

Sheep Farmer

APRIL/MAY 2016



A NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

**SHEEP FARMING AND
THE BREXIT DEBATE**

**NSA SCOT SHEEP, SOUTH SHEEP
AND SHEEP EVENT PREVIEWS**

**SURVEY LAUNCHED ON
SHEEP WORRYING BY DOGS**

**BLUETONGUE LATEST
DECODING ABATTOIR FEEDBACK**



your business your future

CRYSTALYX®

FOR HEALTHY THRIVING LAMBS



EXTRA HIGH ENERGY

- ✓ Improves lamb Daily Live Weight Gain.
- ✓ Optimises lamb birth weight to produce healthy vigorous lambs.
- ✓ Enhances ewe milk production, providing for healthy lambs.
- ✓ Crystalyx stimulates forage intakes and digestibility.
- ✓ Research proven in the UK and around the world.



TYPICAL DAILY COSTS
3-5p PER EWE

CRYSTALYX®

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

Follow Crystalyx UK



Falling consumption shows urgent need for marketing of sheep meat

By Phil Stocker, NSA Chief Executive
For virtually the last 12 months the subject of marketing and promoting lamb has never been far from the surface. The reasons don't need much explanation, with the strong pound making export conditions difficult for us and import conditions easier for those selling lamb to the UK. These conditions have brought a very sharp focus on the importance of our domestic market, with many calls to do more to sell lamb and mutton to British consumers.

There is absolutely no question of the importance of our export markets, as close to 40% of our production is exported, including prime cuts, products that help us balance carcase utilisation and fifth quarter products that help us maximise value. Maintaining these markets and opening new ones is essential. Trade missions, overseas relationship management and development work by our levy bodies, supported by industry and politicians, is highly valuable work. The role of industry (and policy setters) in maintaining responsible and demonstrable procedures is essential to give confidence to overseas markets, and part of this includes keeping trade-affecting diseases well under control.

Domestic market

But if exports are important then our domestic market, accounting for the remaining 60% of domestic production, is every bit as important and not something we can take for granted. You don't need to look any further than the sheep meat consumption figures to evidence the work that we need to do.

UK sheep meat consumption has dropped by some 30% since 2000, a figure which is bad enough, but statistics show even more worrying signs. While the consumption of those who actually eat sheep meat has fallen from an average of 6.5kg to 4.6kg per year, the volumes of sheep meat consumed per capita have fallen from 2.8kg in 2000 to 1.8kg in 2014 - clearly this is affected by many people not eating lamb at all.

Looking further back, sheep meat consumption has fallen to 80% of volumes in the 1950s while chicken has increased by some 2,500%. If you're still unconcerned then consider that consumption by the under 30s age group is 25% of that of the 60s age group - and I would suggest that hoping eating lamb



magically starts as a result of mid-life change would be naive.

Although sheep meat is unlikely to compete as an everyday alternative to chicken there is huge untapped potential to grow demand. I believe we could make massive gains by communicating the image of lamb and mutton, which is produced largely from grass-based systems, has real taste and brings important nutritional benefits. While we accept New Zealand's example to learn efficient sheep farming, we stubbornly ignore their green, clean and natural image that underpins all their food products.

Looking at the sheep meat products currently on offer, you might suggest it is no wonder consumption in the under 35s is as low as it is. Nowadays young people eat in a different way and, while this should be challenged, we must also recognise that quality lean lamb can fulfil the potential for small portions, easy and quick-to-cook cuts and products, and the interest in international dishes. It's good to see some of this product development being done but, as with research and knowledge exchange, we need more uptake.

NZ partnership

Recently I was asked by the farming press whether the UK should work in partnership with New Zealand's sheep industry to jointly promote lamb as a product. My answer was that I was not sure. It would

take a lot of discussion, clear parameters and a lot more trust than exists currently but, considering the work required to increase the share of sheep meat consumed compared to other meats, you could argue that ignoring the suggestion would be stupid.

Of course, a huge amount hinges on the result of the Brexit referendum. The current mood feels very much in the balance and, even within the farming world, there is no shortage of support for the out vote. But even those firmly in the 'out camp' are still lacking confidence, brought about by an absence of information of what life outside would be like. Of course there can be no guarantees and, even if there were, they would be short lived and, at best, may only be until a Government change. Everyone's vote will count, even though the farming vote may be small.

I've said it before but, in or out of Europe, the political framework for the future will depend on the way sheep farmers are viewed and appreciated. That is the question we should be asking of ourselves and of our political leaders.

Contents

- 2 News round-up
- 4 NSA reports: Devolved nations
- 6 NSA reports: English regions
- 8 Full report from NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair
- 9 NSA Scot Sheep preview
- 10 NSA South Sheep preview
- 11 NSA Sheep Event preview
- 12 Voucher giveaway winners
- 14 Dog worrying latest
- 15 Sheep farming and the big Brexit debate
- 20 FARM FEATURE: NSA South West Region Chairman Alan Derryman
- 22 Pension rules for employers
- 24 Inspiring example from NSA Make More of Mutton
- 25 Grassland rejuvenation
- 26 Body condition scoring guide
- 28 SPECIAL SERIES: Fifth article looking at farmer-vet relationships
- 30 Bluetongue latest
- 32 Nematodirus forecasting 2016
- 36 Decoding abattoir feedback
- 38 New product news
- 39 Maximising value of fleeces
- 40 NSA Next Generation latest

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

April/May 2016
Vol. 35, No 2 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 North of England Mule ewes and crossbred lambs was taken by Carroll Barber of NSA Eastern Region at the farm in Newmarket, Suffolk, where Dan Phipps, NSA Eastern Region Chairman, is the head shepherd.

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
Llew Thomas
Regional Chairman
01267 253374
07974 386394
llewthomas@btinternet.com

Eastern
Dan Phipps
Regional Chairman
07836 590996
07836 287281
dphipp@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
Alan Derryman
Regional Chairman
01395 597836
ahderryman@hotmail.com

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

David Gregory
Honorary Treasurer

Bryan Griffiths
English Committee Chairman
07779 465729
bryan.southcott@btconnect.com

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

Helen Davies
Regional Development Officer
01691 654712
07976 803066
helen@nationalsheep.org.uk

Jonathan Barber
Regional Manager
01953 607860
07712 659262
jonathan@ceressolutions.co.uk

Dyana Webb
Regional Secretary
07971 409259
dy@nationalsheep.org.uk

Heather Stoney
Regional Manager
01423 712820
079666 99930
heather@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

Breed Society Forum

NSA is looking forward to the annual Breed Society Forum, an event held each May for NSA-affiliated breed societies to provide an update on the sheep sector and NSA activity. This year's event is on Thursday 5th May at Honiton, Devon. We are in the process of sharing details with breed societies so people interested in attending are encouraged to express an interest via their society. The day will include a farm walk, by kind permission of the Derryman family at Yarcombe.

Legal helpline

NSA continues to offer a free legal helpline to all members. This entitles you to up to half an hour of free legal advice per distinctly different legal issue. The telephone number for the helpline changed on Monday 4th April so please contact NSA Head Office if you want to use the service, or find details in the members-only area of the website. You will be asked for your NSA membership number when using the helpline so contact us if you cannot find your membership card.

Save the date

This year's NSA Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 9th August, in South West England. Full details will be provided in the next edition of this magazine.

Wool bedding giveaway

NSA is giving away five sets of 100% British wool bedding this year, thanks to the generous support of the Wool Room.

The first set was won by Stephen Matthews, a NSA member from Staffordshire who entered at the NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair. Stephen and his partner run two small pedigree flocks of Suffolks and Southdowns, as well as 80 commercial breeding ewes. Aside from the sheep enterprise, Mr Matthews does contract shepherding and relief milking.

To join Mr Matthews as a winner, enter for free at NSA Scot Sheep on Wednesday 1st June, NSA South Sheep on Tuesday 7th June, or NSA Sheep Event on Wednesday 27th July.

Alternatively, go online to www.nationalsheep.org.uk, or find the NSA stand at any of these events: Devon County Show (19th-21st May), Beef Expo (20th May), Royal Welsh Spring Festival (21st-22nd May), South of

England Show (9th-11th June), Royal Three Counties Show (17th-19th June) and Great Yorkshire Show (18th-21st July).

And of course, the NSA Sheep Centre will be a key attraction again at the Royal Ulster Show (11th-13th May), Royal Highland Show (23rd-26th June), and Royal Welsh Show (18th-21st July). Come and see us for a chat about the sheep sector and a cuppa.

NSA also has two books to give away; details on page 22.

Research farm visit

NSA members and Welsh Commons Forum-affiliated members are invited to be part of a visit to the Pwllpeiran Research Farm facility at Aberystwyth University's Penglais Campus (SY23 3FL).

Attendees will be able to partake in a Brexit debate, followed by a farm tour, meeting at 10am for a 10.30am start. To book a place please contact Helen Breakwell at NSA Head Office; contact details on page 2.

Contact details

If you're not currently receiving the NSA Weekly Email Update and/or text message alerts, please send your contact details to membership@nationalsheep.org.uk.

Regional elections

With all nine NSA regions now having held annual members' meetings, we have a number of new office holders. These include two new regional chairmen - Llew Thomas (pictured centre) in NSA Cymru/Wales Region and Alan Derryman (pictured left) in NSA South West Region. Both are excited about their new roles and meeting members in their regions.

There is also a new face at the helm of the NSA English Committee. Mike

Credland has stepped down after four years of the role, passing the reins to Bryan Griffiths of UMBERLEIGH, Devon (pictured right). Our thanks to Mike for his superb contribution in the position, as well as to all other NSA office holders who've finished their roles this time around.

Find all regional office holders and committee reps at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/about.



NSA Supporters

NSA thanks the following companies for their sponsorship of NSA, which is invaluable in supporting the work we do on behalf of the sheep sector.

Gold Supporters



Supporters

- Assured Food Standards
- Agrimin
- Bimeda
- Ceva Animal Health
- Cox Agri
- Craven Cattle Marts
- Euro Quality Lambs
- Farming Connect
- Limagrain UK
- McGregor Polytunnels
- Morlands Sheepskins
- Osmonds
- Pro-Ovine
- Randall Parker Foods
- Ritchey
- SAC Consulting
- SAI Global
- Secure Covers
- Sell My Livestock
- TGM Software Solutions
- Tithebarn
- Welshpool Livestock Sales

Auction Mart Supporters

These are Livestock Auctioneers Association members who work with NSA to spread a membership recruitment message to their clients. These companies receive NSA benefits in return for this work and we hugely appreciate their efforts.

- Aled Ellis
- Bagshaws
- Barbers Auctions
- Bryncir Auction Centre
- Evans Brothers
- Exmoor Farmers Livestock Auctions
- Farmers Marts (R.G. Jones)
- Hexham and Northern Marts
- McCartneys
- Melton Mowbray Market
- Morgan Evans & Co
- Nock Deighton Livestock Market
- Penrith and District Farmers Mart
- R.G. and R.B. Williams
- Richardson and Smith
- Salisbury Auction Centre
- Stags Livestock Market
- Stanfords
- Thirsk Farmers Market
- Voyce Pullin Markets
- Welshpool Livestock Sales

Contact Helen Davies to become a corporate supporter, or Charlotte Underwood for auction mart support. Contact details on page 2.

NSA reports – devolved nations

NSA Cymru/Wales Region

By Helen Davies, Development Officer



We held our Annual Members Meeting in February where Lew Thomas, who breeds pedigree Lleyn sheep at Peniel, Carmarthenshire, took over as Chairman. Outgoing Chairman Paul Wozencraft was thanked for his hard work during the past two years.

Llew is passionate about the sheep industry and his priority during his two-year term is a new NSA building on the Royal Welsh Showground, alongside the ongoing and vital NSA activity. Vice Chairman is Tim Ward of Churchstoke, Powys.

Aside from the elections, the meeting had four inspiring speakers and much discussion. Joe Angell, a practising vet teaching at Liverpool vet school, spoke about research and control of CODD; his presentation can be found at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events/reports. Two NSA Next Generation Ambassadors, George Gough and Georgie Radmore, gave a great talk about the impact the NSA programme had on them, and North Wales hill farmer Gareth Wyn Jones described his experience of sharing the plight of sheep farmers during the horrendous snows of 2013. Gareth showed us that we have such a great story to tell to the public and should tell it with honesty and openness.

