was claimed that part of the solution at least should be to look at holding water back in the upper reaches of catchment areas. This is a view NSA does not object to. However, given all the other challenges society faces, we believe in being more holistic in all we do and not to think of 'single issue solutions'. In short we have to balance the demands of food security and human health and nutrition (and the wider genetic role that upland sheep play within sheep production), with economic and community/social needs, and of course environmental needs including our natural capital of soil, water and air and that of wildlife and habitat.

NSA's view is that we need to aim to bring all these interests together rather than drive them apart, and that is one of the reasons behind our frustration over the lack of a clear link between the Government's 25-year food and farming plan and its environment plans. Sheep farming is almost entirely land-based and in the vast majority of cases, particularly in the uplands and more marginal regions, production and environment are interdependent. It is worth noting that since 1998, vastly affected by the foot-and-mouth outbreak of 2001, sheep numbers in the UK dropped from in excess of 20 million ewes to below 14 million ewes, with much of this destocking being seen in the uplands and linked to agri-environment schemes. Ironically it is within this period that we have also seen increased flooding events.

Holistic approach

A holistic view would also need to take into consideration planning and building and increased areas of tarmac and concrete, as there has been a 1.2% expansion of building in high risk areas since 2011, compared to 0.7% in low risk areas. These are not areas of expertise for NSA, but we do know that an approach to reducing risk from flooding that considers all angles will include dredging and clearance in some areas but blocking and holding water back in others.

The solutions need to be guided strongly by local knowledge and 'owned' by local residents and businesses. Solutions will be different depending on topography, geology, hydrology and, of course, part of this includes soil type.

As I outlined to Mrs Truss, this is where we feel there is gross

continued on page 14

FARM-O-SAN

Support recovery and improve growth

Farm-O-San Reviva Ewe



Reviva Ewe. Supports recovery of freshly lambing ewes.

Farm-O-San Reviva® Ewe is a recovery drink for freshly lambing ewes. A trial has shown that if ewes recover rapidly after lambing, the lambs also grow better.

Ask your feed adviser or animal health supplier about Farm-O-San Reviva Ewe this lambing time.

trouwnutrition.co.uk

trouw nutrition
a Nutreco company



DELAYED PAYMENT* UNTIL APRIL 2016!!

The best **START** in life you can give

MEGASTART

The UK's leading range of pre-lambing/pre-calving supplements



- ✓ Includes high quality MOS designed to improve colostrum quality.
- ✓ Vitamins, minerals and trace elements incorporated at optimum levels to achieve enhanced animal performance.
- ✓ High in Vitamin E and Selenium to promote a healthy immune system.
- ✓ High in phosphorus to allow better mobilisation of energy.



SCOTMIN NUTRITION

www.scotmin.com

info@scotmin.com

*T&Cs apply, see website for details

For more information call
01292 280909
or contact your local merchant



► misunderstanding among some environmental commentators, particularly when we hear of 'too many sheep on the hills leading to treading and water run off'. The fact is that many of our agri-environment schemes have driven sheep off the real uplands where the soils are not prone to treading; on the high hill high organic matter soils are not compacted through the activity of sheep. These sheep have been moved to the higher mineral content soils of the lower reaches, soils that can be more prone to compaction.

At the same time we are seeing the degradation of many upland habitats due to an absence of grazing stock. We need to find ways, particularly in the uplands, to maintain traditional methods of sheep farming using the right breeds and shepherding, land management practices that include the ability to manage in-bye land and to correct soil pH through liming, accepting that the low level of inputs and available access will lead to good public and environmental outcomes.

Good condition

EU policies and support should incentivise such approaches. Our 'environmentalists' report that 'sheep lose money and are only there due to grants', but they forget to mention that the grants are not based on sheep, they are area-based payments made available when land meets good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC) conditions.

Farmers keep sheep because they are crucial economically to the farm business but also, in many cases, because sheep farming is an essential part of a very rich and traditional culture and way of life that also benefits tourism and hospitality while also maintaining landscape and biodiversity.

A further specific point is that we feel the exclusion of 'permanently ineligible

NSA defends sheep in flooding debate

In addition to a letter from NSA to Secretary of State Liz Truss, the details of which are shared here, press activity has been a priority to try and balance out the more negative comments made about sheep.

The aim was to highlight in the national, regional and agricultural press that farmers and landowners have a positive role to play in tackling the issue, rather than being a victim of the 'finger pointing game'. We also voiced the frustration felt by farmers in the uplands of being blamed for flooding when their choices on how to stock land have been taken away by over-prescriptive agri-environment schemes.

Northern view

Greg Dalton, NSA Northern Region Chairman, pictured on his hill farm at Upper Weardale, County Durham, says: "Poorly directed agri-environment schemes in combination with foot-and-mouth in 2001 have caused a massive reduction of sheep in the true uplands. While the number of sheep in the hills



has significantly reduced, the incidence of flooding has increased, so the evidence does not stack up for sheep to be blamed. At the same time, due to the absence of grazing stock, we are seeing the degradation of many upland habitats."

features' such as trees and scrub from the Basic Payment Scheme sends the wrong message and risks these potentially valuable features being lost. EU incentives and their implementation in the UK need to be more focussed on wide outcomes rather than narrow goals.

Trees have been one of the 'cure all' solutions suggested by environmentalists opposed to sheep – but I do not believe the argument over trees should be on the basis of either/or. NSA has a good working relationship with the Woodland Trust and jointly produced a booklet that drew heavily on work that has been much cited recently, the Pontbren initiative. This work

showed that by integrating more native trees, and planting them strategically within a farmed landscape, it was possible to increase water infiltration by a factor of 67.

I sent a copy of the booklet to Mrs Truss, highlighting that this is valuable work being promoted by NSA, but also outlining the need to accept that rates will differ given different soil types, and that infiltration will vary dependent on the moisture held in the soil (i.e. the level of rain that has fallen and is falling).

Trees and sheep

There are many ways that more trees could be incorporated into farmed landscapes, and done in ways to catch water run off as well as provide shade and shelter for stock, and even drain boggy areas. However, we have to recognise that in some upland areas tree planting also brings challenges, such as flystrike in sheep and predator problems.

This goes back to the holistic approach again, as most challenges have solutions if approached in this way. For example, where trees might not be suitable, other deep rooting forage crops including certain grasses and herbs, trefoils and chicory should be explored and, if necessary, incentivised as ways to increase infiltration rates.

NSA will keep members updated on any response received from Mrs Truss. To view the NSA- Woodland Trust booklet referred to here, go to www.nationalsheep.org.uk/policy-work and look for the 'Role of trees in sheep farming' area.

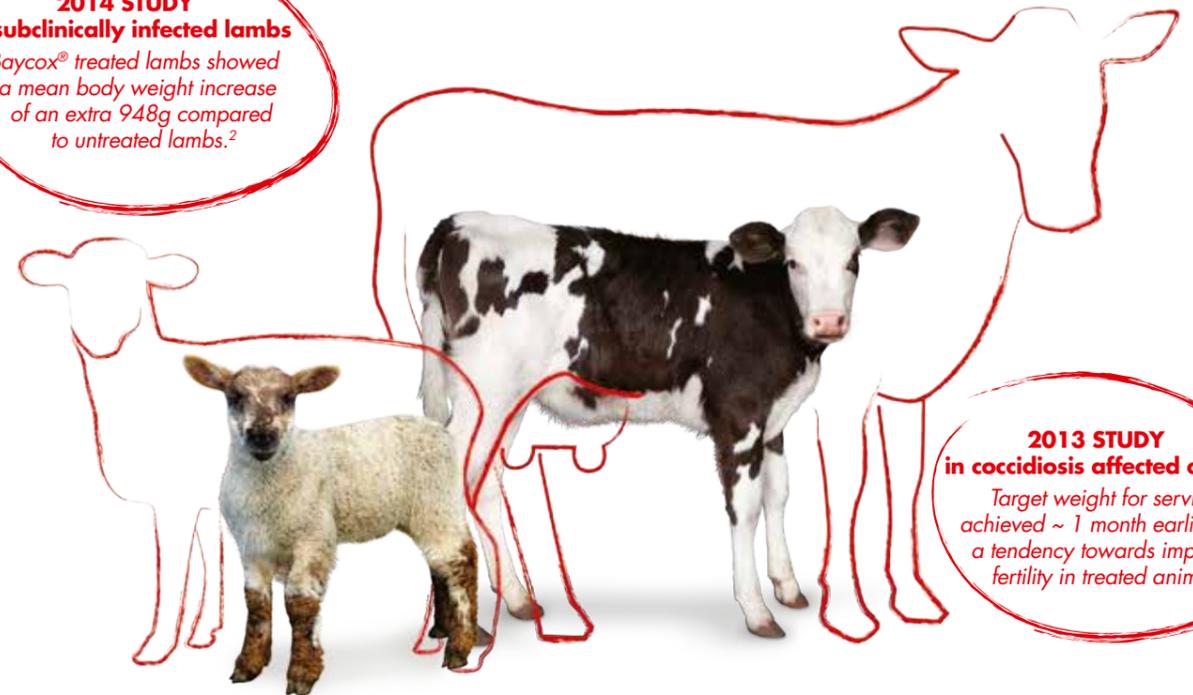


The number of sheep in the uplands has decreased while incidents of flooding have increases – a fact widely ignored by many environmentalists.

PREVENTING COCCIDIOSIS CAN HELP YOU DRAW HIGHER RETURNS

2014 STUDY in subclinically infected lambs

Baycox® treated lambs showed a mean body weight increase of an extra 948g compared to untreated lambs.²



2013 STUDY in coccidiosis affected calves

Target weight for service achieved ~ 1 month earlier and a tendency towards improved fertility in treated animals.¹

BAYCOX® ...

- ➔ Helps youngstock reach their full potential
- ➔ Kills all intracellular stages of coccidia
- ➔ Reduces oocyst excretion
- ➔ Convenient single dose treatment
- ➔ Enables development of normal or enhanced immune response^{3,4}

For more information please refer to Baycox® 50 mg/ml oral suspension for Piglets, Calves and Lambs data sheet or contact your veterinary surgeon.

Use Medicines Responsibly (www.noah.co.uk/responsible).

¹Veronesi F. et al., Parasitol Res 2013 Jun;112(6):2137-42. ²Scala A. et al., Small Ruminant Research 120 (2014) 242-246 ³Jonsson N et al., Parasitol Res (2011) 109: p113-p128 ⁴Gjerde B. and Helle O. Veterinary Parasitology, 38 (1991) 97-100 Baycox® 50 mg/ml oral suspension for Piglets, Calves and Lambs contains 50mg/ml toltrazuril. © Registered Trademark of Bayer AG. Advice should be sought from the medicine prescriber. Further information from the datasheet at www.noahcompendium.co.uk or on request. Bayer plc, Animal Health Division, Bayer House, Strawberry Hill, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1JA. Tel: 01635 563000. [POM-V] BXUM02 2015/10039



Trust...

Baycox® 50 mg/ml

Prevent Protect Profit

Constant awareness raising is only cure for irresponsible dog owners

By Phil Stocker, NSA
The 'hangover' of people enjoying the countryside over the Christmas and New Year break was particularly stark this year, with even more reports that usual of sheep being worried by dogs.

South and South West England seems to have been particularly badly hit and I have been in contact with NSA members Tim White, Keith Raymond and Owen Singer, who have either been in the media or have had active police attention.

In the first week of January I did three radio and a television interviews in one morning with the aim of raising attention to this devastating criminal act. The media can be quite keen to cover sheep worrying cases, and it's not surprising when you think of how angry the public gets about dog mess and dog attacks on people – sheep worrying is just another example of inconsiderate and unacceptable behaviour by some dog owners.

When I was in the radio studio I got the chance to see listeners' comments coming in on a live screen and it was encouraging



Shocking images are a useful part of raising awareness of the problem.

to see all the comments showing sympathy for farmers and anger that a small number of dog owners are damaging the reputation of the majority.

But the irresponsible attitudes of some can be changed, and that is the purpose of NSA's work on this subject. We have to keep on increasing awareness of the damage that dogs can do (even if sometimes sheep aren't visibly marked)



and we have to increase enforcement of the law where people refuse to do something about it.

Police activity

Keith Raymond runs his sheep on a number of sites around Salisbury, Wiltshire, and has seen the number of dog

Your help is needed

Reporting: NSA recommends you always report incidents of dog worrying to the police and push to get a crime reference number so you know the report has been logged. This is vital because it counts towards the crime statistics that determine how high a priority a problem is given.

As part of NSA's involvement in the Take The Lead initiative with Farmers Guardian we use national crime stats to back up our arguments, but the most recent figures (2014) unhelpfully show a decrease in cases. We know this does not reflect the reality so (along with a change to how police record reports) the issue must be under-reported by those affected. NSA appreciates it is time-consuming to make a complaint, especially for sheep owners who do not feel their local police take it seriously, but it is a vital step.

Social media: Twitter and Facebook are incredibly powerful to spread the

awareness message, but back it up with a link to www.nationalsheep.org.uk/dog-owners. This is a dedicated area of our website with advice for dog walkers, an explanation of their legal obligations and some really hard-hitting images and case studies. There is also a section for farmers, with more advice and (in the coming weeks) examples of impact assessment forms.

Case studies: NSA's work with the media is reliant on farmers willing to talk about their experiences. We have a library of case studies on our website but we need more, especially in Wales, Scotland and

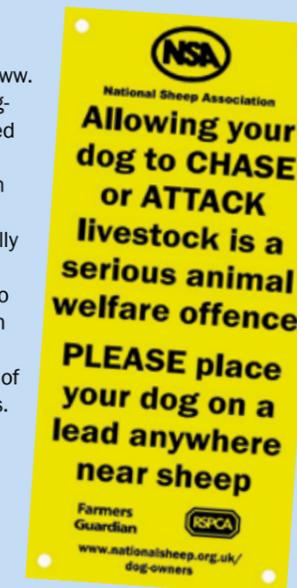
attacks grow significantly over the last 18 months. In order to provide support and witness the process, I accompanied him in an interview with the police in mid-January. The police have been persuaded to officially report two very recent cases as criminal acts and a decision will soon be

taken on whether they will go to court.

I tried to help the police understand how serious and widespread this problem is and have since been giving Mr Raymond help to pull together a hard hitting impact statement that will make the police and, hopefully, the courts take this seriously.

Northern Ireland, as well as East Anglia, Lancashire, Cumbria, Yorkshire, Devon and Somerset. Contact NSA Head Office (details on page 2) if you are willing to volunteer with pictures and a description of how you've been affected.

Signs: We still have a supply of plastic yellow dog control signs for members (pictured) and are looking to have more made soon. It has been suggested that we provide a space on the new signs for farmers to write their contact details in the event of an attack. We would be interested in people's views on this, and any other suggestions for improvements to the current signs. Contact NSA Head Office with suggestions or to request a supply of signs.



Kubota

No Kubota is ordinary. This is no ordinary Kubota.

The Limited Edition M128GX-II / M135GX-II Vision models come complete with an exceptional level of specification as standard to enhance your working day. That's in addition to the superb performance that comes as standard on every Kubota.

- High performance hydraulics, suspension and PTO
- Air conditioned, spacious cab for easy access and control
- Class-leading levels of power and performance

All in addition to Kubota's exceptional reliability, incredible ease of use, low running costs, fixed-price servicing and extraordinary Kubota Care 5-year Warranty.

THE VISION EDITION INCLUDES:

- Twin beacons for greater safety and visibility.
- Extended rear fenders for reduced splashback.
- A full set of eight LED cab work lights – 4 front, 4 rear plus upgraded LED front lights to extend the working day.

+ Exclusive Driver's Kit
Find out more: www.kubota.co.uk/vision

5 YEAR
NO NONSENSE
WARRANTY
AVAILABLE

EXTENDED WARRANTY FOR THE HOURS YOU USE*

LOW COST FINANCE†

Ask for details

†Subject to terms and conditions

No ordinary tractor. No ordinary upgrade.

Introducing the limited edition **MGX-II Vision**

Arrange a demo today Call: 01844 873156
Visit: www.kubota.co.uk/vision

For Earth, For Life

LAMLAC®

Tried & Trusted by Farmers for over 40 years

Visit lamlac.co.uk
Freephone 0800 919808

No clear picture for 2016 lamb price, but some future optimism

By Howard Walsh, contributor

Although the law of supply and demand pretty much governs the value of everything we buy and sell, it is an oversimplification to suggest more lambs equals lower prices, or vice-versa.

There are so many factors at work influencing supply and demand that few people in the supply chain, certainly at the start of the year, care to predict with certainty how UK lamb prices might shape up through 2016.

Many of the big processors prefer to weigh up the market on a much shorter but regular basis – but, without doubt, producers would be reasonably happy if the stronger mid-January price levels were to persist, albeit subject to normal seasonal trends, rather than fall back to the levels of the latter part of 2015.

Lamb sales

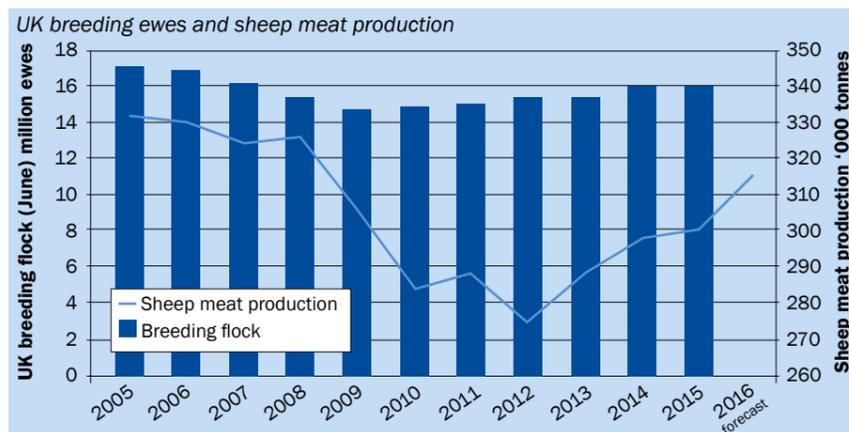
There are a few positives to be contemplated right now, not least some indication of increased domestic consumption of sheep meat, up 7.7% in the 12 weeks to 6th December 2015. The euro-sterling exchange rate is also shifting slightly more favourably towards exports and there is talk of marginally reduced volumes from New Zealand.

The big unknown at present is how many ewes went to the tup in the UK and subsequent lambing performance. The weather plays a major role at lambing time and, for a few unfortunate individuals, has already reduced their ewe numbers in the floods.

Mark Kozlowski, AHDB Beef & Lamb Senior Analyst, says high UK production and difficult export conditions led lamb prices in some months of 2015 to be at their lowest level for a number of years



Although the UK sheep flock has increased slightly in recent years, at a global level, supply is not meeting demand.



– but he also points to how early-year predictions can sometimes prove wide of the mark, as UK lamb slaughterings fell for the second month in a row in November 2015, down 6%.

The question is whether the lambs we would have expected to come forward in the back-end of 2015 are still on the ground and about to appear in markets and abattoirs as old season lamb? As of mid January, the answer was no, with auction marts reporting buyers were actively looking for supplies.

Carryover

This was a different picture to that seen at the start of 2015 when a high carry-over from 2014's large lamb crop was followed by another big lamb crop in 2015. Consequently, those with early lambing flocks were hit hardest by the lower returns in 2015, as the largest falls were seen during the middle months of the year.

Mr Kozlowski says general dissatisfaction with prices through most of 2015 means fewer lambs may have been produced this year, although the figures for autumn ewe slaughterings do not tend to support a reduced national flock.

Andersons farm business consultants say the ultimate size of the UK flock will depend on producers being able to make a profit on whatever the lamb price happens to be. Consultant David Siddle says there

are an extra 1.5 million ewes in the UK compared to six years ago, meaning sheep meat production has shown an increase every year since 2012 - see graph. In the Andersons 'Outlook 2016' he says, with costs of production in excess of market returns, the majority of producers will still rely on support payments to produce a profit.

"Falling BPS receipts are likely to bring this more sharply into focus over the next few years, especially if lamb values remain low," Mr Siddle says, but adds there is encouragement in the fact physical performance, variable costs and fixed costs are all directly within producers' control.

"There are genuine examples of positive margins before subsidy being generated from most types of sheep systems," he says. "The key driver of profitability continues to be the level of fixed costs employed. Too many producers still judge their success or failure on maximising the price per head they receive for their lambs, with little thought to the costs of production which they incur."

NZ figures

Beef and Lamb New Zealand data for 2015/16 shows overall lamb exports down 6.3% to 293,000 tonnes and mutton exports down 14.4%. However, 6.4% more come to the UK in January to September 2015 due to the depressed Chinese market. The EU remains New Zealand's biggest destination and the UK takes 48% of that EU tonnage.

There is a strong belief in New Zealand that it could work with the UK to promote and boost sustainable sales volumes for both nations, as Beef and Lamb NZ points to a fairly consistent gap between EU sheep meat production and consumption.

Export of prime lamb and fifth quarter to remain key for the UK

By Jean-Pierre Garnier, AHDB Beef & Lamb Export Manager

A two-pronged approach to developing global market opportunities will remain crucial for the sheep meat sector.

Maximising opportunities for sheep meat with EU markets and developing more for fifth quarter products for sheep meat outside the EU will play a vital role in maximising returns and managing market volatility as we move forwards in 2016 and beyond.

This has been highlighted in the World Sheep Meat Market to 2025 report – produced by AHDB Beef & Lamb and the International Meat Secretariat (IMS). While outlining the positive long-term prospects for UK and global sheep meat exports, the report stresses how UK export competitiveness will remain a key issue for the future of the industry.

World player

The UK is an important player on the world sheep meat market. It is by far the largest producer in Europe and the third largest exporter worldwide. The great strides made in exports of sheep meat and the launch of the AHDB Exports brand at the Anuga trade show, in Cologne, Germany, last year underlined the organisation's commitment to competing on the global stage. The World Sheep Meat Market to 2025 report is about examining the dynamics of the world sheep meat markets and foreseeing the factors in the international trade likely to affect our sheep sector over the next few years.



The report produced by AHDB and the International Meat Secretariat.



New Zealand lamb output looks unlikely to increase, and tight world supplies will aid UK exports, says JP Garnier of AHDB Exports.

Although we rely heavily on the European market, equally important will be the continuation of our strategy to export products for which there is little or no demand domestically, or elsewhere in Europe, to markets where they are valued. Typically, these products are in greater demand in a number of non-EU countries where we have either secured market access or are working hard to do so. This will help maximise use of the carcass and thus maximise returns for the UK supply chain.

It's important to keep the momentum going and we will again maintain a strong presence at this year's key industry events and shows around the world where we can showcase our homegrown produce and livestock on the global stage.

Shows in 2016 include Gulfood, the world's biggest annual food and hospitality show, held in Dubai in February, where we will be joined by exporters to highlight UK lamb to key foodservice players from the region. February will also see AHDB Beef & Lamb at SIA, the Paris Agricultural Show, where we will be among more than 1,000 exhibitors showcasing products for the French market and highlighting the UK's production systems.

Similarly, we will have a presence at Food and Hotel Asia in Singapore in March, which is widely regarded as Asia's most established trade exhibition of its kind, and Alimentaria in Barcelona at the end of the month. Other key events include our presence at the Tavola fair in Belgium in March, Restaurant and Bar in Hong Kong and SIAL in Paris in October, the world's

largest food innovation exhibition. In addition to planned inward trade missions and overseas missions with exporters, 2016 promises again to be a busy year for developing further opportunities for UK sheep meat exports. In terms of market access work, we are progressing some important dossiers with China, the USA, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Japan as our main targets.

Production developments, which in turn will be influenced by producer profitability, will continue to impact on export availability. Importantly, producers will keep a keen eye on currency movements with a correction of the overvalued sterling well overdue. Ultimately, however, the UK is in a good position long term to increase its trade both within and outside of the EU.

Global supplies

In terms of supply, the long term exports of New Zealand lamb are unlikely to increase, although the strong growth taking place for Australia could well continue. The global supply situation will be tight, especially if demand continues to grow, suggesting a positive outlook for prices.

Conclusions drawn in the World Sheep Meat Market to 2025 underline this and we look forward to making further progress with our export strategy to help the UK compete on the global stage as we start 2016.

The World Sheep Market Report to 2025 can be found in the Corporate Publications section of the AHDB Beef & Lamb website – see <http://beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk>.

Future of NSA Make More of Mutton

By Bob Kennard, NSA Make More of Mutton

The last two months has seen a major change in the NSA Make More of Mutton project, which has been funded by AHDB Beef & Lamb, HCC and LMC.

We have been running the project for just over a year and the work has been considered very successful in its aims of broadening interest in mutton and assisting the quality mutton supply chain. Taking advantage of what has been achieved and learned over the past year, AHDB Beef & Lamb and HCC have decided to take some of the work in-house, to connect it with existing supply chain and promotional activities, and to reignite Mutton Renaissance.

NSA's Make More of Mutton activities over the past year have included:-

- Development of strategy to support the quality mutton supply chain.
- Identification of well over 50 individual quality mutton supply chains across the UK.
- An in-depth survey of 25 of these supply chains, including gross margin data.
- Establishment of the www.makemoreofmutton.org.uk website.
- Production of point of sale and trade leaflets and posters for quality mutton retailers.

- Events held in England and Wales, together with a presence at various other shows and events and including mutton tastings.
- Good coverage on TV, radio, print and social media.
- Regular newsletters with a circulation of more than 250 recipients.
- Widespread industry contacts made along the supply chain.

NSA will be one of a group of organisations steering and helping to deliver the AHDB Beef & Lamb and HCC's future mutton work. Others include AIMS (representing meat plants) and the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts.

NSA support

The levy-funded activity will come directly under AHDB and HCC management. But in addition NSA, as a membership organisation intent on furthering the interests of UK sheep farming, will continue to support its UK members and others involved in the quality mutton supply chain through our producer focused Make More of Mutton gateway (which includes the website and Sheep Farmer magazine). We will continue to give easy access to new and existing information and activities for those involved in the quality mutton supply chain, and also to take enquiries and suggestions.



NSA Make More of Mutton has been successful in broadening interest.

We are delighted to have been able to stimulate so much interest and activity in quality mutton over the last year, and we thank all those NSA members who have been involved. The fact that this has resulted in our English and Welsh levy bodies, which are responsible for the generic market development and promotion of our products, being keen to build on the work we have done is a real achievement and something of which we are proud.

Continue to contact NSA about mutton topics at mutton@nationalsheep.org.uk or www.makemoreofmutton.org.uk. Other contacts are Mike Richardson at AHDB Beef & Lamb on michael.richardson@ahdb.org.uk and Melanie Hughes at HCC on mhughes@hccmpw.org.uk.

Promoting farming with #Sheep365

Supporting and promoting British lamb production has seen a positive upturn since the success of #BritishLambWeek in autumn 2015, and NSA is urging sheep farming Twitter fans to continue this in 2016 by supporting the #Sheep365 movement.

#Sheep365 made its debut on Twitter many months ago, pioneered by NSA Next Generation Ambassadors Thomas Gibson (County Antrim, Northern Ireland) and Andrew Prentice (Iona, West Scotland). Since then it has become a popular movement showcased on the @LoveBritishLamb Facebook and Twitter pages by Rachel Lumley, the woman behind #BritishLambWeek.

@LoveBritishLamb is posting a daily image of sheep farming and encouraging other social media enthusiasts to generate their own posts, as well as liking and sharing #Sheep365 content. Volunteers can also take a 'guest spot' for a week, with their posts being showcased across both social media channels.

Having successfully facilitated #BritishLambWeek, Rachel says she



A selection of pictures tweeted by #Sheep365 instigator Andrew Prentice.

is keen to keep the ball rolling with #Sheep365, so long as support from sheep farmers continues.

NSA is supporting the activity because it taps directly into a clear interest from non-farmers for sheep content, particularly photos, on social media. Hannah Park, NSA Communications Manager, explains: "The interest in #Sheep365 reveals an

appetite from the general public in the role of sheep farming, but is also creating an enthusiastic community of farmers who are looking to do something positive for the industry. It has got people talking and can only be going the right way in terms of raising awareness and helping to underpin and support our home market."

Thomas Gibson adds: "I think #Sheep365 has helped sheep farmers expose what they do on a daily basis, while allowing them to share this collectively with an audience. I have had lots of questions from people about sheep and what we are doing on the farm as a result of seeing pictures posted with #Sheep365. I think the hashtag can also be used to raise awareness and promote British lamb as a natural and ecological product to consumers."

Follow NSA (@natsheep), LoveBritishLamb (@LoveBritishLamb), Andrew Prentice (@Maolfarmiona) and Thomas Gibson (@SheepSchool) on Twitter. Direct message Rachel Lumley (@RachelLumley) to get involved or contact NSA on enquiries@nationalsheep.org.uk.

Endospec 10%

Albendazole 100mg/ml



New 10ml low dose metal applicator...the missing piece of the puzzle for convenient parasite control



Effective

-Licensed for the control of: **adult liver fluke, tapeworms (*Moniezia* spp), lungworms, mature & developing gastro-intestinal roundworms**

-Includes cobalt and selenium

Convenient

NEW Bimeda 10ml metal drench applicator for ease of administration

Affordable

Low dose rate for sheep of 3mls per 40kg for fluke & worm control*

Use Medicines Responsibly
Noah.co.uk

Date advert created: January 2016. Legal Category Endospec 10%: POM-VPS. Active constituent: Albendazole 100mg/ml. Other relevant constituents: Selenium 1.08mg/ml, Cobalt 2.5mg/ml. For full product information, including dose rates and contra-indications, see the SPC on the VMD website or the data sheet on Bimeda.co.uk. Bimeda can be contacted at Bimeda, Unit 2, Bryn Cefni Industrial Park, Llangefni, Anglesey, LL777XA. 01248 725 400

*This corresponds to a dosage of 7.5 mg albendazole per kg bodyweight

Bimeda.co.uk

For more information speak to your supplier or call Bimeda on 01248 725 400



Effective predator control options to keep flocks safe from harm

By Glynn Evans, British Association for Shooting and Conservation Head of Game and Deer Management

Foxes can be significant predators of game and other ground nesting birds, small mammals and livestock, including lambs. Given the diverse range of habitats, and the time of year that control of foxes will need to be undertaken, not all methods will be appropriate for all locations. It is often a case of using the most suitable type of control for a given situation.

When considering any method of control, it is important to remember that they can have very different rules and regulations depending on where you are in the UK. It is vital to be familiar with these to prevent you falling foul of the law.

Lamping

As the name implies, **lamping** (or night shooting) is the term used to describe the use of a powerful light at night to spot a fox and then use a gun to dispatch it. While it is possible for one person to do this, it will often involve a small team consisting of a lamper, who works the light, a shooter who obviously does the shooting and a driver if a vehicle is used.

For foxes, generally a suitable centrefire rifle will be used, as it allows accurate shooting at much greater distances than either a rimfire rifle or a shotgun. However, both of these can be suitable at closer ranges. Lamping can be a very efficient form of control but it can also be limited. Large blocks of forestry or standing crops can make it impossible to see the fox, and not every location is suitable for use of a rifle.

As with many forms of fox control, there is an element of skill, such as knowing how to approach a fox to prevent it scenting you,



There are thought to be in the region of 258,000 adult foxes in the UK and 425,000 cubs born every spring.

Protected species of predators

NSA is grateful to the British Association for Shooting and Conservation for providing this article on options for controlling foxes – but, as many members will know, foxes are not the only predator that causes problems for sheep flocks.

Given that some predators are protected species, NSA has been vocal about the need to ensure options are still available to farmers when there is a need. For example, we received a high number of complaints about ravens last lambing season so arranged a face-to-face meeting with Natural England to discuss the situation.

Natural England asked to be put in touch with NSA members who were particularly struggling, so it could better understand the situation, and also confirmed that licences can be granted giving permission to control raven populations in specific situations. NSA found Natural England to be very sympathetic about the problem and not blinkered in its view that a protected species must be protected against all odds.

NSA Scottish Region is in contact with Scottish Natural Heritage, where the ongoing situation with sea eagles is far from positive. Sea eagles are a clear example of where serious consideration should be given before (re)introducing species and, following that decision, how growing numbers within a protected situation could and should be controlled so that no single part of the ecosystem is too dominant.

NSA is using sea eagles of an example within the lynx and rewilding debate, as the situation in some parts of Scotland is not something that should be replicated in other parts of the UK and/or with other protected species.