With a new Chairman at the helm, work in NSA Cymru/Wales Region is continuing and, given the impact sheep scab has on the industry, we are encouraging all members to complete a survey we have created in response to questions posed to the industry by the Welsh Government and Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework. The survey is online at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WelshSheepScab and responses are anonymous unless you choose to volunteer your contact details.

Legislative changes

The Welsh Government has already gathered our views on the option of quarantine units as an alternative to the six-day standstill and it is clear the industry sees one of biggest obstacles as the requirement for electronic reporting within 24 hours when using a QU. Discussions will continue over the coming months.

At the last EID Cymru stakeholder meeting we were told that 1,100 farmers have signed up for the new electronic sheep movement reporting system. These are voluntary sign-ups on top of the compulsory requirement for markets, abattoirs and collection centres to electronically report. If you are continuing with paper reporting, please remember movement licences (AML1 forms) must now be sent to the EID Cymru offices in Aberystwyth. Further information at www.eidcymru.org.

To end on a positive note, it is great to hear that sales of Welsh Lamb bucked the overall lamb sales trend and increased in the latter part of 2015. HCC says consumer spending on legs and chops rose by 46% and roasting joints by 31% year-on-year. These



The talk by NSA Next Generation Ambassadors George Gough and George Radmore.

were heavily promoted during HCC's July to November marketing campaign, which reached up to three times the target consumer base it was originally aiming for.

NSA Northern Ireland Region

By Edward Adamson, Development Officer



Sorry for the doom and gloom, but the following figures cannot be ignored. The total income from farming (TIFF) in Northern Ireland fell by 41% in 2015 (42% in real terms). It stood at £183 million compared to £312m in 2014.

At the same time, the total value of gross output for agriculture decreased by 9% to £1.74bn, driven by a 13% decline in the value of output from the livestock sector as a whole. The value of sheep meat output decreased by 10% to £63million, which was almost entirely due to a 9% reduction in the average producer price, with little change in the output volume. The average producer price of finished lambs and hoggets was £3.40/kg in 2015, and I suppose we cannot budget for much difference this year.

I spent a couple of days at the Paris Show a few weeks ago, where French President Francois Hollande and Agriculture Minister Stéphane Le Foll got a (not unexpected) heckling from disgruntled French farmers. On speaking with my French farmer friends they tell the exact same story as here in the UK, with falling prices, 10% of small farmers facing bankruptcy and many questioning their future in the industry.

Brexit debate

Our May elections will soon be upon us, and of course we are having a referendum on our position in the EU in June. At present this seems to be based on supposition and possibilities. Regardless of whether you are an 'in' or an 'out', we need some facts about the outcomes rather than the fictitious reports we are getting at present. As an agricultural area exporting 80% of our output, Northern Ireland needs to keep as many markets open as possible. Mainland UK is our main market but we need other customers to create competition for our produce.

A delegation from NSA Northern Ireland Region recently met with members of the Dard Policy Branch to gain more information on the designation and funding for Areas of Natural Constraint (ANCs) and future support for coupled payments.

NSA NI Region has no appetite for coupled support payments, as we see them as creating animosity between the various agricultural sectors and also burdening us with extra rules and regulations. However, the concept of payments on ANCs is something we are interested in, particularly how Dard will use data on standard output per hectare or gross value added output per hectare in the wards to decide which areas qualify. These ANCs will be similar to the old SDA areas, but not exactly the same and slight anomalies will mean a small number of businesses will be winners or losers. Ways around this are difficult to find but we will explore all aspects of the process to reach as fair a way forward as possible.



NSA office holders Campbell Tweed and John Blaney (right and inside right) at the ANC meeting with Dard representatives.

NSA Scottish Region

By George Milne, Development Officer



NSA Scottish Region held its annual members meeting recently, in Edinburgh, where elections saw Sybil Macpherson

return as Chairman for a further year and Billy Renwick came in as our new Vice Chairman. Treasurer Maimie Paterson was also elected back in office for a further year.

Comprehensive reports from Sybil and myself outlined last year's extensive activities and our current policy work. Among other things, I drew on my recent trip to the USA to talk about the potentially lucrative American market opening up to British lamb before the end of the year. Export volumes would not necessarily be high initially, but Scotch lamb would be highly valued and attract a premium price.

After the formal part of the meeting, members enjoyed a butchery demonstration from the Scottish Craft Butchers. A whole lamb was broken down into various cuts, which were auctioned off after the dinner. The dinner was attended by 76 members and guests and, between the auction and a raffle, we raised £741 for charity. Also at the dinner, awards were



presented to the winners of the Scotch Lamb PGI product and burger competition, ran by QMS and supported by NSA Scottish Region. We heard from Lynn Allison and Clarke Hibberd on their recent experience as NSA Next Generation Ambassadors, and our guest speaker Jim Walker delivered a frank account of the current situation regarding delayed basic payments.

NSA Scottish Region has been busy in recent weeks with a roadshow of meetings held in conjunction with Caltech Crystalyx. These have proved highly successful, covering the length and breadth of Scotland and giving us the opportunity to speak to more than 380 sheep farmers across eight venues. It was been a fantastic opportunity to explain what NSA does for its members and for the sheep industry specifically in Scotland.

The real benefit I've gained from travelling around the different areas is the valuable feedback from farmers on their



NSA Scottish Region Chairman Sybil Macpherson (right) surveys the work of the Scottish Craft Butchers.

main concerns, which varied from each meeting. Delays in the basic payment scheme are crippling many businesses, compounded by the continuing uncertainty on exactly when an individual business payment will be made. Sheep farmers want to see more income come from the high quality lamb we produce and, hopefully if new export markets like the USA are created, we would see a significant increase in demand for Scotch Lamb.

NSA will work hard to try and deliver on all the topics discussed over recent weeks. If you feel your area has been missed out then don't worry, as more meetings are being planned for later this year.





SMOOTH OPERATOR.

The Kubota RTV range features an independent suspension and ergonomic design, offering a smooth ride and excellent operator comfort. Capable of towing up to 1,000kg, these rugged and dependable off-road vehicles feature hydrostatic transmission to provide optimum safety and control on inclines and uneven ground. Wherever you want to go, whatever the terrain, trust the Kubota RTV range to rise to the challenge. To find out more, visit www.kubota.co.uk or call 01844 873156.

For Earth, For Life
Kubota

www.kubota.co.uk   

NSA Reports – English regions

Central

By Anne Payne, Manager
We welcomed a number of newly appointed officers at our Annual Members Meeting in late January.



David Howlett was appointed as Vice Chairman and Janet Baily as Treasurer. Chris Lewis was nominated as the region's representative on the NSA Board of Trustees.

Formal business was followed by presentations from Steve Dunkley of AHDB Beef & Lamb and a fascinating butchery demonstration from Martin Eccles, AHDB Development Butcher. We were treated to a supper of lamb, hogget and mutton, courtesy of Alastair Sneddon and Bagshaws at the end of the evening, with all enjoying the evening.

We also held a charity social evening in mid-February on behalf of St Luke's Hospice in Sheffield. A pie-and-pea supper was followed by a screening of the recently released film *Addicted to Sheep*. The evening went very well with about 90 people there. There was a great atmosphere and people were very generous in providing raffle prizes, buying tickets or even just making donations. Total profits raised were £542. Thank you to all those who worked hard to make the evening a success.

Aside from these two events, many folks are already involved in lambing or getting ready to do so. I know of two hill farming members who had a very

bad experience with ravens last year, and would ask anyone who experiences problems this lambing time to document it with photographic evidence. NSA is active on this topic and can strengthen the message by being able to share images showing the true extent of the issue.

Elsewhere there are concerns about the issues surrounding the EU and whether we stay in or leave. Perhaps the campaign will feel more relevant the closer we get to Referendum Day.

Eastern

By Jonathan Barber, Manager



I am pleased to report that our NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair at Melton Mowbray Livestock Market was successful, informative and enjoyable. My thanks go to all who contributed to make it such a worthwhile event for everyone involved.

Some may remember the mention of a Youthful Sheep Enthusiasts Focus Group in the last magazine. This will take place at Godolphin Stud, Suffolk, on Saturday 21st May. If you are aged 18-30, let me know if you wish to receive further information on this new group beginning in our region.

The NSA Eastern Region visit to Elveden Estate will take place on Wednesday 15th June. We shall meet at the Elveden Inn, Brandon Road, Elveden, Thetford, IP24 3TP, at 12.30pm. There will be an overview of Elveden Estate during lunch

(at your own expense) from Andrew Francis, Senior Farms Manager, followed by a commented tour of the 22,500-acre estate, 10,000 of which are farmed. It is the largest ring-fence arable farm in lowland Britain, while also having 12 heathlands covering 3,600 acres, each being designated SSSI. Elveden grows 6% of the UK's onions, alongside potatoes, carrots, parsnips, rye, barley and wheat. The tour will take us around the beef unit, hopefully the South Devon herd and the Blackface flock across the heathland. We shall return to the Elveden Inn for tea. Please let me know if you wish to join us; it will be an outstanding visit.

More on both these events at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events.

Marches

By Kevin Harrison, Chairman



Sorry for a brief regional report this time, but I am very busy in the lambing shed at the moment.

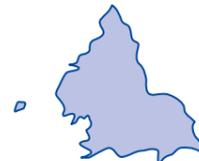
NSA Marches Region is looking forward to traveling around the region a bit this year. We will be combining our next committee meeting with a sheep night and discussion evening at Stratford Market on the evening of Tuesday 10th May, at which members and non-members will be able to voice their concerns and delights about the sheep industry. I believe there is even a bar! Keep your eye on the NSA website and regional emails for more details.

We are also looking forward to hosting our young shepherds' event and competition again this year, in early summer, so please keep all your budding young shepherds out there informed and watch out for details nearer the time.

If you're not receiving reminders for regional events via email or text message at the moment, do pass your details to NSA Head Office to make sure you're not missing out – *contact details on page 2*. See you all on the other side of lambing!

Northern

By Heather Stoney-Grayshon, Manager



Our Annual Regional Members Meeting took place at Hexham Auction Mart towards the end of February. Chairman Greg Dalton gave his report on the year, particularly noting the impact of the weather on the area. Greg also touched on the success of NSA North Sheep 2015 at Millstone Moor and thanked everyone who supported the event as a sponsor, exhibitor, visitor or, in

Double recognition for Julie



Shortly after being named as recipient of the NSA George Hedley Memorial Award (see Feb/Mar Sheep Farmer), Julie Sedgewick was also given the T.I. Allison Memorial Award for outstanding contribution to the sheep industry in Northern England. Julie received the trophy from NSA Northern Region Chairman Greg Dalton.

particular, a volunteer.

Greg also thanked Julie Sedgewick, retiring NSA Northern Regional Manager, for all her hard work and dedication over the previous 12 months but also the past 27 years. Greg described Julie as 'an inspiration to others' in turning NSA North Sheep from its humble beginnings to what it is now. It was therefore hugely fitting that Julie be presented with the T.I. Allison Memorial Award, given annually to mark an outstanding contribution to the sheep industry in Northern England.

The committee extended its gratitude to Julie for all her work over the years in presenting her with a very handsome Teesdale crystal tablet engraved with a North of England Mule ewe (which Julie won the Royal Show with) and Durham Cathedral. We all wish Julie well; I am sure

we will continue to see her around the shows and sales.

Following the Annual Members Meeting was a series of presentations from Steve Dunkley, AHDB Beef & Lamb Senior Regional Manager, and NSA Next Generation Ambassador Thomas Carrick, who reported on his involvement with the programme. NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker concluded the meeting with an update on NSA's ongoing areas of work.

Heather has recently taken over as NSA Northern Region Manager. Her contact details can be found on page 2.

South East

By Bob Blanden



This year saw two changes to our Annual Regional Members Meeting - a move from the autumn to February to fall in line with the majority of other regions, as well as incorporating it into a very successful sheep health conference in conjunction with Surrey University Vet School.

More than 80 attendees were able to also view the university's new post mortem and pathology unit. About half that number stayed on for the Annual Members Meeting, which followed the conference, and feedback has been very encouraging. It is likely the Sheep Health Conference will be repeated next year.

The only change to elected officers for the region was Peter Fairbank, who has now retired as Treasurer and has been replaced by Nigel Durnford. We are most

grateful to Peter for his many years of support and it should be noted that it was Peter's suggestion we held our meeting at Surrey University and took advantage of the impressive facilities there.