Evidence of suspected raven damage in a young lamb.

using the lamp so that it won't spook the fox, or being able to 'call it in'. Never forget the need for accuracy on the shooter's part – if a fox is missed it can become lamp-shy and impossible to lamp again.

Specialists

Much of the equipment, such as rifles with telescopic or night vision (which is becoming increasingly popular) sights, can be very expensive, but there are a number of people who specialise in this type of shooting and will provide their services, often free of charge.

Although **waiting out** is similar to lamping and also involves the use of a gun, it is generally better carried out by a single person. In most circumstances, this is likely to be a centrefire rifle, given its longer range.

It is a case of picking a likely vantage point, at dusk or dawn, but knowing the patterns of fox activity can increase the chances of success and reduce the waiting time. The use of calls and lures can also be helpful – but knowing how to use them is important, as getting it wrong can spoil your chances.

In the right situation, **driving/flushing** can be a very good

continued on page 24



Pioneering solutions in animal health

Give your flock optimum levels of all 4 essential trace elements before lambing

tracesure®



Copper*

Cobalt

Iodine

Selenium

✓ Enhances ewe health, fertility & milk quality

✓ Supports lamb vigour & growth

✓ Last for 5-6 months



PLUS... support growth, development and health in your pre-ruminating lambs with pardevit®



ANIMAX
veterinary technology

Contact your local representative or visit www.animax-vet.com

Ask your supplier for advice about our products, with or without copper.



Modern snaring are a humane and effective way of catching foxes.

Non-protected predators

- Non-protected species of pests can be controlled legally on farms, if they are causing specific damage or losses.
- For many corvids, as an example, control is under a general licence where you do not apply for permission but are required to obtain the paperwork and adhere to conditions. See www.gov.uk/government/collections/general-licences-for-wildlife-management.
- The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust website has great information on larsen traps at www.gwct.org.uk/advisory/larsen-trap-factsheets.
- It is not permitted to leave larsen traps or snares as semi-permanent control measures or use poisoned baits to control foxes or corvids due to the risk of killing non-target species.
- On the topic of pesticides, from April this year all rodenticide users must hold professional certification under UK Rodenticide Stewardship requirements. Farm assured farms are exempt; if you operating from a non-assured holding see www.rodentcontrolonfarms.co.uk for a free, self-study training course.
- More advice on using poisons from the Campaign against Accidental or Illegal Poisoning at www.caip-uk.info.

► method of control. Unlike flushing pheasants on a driven day, Guns will stand inconspicuously, up close to a tree or other cover, often using camouflage clothing to hide their presence; if a fox spots them as it moves forward it is likely to turn back and not offer a safe shot.

The driving or pushing through of the area might be done by walking Guns but at times dogs might also be used. Under the different hunting legislation, the law on using dogs to flush foxes is

different depending upon where you are in the UK. In England and Wales a maximum of two dogs can be used, whereas in Scotland this is not defined so a pack of hounds can be used to flush foxes to standing Guns. In Northern Ireland fox hunting is permitted.

At times of the year when foxes hide in dens (most commonly in the winter), the **use of terriers to flush foxes from below ground** can be a good method of control involving dogs. Those undertaking this method need to be familiar with the hunting legislation, as the rules will be different depending upon your location.

In England and Wales, amongst other requirements, you must carry a written permission and only use 'soft' terriers which stand back and bark. Only one dog can go underground and can only be used in 'preventing or reducing serious damage to game birds or wild birds being kept or preserved to be shot'. Other reasons for control are not allowed. A good place to find out more would be the National Working Terrier Federation (NWTF) website.

The size of **cage traps** for foxes makes their purchase expensive, often unviable and transport to remote areas might be difficult. Given the wild foxes' natural wariness, other than in urban areas, the successful use of cage traps is limited.

Snaring

It is a common misconception that **fox snares** are designed to kill. Snares are designed to only catch and hold the animal.

All snares must be free running, which means they relax when the fox stops pulling. Modern snares have several design features which, coupled with correct methods of setting in the right locations, ensures they are humane and efficient.

These include a permanent stop which prevents a snare from closing beyond a certain point. This can help prevent catching non-target species. Having a built-in weak point at the right location allows a stronger animal to get free and strong swivels, ideally two (just in case one becomes stuck), allows the snare to rotate and prevent it from kinking.

A benefit of snares is that, once set, you do not have to wait around, which can free you up to do other jobs. Also, they will catch foxes in situations where other methods won't work or are impractical. The use of snares is also controlled by various laws and codes of practice dependent upon where you are in the UK, so you must be up to speed on these before using them.

You can find out more information on different methods of fox control from the BASC website or by contacting the BASC game and deer team direct 01244 573 019.



THE NATURAL CHOICE FOR HEALTHY GROWTH

The natural choice for healthy growth



Quality milk replacers, dedication and scientific knowledge for a healthy start

You want to give your lambs the best start in life. Milkivit® stands for dedication to quality milk replacers for over 60 years and this experience, combined with the latest scientific knowledge, can help ensure healthy growth and performance of your lambs.

To learn more about the full range of Milkivit milk replacers this lambing time, ask your feed adviser or animal health supplier.

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?



IT'S ALL IN THE DNA

- DNA parentage increases pedigree accuracy
- No manual recording required
- Enables multi-sire mating programs
- Access gene test information such as MyoMAX®
- MyoMAX® detects the gene which increases carcass weight and muscle yield.

Shepherd[®]
PLUS

MyoMAX[®]

Visit zoetis.co.nz/genetics for more information
or contact our New Zealand team on **+64 3 477 5920**

Zoetis New Zealand Limited

PO Box 5520, Moray Place, Dunedin 9058, New Zealand
T +64 3 477 5920 E genetics.nz@zoetis.com
www.zoetis.co.nz/genetics

Success in NI uplands stems from recording and good pasture management

By Hannah Park, NSA

Striving for perfection has become something of a passion for Campbell Tweed, NSA Northern Ireland Region Chairman, after he took on management of the family owned farm near Ballycally, County Antrim.

With the family tree dating back as far as the 13th century in the area, Ballycoose has been maintained by members of the Tweed family for generations – a hard act to follow, some may think, but one which Campbell has embraced.

A well-known figure in numerous agricultural circles, Campbell spends a sizable amount of time off the farm supporting the wider farming community and is often ‘across the water’ in Great Britain up to three times a week. His current NSA commitment as NSA Northern Ireland Region Chairman is not completely alien, having been the first to take this on when NSA became established in Northern Ireland in the late 1980s. This time around he is also the NI representative on the NSA UK Policy and Technical Committee.

Progressing the farm business at

home has never been far from the agenda though and so two full time workmen – Donal Ward and Conal Ward – are employed to help with its day-to-day running when Campbell is away.

Much change has taken place to get the farm to where it is today, Campbell explains: “The sheep enterprise has evolved over the years. My father brought over Newton Stewart type Scottish Blackface rams to cross with the Ballycoose flock, which consisted of about 900 ewes back then. The breed was perfect for the hill conditions on the farm at the time – it was good hardy stock which survived the harsh winters in the days when there was no supplementary feeding.”

Since then the flock has expanded to 2,950 ewes, which Campbell developed by buying in Colbred sheep in the early 1980s to cross with the existing Scottish Blackface ewes. This was the breeding strategy up until 1999, when he took the decision to try wool shedding sheep. However, the disruption of foot-and-mouth meant the Wiltshire Horn and Easycare



Checking the ewe lambs on Campbell's coastal farm in County Antrim.

breeds did not arrive at Ballycoose for another two years.

“We have built up both breeds extensively over the years, but the main of the flock is now made up of Easycare,” Campbell says. “The Wiltshire Horn rams are generally used as sweepers, apart from a small purebred flock of 100 from which we breed rams.

Performance recording

“The primary aim of performance recording in the flock is to improve our output and efficiency, but also to enable us to build a good reputation for selling breeding stock. Part of this to supply ourselves, but we also privately sell around 40 to breeders from the Isle of Man, Scotland and England, as well as some locally. Some buyers assure me they only purchase Easycare rams from Ballycoose now, which is obviously

pleasing feedback.”

Lambing, which is due to start around 10th April, is all outside – and Campbell's approach is one which could certainly be described as no-nonsense. “If we see a ewe which needs assistance we will help her out, but



Easycare tups used on the farm.

the following autumn she and her progeny are sold for slaughter,” he says, adding that the flock is currently running with a lambing difficulty of 0.5%. “All new-born lambs are tagged at birth when a lot of key information is able to be recorded, including size, weight, gender, number of siblings and whether assistance was required to lamb.

“Within the flock there are 23 family groups and almost all are single-sire mating. We really want to select sheep which perform well under our circumstances and environment. We

Farm Facts

- Ballycoose is a 650ha (1,600ha) upland unit at 260-400m (850-1,300ft) above sea level.
- The 2,950 breeding ewes are mostly Easycare cross Wiltshire Horns, with a 100-head pedigree Wiltshire Horn flock to breed rams from.
- The farm has hosted a number of television and film production sets including: Your Highness, Game of Thrones and, most recently, the soon-to-be released Lost City of Z.
- Campbell juggles commitments with various agricultural groups, including NSA, Lantra, Nuffield, Haper Adams, the AgriSearch sheep committee, NFSCo, a ministerial TB stakeholder group, the National Trust and Maternal Sheep Group.

select our sheep on physical correctness, but as it's really not possible to tell which sheep are best visually we also use performance data.

“A prime example, which we've found from looking at our recorded data over a number of years, is understanding which sheep in the flock are working the hardest and are, therefore, of most value to me. A sheep which isn't working hard will visually look better than one which is, and it's therefore

easy to miss those animals which are really doing the business.”

To ensure only the best ewe lambs are kept as replacements, Campbell keeps back double the number that are actually needed each year, around 1,300. This is partly to wait to see what their performance data will come back as, as it returned annually around September time, but also to see how the animals will shed their wool. The ewe lambs which do



Campbell Tweed.

make the grade go to a Wiltshire Horn or Easycare ram as a yearling and are then assessed again as a first time lamber, predominately using performance data. Two, three and four year olds which are not in the top 60% of the flock will be sold as breeding ewes.

Lambs not selected for breeding are finished and sold deadweight to Dunbia, aiming for around 19.5kg deadweight. These consist of around 250 ‘bottom end’ ewe lambs and 2,000 males.

Ballycoose is very much a hill and upland farm, standing at 260m (850ft) above sea level. It is directly above the Antrim Coast and has some fantastic views across the North Channel towards Stranraer and West Scotland. The 650ha (1,600-acre) area the farm covers is entirely grass based with at least two cuts of about 25ha (60 acres) of silage taken each year. The farm also mixes its

continued on page 28



A mix of Easycare cross and Wiltshire Horn ewes at Ballycoose.



Take the pens to the sheep, not the sheep to the pens

200 SHEEP SYSTEMS FROM JUST £4,295



For more details or a FREE demo please call 01207 523179 • Visit us at www.coxagri.com



PROMOTIONAL OFFER
on Agrident EID Stick Readers

Buy with an Alligator system for £495 +VAT

RRP £545



own concentrate blend based on soya hulls, which is used for stock as necessary over the winter. All the ewes are scanned and fed pre-lambing according to what they're carrying as well as their condition. Stronger ewes will also get silage and, those that need a bit more, a silage and molasses blend.

Nutrient levels

Campbell has spent a lot of time improving the nutrient value of the soil, initially through extensive liming and now through work to determine more specifically what nutrients are lacking. He says: "We do soil sampling to determine basic nutrition requirements and, having found selenium and copper deficiencies, bolus stock twice a year. We also carry out tissue sampling now and again, which is a bit more specific than blood sampling to determine micro nutrient requirements."



Campbell is moving towards a breeding strategy favouring the Easycare over the Wiltshire Horn



Tups sold for rearing are reared in the same tough, upland conditions as the rest of the flock.

The farm previously ran a large suckler herd but this was sold around six years ago and, instead, 80 store cattle are bought in annually, a mixture of steers and cows. They are also used as part of the grass management plan at Ballycoose.

Grazing is carefully managed, with the flock split into eight groups to rotationally graze. Yearling ewes for example, will graze six sub-parts and be moved between them every three to four days.

Flock health is also a priority and Campbell takes a ruthless approach to any flaws which crop up, such as ewes that remain lame after their first treatment. Ewes are vaccinated against enzootic and

toxoplasmosis abortion, and lambs against clostridial diseases and pasteurilla. Fluke treatments are also given according to the need and the whole flock of adult sheep wormed once in the year.

Looking ahead, Campbell is understandably pleased with what the farm has achieved: "As far as I'm concerned the sheep are making good progress in terms of flock performance. I certainly hope to continue in the direction we're heading in terms of management ease. Making improvements is always on my mind though; I'd love to leave behind foot problems, but how realistic that is is another matter."



Saving Farmers Thousands Every Year



- Reduce your disposal costs with an Addfield Incinerator
- Drastically improve your site biosecurity
- No more double handling of fallen stock



Disposal from £41 per tonne

addfield
Incinerate • Cremate
www.addfield.com

For more information contact:
01543 571280
sales@addfield.co.uk
Leaders in disposal systems

Pride in a good dog drives four-time international trial winner

By Wendy Short, contributor
Renowned sheepdog handler Aled Owen has come a long way since his started trialling at age 19 – and it is a measure of his determination to succeed that he remained undaunted when competing against some legendary dog handlers at that time.

"My region has produced a lot of the top sheepdog men, including Glyn Jones, Gwyn Jones, Alan Jones, Meirion Jones and Wyn Edwards," he says. "It was not uncommon for me to be running against these five supreme championship winners, week in and week out. The competition was fierce and I had no chance of beating them, but it inspired me and made me want to do better."

It certainly did that – and last summer Aled picked up the International Supreme title for the fourth time. His win with four-year-old Llangwm Cap, secured in the final run of the day at the International Sheepdog Trial at Moffat, Dumfriesshires, puts him in the record books as one of the all-time great handlers. He has now won the top prize in all four home nations.

Winning run

"It was the type I had previously only dreamed about," he says, looking back to his final run at Moffat. "The course was immense, but Cap did everything right and both his outruns were near faultless. He was working so well that I didn't have to command him that much; he just flowed around the whole course. The Scottish Blackfaces were good to handle, although they were tricky to shed. I came off the field feeling very proud of him."

Aled's sheepdog enterprise makes up about 30% of income from the family

International competition

The International Sheepdog Trials are held annually by the International Sheepdog Society (ISDS). Handlers from the four UK nations qualify to represent their countries in teams of 15. After two days of qualifying, the best 15 teams go through to the International Supreme double-gather final on the third day.

More than 5,500 people attended the 2015 event, hosted by the Mair family at Meikleholm Farm, Moffat. They were joined on the first day by ISDS Patron HRH The Princess Royal.

The 2016 International Sheepdog Trial is on 9th-11th September at Sandilands Farm, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 9AP.



Aled Owen with his haul of silverware at the International Sheepdog Trial.

farm at Penyfed, Corwen, Denbighshire. He keeps a couple of brood bitches and also sells a small number of broken and part-broken dogs each year. Some go on to compete at trials, while others are sold as useful farm dogs. His string of supreme championship wins means his expertise is in great demand and this year he has clinics booked in the USA, Japan and Australia, as well as his usual ones at home.

"Sheepdog trialling is very popular in the USA and, in recent years, the Japanese have become very keen on the sport," he explains. "I'm lucky because I have family at home to look after the sheep and someone to come and take care of the dogs when I'm away. However, I always make sure I'm back from my travels in time for lambing and other busy periods."

"Farmers and their dogs will often see a difference within six to eight weeks; the relationship between the two can improve rapidly, with just a little guidance," Aled says of the clinic work he does. "Once the groundwork has been done, they will then have a good working dog by their side for many years into the future."

"The main problem occurs when dogs are left in their kennels for long periods and then expected to behave calmly when they are taken to sheep. Training a dog requires patience and understanding; they're not like quad bikes, which can't just be put away until the next time they're needed."

"Farmers must bond with their dogs to

get the best out of them, so the two must spend time together, to build mutual trust and respect. It is also important to avoid using sheep which will turn on a young dog when training, as it can affect his confidence."

On his own farm, Aled finds it inconceivable that he could manage the flock without his team of dogs. He runs 750 ewes, a mix of 300 Welsh Mountains and various crossbreeds, over 115ha (280 acres) rising from 230m to 520m (750ft-1,700ft) above sea level. He says the Suffolk is his first choice of terminal sire, and is interested to see the results when lambing this March of a recent decision to use Texel cross Bluefaced Leicester rams to produce his replacements.