Congratulations go to the NSA Next Generation Ambassadors for this year that come from NSA South East Region – Alex Olphert and James Wright. Alex and 2015 Ambassador Harry Frederick, along with Zoe Stanistreet, having been elected on to our Regional Committee.

Our focus is now on NSA South Sheep on Tuesday 7th June. For the attention of all young people in the region, we are holding NSA Next Generation workshops, seminars and farm visits on the afternoon of Monday 6th June, the day before the event. This will be followed by a speed shear competition and social evening with live entertainment. Camping facilities will be available. *Full details on page 10.*

South West

By Kate White, Secretary



NSA South West Region has had a change in office holders following the Annual Members Meeting in mid-February. A huge thank you is owed to Bryan Griffiths for his service to the region over the past few years, while our congratulations go to Alan Derryman, who takes over from Bryan, with John Garthwaite as Vice Chairman.

The meeting was followed by a very insightful talk from Craig Finch from Beef & Lamb New Zealand (BLNZ). Craig spoke about how the organisation works in NZ, describing the background to its formation and the way farming has had to change there since becoming completely unsubsidised after economic reform and deregulation in the 1980s.

Farmers at the meeting were intrigued to hear how BLNZ works as a limited company, rather than a government organisation, and that it is completely answerable to NZ farmers. If farmers are unhappy with its work, they can vote it out and have already done so with wool. It was particularly interesting to hear of BLNZ's success in terms of international trade, which could be something we need to look at and perhaps learn from, particularly if things are about to change with the EU referendum coming up in June.

Any members attending the Devon County Show on Thursday 19th to Saturday 21st May 2016 can expect to see members of the South West committee on the NSA stand. We look forward to seeing many of you there. If any of you want to discuss or draw attention to anything in particular within the region, please contact me.

Meet Alan Derryman, new NSA South West Region Chairman, on pages 20-21.

Addicted to sheep in Derbyshire



NSA Central Region enjoyed an excellent social and fundraising evening, watching the film *Addicted to Sheep* and sharing a pie-and-pea supper.

Sheep health event



New facilities at Surrey University's vet school provided an excellent venue for the first ever NSA South East Region sheep health conference.

NSA sheep event season kicks off with Eastern Region Winter Fair

Melton Mowbray Livestock Market was a hive of activity in early February as NSA members, sheep farmers and allied industries came together for NSA Eastern Region's biennial Winter Fair.

Albeit one of the smaller NSA sheep events, organisers were in good spirits and delighted to welcome visitors to the mart. NSA Eastern Region Manager Jonathan Barber says: "A huge thanks must go to the range of trade and breed society stands which came out and supported the event. The friendly buzz in the atmosphere was clear to see, and it is always a joy to meet new people and renew friendships on occasions such as this. It was good to also see people spending time at the NSA stand on the day, finding out more about the numerous topics influencing our sector and feeding in their views."

Seminars

The seminar area proved to be one of the most popular attractions for visitors throughout the day, where six topics were covered by a range of industry experts.

Highly regarded sheep specialist Lesley Stubbings provided best practice advice on how to tackle worms. She reiterated how important it is for producers to

Event Fact File

Event: NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair 2016.

Venue: Melton Mowbray Livestock Market, Leicestershire.

Date: Friday 5th February.

Competition winners:-

- **Stockjudging:** 1, Sam Crossland, Nottinghamshire; 2, Geoff Watson, Northamptonshire; 3, M.J. Wallis, Cambridgeshire.
- **Outside trade stands:** 1, Allflex-Ritchey Handling Systems; 2, Pharmweigh; 3, Gallagher Fencing.
- **Inside trade stands:** 1, AHDB Beef & Lamb; 2, Advantage 3in1 Feeders; 3, Horner Shearing.
- **Breed society stands:** 1, British Charollais Sheep Society; 2, Lley Sheep Society; 3, Suffolk Sheep Society.

More at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events/reports.



NSA Chairman Samuel Wharry (left) and NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker (right) present British Charollais representatives with the prize for best society stand.

use wormers appropriately within their individual flocks in order to reduce the speed of anthelmintic resistance development and ensure the ongoing performance of growing lambs.

A newer, but no less serious topic,

for NSA Eastern Region is the rise of liver fluke. A practical and lively talk about how to tackle the fluke parasite was well received, as were several informative discussions on industry requirements and an outlook from AHDB Beef & Lamb.

PM demo

Drawing the biggest crowd on the day, however, was a demonstration of on-farm post mortem techniques, led by Farm Veterinary Solutions. The animal health experts used this to prompt a subsequent discussion on emerging sheep diseases in the area and the lively question-and-answer session hopefully left many attendees returning home with fresh ideas on some of the key issues within the industry.

Additional highlights included the stockjudging competition, in which Sam Crossland of Nottinghamshire was awarded first place. Geoff Watson,



Practical advice was on offer at the AHDB Beef & Lamb stand.

Northamptonshire, took second while M.J. Wallis of Peterborough was third.

Next generation

NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker says: "What was noticeable at the NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair, and somewhat encouraging as a representation of the sheep industry, was the number of young people present on the day. I hope each and every one of them was able to leave the event with extra information to aid their studies or sheep farming enterprises, as they progress through their careers. The wide range of trade and breed society stands must, as at all NSA events, be highly commended for their efforts. Many of them incorporated live demonstrations, which enabled visitors to see exactly how equipment, tools and services could work for them in a practical situation."

NSA Scot Sheep to be hosted in rolling hills of Scottish Borders

This year's NSA Scot Sheep, organised by NSA Scottish Region with Bank of Scotland as major sponsor, will provide a real showcase for the Scottish sheep industry.

Taking place on Wednesday 1st June at Blythbank Farm, West Linton, Edinburgh, the event is set to attract thousands of sheep farmers and industry professionals from Scotland, Ireland and Northern England.

Blythbank Farm was not only the birthplace of the world's first cloned sheep Dolly in 2003, but also home to the first Texel sheep imported into the UK in 1970, by Dr John King of the Animal Breeding Research Organisation.

Today the 1,300-acre farm is part of the Campbell family's farming operation, Glenrath Farms, and is home to a flock of 2,000 Scotch Mule ewes, 500 replacement Scotch Mule hogs, 700 Blackface ewes and a 40-ewe pedigree Texel flock. In addition to the sheep is a herd of 200 Limousin cross suckler cows, a 10-cow pedigree Charollais herd and 320,000 free range hens, making it the UK's largest egg producer.

The Campbell family's extensive farming business includes five hill farms stocked with purebred Scottish Blackface ewes, meaning the farm is able to produce its own replacements for both the hill and lowland farms within the enterprise. Bluefaced Leicester rams are crossed with Blackface ewes to breed all the replacement Mule ewes. There is also a Suffolk and Texel flock at Blythbank, with some of the homebred Suffolk and Texel ram lambs then being used on the Mules to breed finished lambs. This integrated structure allows the enterprise to maintain a closed flock, which it feels has a positive effect on health status. Blythbank has also been adapted to allow for extensive environmental schemes, including the planting of 20,000 trees and the use of reed beds. Around 100 acres on the farm is also devoted to trees.

Ideal venue

NSA Scottish Region Chairman Sybil Macpherson says: "Blythbank Farm, with its renowned flocks of both commercial and pedigree sheep, is an ideal venue for the event and will be a mecca for sheep farmers on the day. We are greatly indebted to the Campbell family for their willingness to host what is widely recognised as the major event for the sheep industry in Scotland. Thanks go to our main sponsor RBS, alongside the other generous sponsors that makes NSA Scot Sheep possible."

Scott Somerville, NSA Scot Sheep Organising Committee Chairman, echoes Mrs Macpherson's comments and says: "Blythbank Farm will provide a superb backdrop for NSA Scot Sheep, which will showcase everything that is good about Scottish sheep farming."

As well as the farm tour by tractor and trailer, a comprehensive seminar programme on the day is set to cover topics including the health status of the national sheep flock, new opportunities and finance in sheep farming, and profitable sheep production.



John Campbell with a selection of Scottish Blackface tups. Stock from Blythbank Farm has sold for up to £49,000.

There will also be the Young Shepherd of the Year competition, stockjudging, a sheepdog trial, show and sale of ewe hogg pairs, and a farmers market and craft fair. Practical demonstrations of shearing, butchery, carcass grading, crook making, sheep dressing, wool spinning and fencing will be taking place – and numerous breed societies and trade stands will be in attendance, covering everything from genetics, nutrition and management to marketing the end product of quality Scotch Lamb.



Wednesday 1st June

Blythbank Farm, Blythbridge, West Linton, Peeblesshire, EH46 7DB

By kind permission of Glenrath Farms Ltd

FARM TOUR, TRADE STANDS, SHEEP BREED STANDS, SHOW & SALE PAIR EWE HOGGS, FARMERS PRODUCE STALLS, SHEEP DOG TRIAL, SEMINARS, EDUCATIONAL & WORKING FARM DEMONSTRATIONS, BUTCHERY DEMONSTRATIONS AND COMPETITIONS

Admission
£12

NSA Members and Students on Production of Membership Cards £6

Further information from the Website or Organiser Euan Emslie
T: 01430 441870 / 07718 908523
E: euans@appliedremedies.co.uk

www.nsasotland.org

Central location and fascinating farm for NSA South Sheep 2016

NSA South East Region's biennial event, NSA South Sheep, is being held on Tuesday 7th June at Pythouse Farm, Tisbury, Salisbury, by kind permission of Sir Henry and Lady Rumbold.

Conveniently located for the event, Pythouse sits between the counties of Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire. The ground spans 890 acres, plus an additional 140 acres rented from a neighbouring estate. The grassland comprises of parkland in the main, while the arable enterprise includes the growing of winter wheat, winter oilseed rape, spring barley and oats. Some land and buildings are also let out and used to produce regional free range chickens for Waitrose.

Mule flock

The farm, managed by Paul Aldridge, runs 600 North of England Mule ewes plus 150 replacements bought from the same source each year. Lambing takes place indoors from 1st March and is staffed by Mr Aldridge's partner Amy as well as a freelance night lamber. This year's scanning results gave an overall forecast of 201% on the ewes and 180% on the shearlings. Up to 95% of the lambs are finished off grass and stubble turnips and sold direct to ABP Yetminster; the rest are sold as stores through Southern Counties Auctioneers at Salisbury, as are any cull ewes.

Pythouse is farmed under HLS, which has meant many of the management decisions have been made with the environment in



The grass plots, a popular feature at NSA South Sheep 2014, will return again this year.



Pythouse Farm is home to 600 North of England Mules, plus replacements.

mind, such as providing lapwing plots, buffer strips, field corner management, low input grassland, a nectar flower plot, unharvested conservation headlands, wild bird seed plots and overwintered stubble.

The 2015/2016 sheep year at Pythouse is being monitored by independent sheep consultant Kate Phillips, supported by JG Animal Health. Suggestions from Kate have included carrying out blood testing in the autumn, which highlighted a copper deficiency. Half the flock was subsequently treated with a mineral drench and early indications show those ewes treated scanned 7% higher. Details of management suggestions from Kate can be found on the event website and will also be available on the day for visitors.

Also on the day, there will be a number of seminars and workshops as well as farm tours, demonstrations, a 'celebrating wool area', Young Shepherd of the Year competitions and a sheepdog trial. More than 100 trade and breed society stands are expected to be in attendance on the day.

A highlight of the seminar programme will be a debate on the EU referendum, while the grass and forage trial plots are set to return for a second time at NSA South Sheep, managed by David Bright Seeds.

Encouraging the Next Generation

The day before NSA South Sheep will be an NSA Next Generation programme on the afternoon of Monday 6th June.

Young people will be invited to participate in a selection of workshops and seminars. A range of subjects will be covered, including feed budgeting, fencing and fence maintenance, electric fencing, dog training and care, safe ATV use, flock health planning, faecal egg testing and the use of EID.

Rounding off the Monday afternoon will be a panel of young, successful entrants into the industry, including NSA Next Generation Ambassadors from the South East area. The afternoon will also include opportunities to visit Orchard Meadow Sheep Dairy, as well as other local farms, and will be open to any interested visitors, of all ages.

A social evening will follow, starting with a speed shear competition to raise money for the host's chosen charity, Wiltshire Air Ambulance. A lamb roast with bar and a live band will also feature, and there will be access to a camping field with shower block.

To book in for the Monday afternoon NSA Next Generation session and/or social evening, contact NSA Event Organiser Bob Blanden by Wednesday 1st June.

Debate, workshops and a positive farming image at NSA Sheep 2016

Working to the overarching theme of 'adding value', plans are racing ahead for the biennial NSA Sheep Event this July. Entry for members will be free of charge, so we look forward to seeing many of you there.

A huge amount of preparation has gone into finding a top line-up of speakers in the seminar area, as well as an even stronger workshop timetable. Topics in the seminar tent will include the role of sheep in our upland and marginal areas, how the sector should add value to prime lamb, sheep genetics, wool and mutton, and the sometimes tricky relationship between sheep farmers and vets. The result of the EU referendum in June will also determine the direction of an exciting debate on what the future might look like for direct farm payments.

Workshops

Practical tips will be on offer in the workshop area, including sheep health, grassland management and EID regulations, while demonstrations and drop-in clinics will be scattered across the showground.

With the NSA Next Generation project going from strength to strength, this year's event will also see a dedicated area for young people involved in or wanting to enter the sheep sector.



James Manning of BBC2 Harvest and Channel 4 First Time Farmers is supporting NSA Sheep 2016.

With the intention of replacing the outdated stereotype of the flat-capped farmer, the event will highlight the realities of modern farming incorporating the latest technology and innovations. NSA hopes this positive message will not only encourage more people to be involved in the sheep sector, but also inspire people to go home and spread the word to the wider public too.

TV presenter James Manning has come on board to help promote this message at the event; he will be spending the day with NSA Next Generation Ambassadors and meeting likeminded enthusiasts keen to promote a positive future for young people in agriculture.

"For young, enthusiastic people to be interested in the industry and take us forward into the future we have to showcase what we do, across all sectors," says James, who has been involved in BBC 2's Harvest 2015 and Channel 4's First Time Farmers.

"I think the general public needs to see agriculture as a young, exciting and vibrant industry to be a part of. The great thing about farming is that it's a passion, not just a job. It's our responsibility to try and portray that to new entrants and the wider public."

More NSA Sheep 2016 information at www.sheepevent.org.uk and in the June/July Sheep Farmer.

Join our farm tours

Farm tours are a brand new feature of NSA Sheep 2016, and will be held on Tuesday 26th July, the day before the event. Visitors will be in for a treat as they head into the beautiful local countryside to visit two very different sheep farms.

The first stop will be at Knighton, Powys, to meet Colin Pugh (pictured here with son Gareth) who runs a mixed enterprise of sheep, beef and arable across 500 acres of owned and rented land. Focus recently has been on improving the productivity and efficiency of the farm's 850 Texel Mule breeding ewes using Aberdale genetics, alongside 'a bit of an experiment' this year with a Bluefaced Leicester ram. This fits the NSA Sheep 2016 theme of 'adding value', as does the addition of solar panels to the potato sheds, halving the farm's electricity bill.

The second visit will be to Stuart and Helen Morris, who run 1,000 pedigree Lleys across 350 acres at Clyro, Herefordshire. Sitting at 1,100 feet above sea level, the farm boasts some fantastic views and is described by Stuart as 'commercial through and through'. Having started producing and supplying mutton for local buyers and restaurants in recent years, Stuart is hopeful this will continue in the future. The farm has also taken on a full-time shepherd in recent months, Ernie Richards (pictured left with Stuart), who is an NSA Next Generation Ambassador this year.



Book on the farm tours in the "Attractions" area at www.sheepevent.org.uk.



THE THREE COUNTIES SHOWGROUND
MALVERN, WORCESTERSHIRE, WR13 6NW



Free entry for NSA members

9AM - 5PM

£15 FOR NON-MEMBERS
OR FREE FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS AND UNDER 16S

PRE EVENT DINNER, SEMINARS, TECHNICAL & POLICY INFORMATION, MARKETING, ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION, YOUNG SHEPHERD OF THE YEAR FINAL, SHEEP BREED SOCIETIES, DEMONSTRATIONS, SHEEP DOG SALE, TRADE STANDS

FURTHER INFORMATION FROM THE WEBSITE OR ORGANISER
HELEN DAVIES:
T: 01938 590535 M: 07976 803066
helen@nationalsheep.org.uk

www.sheepevent.org.uk

A company limited by Guarantee. Registered in England, Registration No. 37818. Registered charity in England and Wales (249255) and in Scotland (SC042853)

Picture credit: BBC

Voucher wins bring quick return on investment for three NSA members

An unexpected surprise was on the cards for three NSA members when they each received a £200 voucher in the second of NSA's bimonthly prize draws, just weeks after signing up as members.

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 during 2016. New NSA members are automatically entered into the draw, as well as existing members who recommend a friend or neighbour to sign up to NSA. With no limit to the number of entries existing members can have, the more people you recommend the more chances you have to win. Write your membership details on the form opposite and pass it to a friend or neighbour.

The three vouchers in this second prize draw have made their way to different

Gareth Thomas, Scottish Borders

The farm Mr Thomas works on runs 600 Scottish Blackface ewes, around 400 of which are bred pure and hefted to the hill. The remaining 200 are crossed to produce Scotch Mules.

A mix of 700 Mules and Suffolk Mules are also kept. The main of the sheep lamb in April and the majority of the lambs finished off grass, aside from the last 300 which receive some concentrates.

Mr Thomas says he hopes to add to the work already being done on the farm to improve efficiencies. This has already included measures to eradicate foot problems across the whole sheep enterprise. He says: "Vaccine administration, regular moving of the sheep and a zero tolerance policy on those prone to foot problems mean we now have very little among each flock."

"There is a tick burden in the hill flock, which is treated using pour-on methods, while replacements will always be bought from local breeders who have worked to establish some resistance in their flock."

corners of the UK – the JG Animal Health one to Stephen Scott of NSA Northern Ireland Region, the Fecpak^{G2} voucher to Gareth Thomas of NSA Scottish Region and the Cox Agri/Ritchey one to Emily Saunders of NSA Northern Region.

Flock efficiency

Mr Scott, who farms alongside his father near Londonderry, says he will be putting his £200 voucher towards products he hopes will improve the flock's efficiency. Gareth Thomas, who is employed on a sheep enterprise at Selkirk, Scottish Borders, says he will be using his voucher

Stephen Scott, Northern Ireland

Mr Scott of Swatragh, Londonderry, says receiving the news of his win was a 'welcome stress relief in the middle of a busy lambing'.

He says: "We run a total of 390 breeding ewes, made up predominantly of 340 commercial Suffolk cross Cheviots and Mules, which we cross to Texel rams. We also run 50 Blackface ewes, put to the Bluefaced Leicester, to breed our own replacements."

Mr Scott says one of his primary focusses within the business is cutting input costs to ensure the flock is as profitable as it can be. "I've been concentrating on the livestock side of the business since 2005, and have continued to increase the flock size since then. We've also started to grow our own cereals to mix with concentrates and I am continually identifying ways to make my flock more productive and profitable."

Having recently signed up as a member, Mr Scott says the NSA Lambing List is the primary membership benefit he hopes to make use of in the future, to help find extra help for lambing time.

to improve faecal egg counting across the farm's several flocks, helping to improve overall performance in time.

Everyday essentials

Emily Saunders from Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, says her Cox Agri/Ritchey voucher will enable her to purchase some everyday essentials for the farm, including a new shepherd's crook after a busy lambing time.

Emily Saunders, North Yorkshire

Miss Saunders says her interest in sheep stemmed from a young age, having grown up helping her father with his flock. But it was after seeing the first pet lambs she'd reared being sold at market that she decided to make sheep farming a business in her own right.

The farm runs Kerry Hill and Woodland Whitefaced flocks, from which breeding stock are produced. A small commercial flock is also run alongside, to produce finishing lambs. The farm is open to the public seven days a week.

"I feel it is important to provide people with knowledge of how we farm and also where their food comes from." Miss Saunders says. "We do have to plan around this a bit. For example, to make sure we have pet lambs during the school Easter holidays, lambing will take place indoors around February/March time. I also buy in some pet lambs for the children who visit the farm to bottle feed. I don't think farmers get enough credit for what they do on a daily basis."

"I think the resources NSA offer farmers are invaluable and that all sheep farmers should be members. I will definitely be recommending other sheep farmers I know to join."

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 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:

.....

.....

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

FECPAK^{G2}
Remote Location Parasite Diagnostics
Contribution to Faecal Egg Count user subscriptions

JG ANIMAL HEALTH
Premier Sheep Mineral Drench

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

FECPAK^{G2}
Remote Location Parasite Diagnostics
Contribution to Faecal Egg Count subscriptions

JG ANIMAL HEALTH
Premier Sheep Mineral Drench

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

your business your future



Views on sheep worrying needed

NSA's work on highlighting the devastating affects of sheep worrying by dogs is continuing with a new survey seeking the views of farmers affected by the problem.

This is the third annual survey NSA has organised, to capture the experiences of flocks around the UK. The results and trends revealed are vital in the communication NSA has with dog owners, so we urge you to fill it in and spread the word to others. It will only take a few minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous. Go online to www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SheepAttacks2016.

Evidence-based

Phil Stocker, NSA Chief Executive, says: "Gathering evidence and information is key when communicating the scale of this issue to the public, the press and the police. We know the impact dog attacks can have, not just on sheep but also on flock owners, but having the weight of survey results behind us strengthens the work we do. Please take the time to answer the handful of questions we are posing this year."

The survey comes on the back of a busy



Attacks are devastating at any time of the year, but particularly lambing season.

period for NSA, with numerous local radio interviews and comments to the national press following the horrific 116-ewe attack in Sussex. NSA also helped the BBC Countryfile researchers prepare for the feature they ran.

Case studies

NSA's work with the media is reliant on having farmer case studies, and we have a library of these on the website. But we need more, particularly in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, East Anglia, Lancashire, Cumbria, Yorkshire, Devon and Somerset. Use the contact details on page 2 to volunteer a case study to NSA Head Office.

Latest figures

NSA continues to work closely with Farmers Guardian on the Take the Lead campaign, which includes an annual Freedom of Information (FOI) request to UK police forces asking how many dog attacks on sheep have been reported.

Not all police forces respond to the FOI request but it gives a snapshot of the scale of the problem. The figures show 691 cases in 2011, 738 in 2012, 1,074 in 2013, 1,002 in 2014 and 1,051 in 2015.

NSA believes these figures are only the tip of iceberg, partly because not all reported attacks are given a crime reference number, but mostly due to under-reporting by farmers.

We know the police response is hugely variable depending on the area you live in, and that reporting is time consuming, but we urge you to contact the police each and every time you experience an incident, and to push for a crime reference number.

For past survey results, legal advice and general information, go to www.nationalsheep.org.uk/dog-owners.

In or out? The two sides of the Brexit argument on agriculture

By Adam Gray, contributor

The polls suggest the EU referendum on Thursday 23rd June could go either way. For the UK sheep industry, arguably more than any other farming sector, the stakes are enormous.

The UK sheep sector is hugely reliant on exports to the EU. Exports were worth £345 million in 2014, with 38% of UK lamb going out of the country. The EU is the destination for 92% of UK sheep meat exports, with 60% alone going to France. Looking at the wider industry, £17.8bn of UK food, drink and animal feed was exported in 2014, with £10.7bn (60%) going to the EU; £37bn of food, drink and animal feed was imported, including £26.5bn from the EU.

As a member of the EU since 1973, the UK has had access to the single market, with its free movement of people, goods, services and capital. There are no tariffs or border controls when goods are traded between member states and common rules and standards apply. The EU imposes tariffs on goods coming into the EU to protect its own producers, and it negotiates trade deals with others parts of the world on behalf of all members.

Prime Minister David Cameron and Defra Secretary Liz Truss, both campaigning to stay, have claimed beef and sheep farmers would face enormous uncertainty and added costs if the vote was to leave.

Default rules

They argue, under Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, if no deal was reached after two years of the exit process being commenced, trade would revert to World Trade Organisation default rules. According to Mr Cameron, as a result lamb producers could face 40% tariffs on EU exports, costing the industry £90m.