Best dogs

When selecting dogs, Aled says his personal preference is for classically-marked, black and white or tri-colour dogs. He doesn't mind rough or smooth-coated, but tends to avoid too much white.

"The priority is a good temperament; a dog should not be aggressive or nervous," he says. "It should be athletic, with stamina to spare. A dog also needs to have enough power to move sheep, but not so much that he is too hard to handle."

"Even after 40 years of training dogs, it still gives me pleasure when I see a dog working and I know he's going to turn into something special."

More about Aled at www.aled-owen-sheepdogs.co.uk.

Limited time availability reveals true value of vet's contribution

By Joanne Briggs, NSA

With a mixed farm, busy contract spraying business, new cattle rearing enterprise, occasional lorry driving shifts and a family-run caravan park, not to mention a recent house move and a new born baby daughter, time is not a luxury Chris Jones has.

He has therefore fully embraced working with his vet, Hilary Jones from Usk Vets, Monmouthshire, to try and ease some of the high-risk areas of the sheep enterprise and save time by preventing problems before they happen at Pont Kemys Farm, located a short distance out of Usk.

Some real gains have been made in the flock, reducing abortion and mastitis, solving a problem with white muscle disease in lambs, dealing with foot problems and creating a system to keep on top of the fluke risk.

Confidence

After five years of working together, Chris says: "I feel that I understand more than I did and have more confidence. The aim is to save ewes with the preventative stuff, but now we also know what drugs do what so if we get mastitis, for example, we know how to stop it and save ewes that way too."

"Being educated makes all the difference. It's like the lambing courses Hilary does. I've been lambing sheep for years and could easily say 'I know it all', but it jogs your memory and you only have to pick up on one thing to make it worthwhile."

Hilary says: "What was really refreshing about doing a farm health plan with Chris was that he came to me and said 'these are my issues, how can we address them?' We worked through the list and also looked at lamb growth rates and neonatal deaths."

"Since then it's been very much an ongoing conversation, which is the great thing about working closely together. A good

Farm facts

- 100ha (250 acres) of owned and rented land, split 60:40 between grassland and arable.
- 320 ewes on the farm, plus calf rearing and grain production.
- Close working partnership with Hilary Jones, Usk Vets, who has been working for the practice for 20 years.
- Small contract spraying round taken on in 2004 and since increased from a circuit of 800ha to 6,000ha (2,000 to 15,000 acres).
- Parents Bryan and Rosie run a successful caravan park. Established in 2000 after the farm successfully hosted a number of caravan rallies, it has recently been named AA Best Campsite in Wales 2016.

Sheep Farmer Special Series

This is the fourth article in a series looking at how vets and farmers work together. More in the next edition



Chris Jones and his vet Hilary Jones.

vet-farmer relationship comes into its own when you can just call or email your vet and feel confident to do that."

Chris works alongside his parents Bryan and Rosie, but has increasingly taken on responsibility for the farm while his parents Bryan and Rosie focus on the caravan park and Bryan's role on the local county council.

The summer is a particularly busy time, with the caravans at full capacity and Chris busy off the farm spraying crops. "Some weeks in the summer I'm not here at all and have to rely on dad to check the stock," he says. "Jobs like drawing lambs have to be done on wet days."

Juggling commitments

The cattle joined the business towards the end of 2014 as a way to utilise some former dairy housing that comes with a block of rented land. Buying three-week-old Angus cross calves from Meadow Quality in the autumn worked well with the spraying and was repeated in 2015 as a likely-permanent addition to the business. The spraying is predominantly March to October, so Chris utilises his HGV licence during his 'quieter' months with the odd lorry shift where it fits in.



Ewe on silage ahead of lambing, which is complemented by high protein ewe rolls.

The complexity of this busy timetable means ewes have traditionally been sponged to lamb early and tightly together, but emergency heart surgery for Bryan last summer stopped

continued on page 32

MCGREGOR
POLYTUNNELS
SHEEP HOUSING
 Invest in the best for lambing success
01962 772368
 sales@mgregorpolytunnels.co.uk

ROXAN

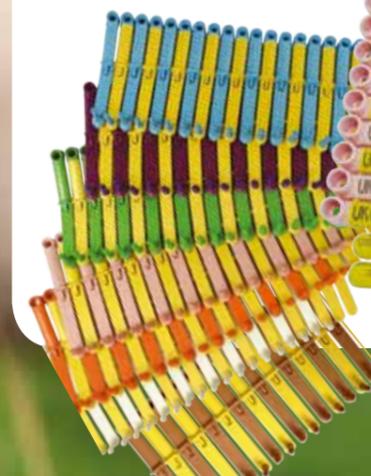
TAG WITH CONFIDENCE FROM BIRTH



Designed & Made

TagFaster

Automatically Dispensed



from **89p** / pair

Volume Dependant

Rubba

Hand Application Only



75p / pair



Double Tags

10 PAIRS PER STRIP

FREE DELIVERY

Promo Code: **ROXP05**

Enter online at checkout or quote over the phone.

Ends 31/01/16

Prices quoted are subject to VAT & postage

01750 722940

sales@www.roxan.co.uk

[f](https://www.facebook.com/roxanid) [y](https://www.youtube.com/roxanid) /roxanid

The first lambs born in 2016 at Pont Kemys Farm.



► the usual cycle of work. Chris started lambing slightly later in January this year than usual and is thinking the slower pace and cost savings might mean he reconsiders things.

The flock has evolved from the three-quarter Texel ewe preferred by Bryan when he controlled the sheep enterprise. The opportunity to rent 30ha (80 acres) and buildings nearby, taking the farm to a total of 100ha (250 acres), led Chris to decide to more than double the 150 ewes his dad ran and to do so using slightly different genetics.

Chris says: "Dad didn't have a bad system running, and the lambs made good money, but I found the ewes had small pelvises and were hard to lamb and the lambing percentage wasn't great. The advantage was that we weren't buying any problems in, which we are at risk of now and need to be aware of."

Some Texel Mules were bought from Bicester Sheep Fair in 2010 and 2010, followed by 100 North of England Mule ewe lambs from Lancaster in 2012. Half of these were lambed as ewe lambs and all 100 have gone on to produce Texel Mule replacements for the flock. The Texel is used across these again to produce three-quarter Texel lambs for finishing.

Chris began working more closely with Hilary when he first started buying in sheep, straight away identifying vaccination against enzootic abortion as a sensible step to protect the flock. The next year vaccination for toxoplasmosis was added, which was a turning point for Chris in terms of looking at the cost benefit of interventions.

Cost benefits

He says: "I wouldn't go back from vaccinating for toxo, whatever the cost. The risk is so high, especially when you feed mill and mix, because you'll never keep the cats out of the shed. You only have to lose a few less lambs and it pays for itself."

"I'm also think vaccinating for footrot is money well spent. We have CODD in the flock now, which we must have bought in. It's a real nuisance, particularly at lambing time, so we vaccinate for footrot at scanning time, when we also bolus and, this year, fluked



Some Mules bought in 2012, alongside a homebred Texel Mule.

the ewes. We have found that when we get less footrot we get less CODD too."

Since getting involved on the farm, Hilary has been pushing Chris to include more protein in the diet for in-lamb and recently lambed ewes. Having gained farm assurance status for the wheat sold off the farm this summer, Chris decided to sell some barley as well and buy in rolls for the ewes instead. Hilary is delighted but says that, while the labour saving of rolls attracted Chris, he could have achieved the same by including more protein and minerals in his previous mill and mix.

"If the ewes are better fed and more satisfied they'll produce

Cosy Calf

UK Supplier of Calf Jackets

Tried, tested and produced by a farmer for farmers

Introducing our new Lamb Jackets!

- Reflective edging
- Breathable and water repellent
- High quality for long life
- Easy to use
- Machine washable at 50 degrees C
- Adjustable belly strap



Optimum protection at low temperatures



Available in four sizes:

- Extra Small (3-8 pounds)
- Small (8-12 pounds)
- Medium (12-16 pounds)
- Large (16+ pounds)

Each jacket comes with a blank plastic number card. 1 permanent marker pen per order, Red or Blue.

Material: Outer shell 600D Oxford, 100g filling, nylon lining.

£10.00 + VAT per jacket. Free P + P to Mainland UK.

Tel: 01308 868 337 Mob: 07973 444 140

Email: mandy@cosycalf.co.uk | www.cosycalf.co.uk



more milk and there'll be less teat problems in general," she says, adding that Chris's lambing shed routine of regularly disinfecting pens and using lots of straw bedding helps too, by reducing the infection pressure.

Bolusing ewes for selenium has also helped with mastitis, although the deficiency was a problem that revealed itself in the lambs first, due to losses from white muscle disease. Chris looks back: "We had some lambs born weak but also lost some big, strong lambs. Apparently they go because they're growing faster and the pressure on their hearts is more. Post mortem found they had spongy hearts from the disease, but we wouldn't have known it was that otherwise, as the visible symptom of stiff joints is easy to confuse with lameness.

"We just bolus the ewes now and think 'that's it sorted for six months'," says Chris. "If you're gentle with the gun you're fine doing it, but it's not a job that you want to do in a rush." He uses a selenium, cobalt and iodine product, as Hilary's local knowledge confirms cobalt is a problem in the area.

Local network

Hilary's close links with other sheep farms in the area and APHA Carmarthen means she also alerts her clients to any sudden deaths in lambs from nematodirus, signalling a mass hatch of worms in the locality. For worms later in the season, Chris does do occasional faecal egg counts to stay on track, and due to problems in the past with fluke the duo remain in regular contact on a farm and season-specific plan for this.

Coccidiosis, on the other hand, is not yet an area of agreement between Chris and Hilary. They agree the flock is high risk but Chris favours buckets containing decoquinate as a preventative measure (for ease of use) and Hilary would prefer it be included in the creep feed (so larger lambs don't get it all).

Creep feeding is continued until early summer, when Chris gets



The last of the 2015-born lambs on turnips and forage rape.

too busy to be regularly drawing finished lambs and, as the trade drops off, holds lambs through to autumn to finish on a turnip and forage rape mix. This root crop is also used for early lambing ewes and their lambs, before the grass comes through. Linked to the discussion about nutrition with Hilary, ewes are supplemented for six or eight weeks after lambing, depending on grass growth. The first lambs were sold at the end of April last year, but will be slightly later this time due to a later start.

Now Chris has found his way with the sheep, and increased his commitments elsewhere, he feels more comfortable that he knows what size flock suits him and the farm. This spring he will sell some older ewes with lambs at foot and reduce to around 200-head.

With the breeding and health much closer to where he wants to be, doing a good job with slightly fewer ewes looks like a sensible and more efficient option for this incredibly busy operator.

THE ALL-NEW 500

NEW RELEASE

EASIER TO FILL
With a filling height of 700mm, this makes it easy to fill with bags in sheds and in the field

LOWER INITIAL INVESTMENT
The 500 model has a low cost per length of trough space, making it cheaper to use the 3IN1FEEDERS

EASY TO MOVE
The feeders are easier to move into sheds, load into trailers, skid and lift with a front end loader

3IN1 FEEDERS

08000 786030
www.3in1feeders.co.uk

£695+VAT fully assembled

Working with farmers to deliver real solutions to livestock disease

By Lee Innes and Beth Wells, Moredun

Moredun Research Institute in Scotland is world renowned for its research to prevent and control diseases of livestock.



The research outputs from the institute have made a major impact both in the UK and globally, due in a large part to the unique relationship Moredun has with the farming community and the emphasis the organisation puts on effective knowledge exchange with livestock producers.

Moredun was originally established by Scottish farmers in 1920 who were concerned about the serious losses they were experiencing due to disease in their farm livestock. Within 10 years of the research institute opening, Moredun scientists had discovered the causes of several major diseases of livestock and developed effective vaccines and treatment strategies.

This success continued and today many of the veterinary medicines and vaccines that are routinely used on the farm have either been researched, developed or tested at Moredun. The research focuses mainly on the prevention and control of disease in sheep and cattle, although there has been increasing work done on pigs, poultry and fish.

The critical link with the farming community has been a mainstay of Moredun's success and the Moredun Foundation currently has more than 13,

000 members from the farming, veterinary and animal health community, as well as farmers sitting on Moredun's governing boards. This ensures research outputs, knowledge, skills and expertise generated at Moredun are focussed and targeted to improve animal health and welfare and increase the sustainable efficiency of livestock production, vital to help safeguard global food security.

Sharing info

The Moredun Foundation is also committed to ensuring effective communication of the research outputs to people that may benefit from them. Moredun staff take part in many knowledge exchange activities including: animal health road shows and practical on-farm workshops and demonstrations with farmers; production of fact sheets and practical animal health information; policy and stakeholder discussions and workshops on some of the major animal health issues, such as eradication of BVD; diagnosis and management of Johne's disease; control of liver fluke; prevention and control of scour in calves; and cattle health planning.

In this work Moredun is very fortunate to have a very talented and enthusiastic group of volunteers across the UK to help communicate science and to advise on animal health topics and issues within different regional areas.

The Moredun Foundation has five regional boards covering South England,

Partnership working

NSA and Moredun have been working closely together for a number of years now, including an agreement that allows all NSA members to enjoy associate membership of Moredun. As part of the agreement last year to continue the membership agreement, NSA invited Moredun to use this article to remind Sheep Farmer readers of the incredible role it plays in the sheep sector.

North England, Wales, South Scotland and North Scotland, with each regional board being comprised of farmers, veterinarians, SQPs, industry representatives, young farmers and students collectively representing a wide cross section of stakeholders within the livestock industry – see *panel and map*.

The chairs from each of the regional boards travel up to Moredun four times a year to represent their region in the main Moredun Foundation Board. In December the first regional advisors workshop was held at Moredun to look at how collaborative working may be improved and to plan some new engagement and outreach activities over the coming year. The workshop was a great success with the scientists hearing more about the work of the regional advisors and the advisors getting a much better understanding of life at the coal face for the scientists and some of the challenges and opportunities currently facing Moredun.

Moredun's Regional Advisors

1. North of Scotland

Willie Stewart, Orkney (Chair)
Ian Gill, Angus
Kevin Kennedy, Isle of Lewis
Rod McKenzie, Ross-shire
Ian Duncan Millar, Perthshire
Sandy Tulloch, Aberdeenshire
Bill Wilson, Perth

2. South of Scotland

Mungo Guthrie, Ayrshire (Chair)
John Bell, Fife
Scott Brown, Midlothian
Roddy Dunse, Dumfries and Galloway
Lorraine Luescher, Dumfriesshire
Johnny Mackie, Perthshire
Scott Somerville, Lanark
Kevin Stewart, Scottish Borders

3. North of England

Bridget Taylor, Cheshire (Chair)
Clive Brown, Shropshire
Thomas Carrick, Cumbria
Eddie Eastham, Carlisle
Ian Hall, Northumberland

Rachel Hall, West Yorkshire

Fiona Kidd, Penrith
Graeme Reavley, Berwick on Tweed
Richard Wheeldon, Derbyshire

4. Wales

Gareth Jones, Denbighshire (Chair)
Lynfa Davies, Ceredigion
Sally Harmer, Carmarthen
John Hughes, Powys
Dafydd Jones, Ynys Mon/Anglesey
Catherine Nakielny, Carmarthenshire
Kate Phillips, Shropshire
James Ruggeri, Aberystwyth
Deborah Shukman, Monmouthshire
John Yeomans, Powys

5. South of England

Frank Langrish, East Sussex (Chair)
Peter Baber, Exeter
Emma Carr, Malvern
Patrick Green, Northampton
Nick Hart, Herefordshire
Bill Hill, Devon
Nerys Wright, Bedfordshire



New ideas were discussed to help improve communication and engagement activities and, perhaps most importantly, volunteers emerged to champion and drive some of these ideas forward. The participants also greatly enjoyed the opportunity to meet each other and do some cross regional networking.

Volunteer army

There is no doubt that one of Moredun's greatest assets is this secret army of volunteers on the regional boards, who are our ambassadors out in the field and help Moredun retain its roots and strength within the livestock industry.

Moredun was delighted when the partnership with the NSA was renewed for a second three-year term in June 2015. This means that all NSA members are complementary associate members of the Moredun Foundation, receiving the invaluable Moredun technical newsheets on a range of animal health issues, as well as its regular members' magazine. This partnership has two way benefits as Moredun gains from improving connectivity with sheep farmers across the UK, enabling the research to be focussed where it can provide most benefit to sheep health and welfare.