But Farming Minister George Eustice, campaigning to leave the EU, dismisses these claims, insisting the UK would not be bound by Article 50 and, even if it was used, would have a 'period of negotiation' before the formal process was triggered. Both sides would be keen to reach a deal quickly, he says.

So what might a new deal look like? There are various existing models out there. Iceland, Norway and Lichtenstein all have access to the single market as members of the European Economic Area (EEA). But Norwegian farmers have to comply with most EU regulation and its government makes a significant contribution to EU funds. Switzerland has a slightly different



With so much lamb traded to the EU, the outcome of the EU referendum could impact sheep more than any other sector.

arrangement but still has to comply with regulation in areas where it trades with the EU. The UK could simply try to negotiate a free trade agreement with the EU, along the lines of that negotiated by Canada, which has removed 98% of tariffs between the two trading blocs.

In a report on the implications of Brexit for farming, agricultural economist Allan Buckwell says the UK would face a dilemma. He writes: "If we remained close to the EU single market we would have to retain most EU existing regulation, but if we left the single market to avoid this, exporters would face higher trading costs through tariffs and border controls."

Mr Eustice says it would be relatively straightforward to roll forward something very similar to the single market access the UK enjoys today, pointing out the UK has a total trade deficit of £60bn with the rest of the EU. Other member states would not want to jeopardise that market access, he says.

Compatibility

"We are already in the single market and have a compatible legal system and regulatory objectives on, for example, food safety and animal welfare. The long-term legacy would be there," Mr Eustice says. "I can understand why those who want to stay in want to spook everyone about trade, but fundamentally it is in everyone's mutual interest to continue trading freely."

Mr Cameron says it would be 'naïve' to think other member states would grant the UK a 'sweetheart deal'. "Wouldn't French farmers want a share of the Welsh dairy industry, wouldn't Italian farmers want a share of the British lamb industry?" he says. "For farmers there is a very clear argument, don't swap the certainty of a 500 million person market for the uncertainty of the alternative."

Similarly, there is the question about how quickly the UK could re-negotiate trade deals with non EU-countries and whether these could match or improve on the 130 deals the EU has already

Continued on page 16



Premier Lamb Drench

Give your lambs the start they deserve this year.

Drench with the Premier organically chelated trace element vitamin supplement.

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

Sheep Farmer Special Feature

More Brexit analysis on page 18.

MCGREGOR

POLYTUNNELS SHEEP HOUSING

Invest in the best for lambing success

01962 772368

sales@mgregorpolytunnels.co.uk

► negotiated or is in the process of negotiating. And what would be the UK's approach to tariffs? If the UK reduced tariffs to help reduce consumer prices, it could leave domestic producers more exposed to competition from imports.

Direct payments

Mr Cameron has pledged a Conservative Government would put an agricultural support system in place if the UK left the EU, but warned the same could not be said for a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour Government. Mr Eustice insists it would be possible to use some of the £18bn a year the UK would save by leaving the EU (a figure disputed by 'stay' campaigners) to fund a British Agricultural Policy at the same level the CAP provides today, about £4bn a year. He insists MPs would not only want to retain a farm support policy but would engage in developing something better once the policy had been repatriated from the EU.

His 'plan b' for farm support would retain an element of the current area payment but also include funds for agricultural research and a Canadian-style risk management scheme to support farmers hit by, for example, extreme weather and animal disease. There would be an expanded countryside stewardship-type scheme that also rewarded high animal welfare systems. Cross compliance, with its punitive penalties for minor infringements, would be replaced by an accreditation scheme rewarding farmers for good practice.

Skepticism

But Farmers for In, a farming campaign group led by AHDB Chairman Peter Kendall, is deeply sceptical about the leave campaign's claim farm that support would not be drastically cut. It points out that the two main UK political parties have been very clear in the past about their desire to 'abolish direct payments by 2020'.

The big goal for many proponents of leaving the EU is escape from Brussels regulation and the stifling presence of EU auditors and courts, which Mr Eustice says had generated a 'culture of

View from an exporter

An individual closely involved in the export of UK sheep meat to the EU shared this anonymous view with NSA.

"If we want to export to the EU we have to have the same regulations, so we absolutely cannot gain any relaxation on anything like traceability or meat hygiene. The more independent we want to be the harder trade will be. We will not be able to pick and choose what we want. The EU will treat us like any other third country. Why would it make it easy for us? Yes, we have two years to make it work, but if you look at the record of the UK in developing free trade it is not good. I don't think export tariffs are likely, but neither is freedom of access."

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-hereford.co.uk

'Hand selected from the Himalayas'



Brexit opinions

NSA office holders share their views

Llew Thomas,
Carmarthenshire, Wales

"I think it's key to look at things from a practical point of view, and essentially you can't un-scramble eggs. I think it would be so costly and complex to exit the EU that we'd perhaps be better off in, fighting our corner and making a good go of being an EU member as we are now."



Campbell Tweed,
County Antrim, Northern Ireland

"We see the impact of anything which alters the currency and trade in NI almost instantly. Experience tells us alterations in trading relationships are not something we'd look forward to. Any time there is disruption and changes to regulations, it has meant a cost to producers."

Kevin Harrison,
Gloucestershire, England

"I'm undecided. There would seem to be more misinformation than information out there and it's tricky to sort the chaff from the wheat. I'm having to balance my own personal views with what would be best for the industry I know and love, while also considering what would be best for my kids' futures. For me, there is still a lot of research and thinking left to do."



George Milne,
Fife, Scotland

"What we lack is a clear picture of what agriculture could look like if an exit wins. Will we get payments from UK Government? Could we control imports whilst still maintaining exports? Would we receive a better price from the market place? These questions, and others, are what I will be posing as I attend political debates aimed at agriculture and the rural countryside."

fear' within Defra. He says: "If we ended the supremacy of EU law we would be free to come up with fresh thinking on policy and to deal with some of the problems farmers have around regulation."

But Farmers for In insist the promised 'regulatory bonfire' just wouldn't happen, because of the likely requirement to meet EU standards in post-Brexit trade, and because of the UK history of 'gold-plating' EU directives.

Regulation

Mr Eustice acknowledges, while the UK would be free to develop its own legislation in many areas, it would still be tied to an extent. He says: "Sheep farmers exporting lamb to the EU would have to comply with regulations like EID, but those not exporting would have more freedom."

The debate will continue to rage until 23rd June. Depending which side you are on, Brexit is a massive risk not worth taking – or an opportunity that will not come along again.

Your livestock can't see the difference. But your bank balance could.

All Veterinary Medicinal Products* have to meet the same regulatory and quality standards.

However, some cost farmers less to buy than others.

Next time, ask for a Bimeda brand alternative and see if you could save.



For full product range see www.bimeda.co.uk

*Veterinary medicinal Products include POM-V, POM-VPS, AVM-GSL and NFA-VPS products. Use Medicines Responsibly. Noah.co.uk/responsible



Bimeda

For more information on Bimeda brand alternatives, speak to your local vet, animal health supplier, or call Bimeda on 01248 725400

Farmer Scientist Network looks at implications of UK leaving EU

By Wyn Grant, Warwick University
When a group of academic experts and farmers got together under the auspices of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society to consider the implications of Brexit for UK farming, we expected there to be complexities and uncertainties, but they were even greater than we anticipated.

There is no precedent for a member state leaving the European Union, so we do not know how the so-called 'Article 50' process, which leads to an exit settlement, would work out. What seems very likely is that the two years provided for negotiations would all have to be used given the various relationships that would have to be disentangled. In addition, the UK Government has decided not to do any detailed contingency planning for Brexit. This means that we have no clear idea of the kind of domestic agricultural policy that would be developed outside the EU.

New deal

There are a number of ways in which Britain's relationship with the EU could develop after Brexit. The Norwegian and Swiss models have been ruled out by the UK Government, because they would involve obeying EU rules without any



Would the farming landscape in the UK change significantly in the event of a Brexit?

opportunity to influence them.

The best deal from a UK perspective would be to negotiate a free trade area with the EU. This would mean, for example, that sheep meat exported to France would not face tariffs. Supporters of Brexit argue that it would be in the interests of the EU to negotiate such a deal, given the volume of trade with the UK. However, the EU would not want to give too generous a deal, as it might encourage other member states to think that leaving would be a viable option.

Single market

The UK would almost certainly be expected to make a contribution to the costs of the single market, although this would be substantially less than the current contribution the UK makes to the EU. Because the remaining member states would want a level playing field with the UK, they would also expect us to adhere to single market rules, although how broad the definition would be for 'single market rules' would be a matter for negotiation.

The UK would remain a member of the EU while these negotiations were taking place and the existing subsidies would thus continue for the two-year period. Our working party did consider that the existing Pillar One subsidies would be vulnerable once Britain left the EU. For many farmers, not least those in upland areas, these subsidies represent the difference between making a profit and a loss.

It is argued that the savings made from not having to contribute to the EU budget would enable these subsidies to continue to be paid at the current level. However, the Treasury has long had them in its sights as market distorting, and it is evident from the Budget statement that there are considerable pressures for greater reductions in public expenditure.

We think Pillar Two payments for agri-environmental schemes and rural development are far less vulnerable. They are embedded in contractual arrangements which extend beyond 2020. Moreover, there is a domestic coalition of support for them from environmental and conservation lobbies.

Some farmers think there would be a considerable reduction in the regulatory burden outside the EU. However, in so far as there is an issue about the 'gold plating' of regulations, this occurs in London rather than Brussels. There are

Sheep Farmer Special Feature

More Brexit analysis on pages 15 and 16.

also considerable domestic political pressures for regulation from environmental, conservation, animal welfare, public health and consumer benefits.

British farmers benefit to some extent from the political 'cover' that is provided by farm organisations in other member states where agriculture is a higher percentage of GDP or there is a strong cultural attachment to agriculture, as in France.

Currency

As far as exchange rates are concerned, the pound has already fallen against other leading currencies because of the uncertainties associated with the referendum. It would probably fall again after a Brexit decision and, what would happen in the medium term, would depend on the settlement that was negotiated.

At the moment Britain conducts international trade negotiations as part of an EU bloc. EU trade agreements with third countries would have to be renegotiated, a process that could take some years to complete. One difficulty we identified is that the UK lacks experienced trade diplomats.

Tariffs

UK farmers benefit from the high tariff barriers that the EU has erected against external agricultural products, particularly livestock and dairy products. It is difficult to predict what level of tariff protection the World Trade Organisation would permit Britain to maintain outside the EU. Domestic subsidies are also subject to WTO rules but, at a reduced level, these would not be at jeopardy from WTO action. A concern in any WTO negotiations is that protection for farmers would be traded off against arrangements for manufacturing industry and financial services. This reflects a more general concern that agriculture and food has received insufficient attention in the referendum debate and might well be given a low priority in any post-Brexit negotiations. This could place some farm businesses at risk, leading to diminished food security.

The Yorkshire Agricultural Society report can be downloaded at www.yas.co.uk/charitable-activities/farmer-scientist-network/brexit.

ROXAN

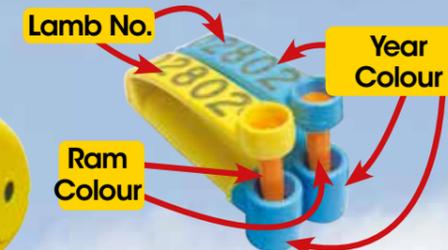
TAG from birth with CONFIDENCE

Promo Code: ROXP05

ROXAN TagFaster



£25 FREE with your first 250 EID tags!



TESTIMONIAL



DAVID BARBER
 A.R & S.L Good, Warborough Farm
 Letcombe Regis, Wantage Oxfordshire

Read the full case study on our website

"We have been using Roxan tags since 2002, at which time we started with the Adamatic Tag, this was to help save time when tagging lambs for slaughter. Previously it was another person's job just to load the pliers with a conventional single tag system, so this did save a lot of time and money when tagging 3000 lambs.

In 2010 we started using the TagFaster single batch tags for slaughter lambs, which we found to be a much simpler and faster system. We did have a few teething problems at first where we found that the thinner pins were breaking, but this has now been addressed with a new thicker pin. With these improvements we are now confident of being able to double tag our breeding stock at birth, with their life time identifier which saves a lot of time and money, as we don't have to re-tag ewe lambs later in life."

Prices quoted are subject to VAT & postage

01750 724 110

sales@www.roxan.co.uk

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

From seeing the world as a shearer to bringing a little piece of NZ to Devon

By Joanne Briggs, NSA

They say that once you've mastered the skill of shearing it can take you all over the world – and for Alan Derryman, that's certainly the case.