All NSA members in the UK are

automatically Moredun members, unless they inform NSA otherwise. Livestock farmers are also encouraged to be members of Moredun individually, if they would like voting rights within the organisation and also to support the invaluable work Moredun does for the industry.

NSA members are able to access the member's area of the Moredun website but they have to register first. The link to do this is www.moredun.org.uk/members/registration

To support Moredun's work further by becoming a full member call 01314 455111 or visit www.moredun.org.uk.

Putting a *spring* in their steps for over 30 years



INSTA-LIFE FROM ONLY 13p a dose

Osmonds Lamb Colostrum Supplement was the very first colostrum supplement to be sold in the UK. Over 30 years later we continue to produce the highest quality Colostrum Supplement so your lambs get the very best start in life.

Est. 1854
Osmonds
Animal Nutritionists & Veterinary Suppliers



Quality ✓ **Reliability** ✓ **Mixability** ✓

Visit www.osmonds.co.uk or call 01948 668 100
Bradeley Green, Tarporley Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 4HD

Monitoring lambing mortality and disease for management benefits

By Beth Lawrence,
Belmont Farm
and Equine Vets,
Herefordshire



The most important performance indicator of any commercial sheep enterprise is the number of lambs sold per ewe or, more precisely, the kilograms of meat sold per ewe. The target is 1kg of lamb sold per 1kg of ewe mated in lowland flocks. This single factor has a huge impact on the overall profitability of the enterprise.

Historically, sheep farmers have struggled to record data and, too often, the only data obtained easily is number of ewes put to the ram and the number of lambs sold. With the drive for all farming businesses to become more efficient we must be able to accurately monitor how well a farm is performing, demonstrating both strengths and weaknesses, at certain stages in production. Therefore, we must monitor when and how both lamb and ewe disease and mortality occur.

It is vitally important to be able to record data in order to calculate key performance indicators (KPIs) in the lambing period – see *panel*. This allows precise targeting of areas for improvement and prevention of losses in the future.

Loss of any in-lamb ewe means the loss of her lamb crop too. Ewe mortality rates can be calculated from disposal records; dates should be included so this can be calculated for a specified time period.

Reducing mortality

There are many diseases that contribute to ewe mortality around lambing time. Some causes of **abortion** can also result in sick ewes and sometimes death, including *Salmonella* and *E.coli*. Undiagnosed infectious abortion agents within a flock can have a significant impact on the number of barren ewes, ewe mortality and lambs born alive. There are many forms of abortion and obtaining an accurate diagnosis is hugely cost-effective. Always



Classic hypocalcaemia signs - low head position, recumbency and constipation.

BSC targets

	Tupping	Lambing	Weaning
Lowland	3.5	3	2.5
Upland	3	2.5	2
Hill	2.5	2	2

consult your vet at the first sign of any abortion.

Inadequate nutrition can also cause mortality. At the very least, always body condition score (BCS) ewes at tupping and eight weeks prior to lambing to ensure adequate nutrition and preparation for lambing – see *table for target BCS*. Ideally, a sample of in-lamb ewes should be blood sampled for energy, protein and calcium status three weeks prior to the start of lambing to ensure the diet given is meeting the demands of the flock. If demands are not being met, two metabolic diseases can cause ewe mortality:-

- **Pregnancy toxemia (twin lamb disease)** frequently results in death. It is generally seen in ewes of poor body condition and carrying multiple foetuses, but can also be seen in over-fat ewes. Less than 2% is acceptable in many flocks but incidences over this indicate a nutritional problem that needs further investigation. Treatment is frequently unsuccessful unless signs are noticed early.
- **Hypocalcaemia** is commonly seen from up to six weeks pre-lambing; this is another disease with high mortality unless treated with promptly.

Another cause of ewe mortality are **vaginal prolapses**, which are invariably seen annually. Less than 1% is common, however, if incidence is more than 2% please consult your vet. Mark any ewes that have prolapsed to cull after weaning.

Some losses from **dystocia and lambing abnormalities**, including uterine prolapse, can be prevented with a well skilled lambing team. However, evisceration through a vaginal tear invariably necessitates euthanasia.

Toxic **mastitis** is seen within three weeks of lambing and is often fatal unless identified early. Many flocks will experience around 2% annually. Cases often originate from poor milk production, a consequence of inadequate nutrition in late stages of pregnancy.

The risk of **liver fluke** is individual to each farm and should be included in any flock health plan.

When it comes to lamb mortality, approximately 80-90% of the total losses

Data collection and KPIs

- Number of ewes put to the tup(s).
- Scanning percentage (Target varies from 120% in hill systems to 195% on lowland farms).
- Abortion percentage (Target less than 2%).
- Lambing percentage (Number of lambs born alive divided by number of ewes put to the ram).
- Lambs born dead (Target less than 5%).
- Lamb mortality from birth to 48 hours (Target less than 5%).
- Lamb mortality from scanning to turn out (Target less than 10%).
- Ewe mortality from tupping to weaning (Target less than 4%).

occur between the last week of gestation and the first week of life, called the perinatal period. Between two and six million lambs are lost within this period each year. A lamb lost up to the point of lambing, in an indoor lambing system, is estimated to cost £20-25 to the farmer. Extensively managed hill flocks may have higher lamb mortality with climate and predation affecting them more.

Pinpointing losses

Comparing scanning percentage with lambs born alive can indicate the number of lambs lost during the later stages of pregnancy and these losses may be attributed to resorption, abortion or nutritional problems.

Calculating losses between lambs born alive to lambs turned out can indicate if there are any problems related to mis-mothering, colostrum intake/quality,



Blood sampling is an easy and useful tool for analysing nutritional status in ewes.



A 'tucked up' lamb with starvation.

hygiene and neonatal disease such as watery mouth.

Poor pre-lambing ewe nutrition will result in low birthweight lambs and poor colostrum production, leading to hypothermia, starvation and or mis-mothering. Optimal birthweights from 75kg ewes are 4.5-6kg for singles, 3.5-4.5kg for twins and 3.5kg+ for triplets.

Inadequate colostrum not only causes a failure in nutrition for the lamb but also fails to provide immunity essential for protection against disease. This is too-often overlooked and is why body condition scoring ewes is so important; ewes must receive the adequate diet to produce optimal colostrum.

Other losses can result from lambing difficulties (**dystocia**). This is a reflection on both skill of the lambing team and breeding selection. Most **infectious neonatal disease** (joint ill, navel ill, watery mouth (*E.coli*), spinal abscesses and

meningitis) in young lambs arise due to inadequate colostrum intake, along with a heavily contaminated environment. Ensure navels are well dressed with strong iodine. Joint ill can be seen as young as five days old and some farms are increasingly seeing high incidences associated with *S.dysgalacticae*, despite good hygiene practice and colostrum.

Coccidiosis is frequently encountered in young lambs and can have a high mortality rate if not treated quickly. This disease is most often seen with high stocking rates and a heavily contaminated environment. Faecal egg counts can diagnose the problem.

Losses can also be the result of **mineral deficiencies**. Selenium deficiency in ewes can produce white muscle disease in their lambs, which is associated with poor viability. The lambs are often slow



Adequate nutrition before lambing is vital.



Ewbol

Productive
Healthy
Profitable

Grow your future now

The **BENEFITS** of feeding ForFarmers Ewbol range:

- High energy → Reduce twin lamb disease
- Quality protein → Improve lamb growth rates
- ExtraGuard → Improve lamb survival & vigour
- FibreZyme → Increase fibre digestibility

for farmers
the total feed business

0845 722 8853
www.forfarmers.co.uk
@ForFarmersUK

Nutrition key to successful lambing period and early lamb growth rates

Mild temperatures and record rainfall levels this winter have led to grazing that may be unable to meet ewe requirements during late pregnancy, says Bethany May, Trident Feed Ruminant Nutritionist.

Although many pastures appear lush and adequate for pregnant ewes, in many instances grazed grass alone, despite some producers' optimism, may be unable to meet the ewe's requirements during the six to eight weeks before lambing.

Miss May suggests carefully managing nutrition and supplementing diets to help reduce potential problems.

"Fresh grass is typically around 15-25% dry matter," she says. "However, we've seen levels drop to around 12% in many areas, largely due to the mild, wet conditions. This means dry matter intakes of ewes grazing swards are likely to be significantly reduced due to increased bulk fill, further confounded by ewes seeking shelter rather than grazing.

Energy needs

"This results in ewes being unable to consume enough feed to meet the high energy demands in the run up to lambing, increasing the risk of twin lamb disease and small lamb birth weights.

"On top of this, the size of the rumen drastically reduces as pregnancy progresses, due to the foetus taking up more abdominal space, so every mouthful really counts.

"It's really important that the ewes have adequate ME levels in the diet and this is why supplementary feeding is so important, even if on first inspection forages appear adequate. Starting with a rumen friendly compound to complement the lush grass is ideal in this situation."



Wet grass with a low dry matter content will not meet nutritional needs in late pregnancy.

It's not easy to predict if your forage is providing enough nutritional value in late pregnancy, however body condition scoring (BCS) can help with this, Miss May says.

Body condition

"A BCS lower than 2.5 is an indicator that supplementary feeding may be necessary," she explains. "For this reason, it's important to monitor BCS changes throughout pregnancy and try to detect any sudden reductions, as it helps determine the level of supplemental feeding necessary before it's too late, whether housed indoors or grazed outdoors.

"The supply of sufficient feed is crucial for maintaining body condition and helps boost milk availability."

One option for supplementary nutrition is sugar beet feed, which Miss May describes as containing slowly digestible fibre and high levels of energy (a large proportion of which is sugar) to boost intakes and maintain rumen health. It

can be fed alone or as up to 40% of a compound feed.

As well as considering what is in a feed, she suggests considering feeding systems too. For example, she says, robust pellets can mean little wastage when fed on the ground, even in poor weather.

Looking ahead to after lambing, Miss May adds that encouraging the rumen to develop as early as possible could be key to profitable lamb growth this spring.

Lamb growth

"Without access to highly palatable hard feeds with good levels of digestible fibre, rumen development in lambs will be much slower. There's also a real risk of a check in lamb growth following weaning.

"To reduce the risk, producers could start feeding lambs creep feed as soon as possible. It will also make lambs less dependent on the ewe, encouraging efficient growth rates throughout their life."

Making quality silage and condition scoring ewes pushes performance

Silage quality is one component of a detailed approach to ewe nutrition in Graham Lofthouse's flock of 592 ewes at Bankhouse Farm, Stow, Scottish Borders.



Less than 5% of lambs are lost between scanning and sale at Bankhouse – a figure which is significantly lower than the UK average of 15% and is contributing to increased flock profitability.

The Easycare ewes are put to a Suffolk sire, with a proportion bred pure for replacements. Mr Lofthouse, who farms in partnership with his parents, Wilma and Bert, changed from Texel cross ewes seven years ago when they introduced a target for ewes in the flock to produce their bodyweight in lambs.

Mr Lofthouse says: "Our Easycare ewes weigh in the region of 65kg. In 2013-15 we have produced just over this in lamb weight per ewe per year. The Texel crosses could weigh up to 90kg, and it would have been unachievable to expect this performance from them."

Grazing

The farm extends to 110 hectares (265 acres) of upland, which is all grass and also carries 75 Simmental cross suckler cows. Mr Lofthouse treats the ewes like a dairy herd and manages their nutrition to maximise milk yield from grass.

Monitoring body condition is the cornerstone of this approach and Mr Lofthouse aims for ewes to be at condition score 3.5-4 pre tugging and says it is crucial they maintain this level till mid-January. At this point the ewes are normally housed, split by litter size and condition, and fed a controlled diet of



Graham Lofthouse puts lower lambing losses down to quality nutrition for in-lamb ewes.

silage, providing slightly above their group maintenance requirements – in the region of 11-12MJ of energy per day.

Mr Lofthouse was an enthusiastic member of the Border Lamb Supply Chain group and, through his participation in this QMS-supported initiative, worked closely with John Vipond from SAC Consulting to further improve the nutrition of the Bankhouse ewes during pregnancy.

Dr Vipond says: "During the last four to six weeks of pregnancy, the pregnant ewe is under severe pressure; ewes need high levels of good quality protein to help the lambs develop and grow a decent covering of wool – with those carrying triplets clearly with even greater demands."

Mr Lofthouse makes a proportion of his silage specifically to feed in late pregnancy. This is first cut from young grass at six weeks, at the optimum leafy

stage. Analysis of the 2015 forage shows ME of 11.9MJ/kg, 10% crude protein with a D value of 74.

Dr Vipond adds: "Excellent silage is produced at Bankhouse for ewes in late pregnancy, supplied alongside soya bean meal at the rate of 100g per lamb carried per ewe per day.

What the ewe really needs at this stage is digestible undegradable protein (DUP), which does not break down in the rumen but moves through to the small intestine before it releases the protein for absorption. Soya is the optimum source of DUP, but new sources of protected protein are emerging and trial work is being planned."

At housing, condition scoring remains an integral part of the approach and Mr Lofthouse handles the ewes regularly to assess condition. Individuals are moved to a different group if they lose or gain half a score. For example, a thin twin-bearing ewe might go in with the triplets and a fit one with the singles.

Mr Lofthouse adds: "The ultimate aim is to lamb the ewes at condition score 3, certainly not less than 2.5."

There is a lot to gain from this planned approach and close attention to detail. Lamb birth weights average 4.2kg for the Suffolk crosses and 3.7kg for the Easycare, with the majority of the flock lambing unassisted. Lambing starts on 1st April and a vet student is the only support for Graham and his parents. This is sufficient, however, as they encounter very few health issues with the ewes, find the colostrum quality to be first class and the lambs very vigorous.

"In addition to the feed and labour savings seen in this system, it's clear to see feeding high-quality silage with correct protein supplementation helps lambs off to the best possible start," concludes Dr Vipond.

AG Polytunnels



30ft x 90ft
Sheep Polytunnel
just £2,850 +VAT

Other sizes
available

01594 546935 info@agpolytunnels.co.uk
www.agpolytunnels.co.uk

Product development news

In recent weeks Barenbrug has announced the launch of two new perennial ryegrass varieties. Fintona is a new intermediate tetraploid perennial being marketed as suitable for maximising silage yield on a two-cut system. Moira is an intermediate diploid perennial ryegrass that provides excellent spring growth. Both varieties have taken almost 15 years to develop as part of a specialist grass-breeding programme at AFBI Loughgall, County Armagh, Northern Ireland.

In addition, Bimeda has launched a new 10ml drench applicator (pictured) suitable for administering treatments for fluke and worms at low dose rates. The company says the new product is in a direct response to conversations with UK sheep farmers saying there is a gap in the market for such an applicator.



HEATWAVE BY POON

Heats cold milk to be fed ad lib

- Saves Labour
- Feeds 30 calves or 50 lambs
- Thermostatically controlled
- Hygienic
- Reliable
- Fast growing lambs

£385 + VAT

www.heatwavemilkwarmer.com • 01432 830409

SCOPS volunteers get set for first stage of worm boot camp

By Lesley Stubbings, SCOPS

The first priority for our volunteers for the SCOPS boot camp will be considering the right balance of ewe wormer treatments around lambing.

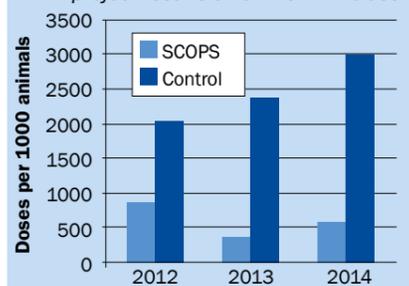


Historically it has been the norm on most farms to treat all ewes at some point around lambing, to reduce the amount of contamination on pastures for lambs later in the year. However, we now know treating adult sheep is very selective for resistance so if we can avoid treating as many animals as possible, without affecting performance, we will preserve the effectiveness of our wormers for longer. We have also learnt that we can significantly reduce the proportion of animals that need to be treated, saving money, time and reducing selection pressure for anthelmintic resistance.

Treating ewes

The graph shows results published last year from an APHA project comparing the number of ewe treatments given on farms following SCOPS principles compared to those following the traditional (control) routine of treating at lambing and pre-tupping.

APHA project results on anthelmintic use.



Good nutrition around lambing allows ewes to control worm burdens without drenching.

The difference is huge. The SCOPS farms used six times less wormer in 2014 with nearly half of their ewes not receiving any treatment at all during the year, compared to the conventional flocks where ewes were treated on average three times a year. The growth rates for lambs and infections levels on pasture were not affected and, in fact, the number of drenches given to lambs was also lower.

The key to this is ewe condition and nutrition. Fit, healthy, adult ewes keep their worm burden under control by using their immune system, allowing only a small number of worms to produce low numbers of eggs. What we now know is that, even in late pregnancy, the ewe's immune system can still cope if she is well fed and her protein levels are maintained. So maybe a bit of extra cost on feed in late pregnancy can be made to pay dividends in terms of worm control?

Nutrition

Ewe nutrition is therefore the first thing the 'boot campers' will look at, with the aim of only treating those ewes that are likely to be struggling and, therefore, putting a lot of eggs onto pasture. We will also be looking at the timing of any treatments carefully, because treatments are less selective if they are given when egg outputs are high and ewes are able to quickly pick up re-infection off pasture, giving a 'dilution' effect. In practice, this means treating ewes either at/very close to lambing or in early lactation, avoiding early treatment (such as at housing) or treatment later in lactation.

Our second boot camp priority will be to use drench tests to establish which wormers are working effectively on the farms and which are not. This will involve the boot camp volunteers checking faecal egg counts (FECs) when sheep are

SCOPS Boot Camp 1: Getting Started

Regular readers of Sheep Farmer may remember that, in the last edition, we asked for volunteers to join a SCOPS boot camp, supported by NSA.

Volunteers were people who had not embraced SCOPS ideas before but were willing to be guided through the steps in return for their progress, the highs and the lows, to be shared in Sheep Farmer and on the SCOPS website. We are in the process of contacting volunteers and plan to bring you progress reports through the coming season.

Lesley says: "One of the things I hope will really interest readers is how different the participants are. Of course there will be an overall plan as we go through the season, but each farm will have to work through their own challenges. Variables include lambing date, location, grazing availability, whether there are cattle on the farm, previous use of wormers, the threat of sheep scab, stocking rate and so on.

"You will see how we work through these on the various farms and we hope there will be something for everyone to put into practice. To get started, I thought we should use this article to tee up what will be the first three of priorities for the volunteers."

There will be frequent short updates at www.scops.org.uk as well as technical information, including nematodirus warnings, so be sure to go online regularly through the season.

drenched (or before if they are ready to start using them to determine the need to treat) and then following up with another test to see how well the treatment has worked. We will start this when lambs are treated for the first time and report on what we find and the choices people have made based on these results. More details next time.

Setting targets

This leads me into the third priority, which is to set some targets and measure progress on the farms. Remember, our objective in all of this is to improve worm control on the farms while reducing reliance on anthelmintics. So, while each flock will have its own targets, all of them will have some measurement of lamb growth rates and how much wormer they are using and when.



Premier Sheep Drench

"The wet mild weather has washed many nutrients from the grass."

To help ensure livestock perform to their genetic potential.

Drench 3-5 weeks prior to lambing

High levels of essential elements to balance the ewe and lamb up to and through lambing.

Not all mineral drenches are the same



For more information contact Jonathan Guy

T 01886 880482

M 07866 607466

E jganimalhealth@aol.com

W www.jganimalhealth.com

Secure Windbreaks

- Improve ventilation
- Weather & bird barrier
- Excellent light transmission
- Strong - will not fray
- Simple clip-on system
- Fully adjustable
- Full 10 year UV guarantee



Secure Econoblind®

- Economic alternative to roller screens
- Concertina blind designed for frequent access
- Simple track and trolley system
- Easy assembly



Tel: 0800 7832804

www.securecovers.com

A team approach to preventing coccidiosis can drive performance

Following a year of sheep prices most farmers would like to forget, it's sometimes hard to prioritise preventative flock health. But vet Will Barker of Castle Veterinary Surgeons, County Durham, argues that ignoring the threat of coccidiosis following the lambing period can cause costly problems, and reduce lamb growth rates that cannot be recovered.

He says: "Farmers know dead lambs mean lost money. The issue is that when a farmer has coccidiosis for the first time, the first thing they tend to notice is lambs around three to 12 weeks old either scouring or just not doing. Lambs go downhill very quickly with coccidiosis, from being good healthy lambs one week, to suffering huge losses in growth rates and poor performance the next.

"By this point they have already suffered major losses that they won't recoup; not only due to the obvious monetary loss of those that die, or have scours and other clinical symptoms, but from all the others in the group which are affected subclinically.

"I've found that some farmers aren't aware that, before these obvious clinical signs, coccidiosis has already affected the lambs' growth rates and increased the time and nutrition needed to get them to



Timing is crucial when protecting lambs from coccidiosis, says Will Barker.

the same weight and finished."

Mr Barker says losses need to be reduced to ensure business margins, as well as lambs, are healthy. His recommendation is to be proactive and contact your vet to create robust, farm-specific flock health plans.

"You have to know and understand the flock history to catch lambs before coccidiosis problems take effect," he says. "I try to encourage farmers to treat proactively rather than reactively and to get analysis done via sampling so they can really work out what they're dealing with.

"If you notice lambs not doing so well contact your vet to discuss a plan of action including speciation testing to identify exactly what you're dealing with. If sheep die get a post mortem, as these can provide valuable information for treating the other animals.

Farm-specific

"It's essential to work out what is happening on your farm before you start treating. Especially with prices so low, you can't afford to waste money on ineffective treatments, wrongly timed."

Getting the timing of treatment right for coccidiosis can be tricky, as Mr Barker explains it is key to target the prepatent period of the disease. This is once lambs have had exposure to coccidiosis, so they can start building up some natural immunity, but before it starts to cause gut damage and consequently problems, such as poor growth rates.

"Working closely with your vet helps to identify this critical period," he says. "Prevention in this way is better than a cure, as by the time lambs need treating for clinical signs they have already lost any advantage they had."

Even those with healthy flocks, who may

Coccidiosis fact file

- Coccidiosis is second only to parasitic gastroenteritis (PGE) in causing diarrhoea and production losses in lambs.
- There are 15 different species of the parasite eimeria found in sheep worldwide, with *E. crandallis* and *E. ovinoidalis* being the two pathogenic species that cause coccidiosis.
- One coccidia oocyst ingested by a lamb can multiply to up to 16 million passed out onto the land as a source of infection. These can survive in the environment for many years.
- Choosing the right product and treatment timing can prevent amplification of environmental coccidiosis infection pressure.

not have had any previous experience with coccidiosis can still face an unexpected challenge. Mr Barker says this means no one can afford to be complacent with coccidiosis.

"My main point to get across would be that it can affect any flock, so working closely with your vet will be the best way to plan ahead and reduce potential losses," he says. "There is such a fast deterioration in young lambs, and when you consider the costly implications of coccidiosis, you can't afford to be lax.

"Vets are just as interested in saving farmers spending unnecessary money as they are, as well as using the medicines we have prudently. So it's important we work together to ensure effective preventative treatment plans, avoiding the risk of coccidiosis and threat to lamb performance. If vets and farmers work together we are more likely to have a sustainable, healthy sheep industry."

IT'S LIKE MOTHER'S MILK



LAMB FORCE

Made with ewe's milk

Contact your local Downland retailer or telephone 01228 564498

bestadvice@downland.co.uk | www.downland.co.uk

DOWNLAND
PARTNERS IN FARMING HEALTH

FARMPUS Constructions Ltd
TIMBER BUILDING SPECIALISTS

Sheep Housing Sheep Troughs & Barriers Cow Housing



CALL NOW ON 01772 785252
www.farmplus.co.uk

old mill
accountants and financial planners

Tax, Accountancy and
Financial Planning from the
heart of the West Country



www.oldmillgroup.co.uk

Exeter 01392 214635 Wells 01749 343366
Melksham 01225 701210 Yeovil 01935 426181



Maximising lambs born by having a system in place for surplus lambs

Surplus lambs are a fact of life when it comes to lambing – but there are several options available when deciding what to do with them.

One option is to sell them off the farm. This removes the risk of rearing them and might even create an opportunity for a keen young farmer wanting to make a start in sheep farming. Other options are to foster onto a single-bearing ewe or artificially rear them on milk replacer.

When fostering-on, independent sheep consultant Kate Phillips offers these tips:-

- **Wet foster.** Take the orphan lamb and cover in amniotic fluids from the single bearing ewe that has just lambed.

Place both the ewe's own lamb and the orphan together into a plastic trug, sprinkle with salt and allow the ewe to lick them in the bucket until it is clear that she has accepted both lambs.

- **Skin.** If a ewe has lost her lambs then it is possible to skin one of her dead lambs and put the skin onto an orphan.
- **Adopters.** A ewe should have accepted the foster lamb within 48 hours otherwise fostering is unlikely to be successful.

Rather than just seeing orphan lambs as surplus, Gill Dickson, Pyon Products Youngstock Specialist, recommends taking triplets and quads off their mothers too. She argues the ewe will recover better and last longer if she's not under pressure to rear multiples. The same is true for twin-bearing ewe lambs, where the removal of one lamb gives the other a better chance and allows the mother to keep milking and



On an artificial rearing system, keeping pipes behind a wire mesh stops lambs chewing them and pulling them into the pen.

growing.

Mrs Dickson says: "Many diseases, such as orf and mastitis, are made worse by ewes having an inadequate milk supply. The constant stripping of the teats causes injury and disease follows."

Vital colostrum

If taking this option with triplet-bearing ewes, Mrs Phillips says: "When deciding which lamb to take off the ewe, choose either the small one or the large one so she is left with a balanced pair. Whichever lamb is chosen it must be strong and suckling well and have remained with its mother for 24 hours and received a good supply of colostrum, particularly in the first

six hours of life.

"All foster lambs must have been fed colostrum as soon as possible after birth – preferably within the first two hours, 50ml/kg liveweight per feed and a minimum 210ml/kg liveweight within the first 24 hours."

If the mother has not been able to provide colostrum, it should be offered by teated bottle or pipe, with defrosted ewe's colostrum or powdered colostrum used if fresh is not available. See panel on facing page for more on artificial colostrum.

If the option selected for dealing with surplus lambs is to artificially rear them, Mrs Dickson argues that ad lib feeding offers many advantages over traditional restricted feeding with a bottle or teated bucket. On tradition feeding, she says: "Lambs grow more slowly, it is very labour intensive and the lambs are noisy as they become bonded to the shepherd. If several people are feeding the lambs there is also



Ensure lambs are in a draft-free pen with plenty of clean, dry bedding.

Artificial colostrum research

Research by Dr Tommy Boland of University College Dublin suggests triplet lambs can be successfully artificially reared and achieve high growth rates.

His research findings within the college's 350 ewe flock concluded that Volostrum, a colostrum alternative made from whey protein concentrate, went on to match the performance of those fed ewe colostrum for the first 24 hours of life. Furthermore, mortality was nil.

	Colostrum	
	Ewe	Artificial
Birth weight (kg)	4.8	4.7
Pre-weaning growth rate (g/day)	385	385
Weaning weight (kg)	21.9	21.5

a danger of inconsistent temperatures and concentrations and an increased risk of digestive upsets," she says.

"Consequently, the rearing method which is growing in popularity is cold or warm ad lib feeding. It is more natural, being available all the time and fed little and often on demand. Lambs look like they have been reared on the ewe, there is very little scouring, they are lively and healthy, and big enough to wean at around 35 days.

"The cold ad lib system is simply a barrel of cold milk available via bar teats on demand. But for warm milk, there are three types of machine available – one design keeps milk warm constantly, another heats on demand, and a third, automated model mixes the powder warm when needed. Machines are available to buy or hire and range from £140 for 10 lambs up to £2,700 for a fully automatic feeder for 240 lambs."

Jackie Bradley from Volac shares Mrs Dickson's views and considers the pros and cons of all available systems – see table. Regardless of the system opted for, Mrs Phillips says all milk

feeding equipment must be kept clean and washed daily in hot water, and consideration given to how and where the lambs are kept.

She says: "Lamb pens must be draft free, well drained and well bedded to keep lambs warm and as clean and dry as possible. Creep feed (18% crude protein) should be offered ad lib from one week of age to encourage early intake. This should be refreshed daily and not allowed to go stale. Clean fresh water should also be available."

Mrs Dickson adds: "If feeding the milk with a machine, place teats at 30-38cm (12-15 inches) from the ground and fix the suckler plates with a maximum of 10 lambs per teat. Place a piece of weldmesh behind the teats so the lambs can't pull the pipes into the pen.

"There is no need to feed hay, as it will stop them eating lamb creep and give them a pot belly. The starch in the lamb creep is essential to stimulate development of the rumen and encourage cudding."

Sheep vet Harriet Fuller says digestive problems, such as a twisted gut, are common in artificially reared lambs. "If milk is being fed ad lib it is vital that it is always available, otherwise lambs will gorge themselves," she says. "It's also important that the hole in the teat is not too large otherwise milk can flow into the rumen, which in turn causes a potbelly and the lamb fails to thrive.

Lamb health

"The risk of disease such as coccidiosis is increased when lambs start eating their bedding, so forage should be offered in racks or feeders. When discussing your flock health plan with your vet, be sure to include a plan for artificially reared lambs. It should include vaccination against clostridial diseases and pasteurella, starting at three weeks of age with a second dose four weeks later, and prevention of coccidiosis by drenching at four to five weeks of age or medicating the creep feed.

"If you vaccinate the rest of the flock against orf, don't forget to do the artificially reared lambs too. All lambs in a pen should be vaccinated at the same time; never mix vaccinated and unvaccinated lambs."

Mrs Phillips says to wean abruptly at no less than five weeks of age and when lambs are eating an average 0.25kg of creep feed over three days. "It's preferable to keep artificially reared lambs indoors rather than turn them out to pasture with a heavy worm burden, to prevent major growth checks," she adds. "Lambs can finish as fast as lambs on their mothers on well managed artificial rearing systems."

Mrs Dickson agrees, and highlights the margins available: "Typical lambs on the system use 10-12.5kg of milk powder each and 75-100kg creep. Depending on the lamb trade they will leave behind a margin over feed of £15-£25 per lamb. That means a large flock with 50 surplus lambs could bring in an extra £1,250 of profit."

Artificial rearing tips

1. Mix up milk powder warm and introduce the lamb to the teated bottle; once sucking keenly transfer it to the ad lib teat. Younger lambs prefer warm milk (20°C is warm enough).
2. Check the lamb's belly is full six hours later and, if not, lead it up to the teat again. Most learn during the first few hours.
3. Use a milk powder recommended for cold or warm mixing and long life feeding.
4. Weigh the powder and mix according to the manufacturer's instructions.
5. Refresh the barrel once per day with ad lib cold and warm systems.
6. Clean the teats and lines daily.
7. Never let the teat run dry.
8. Never mix stale milk with new milk, as it will go make the new milk go stale quickly.

Considerations for artificial rearing systems

System	Pros	Cons
Bottle feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual attention to detail. • Ensures an appropriate, controlled volume of milk replacer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour intensive. • Reduced growth rates: restricted feeding. • Increased risk of digestive upsets
Ad lib feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster growth as no limit to how much or when lambs can drink. • Several lambs can feed at once. • Milk can be fed warm or cold. • Milk consumed 'little and often' means less risk of digestive upsets. • Less labour intensive as the milk is made up in bigger volumes. • Relatively low set up costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disease can spread more easily through shared teats; hygiene is critical.
Automatic machine feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Least labour intensive, as a machine automatically reconstitutes and dispenses milk; no manual mixing required. • Milk consumed 'little and often' means less risk of digestive upsets. • Faster growth as no limit to how much or when lambs can drink. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest set up costs. • Disease can spread more easily through shared teats; hygiene is critical.

**BE IN THE KNOW,
WHEREVER YOU GO...
WITH A
Farmers Guardian
SUBSCRIPTION**



SUBSCRIBE NOW!

VISIT www.farmers-guardian.com/subscribe and enter **EHAFS**

CALL **01635 879 320** and quote **EHAFS**

All this for just **£29.75** per quarter or **£129** annually

Role for traditional grass species

When selecting varieties for reseeding grassland, sheep farmers shouldn't necessarily opt for high yielding perennial ryegrass, according to Rod Bonshor, Oliver Seeds General Manager.