He has worked and competed in Australia, Denmark, Holland, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Poland and Switzerland, earning a wage, building his experience and honing his skills. Such is Alan's prowess that he ran a UK shearing round of 30,000 ewes for some time, at the same time as competing at open level for 20 years and qualifying to represent England on many occasions. His career highlight was a bronze medal in the 1988 world championships, a competition he has since returned to as a chief referee.

Alan remains passionate about shearing, as a life skill, a sport and the best way to see farming practices around the world. He shares this through his role as a British Wool Marketing Board senior shearing instructor and, as of last month, his new position as NSA South West Region Chairman.

Training

"Funding coming in from the Wool Board over the last 15 years means training has really strengthened," Alan says. "It's great to see so many people coming through and that New Zealand is now reliant on British shearers. Everyone in New Zealand admires what British shearing has done and there are three or four lads from the South West out there now doing very well in competitions."

As a result of his many visits to

New Zealand, Alan has adopted Kiwi genetics and management principles on his tenanted farm at Sidmouth, Devon. Lambing is outside, inputs are minimal and staffing is solely Alan, his partner Gwenan and a part-time labourer; silaging and arable work is done by contractors.

This was not entirely the case when Alan first took on the tenancy at Home Farm, Sidbury, in 1996 – and the real change came in when he opted to restock with Romney ewes after the 2001 foot-and-mouth epidemic.

Closed flock

"I wish I'd done it sooner," Alan says. "I'm pretty much a closed flock now, as I'm breeding a lot of my own rams to use. I've kept to breeding pure, as there are always people looking for stock. People are always ringing me to buy them, because it makes sense to keep Romneys. I sell a few rams too, and could do more if I had the time to push it."

Alan took on the tenancy at 120ha (300 acres), but was given the opportunity to double it when a neighbour retired. This allowed the sheep flock to grow to 900 ewes, alongside 70 Stabilisers and a small amount of arable to produce wholecrop



Above: The flock is now entirely New Zealand Romneys, lambing outside from 1st April.



Left: Alan Derryman

peas and barley for the cattle. Roughly 25% of the farm is

cropable and the rest permanent pasture and some estate parkland. Despite being only three miles from the sea, it is a hill farm that suits the extensive system that Alan runs. All the land is in a higher level stewardship agreement.

Organic conversion was completed nine years ago, with last season's finished lambs being sold to Waitrose via Jaspers and making a much-needed premium when the lamb price was so low. All the cattle are sold finished (due to TB movement restrictions) and the split with the lambs is 60:40 finished versus breeding stock. Lambing is outside from 1st April so, while some lambs will have been finished by the end of the summer, Alan relies on seasonal lets on dairy farms through the winter.

System change

A handful of Romney ewes that lambed outside in the particularly wet April of 2001 were the trigger for Alan to make the move away from his indoor lambing Mule flock. He says: "I'd bought 20 Romneys the autumn before and was told that, whatever I did, I wasn't to shut them in or feed them. They lambed outside in the mud and the wet and I thought, there's something in this. The Mules were too hungry for my liking and I like that I'm a closed flock now.

really important in an outdoor lambing system because we can very rarely marry a lamb on. I only see them in daylight, and then I just sort out any problems. With 90 or 95% you don't even touch them. They're spread out at four or five per acre and aren't moved until the end of lambing. I might sometimes need to walk out the ones not lambed, but that's it."

Alan has stepped up what performance data he's collected at lambing over the last three years, using EID tags and a handheld scanner to record parentage and identify ram lambs that might be suitable for breeding. He recognises a huge amount of potential in the data he can collect, especially when it comes to selling rams, but has to balance this against how much time and how much 'computer patience' he has.

Breeding priorities

The priority within his selection criteria is lambing and mothering ability; anything that requires intervention at lambing is marked and not bred from again. He also had a 'purge on teeth' when he reached 100% New Zealand Romneys five years ago and could be more selective.

"It was an amazing little exercise because it was the worst ewes that we ended up pulling out for having the worst teeth," he says. "You wouldn't really notice that otherwise, just that a ewe is a bit thin or that another is overshot or her teeth aren't right. It's made a noticeable difference to the quality of the flock. I was quite taken aback and it's taught me something. I've been keeping on top of it since."

Alan says ewes tend to give him four or five crops of lambs, with a good market for



A selection of stock rams used for this year's lambing season.

100+ that can be sold each year as drafts instead of culls. He is lambing 10 older ewes this year, as a bit of an experiment. He explains: "In a way, they're your best ewes. They're the ones that have done the business for you and you should be breeding from. I'll see what happens this year with them."

Nutrition

No concentrates are fed, with ewes thriving on grass for most of the year, stubble turnips from January and then a tonne of lick buckets post-lambing. In years when the weather is bad some silage is offered, and twice as much lick bought when spring grass growth is slow. Alan says bolusing is essential on his nutrient-poor land, particularly for selenium and cobalt, but the only other input is vaccination against clostridial disease and pasteurised and, more recently, toxoplasmosis vaccination.

When asked to sum up his farming system, Alan replies in his typically understated way. "I've been in New Zealand quite a lot and love the way they farm. All the costs in the UK are around buildings and equipment so I've moved away from that and it works for me."

Left: The farm is part of a larger estate and a mix of steep permanent pasture, cropable land and parkland.

Below: In-lamb Romney ewes strip grazing stubble turnips.

I've not bought in ewes for 10 years now, and I've had the shed space to increase cow numbers."

Alan began introducing New Zealand genetics around four years after starting with the Romneys, using AI for four seasons. He set up six family groups at this time, to allow him to breed rams and use them without risk of inbreeding. He feels the NZ genetics offer increased hardiness and better meat yield, with little disadvantage in terms of prolificacy. And while there is the potential to chase higher conception, Alan had an 'absolutely horrific' year when he tried two high prolificacy rams and has since taken a slower approach to upping percentages.

"The New Zealand Romneys are getting as much meat from half the number of lambs over the tradition Romney," he



says. "And my wool comes to £8 or £9 per ewe so, while I don't get so many lambs, I equate it to my wool cheque being worth 10% of my lambing average."

"We tend to scan at about 175% but are getting fewer triplets within that now. We only had 55 triplets in the first batch of 765 ewes we scanned this year. That's



Pictures by Sam Farlap.

World record attempt



On the day of visiting Alan, he had gathered some Romneys to potentially to be selected for use when fellow shearer Matt Smith attempts to break the nine-hour world shearing record this July. There are strict rules about each ewe needing at least 3kg of wool and guidelines on bellying and crutching at certain times ahead of the challenge. The current record of 721 was set in 2007 by New Zealander Rodney Sutton.

Watch your step with on-farm labour

By Stuart Combe, Old Mill Accountants

The Pension Regulator (TPR) has highlighted the issue of employers often not understanding contractual relationships and therefore not being able to identify who is a 'worker' and therefore who they have auto enrolment responsibility for.

We think for most sheep farming businesses it will be clear who is employed by your business, separate to the self-employed or other businesses you contract with. However, the TPR has seen a number of employers failing to understand how their workforce is categorised under the legislation, particularly where workers' contracts are non-standard.

A worker is defined as any individual who works under a contract of employment (an employee) or has any other contract to perform work or services personally and is not undertaking the work as part of their own business. Anyone who has entered into a contract of either type with an individual is an employer and is required to comply with the new employer duties.

Contractual relationships

TPR has provided a case study involving an employment business that provided workers on a temporary basis. The owners assumed that they didn't have any duties because their workers were issued zero hour contracts. In this example, the employment business was the employer because it issued contracts to each worker, including to those on zero hour contracts (i.e. the workers were not self-employed). The contracts covered all work performed for as long as the worker remained employed by the employment business. The workers didn't have to accept the work, but if they did, that worker had to turn up in person and couldn't send a substitute.



The Government's workplace pension scheme means even small businesses need to be aware of their auto enrolment responsibilities for employed labour.

As a result, the employer needed to assess them for automatic enrolment based on their ages, and how much they earn, in the normal way. The employer was issued with a Compliance Notice and a £400 penalty before they contacted TPR to check their understanding of the legislation and become compliant.

Based on this example alone, it is clear to see why, as an employer, it is vital you understand contractual relationships to ensure you are meeting TPR legislation. Apparently 1,500 £400 fines were issued between October and December 2015. And this is before the vast majority of small businesses reach their staging date. The next year or so is going to be a very trying time for any sheep farmer employing labour so please make sure you are ahead of the game.

Book giveaway

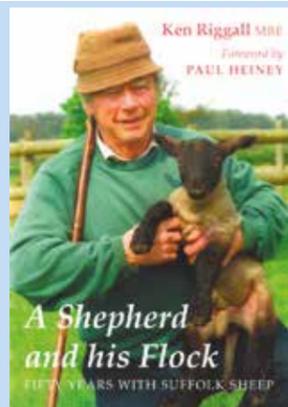
To celebrate the release of two new books for the sheep sector, NSA has four copies of Ken Riggall's biography and two copies of Andrew Humphrey's upland management guide to give away.

Ken Riggall's *A Shepherd and his Flock: 50 Years with Suffolk Sheep* plots his lifetime of devotion to breeding and showing Suffolks. He started as a child, accompanying a shepherd in his pony and trap, and progressed to have his own career, winning countless show prizes and an MBE from the Queen. He tells his story with simplicity and humour.

Andrew Humphries, also an MBE, tackles a more technical subject in *Hill Sheep Husbandry in England: Adaptive to change in diverse ecosystems*. It covers the wide range of expectations of multiple land users in the uplands, while also presenting a set of flexible husbandry principles for farmers. The relationship between soils, vegetation and grazing are examined, plus an overview of the nutritional value of commonly grazed plants.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply email your name, membership number and preferred book title to enquiries@nationalsheep.org.uk by Monday 4th April. If you do not have internet access, contact details for NSA Head Office can be found on page 2.

Not lucky enough to win? Ken's book is £9.99 from John Nickalls Publications at www.john-nickalls.co.uk and Andrew's is £8 via the Foundation for Common Land at www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk.



Heiniger Reliability
BY DESIGN

World Leaders in Shearing

quality + swiss made
Designed and manufactured in Switzerland



See the full range of Heiniger Cutters and Combs at www.coxagri.com

Training and management leads to increased market welfare, says LAA

By Chris Dodds, LAA Executive Secretary

Livestock markets across the UK are continually raising standards of animal welfare through a targeted strategy of legislation, training and management.



We are leading the charge at the Livestock Auctioneers Association (LAA), which represents auctioneering firms across England and Wales, and are continually supporting markets to exceed the standards set by the many Animal Welfare Acts, along with other legislation such as the Welfare of Animals at Markets Order (WAMO).

In order to stay ahead of the curve and provide each animal that comes into the marketplace with the best in welfare standards, LAA launched a course in Livestock Market Operations and Management at Harper Adams University. The course has run since 2011 and attracts more and more students each year. Topics covered include: animal welfare and health in the livestock market, market operational management, law and tax for auctioneers, valuations and supply chain relationships, and preparing students for a career in the livestock auctioneering and handling industries. By educating potential auctioneers with training in welfare, droving and operational management, LAA can continue to improve the efficiency and standards of auction markets across the UK.

Drover training

LAA puts a particular emphasis on drover training within the livestock market environment. The drovers who control animals before, during and after sales are some of the most essential individuals of any livestock auctioneering business. In 2011 we launched training standards and a safety manual for drovers, covering health and safety and animal welfare. Training contains elements such as understanding how animals in markets hear and see, giving the drovers a better understanding on how to handle them when they enter the market. Additionally, drovers are given extra training on disease control, including sheep scab, lameness and other signs of illness which can be found within the industry from time to time.

According to recent research from the National Office of Animal Health, consumers are most concerned about animal welfare when it comes to meat production. LAA has taken this into consideration and ensures each animal is cared for to the best of each market's ability. Animal welfare is taken incredibly seriously, and each of the LAA markets is monitored independently for standards in all areas.

The WAMO governs each auction mart in the UK, reinforces



A threefold approach of legislation, training and management ensure welfare in marts.

general animal welfare provisions and aims to ensure animals are not caused injury or unnecessary suffering. The order makes owners and keepers responsible for safeguarding animals and covers: penning, food and water, care of young animals and unfit animals, injury or suffering. The WAMO is enforced by local authorities and officials from the Animal Plant Health Agency (APHA), who regularly visit and inspect markets. As a result of the WAMO and various other legislative changes, we believe the livestock market is becoming the most profitable way to sell livestock, due to lack in loss of weight, minimal injury and reduced stress for each individual animal.

The Animal Gathering Order continues to be the most important governing legislation when it comes to the livestock market, ensuring sites are inspected annually by Defra and APHA. Under the order, each market is checked to ensure all relevant protocol is in place and that standards in hygiene, pen structure and wash facilities are met. Additionally, the weighbridges at every market are inspected annually to ensure each farmer gets the correct weight for each of their animals. Nearly all markets are farm assured, ensuring the best standards throughout.

A combination of understanding legislation, regular checks and comprehensive training is all in order to make the livestock auction the most attractive place for buying and selling stock and maintaining every animal's health, welfare and, ultimately, monetary value.

AG Polytunnels

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

Other sizes
available

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

FARMPLUS *Constructions Ltd*
TIMBER BUILDING SPECIALISTS

Sheep Housing Sheep Troughs & Barriers Cow Housing

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

Short supply chain for mutton shows small really is beautiful

By Bob Kennard, NSA Make More of Mutton Project Manager
When you know that a Welsh Borders butcher has won a coveted Great Taste Gold Award for his haggis, and his meat supply chains are just 10 or 20 food miles long, you realise this must be someone with vision.

Andrew Pugh established his first butchery around 1980. Now, with his son Tom, he has shops either side of Offa's Dyke - in Knighton, Powys, and Bishops Castle, Shropshire.

Andrew's brother Clive farms with his wife Nina in the hills around Bishops Castle and Clive is equally innovative, being one of the first in the area to install a biodigester for his then Holstein dairy unit. Since recently switching to Shorthorns, he has seen his feed costs tumble and, despite low milk prices, the herd makes a profit. Clive and Andrew's next enterprise will be Shorthorn cheese, to supply their shops, with the whey feeding the biodigester to generate more electricity for the grid. All very compact, tidy and rather clever.

In the wake of foot-and-mouth in the early 1980s, Clive wanted to add value to his Shropshire cull ewes so, working with Andrew, they decided to select the best animals, put a bit of finish on them and, by trial and error, aim to recapture an almost forgotten taste of quality mutton, using a breed traditionally famed for this purpose.

Clive says it is essential that he selects only the best ewes, after scanning and lambing, with the rest being sold at the local markets. He uses only grass to put a good finish on them, which he says the Shropshire breed is ideal for. He supplies Andrew and Tom with a steady flow of animals, using the local abattoir run by Doug Griffiths just 14 miles away at Leintwardine.

Quality and affordability

After hanging the carcasses for about 14 days, Andrew and Tom butcher them according to demand at the time. Andrews says that legs are very popular locally, as is diced mutton. He and Andrew sell quality mutton at about 75% of the price of their Shropshire lamb. This attracts some buyers who cannot afford lamb, as well as those customers who love their mutton. Andrew, Tom and Clive agree a fixed price for the year, which gives Clive more than he would get in the market, as Clive says 'because they're a better product'. Andrew and Tom get a predictable cost price and their customers get a superb quality meat, with total transparency and traceability at a reasonable price. Everyone wins.

What advice do the Pughs have for others thinking of trying to market mutton? Clive says the key is selecting the best ewes from a suitable breed and then finishing them on grass, as you would lambs. He suggests farmers contact their local butchers, develop a relationship and test the waters.



Andrew Pugh (above) showing a leg of Shropshire mutton, supplied by his brother Clive (left) in order to keep down food miles.



To the Pughs, surviving as small businesses is all about offering a personal service and offering the best quality and value, with innovation

and a great story. It also helps if you can work together closely along the chain, they say, especially if that chain is short. Selling superb family-reared Shropshire mutton works well for all of them and their customers. This is surely a case where small really is beautiful.

LAMLAC®

Tried & Trusted by Farmers for over 40 years

Visit lamlac.co.uk
 Freephone 0800 919808

Make More of Mutton with NSA

This initiative started in early 2015, with NSA aiming to broaden interest in mutton and support members involved or considering involvement in the mutton supply chain. This work will continue in 2016 and feed in to activity by AHDB Beef & Lamb and HCC to promote mutton and reignite the Mutton Renaissance.
 More at www.makemoreofmutton.org.uk.



Repairing flood-damaged pasture

Extensive winter flooding in Scotland and Northern England meant huge swathes of farmland have been waterlogged at some stage or other, compacting soils through the weight of the water and leaching out valuable nutrients.

In drier parts of the UK the weather created different challenges, as mild temperatures meant grass continued to grow. Swards have become very open due to there being no dormant period, while weak growth in low winter light has left plants fragile and susceptible to disease.

Mhairi Dawson of Barenbrug UK says: "December was the warmest since 1910 but also the wettest of any calendar month on record. As a result there is a question mark hanging over the productivity of a large percentage of pastures. Our advice to farmers is to tackle any problems head on. For many, compaction is going to be the big challenge. For others, the priority will be applying nutrients to fields to strengthen existing grasses and enable tillering to fill in gaps. This will also prevent the ingress of poor, very low yielding grass weeds like annual meadow grass." She suggests six steps to help achieve sward success:-

1. Complete a visual assessment of fields. An unhealthy shade of yellowy green is a clear indicator of stress, while patchy areas of growth suggest compaction and poor soil structure.
2. Assess the extent of any damage by digging a pit to around 30cm or to the depth of any pan. If the grass roots aren't penetrating below 10cm and/or soil is bone dry at 7-15cm then you have compaction.
3. For compaction down to 15-20cm a sward lifter will aerate the soil; for compaction at just 5cm a sward slitter will suffice. But unless you address compaction there is little point doing anything else, as it can drastically affect the growth rate,

rooting structure, nutrient uptake and drainage of newly sown grasses.

4. Test for and tackle pH. The target is pH6 (or 6.5 for grass and clover mixes), as just a small decline to pH5.5 can reduce grass yields by 35-40% and lock up valuable nutrients.
5. Get a handle on soil phosphate (P) and potash (K) status. This can be supplied by reserves in the soil or, after a prolonged wet period, through the addition of fertiliser and manure. Aim for a soil index of 2 for P and K.

6. Rejuvenate pasture with overseeding or a new ley. Overseeding with a mix of fast growing, vigorous tetraploid ryegrass species with deliver results from as little as six weeks post-establishment, improving ground cover and boosting yield and quality, but remember overseeding is only a short-term solution. For longer term results, sow a more suitable ley come the autumn.

Ms Dawson concludes: "Whatever the weather, you should soil sample every three to four years and build slurry and fertiliser applications into an annual nutrient management plan."



Flooding had done much damage to UK grassland

SI-RO-MARK

SHEEP BRANDING FLUID

THE WORLD'S NUMBER 1

12 MILLION SHEEP CAN'T BE WRONG

- ✓ DURABLE
- ✓ SCOURABLE
- ✓ ECONOMICAL
- ✓ DISTINCT
- ✓ FLOCK SECURITY

Find out more at www.coxagri.com
or call 0845 600 8081

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

INCLUDES FREE APP EDITION WEEKLY

VIP MEMBER BENEFITS AT NO EXTRA COST

PRINT AND ONLINE

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

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

CALL 01635 879 320
 and quote **EHAUSA**

All this for just
£32.25 per quarter
 or **£134** annually

Body condition scoring is a useful tool for flock management decisions

By Nerys Wright, AHDB Beef & Lamb



Body condition scoring (BCS) is a simple and effective management tool for assessing whether animals are receiving adequate nutrition through all the stages of the reproductive cycle.

It was developed in the UK in the 1960s, but hasn't been as widely adopted here compared to other countries, such as New Zealand and Australia.

Knowing the body condition of your flock means you can plan nutrient and feed requirements through the year. When feed availability is good and demand on the ewes is low, such as during the dry period or mid pregnancy, they can build up reserves. These reserves make sure they are more robust at pinch-points, such as late pregnancy and early lactation, when energy demands are high and meeting them can be challenging. The aim is not to have big swings from very thin to very fat; BCS should fluctuate by no more than 1-1.5 throughout the year.

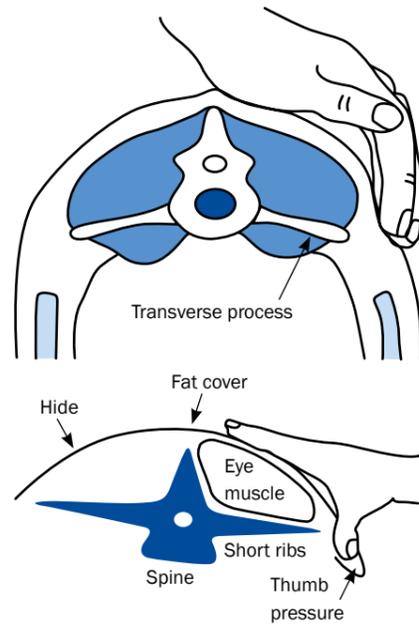
Many sheep farmers will visually assess the condition of their flock. However, assessing condition by handling the ewes over the loin and feeling for the transverse

processes using fingers and thumb (see pictures) is a more accurate method. A scale of one to five is used and some people choose to use half or quarter scores too.

It is the change in BCS that is important, how quickly the change happens and how many ewes are affected, so recording scores is important. BCS can be recorded using BCS score cards (available from AHDB), a recording book, in your own spreadsheet or using EID equipment.

Key times

Ewes should be scored as often as possible and, ideally, at the following times. Consider doing it when they are gathered anyway, such as for scanning or vaccinating.



Handling ewes over the loin is more effective than visual assessment.

weaning and are the last lambs to finish on the farm. As BCS has improved on the project farms, the number of light lambs has reduced. However, there are other factors that effect lamb performance to eight weeks, such as mastitis and lameness.

Thin ewes

The project data also shows that ewes are often at their thinnest at eight weeks post lambing and are starting to regain BCS by weaning. Identifying thin ewes at eight weeks could be used to determine the weaning date, for example weaning thinner ewes earlier, to allow them sufficient time to gain condition before tupping in the autumn. Ewes that lose too much BCS in the first eight weeks and continue to be thin (below BCS 2) at weaning are more likely to have single lambs than twins the following year.

For AHDB Beef & Lamb BCS record cards go to the BRP section at www.beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk.

- **Weaning:** To allow time for condition to be modified before tupping.
 - **Tupping:** To ensure ewes are on target. It is easier to influence BCS when ewes are not pregnant
 - **Mid pregnancy:** Scanning is an ideal time to start grouping ewes based on litter size and BCS.
 - **Late pregnancy:** To optimise lamb birthweight.
 - **Eight weeks post lambing:** To identify ewes that are struggling and use to determine weaning date
- AHDB Beef & Lamb has funded a four-year project looking at the longer term impact of ewe BCS on flock performance. The work has been carried out on three commercial farms in England and has been looking at the impact of ewe BCS on litter size and lamb weights at eight weeks, focusing on twin lambs. We are now in the final year of data collection and expect to be promoting project messages from 2017 onwards. Findings so far suggest that performance of the ewe and lambs in the first eight weeks after lambing is crucial.
- Data shows lambs that are light at eight weeks of age continue to be light at

BCS scores

Score 1: The vertical and horizontal processes are prominent and sharp. The fingers can be pushed easily below the transverse and each process can be felt. The loin is thin with no fat cover.

Score 2: The vertical processes are prominent but smooth, individual processes being felt only as corrugations. The horizontal processes are smooth and rounded, but it is still possible to press fingers under. The loin muscle is a moderate depth, but with little fat cover.

Score 3: The vertical processes are smooth and rounded; the bone is only felt with pressure. The horizontal processes are also smooth and well covered; hard pressure is required with the fingers to find the ends. The loin muscle is full and with a moderate fat cover.

Score 4: The vertical processes are only detectable as a line. The ends of the horizontal processes cannot be felt. The loin muscles are full and rounded and have a thick covering of fat.

Score 5: The vertical and transverse processes cannot be detected even with pressure; there is a dimple in the fat layers where the processes should be. The loin muscles are very full and covered with very thick fat.

WIN THIS MOBILE SHEEP HANDLING AND WEIGHING SYSTEM!