"Perennial ryegrass is a fantastic plant, but the high growth peak through April and May can be tricky to manage and in dry summers it can stop growing all together," he says. "Under excessive rainfall and flooding it can be killed - leaving gaps for unproductive weed grasses and broadleaved weeds to gain a foothold."

One way to avoid these extremes is to look at the wider grass family and select species that grow at different times of the year and can perform on adverse sites, he suggests. Timothy and meadow fescue both start growing early in the year and keep going well into the autumn. They are good on heavy soils and will stand short periods of immersion, while also coping well in dry spells. They are more winter hardy than ryegrasses.

Cocksfoot is another traditional species seeing a bit of resurgence. Deep roots give it good anchorage and drought tolerance and it also survives hard winters. It exhibits excellent early spring and summer growth. Newer varieties of cocks are softer leaved than older ones and so are more palatable. They are also termed 'non-aggressive', as they complement other grasses in the mixture without



Lambs grazing in mid-summer on an Oliver Seeds sheep mix containing tradition species.

overpowering them.

Mr Bonshor says the newest species proving particularly useful in stress-prone sheep fields is festulolium - a range of crosses between different types of fescue and ryegrasses. Originally conceived to cope with Mediterranean conditions, they have proven to be very effective in the UK over the past few years. They have a deep and penetrating root mass and combine the stress tolerance and durability of the fescue, with the speed of establishment and feed quality of the ryegrass.

Festuloliums

Festuloliums have been the first species to return to active growth after flooding, and after dry spells. They also show good leaf retention when used for silage or

hay, which enhances the quality of the conserved forage and makes them a good dual-purpose species.

"The site should always be the first consideration when deciding which grasses to grow," advises Mr Bonshor. "At the moment, one of our most popular sheep mixes 21% of our festulolium and 29% cocksfoot, plus meadow fescue, timothy and a blend of white clover and birdsfoot trefoil. Late perennial ryegrass is also included.

"This diverse range of species performs particularly well on adverse sites. It has kept producing high quality forage all season long on farms across the UK, including in the dry south east, where other, mainly ryegrass mixtures, have given up."

New figures for grass-only lamb

The Pasture-Fed Livestock Association (PFLA) has published 'Pasture for Life: It can be done', a farm business case for feeding ruminants just on pasture.

PFLA champions the feeding of sheep entirely on grass and forage crops, arguing that while cereal diets may lead to quicker finishing it does so at an economic and environmental cost, while producing a less healthy product for consumers to eat.

The association is often asked about the physical and financial implications

of this approach so has teamed up with Jonathan Brunyee of the Royal Agricultural University to produce the new booklet analysing the business costings of eight PFLA members and comparing them against the average and top third producers in the AHDB Beef & Lamb Stocktake figures for 2015.

Due to lower variable costs, particularly concentrate feed purchases, the three PFLA sheep farmers earned a healthy gross margin per ewe of £72.74 - see

table. Fixed costs are on a par with the Stocktake average, making the net margin £24.07/ewe. This is higher than the Stocktake average and rivals the top third. At a stocking rate of 10 ewes/ha it equates to £241/ha, before rent.

Mr Brunyee says: "While these results are from a small sample of fairly sizeable flocks, they show PFLA sheep farmers can rival the top third of producers. I believe we can fairly say that rearing and finishing lamb on nothing but pasture does make economic sense."

PFLA is seeking more producers to become certified to meet increasing consumer demand. All sheep farmers can be PFLA members, but have to meet PFLA standards to become certified/ permitted to use the Pasture for Life logo for marketing. The standards do allow supplementary feeding for ewes that have been scanned as carrying multiples, although their lambs cannot be marketed under the logo. More information and copies of the new booklet at www.pastureforlife.org.uk or from Russ Carrington on execsec@pfla.org.uk.

Breeding sheep flocks, non-SDA (£/ewe put to the ram)

	PFLA average	Stocktake top third	Stocktake average
Gross output less replacement costs	89.27	93.06	92.69
Feed and forage costs	7.14	14.15	17.76
Vet and medicine	5.09	6.37	6.61
Other variable costs	4.30	6.42	7.80
Total variable costs	16.53	26.94	32.17
Gross margin/ewe	72.74	66.12	60.52
Labour (paid and unpaid)	30.02	20.97	28.29
Total fixed costs (before rent)	48.67	38.79	51.94
Net margin/ewe (before rent)	24.07	27.33	8.58
Net Margin/ha at 10 ewes/ha	241	273	78

On-farm works shows potential to finish lambs on red clover silage

Farmers looking to maximise the performance of their lambs and cut the cost of bought-in feeds could consider finishing lambs on red clover silage, according to work carried out by Farming Connect in Wales.



Lambs finishing indoors on red clover silage at Frowen Farm in Carmarthenshire.

Well-made red clover silage contains 14-20% crude protein, twice as much as grass silage, and also has a high energy content, meaning farmers can reduce the amount spent on expensive bought-in supplements. Red clover is usually very palatable too, meaning a possibility for higher intakes and more efficient use of forage.

Early findings of a feeding assessment at a West Wales farm in autumn 2015 supports the potential for red clover silage. Focusing on finishing lambs, it suggests they can grow at optimum rates without the need for supplementary feed.

After three weeks of being housed and fed bales of red clover silage without any supplement, a group of 182 lambs at Frowen Farm, Login, Whitland, Carmarthenshire, showed an impressive daily liveweight gain.

Performance

"When we started feeding the red clover silage we could see them altering and after three weeks had averaged 170g a day. In addition, 104 lambs from the group were ready to go to slaughter. Prior to feeding the red clover silage the lambs growth had become stagnant with very little daily liveweight gains," says farmer Ben Anthony. "Feeding the red clover silage has proved to be a good return on investment."

Independent sheep consultant Lesley Stubbings, who works with Ben and his partner Diana Fairclough at Frowen, says the high quality of the silage means only a minimal amount of supplements are needed and some will finish on silage alone.

"The red clover silage is really doing the business - it's pretty much like rocket fuel!" she says. "The lambs at Frowen have done at least as well as we would have predicted from the forage analysis.

"When finishing lambs, there can be a temptation to just assume they will need a significant amount of supplements, but if we apply more science than that and use the potential of good forage, the cost

can be minimal. Red clover is high protein, high energy and, if it's made correctly, you get very high quality silage. Many farmers could finish their animals without the need for supplements."

Mr Anthony is confident he can cut his costs this year thanks to the introduction of red clover silage. He says:

"We haven't fed any concentrate to the lambs. We thought we might have to, but they did so well on the red clover it wasn't necessary. Last year we were feeding the lambs creep to finish them, but we're hoping to avoid that entirely this year, which will mean a reduction in costs."

The analysis of the second cut of red clover silage made at Frowen this year showed it contained 11.1ME and 18.6% protein, compared to the first cut of 10.7ME and 15.8% protein.

Comparing cuts

The higher quality second cut of red clover silage was fed to the lambs first, before switching to the first cut bales once the initial group of 104 lambs went to slaughter. This decision was to save the best analysed silage for the ewes. However, they have since noticed a difference in the performance of the lambs.

Miss Fairclough states: "The remaining lambs seemed to have stalled slightly since the change of cuts of red clover silage, so it's a fine line - the silage has got to be the right quality. This emphasises the need to analyse your silage to know what you are feeding, if we continue to feed the first cut silage to the lambs we

may have to consider supplementing them with a very small amount of concentrate, but this will still work out cheaper than feeding ad-lib creep."

Red clover silage is also suitable for feeding to ewes, although it should be fed along with grass silage in late pregnancy to avoid any problems.

"Silage intake should be split so that they're not having too much pure red clover silage; either feed a bale of each or alternate them," Mrs Stubbings says, adding that ewes can be fed good red clover silage and/or grass silage well into late pregnancy before any supplementary feed is required.

"Sometimes you just have to top up with concentrates, but red clover silage will take you up to three weeks before lambing without needing any supplement," she says.

Pre-lambing

At Frowen this year the ewes will simply be topping up with a small amount of a high protein (34%) mineralised nuts for the last three to four weeks, reaching no more than 300g/ewe/day.

Red clover can also be grazed throughout the year, apart from the six weeks before and after tupping as it can interfere with ewes' reproductive systems. To avoid bloat problems when grazing, animals should be introduced slowly to red clover. Make sure they don't have empty stomachs when they first go into the field, so they don't gorge, and increase the intake gradually. The same rule applies when feeding red clover silage.

Book now for shearing refresher

As the new wool season approaches it is an ideal time for those wishing to learn to shear or to refresh their skills to undertake shearing training with British Wool Marketing



Board, says Colin MacGregor, BWMB Shearing Training Manager.

"Shearing is a truly universal skill which can be used anywhere in the world," he says. "As the approved shearing training provider in the UK, BWMB runs shearing courses across the country allowing both

new shearers and those wanting to brush up on their technique the chance to get top quality training wherever they are in the UK."

Mr MacGregor says learning to shear is an invaluable skill which can help young people earn a living.

"Shearing is a great way to earn a living and, once you've learned to shear, you can take that skill around the world and always be able to find work," he says. "UK shearers are now recognised as some of the best in the world and

many shearers who have been trained by BWMB have gone on in recent years to build sizeable businesses both at home in the UK and overseas."

Anyone wanting to know more about the BWMB's shearing courses should see the shearing page in the "Producer Services" area at www.britishwool.org.uk.

BACS move for wool producers

The turn of the year sees BWMB maintaining the fast pace of its work to help ensure producers receive the best possible returns for their wool, says Producer Communications Manager Gareth Jones. In a continuation of this work BWMB is moving to BACS payments for all producer payments from 1st May 2016.

Mr Jones says the switch to BACS payments will be a significant step forward and is one more way of increasing the ease with which producers deal with the board.

"BACS payments greatly increase the speed with which producers are paid, potentially meaning producers will have cleared funds in their accounts as much as 14 days sooner than if they were being paid by cheque," he explains. "With a cheque there are significant delays between the cheque being issued and cleared funds being available in the producer's account. With BACS payments the funds are available quicker, thus aiding cash flow and eliminating problems which may occur in the processing of cheques."

"Producers have been able to opt for BACS payments since 2012, but from the start of the new season all producers will be paid this way, giving the increased benefits currently being enjoyed by those producers who have already chosen BACS payments."

On top of the obvious benefits of quicker payments, receiving funds by BACS could also reduce producers' bank charges and will help cut costs for BWMB, enabling the board to continue providing producers with a cost effective and high quality service, Mr Jones adds.

"Those producers who have yet to register their bank details with BWMB to enable BACS payments should do so at the earliest opportunity to ensure their payments aren't delayed," he says.

To register for BACS payments, contact the BWMB Producer Services Department on 01274 688666 or ps@britishwool.org.uk.

Wool flooring show

An exciting new event aimed at showcasing the versatility and adaptability of wool as a flooring material will take place in London in March this year.

The event is targeted exclusively as a trade show to demonstrate to retailers and trade representatives the many ways in which wool can form part of a flooring solution, explains Tim Booth, BWMB Marketing Manager.

Taking place at Chelsea Football Club on 23rd and 24th March, the event is a concept from the Campaign for Wool and its major funder, BWMB. It will host more than 20 wool carpet manufacturers, with a key feature of the event being a series of inspirational wool showcase

installations.

"It is the growing interest in a more stylish approach to flooring, which has appealed to retailers and designers, that instigated this event," says Mr Booth. "It is intended to create a really vibrant and stylish showcase that empowers the story of wool for the floor."

More at www.woolfloorshow.co.uk.



NSA
Sheep Breeding and Services Directory
 Advertise here from just £30 per edition.
 Contact Helen Davies 07976 803066
 e: helen@nationalsheep.org.uk

BELTEX
 T: 015395 67973 www.beltex.co.uk

British Berrichon
 "The HARDY, EASY LAMBING, EASY CARE Sheep"
 For information please contact Sue Powell 01989 770071/07974 360807
www.berrichonsociety.com
 email: berrichon@btconnect.com

Blackface Sheep Breeders' Association
 Information on the breed and sale dates available on our web site or from:-
 Aileen McFadzean, Tel/Fax: 01738 634018
 Email aileen@scottish-blackface.co.uk
www.scottish-blackface.co.uk

CHAROLLAIS
 A Chop Ahead of the Rest
 Web charollaisheep.com
 Phone 01953 603335
 Email office@charollaisheep.com
CHAROLLAIS SHEEP SOCIETY

Bluefaced Leicesters
 Sire Of The UK Mule
 Tel - 01228 598022
www.ukmules.co.uk
www.blueleicester.co.uk

Charmoise Hill Sheep
 • HARDY Hill Sheep
 • Add SHAPE to your prime lambs
 • EASY Lambing
 • Terminal Sire suitable for tupping EWE LAMBS
 Please contact David Trow Tel: 01686 688234
www.charmoisesheep.co.uk

SHEEP BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION
POLL DORSET HORN ASSOCIATION
 Est. 1892
strength in versatility
 Tel: 01305 262126
 e-mail: dorsetsheep@xlnmail.com
www.dorsetsheep.org.uk

LLEYN SHEEP SOCIETY
 Secretary 01758 730366
 Promotions Officer 079666 99930
promotions@lleysheep.com
www.lleysheep.com

Easy Care Sheep
 The rapidly expanding breed for low-cost sheep systems
www.easycare Sheep.com

ILE DE FRANCE
 The breed to meet your grades For 3Ls
 use an Ile de France Lean, Liveweight and Lively lambs
 Secretary Edward Adamson 07711 071290
www.iledefrancesheep.com

North of England Mule Sheep Association

SWALEDALE SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION
 England's Premier Hill Breed. Ewes are supreme for breeding Mule Lambs.
 Rams are ideal for crossing with other Hill Breeds for increased lamb production on the hill.
Secretary: John Stephenson
 Barnley View, Town Head, Eggleston, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham DL12 0DE
 Tel: 01833 650516

NORTH COUNTRY CHEVIOT
 The ideal crossing sire for all hill ewes
 The ideal ewe for producing mules and half-breeds
Profit from Quality Store Lambs
 Visit www.nc-cheviot.co.uk
 Contact 01750 82338 or alison.brodie@nc-cheviot.co.uk

SOUTHDOWN
 the traditional, modern terminal sire
 Southdown Sheep Society
 Details from the Secretary:
 Mrs Gail Sprake Tel: 01986 782251
secretary@southdownsheepsociety.co.uk
www.southdownsheepsociety.co.uk
 "The breed that makes ends meat"

Suffolk and Texel Rams
 Performance recorded - Grass fed
 Selling 'Genetics not Cosmetics'
 All stock sold direct from farm.
 Peter Baber 01647 252549
 Visit: www.baber.co.uk

NSA
Four great NSA sheep events in 2016

NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair
 Friday 5th February
 Melton Mowbray Market, Leicestershire.
www.nationalsheep.org.uk/erwf

NSA Scot Sheep
 Wednesday 1st June
 Blythbank Farm, West Linton, Scottish Borders.
www.scotssheep.org.uk

NSA South Sheep
 Tuesday 7th June
 Pythouse Farms, Tisbury, Wiltshire.
www.southsheep.org.uk

NSA Sheep Event
 Wednesday 27th July
 Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire.
www.sheepshowevent.org.uk

GEORGE MUDGE SHEARING
 New and second hand mains and 12V machines.
 Full range of spares.
 All requisites for shearers.
 NZ Super Crook for only £25
 Contact 01822 615456 or info@georgemudgeshearing.co.uk
www.georgemudgeshearing.co.uk

Challenging selection process and exciting plans for NSA Ambassadors

This year was the toughest selection process yet for the NSA Next Generation Ambassadors – but there is an exciting year ahead for the lucky 12 with five delivery sessions planned on a wide range of sheep farming topics, business management and personal development.

An exceptionally high quality of applications made for some difficult decisions to find the final 12 for this year's programme, and those who applied experienced a slightly different selection process too.

Instead of regional interviews for candidates, which used to mean nine different selection panels around the UK, the NSA regions shortlisted 17 of the best candidates and passed the most difficult stage – whittling those 17 down to a maximum of 12 – to a central panel.

Shortlisted individuals were invited to attend an interview via Skype, with the four people on the selection panel spending an entire day 'meeting' everyone and making the final decisions. The selection panel (pictured during one of the interviews) came with a range of expertise appropriate for the task.

- Eileen McCloskey, NSA Northern Ireland Region Committee member and Sheep

Technologist at CAFRE.

- Jimmy Warnock, judge for the NSA Scottish Region's annual lamb dressing contest for young people and long involved in the Royal Highland Education Trust.
- Richard Wheeldon, NSA Central Region Chairman, previously a lecturer at Reaseheath College and now involved in regional agricultural training.
- Mark Williams, one of the youngest county chairmen for the Farmers Union of Wales, based from his sheep and beef farm in Montgomery.

Joanne Briggs of NSA oversaw the process. She says: "This is the third year we have selected people to be NSA Next Generation Ambassadors and, as awareness of the programme increases, the process gets harder each time. It was heart breaking to turn some excellent candidates down this year, which was purely because of the overwhelming quality seen, but also very positive that our sector has so many bright young people keen to get ahead."

"Thank you to the selection panel and the applicants for trying out the new system this year. It is a positive step for the programme and, with a few tweaks to the technology, will be used in future years too."



2016 Ambassadors

1. Jacob Anthony (22) Glamorgan
2. Ellen Helliwell (22) Gloucestershire
3. Hannah Jackson (23) Cumbria
4. Jamie Laurie (22) Dumfries and Galloway
5. Fred Love (23) Nottinghamshire
6. Oliver Matthews (27) Somerset
7. Alex Olphert (23) Hampshire
8. Dan Pritchard (30) Swansea
9. Tom Richards (22) Shropshire
10. Michael Ritch (24) Aberdeenshire
11. Bert Spink (24) Norfolk
12. James Wright (23) Sussex

The 12 Ambassadors will get together for their first session in late February. Regular updates will be posted on the www.nsanextgeneration.org.uk website, where you can also find profile of the 22 Ambassadors selected in previous years.



Premium Quality Red Lump Rock Salt

Ball of Madley Ltd
EST 1970
bom
THE ROCK SALT MEN

- Imported and graded by us • No waste
- Large lump size • Delivered nationwide

If it's not our name on the bag,
It's NOT our salt!

Telephone: 01981 250301

www.ballofmadley-herford.co.uk

'Hand selected from the Himalayas'



Healthy Hooves ECO™ The Footbath Solution for Sheep

- Fast Acting
- Long Lasting
- Reduce Zinc Sulphate usage
- Easy to use
- Lowers pH of Footbath Solution

+44 (0) 2475 090 133
+44 (0) 2475 090 139
sales@healthyhooves.eu
www.healthyhooves.eu



Jacob Anthony (22) Glamorgan



Having taken over the sheep element of the family farm at Tondy, Bridgend, Jacob is enjoying driving the business and planning expansion from his 800 Lleyn cross Texels to nearer 1,000.

He is already implementing changes to make the flock more efficient, particularly in terms of labour. Half the flock is now lambed outside, with plans to move more in this direction while still implementing systems to collect precise performance data. Finishing lambs off grass is another priority, with all lambs sold deadweight off the farm.

So how has Jacob found flock management so far? He modestly says his father has been 'very good at letting me make my own mistakes' since he took charge of the flock in 2013 after leaving college!

Jacob won the selection panel over with his clear passion for promoting the industry and says this is something he wants to do more of in the future. He says: "There is a massive opportunity for farmers to engage with the public, as there is currently an increase in interest from the public in how food is produced. We can take advantage for the benefit of our industry as a whole." **Top fact:** Jacob got involved in promoting the industry when the lamb price slumped in the summer and appeared on the telly in a piece for ITV Wales.

Ellen Helliwell (22) Gloucestershire

Employed as a stockman on a mixed lowland farm in the Cotswolds with a popular farm park, Ellen's shepherding job includes all the usual farm jobs with the added element of doing it alongside hundreds of visitors. It also involves a fascinating mix of running rare sheep breeds alongside a commercial flock.

It is a long way from the tenanted hill farm that her parents run in the Peak District, and while she says her heart will always be in the uplands, Ellen is thriving on the contrast of her current role. She is involved in all the nutritional, health and management of the flocks, which include

400 Lleyns and New Zealand Romneys and 150 sheep from 12 rare breeds.

The combination has given her a unique insight into the many differences and similarities between upland and lowland farms and Ellen speaks passionately about the need for both to work together, particularly on breeding sheep within the stratified system. Ellen's long-term aim is to have her own tenancy and she hopes to gain confidence and knowledge as an NSA Next Generation Ambassador to help her on this journey. **Top fact:** With her roots in Derbyshire, Ellen entered the Young Shepherd of the Year competition at the NSA Central Region Winter Fair in 2013 and walked away with the top spot and prize money when aged just 19.



Hannah Jackson (23) Cumbria

Alongside her work as a self-employed contract shepherd on a number of farms, Hannah runs a flock of pedigree Hampshire Downs and 60 North of England Mules near Carlisle.

Having established herself from scratch with no farming background, she is working hard to establish a reputation for both her professional shepherding services and the sheep she breeds. She has a clear appetite for knowledge and passion for promotion and describes her targets at twofold – to be an innovator within the sector and a role model for other new entrants.

Hannah visits schools to educate people about farming and food production, she is an avid Twitter user and takes every opportunity to shout up for sheep farming. When asked how she might balance an education role with future flock expansion,

Hannah told the selection panel: "I definitely want more sheep, but I never want to forget the journey I've had and how I've got here. It's important to share that with other people."

Land is the biggest constraint for Hannah's current flock, but she has implemented rotational grazing to make the most from the grass on her parent's smallholding, and is investigating options for exchanging her shepherding services for access to land.

Top fact: Hannah helps with her parents' business offering team building away days for corporate companies. She demonstrates her sheepdog handling skills, exchanging sheep for people, to highlight good communication skills.

Jamie Laurie (22) Dumfries and Galloway

There is no chance of resting on your laurels when Jamie is around! Both his NSA Next Generation Ambassador application and his subsequent interview were littered with an endless list of plans for the family farm at Lockerbie.

He is a partner with his parents on the tenanted farm and continually 'convincing dad' of 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. He would also like to use more Shetland ewes.

"I got the Bluefaced Leicesters when I was 10, after telling my dad we should be breeding our own tups," he says. "This has proved successful, as the homebred tups last far longer. The Shetlands were also to convince my dad, as I am a firm believer in a small, efficient ewe (or cow) producing more output per acre. I am now convinced the Shetlands are the way to go – although they're not perfect, yet." **Top fact:** It's not all about Jamie telling his dad what to do! He says advice that came from his father (that 'knowledge is light to carry') drives him to always keep learning and taking opportunities.

continued on page 52



Fred Love (23)

Nottinghamshire

Starting as a first generation sheep farmer just four years ago, Fred has made quick progress and already runs 600 Lleyn ewes. That is alongside a shearing round managed with a friend and taking in 20,000 sheep.



Finding grazing ground for sheep can be difficult in an area where competition from arable farms and anaerobic digesters is high, but Fred is a believer that sheep can benefit arable rotations and hopes to increase access to land from his current base near Retford. Fred's target of more land and high stocking rates is linked to an ambition to grow to 1,000 in the next five years, with more ewe lambs sold for breeding and quality prime lambs sales from the remainder.

Fred wants to surround himself with positive people in this quest, saying the NSA Next Generation Ambassador group 'with likeminded people who see a positive future like me' will inspire him further. He wants to give back to the industry in time too.

"I want to be a role model and show it's not impossible to start from nowhere and build up," Fred says, adding that he'd love to offer apprentices and training within his business in the future.

Top fact: While shearing has helped fund Fred's flock expansion, it has also helped him to success in NSA Young Shepherd of the Year competitions, taking best placed under 21 in a regional competition a couple of years ago.

Oliver Matthews (27)

Somerset

A business based on sheep and poultry with enough capacity for his younger brother to be involved too - that is the ambition for Olly on the farm he has taken over from his grandparents at Yatton.



He has increased sheep numbers from five to 550 in the last five years, alongside a thriving Christmas poultry, and is even considering phasing out the 70 suckler cows to increase the flock further.

Olly is openly frank about his desire

for more knowledge to drive his flock, saying he wants to learn about business analysis and costs of production to better compare the performance of his early and later lambing flocks. He's also keen to look at grazing options for his Mules, Suffolk Mules and Texel Mules. He is already finishing all his Charollais and Texel cross lambs, sold deadweight, but has ambitions to do this more efficiently in the future.

As well as driving his own business, Olly is exciting about opportunities to be involved in the wider sector and NSA in particular, saying sharing experiences and networking with people through committees and groups is the best way for everyone to learn and be inspired.

Top fact: Olly considered being a vet at one stage, even completing a degree in Bioveterinary Science as a stepping stone, but could never shake off his first passion of being a farmer.

Alex Olphert (23)

Hampshire



Despite being busy as a partner in the family farm at Petersfield and running 1,750 ewes, Alex also helps his neighbours with contacting, harvest work and a shearing run of 10,000-head.

The home farm is just 80 acres, so a lot of rented land, winter keep and conservation grazing means sheep and electric fences need to be moved most days. The ewes are Texel cross Beulah Aberdales, which Alex has found to be very prolific, with most lambs finished off roots in the run-up to Christmas and a few sold as stores.

Alex is already taking on more of the business responsibility and hopes to help his father towards retirement in the next five years. He plans for the flock to have increased by another 250-head in that time and be fully EID recorded in a bid to collect data to drive production. Alongside this Alex plans to increase his shepherding work, not decrease it. He says: "It helps to see other systems and methods, helping

to grow my skills and improve other flocks locally. If I can ever find a window, I would love to get to New Zealand for a couple of months too - to see what everyone is talking about!"

Top fact: Alex was sponsored by NSA South East Region to attend the Sheep Breeders Round Table in November, which he describes as an 'incredibly interesting and worthwhile weekend'.

Dan Pritchard (30)

Swansea



With a farm shop and a specialist product in the form of salt marsh lamb, Dan will be an interesting addition to the group of Ambassadors this year. Last year he and his family sold 600 of the lambs from their 1,000-ewe flock privately, with plans to increase this number in the future.

The salt marsh is at Llanrhidian, on the Gower peninsular of South Wales. The family has common rights to graze 4,000 acres here, as well as the 250-acre farm. Dan says: "The tide book is our bible. We get one every Christmas and plan everything around it. Shearing, weaning, lambing, everything is down to that."

The added aspect of selling lamb privately, through the farm shop and directly to butchers, means Dan is particularly interested in promotions and protected brands. For his family's Gower Salt Marsh Lamb and for wider industry brands, Dan would like to see more activity on social media and online to add value to lamb as a premium product.

Dan is keen to embrace and share best practice messages in his role as an NSA Next Generation Ambassador, saying EID, genetics and biosecurity are of particular interest to him and his business.

Top fact: Dan has recently joined the Pasture-Fed Livestock movement and would like to see more potential exploited from consumer interest in this area.

Tom Richards (22)

Shropshire

The power of modern technology means Tom (who more often goes by the name of Ernie) was able to do his NSA Next Generation Ambassador interview from Fuji! He coincided the visit with a working holiday to New Zealand before starting a new job on the England-Wales border.

Ernie starts as assistant shepherd on the 1,000-head purebred Lleyn flock, with a strong ambition to progress to head shepherd in time. He is very excited to be working under the guidance of his new boss and improve the flock in terms of breeding animals and prime lambs reared. The current target is to sell at least 20 quality, performance recorded tups a year, with 30 being the next step. In the longer term, Ernie would like to progress from shepherding to having his own flock, and has an interest in the Roussin as a crossing sire for Lleyn ewes.

Online promotion is something Ernie sees as a powerful tool, within farming to sell genetics and outside farming to raise awareness of the sector. He is keen to start this through his current role in YFC, encouraging fellow members to learn more about lamb cuts and cooking.

Top fact: Ernie approached NSA to help find a work placement as part of his course at Aberystwyth University. He ended up working in Cumbria, with the then NSA Chairman John Geldard, followed by a stint in Canada.

Michael Ritch (24)

Aberdeenshire

While not a new entrant to farming, Michael is new to having sheep around. He returned to the family beef and arable farm three years ago and, having encouraged his father and grandfather to buy an extra block of non-arable land with no buildings, breeding sheep became a new thing for the business.

Store lambs had always been bought in, for finishing on grass and turnips,



but Michael has now established an outdoor lambing, low input multiplier flock for the Logie Durmo brand. He is enthusiastic about the flock and keen to increase numbers and improve grazing management, but says he still has a lot to learn about sheep and hopes the 'exposure to new ideas, outlooks and opinions' as an NSA Next Generation Ambassador will benefit him and the sheep.

Michael struck the selection panel with his very business-minded attitude and his belief that young people with a lot of ambition have a bright future, as long as they focus on efficiency and keeping production costs low.

Top fact: Having previously done a degree in chemical engineering with a view to working in the local oil industry, Michael says the opportunity to come home is one he has never regretted. "I've been able to stop the business winding down and drive it forward instead," he says. "I love the farm and, once I was home, that was me; I lost interest in the oil industry very quickly."

Robert Spink (24)

Norfolk



Unusually for arable men based on the east side of the country, Robert believes sheep give him just as much opportunity, if not more, than crops.

He has been working to find the right balance between crops and sheep on the family farm, which he took over after losing his father nearly three years ago. Identifying poorer part of the 120 acres where the sheep are more suitable, Robert has developed a real appetite for exploiting the role of sheep in other parts of the arable-dominated area of Diss where he lives.

His aim is to increase from 80 Mule ewes to 400, selling an increasing number of homebred Texel Mules for breeding. He is already finishing store lambs and knows there is potential with that too. Robert's passion for sheep means he'd also like to swap contracting work on a tractor for shepherding and shearing instead.

"There is no family connection with sheep, but I've got the wind in my sails

at the moment and am really starting to get my teeth into it," Robert told the selection panel. "I want arable farmers to understand where sheep can fit in and be the person to help achieve that. A lot of arable farmers are really good at working together, so why not with other sectors too?"

Top fact: As well as being focused on his own business, Robert is very keen to campaign for the sheep industry and says he is looking forward to being involved with NSA to push this further.

James Wright (23)

Sussex



With a job off the farm as an agricultural sales rep, James is getting used to juggling responsibilities and ensuring there is always someone around to manage the sheep if he's not there.

This managerial element of his activity will stand him in good stead as he pursues his goal of lambing 1,000 low input Romney ewes by 2018 and hopefully gaining a tenancy to ensure a more secure base. He is currently running 250 New Zealand Romneys and 150 Welsh Mountain cross Texels.

James is a strong advocate of the sheep sector and believes taking steps to exploit the diversity of systems and ensure a more even year-round supply would be a great step forward, alongside a move away from relying on subsidies. He is not afraid to speak his mind and, as someone who does not claim support payments, is happy to challenge those who do on the impact it has for young people trying to get into the industry.

As a first generation farmer, James says he is excited about the opportunities as an NSA Next Generation Ambassador to make contacts within the industry and learn more about the heritage of an industry that he is new to.

Top fact: In addition to his business commitments, James is a chaplain for the Farming Communities Network, meeting with farmers who have called the helpline for pastoral support.





business save

changing the way you think about energy



Save Money on Your Energy Bill and We'll Donate to the NSA

BUSINESS SAVE ARE EXCITED TO OFFER AN EXCLUSIVE DEAL TO NSA READERS

By using our services you can **save up to 45%** on your current energy bill and contribute to the **NSA**

For every new customer that quotes the code '**NSA5**', we'll donate to the National Sheep Association

Our main aim is to **save businesses money** on their energy bills

Our team of energy experts will handle your utility contracts and continually look for ways to **save you money**

What we're really offering is a way to **save money and time** simultaneously

Please call the NSA's very own Energy Consultant John Woodward on

0203 4341 648

or visit www.businesssave.net/NSA to enquire

We guarantee that there is no obligation to accept any offer, product or service from Business Save

For every new customer that quotes the code '**NSA5**',
we'll donate to the National Sheep Association

What We Do

Due to our buying power we have access to the best prices in the market

We work with all the leading energy providers, to ensure an impartial outcome

We offer a free account management service with your own personal account manager

How We Do It

An individual is unlikely to have a high enough utility usage to negotiate competitive prices, but when pooling all BSI customers together there is considerably more buying power

We work around your needs and preferences

We handle the whole process for you, whether it is renewing or switching providers



TOTAL



GDF SUEZ

0203 4341 648 - John.Woodward@BSIenergy.co.uk - www.businesssave.net/NSA