ARE YOU...

- Establishing a flock of your own or looking to expand?
- Looking to use a mobile sheep handling & weighing system to establish a second income?
- Short of staff and need an "extra pair of hands" mobile handling system?
- Wanting to realise the benefits of accurate weighing?
- Looking to make your handling routine simpler and more efficient?

**WORTH
£8,000**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Tell us how us how winning this system would make a real difference to you in a two minute video or 400 words.

Go to www.winanalligator.co.uk to complete a short application form* then get creative and upload your video to Facebook or YouTube using **#iwantanalligator**.



#iwantanalligator

*Terms and conditions apply, visit www.winanalligator.co.uk/terms. The competition closes 09/09/16. As part of the selection process shortlisted entrants may be invited for an interview.

Partnership vet approach supports work on flock and herd expansion

By Joanne Briggs, NSA

They may be situated in the popular holiday destination area around Poole Harbour, Dorset, but farming for Andrew and Claire Head isn't all about enjoying more sunshine and less rain than other parts of the UK.

Limited by the productivity of the land at Rempstone Farm, a tenanted unit on the Isle of Purbeck, they want to maximise output from the livestock they can run. They see animal health as a key part of this.

Despite being a reasonable acreage – 215ha (530 acres) – the inclusion of downland chalk, hill grazing and heathland means stocking rates are limited. There is also a very wet 'no go' area for six months of the year, plus patches of woodland, inaccessible hill and gorse. Having taken on the tenancy just over eight years ago, embarking on organic conversion straight away and entering into a HLS agreement, Andrew and Claire say they are now at the stage where they know what the farm can manage and what it needs from them.

Stocking rates

"It sounds like a massive area and not much stock but, for the amount of forage we can get and with taking finishing cattle all the way through to 36 months, it's about right for us," Andrew says. "Our limiting factor is the winter. It's a dry farm and we get good weather, but we don't get the grass very early in the spring. The maximum we could run would be 300 ewes, lambing inside, plus 40 outdoor calving cows and all other youngstock indoors."



Andrew and Claire Head.



The Lleyns are winter shorn and housed eight weeks ahead of lambing.

Numbers are already heading in this direction and the end of March this year saw 260 purebred Lleyns start to lamb and 23 North Devon Ruby Red cattle calves. There are plenty of homebred heifers coming through and around 70 suitable ewe lambs each year. In 2016 only 13 ewe lambs had to be sold for not holding to the tup. The group scanned at 1.67, compared to 1.79 for the main flock.

Expansion using homebred replacements has become a priority for the couple, after struggling to build up cattle numbers as a result of buying in Johnes and campylobacter-linked abortion. They have overcome those problems and now have a mostly closed herd with only high-health status bulls bought in when needed. Maintaining five separate family groups allows the use of homebred rams and means the Lleyn flock is entirely closed.

More than 50 finished lambs a year and around half the cattle are sold through Andrew and Claire's thriving direct sales business, Cedar Organics, supply local customers, restaurants and a school. They also produce 100 table chickens a month for this route, while eggs from 500 layers are sold to local shops, and pigs have recently been added to supply a local charcuterie. The remainder of the cattle and lamb are sold finished, mostly deadweight but some liveweight, and Andrew aims to have nearly all lambs

away by the end of the year. In 2015 some were ready as early as June and around 20% before weaning in August; all but 40 (mostly out of ewe lambs) had gone before Christmas.

"Those 40 lambs were the only ones we wormed last year, plus the ewe lambs that went to the tup," says Andrew. "They had one dose each. Nothing else had anything. Hopefully we can build on that with our pattern of clean grazing."

Clean grazing

"We have two areas of the farm for turning out ewes and lambs, and are very, very strict that each year they go to ground that has not carried sheep for a whole year. The ground gets an absolute, 100% break. Mostly the land not being used by sheep is cut for hay with cattle grazing the aftermaths. We target our manure on the land we cut for hay, and having more cattle will help with that."



Cows are the only stock overwintered outside; they calve from late March.



The scanning rate in the ewe lambs was higher this year, with more carrying twins.

Andrew explains how working with his vet, Emily Gascoigne of Synergy Farm Health, has made all the difference on this worm management system.

He says: "I've been working in organic systems for 20 plus years, but it was Emily's way of explaining high risk grazing with a traffic light system that really meant I got it. It's a best practice principle, not an organic one."

Deficiencies

Emily was also instrumental in reacting to a white muscle disease problem in lambs two years ago. She analysed forage to ascertain a selenium deficiency, allowing Andrew to apply for an organic derogation to use boluses each year. Any other issues, such as a handful of abortions in ewe lambs last year, are looked into promptly. No other routine treatments or vaccinations have been found to be needed, apart from obtaining a derogation to fluke the sheep once a year and cattle twice a year. The farm carries a surprisingly high fluke burden and faecal egg counts and blood tests have been used to investigate this, over and above



A group of ewe lambs carrying singles, in front of a pen of North Devon youngstock being taken through to finishing.

the six-weekly faecal egg counts to check for worms through the summer.

Andrew has just completed training to do his own egg counts, so a microscope is top of his shopping list. He would also like to invest in better weighing facilities, to link with the EID data he is already capturing on breeding, family groups, lambing performance and growth rates. Other training completed recently is a basic post mortem method for lambs. This is part of a trial Emily is conducting with several farms this lambing time, using AHDB Beef & Lamb funding. Farmers will investigate and record lamb losses with increased detail by checking if the lamb was born alive and, if so, whether colostrum was received.

This is linked to work Emily does with Andrew's flock ahead of each lambing time, blood testing in-lamb ewes to check the forage is providing enough energy. Andrew winter shears and houses ewes eight weeks before lambing, feeding homemade hay. A small amount of organic pellets are introduced a fortnight later, stepping up for twins and triplets two weeks later again.

"I like the winter shearing system," he

View from the vet

Emily Gascoigne from Synergy Farm Health comments on how she enjoys working with Andrew and their shared interest in an evidence-based approach to flock health planning. She says this has its roots in the farm being organic, but is something she is increasingly seeing across the conventional flocks she works with as well.

"What I can offer as a sheep vet is an evidence-based strategy, which clients like Andrew are demanding and are willing to spend money on through testing and analysis," Emily says. "I recognise I'm not the only person who advises the flocks I work with, and am probably the most expensive one, but I see collaboration with SQPs, nutritionists, scanners and others as a vital part of what I do."

"The time has gone where we all work in isolation. And with things accelerating forward with new, evidence-based advice on things like lameness, anthelmintic use and fluke diagnostics, the vet can interpret that, put it into context and provide the strategy for everyone working with the flock."

Commenting on the success Andrew has had with 'traffic light' pasture risk assessment, Emily says that although it suits his extensively-ran sheep-and-cattle system, it is something more producers could look at.

"As sheep farmers we need to use drenches, but we need to not rely on them," she says. "The productivity impact of parasites is not limited to organic farms so avoidance strategies and grassland management are advantageous on conventional farms too, and I work with both types of flocks who use them in their health plans."

"Andrew has got down to a very low level of drench dependency, but we're not just putting sheep on low risk pasture and forgetting about them. You have to monitor them, which Andrew is doing with regular faecal egg counts and by recording liveweight gains through his EID system."

For more on risk based grazing go to the "Better Returns" area at www.beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk and look for 'Manual 8: Targeting worm control for better returns'.

says. "It suits us well because we're at risk of very early fly strike here, as it's warmer and surrounded by the forests where the flies breed and over-winter. It also suits the organic system because I don't think a ewe is as hungry with wool on. If we shear at housing we can get them to eat more forage, which helps feed the lamb and contribute towards our ultimate aim of reducing losses throughout the whole system."

Vigilance and open dialogue on vaccination needed on BTV8

By Hannah Park, NSA

With the re-emergence of bluetongue (BTV8) in regions of France, NSA is encouraging the whole livestock industry to be open in its discussion of the issue and remain vigilant over the coming months.

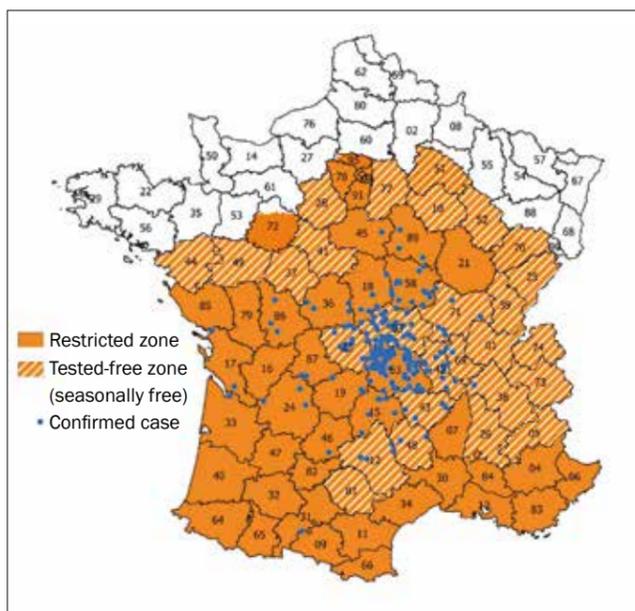
The movement of live animals is tightly controlled so the likely source of introduction to the UK will be infected midges coming across the channel from France. The level of risk is largely dependent on weather conditions, temperatures and the extent of virus circulation in France.

The latest map from France, dated 18th March (pictured), shows the restriction zone currently placed on French farmers. Francoise Dion, a vet in France, tells NSA that the majority of the 210 confirmed cases by the end of February were picked up through surveillance (PCR testing) rather than clinical signs. She says: "That does not necessarily mean the virus is less active, but simply that circulation is presently limited or that some kind of immunity is persisting. Up to now, the main issue is not the clinical symptoms of disease but the restriction of movement, within France and to other member states and third countries.

Movement restrictions

"Vaccination is about the only tool allowing free movements of animals (especially for sheep when considering the cost of PCR tests), but several problems appear – the availability of doses and the necessary waiting period before exit (20-60 days following first vaccination)."

NSA understands that the French Government currently owns all existing vaccine for BTV8 and has made it compulsory for any stock exiting the restriction zone to comply with pre-movement vaccination stipulations. The vaccine has to be administered by a vet, which the farmer pays for, but the vaccine itself is free. On 1st March the Government made the vaccine available for farmers to use across all their animals, meaning an additional 700,000



sheep are now eligible for vaccination on top of the circa three million who have already received a dose.

Ms Dion says: "Vaccination of herds and flocks is voluntary and can be completed by the farmer, but according to priorities as the number of doses is short. As eradication of the disease was not effective in 2012, it looks like we will have to live with it and not try to eradicate it."

Although the UK currently has its hand tied by there being no vaccine available, NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker is clear that livestock keepers and UK governments need to have an open dialogue on the choices being faced. He says: "Low vaccine

Bluetongue opinions

NSA office holders share their views

Bryan Griffiths,
Umberleigh, Devon

"Hill, lowland and pedigree farmers I've spoken to in South West England, like myself, are preoccupied with the extreme weather, depressed prices and lambing. Bluetongue is simply not on the radar. It may prove to be a short sighted view, but I think it will take clinical cases in the UK to spark enthusiasm for vaccination."



Dan Phipps,
Newmarket, Suffolk

"Bluetongue is something that concerns us in the East of the UK, and the current situation has highlighted our lack of knowledge on the subject. If we have to bear the cost, it will come down to a straightforward business decision. If the vaccine is available and is in line with prices during the last outbreak, it's inevitable that we will vaccinate."

Greg Dalton,
Wearhead, County Durham

"Bluetongue isn't on anybody's radar here in the North of England, but if it starts circulating in the south of the country and zonal restrictions come into force we may have to re-think. It will affect us considerably if it becomes a requirement later in the year for stock going into the south to be vaccinated, when people are wanting to send Mule lambs when the backend breeding sales kick in."



Andrew Barr,
Lewes, East Sussex

"There is a mix of opinion in this area. One neighbour told me he wouldn't be keen to vaccinate and isn't especially worried at this stage. Another said he most definitely would, as an animal welfare issue as much as anything else. Personally I would, if a vaccine was available, definitely in rams and breeding stock in the autumn and probably in the main flock too, if it came down to it."

uptake in the past has made manufacturers understandably nervous about producing a vaccine that no one will buy. We hope the seriousness of the situation in France will encourage them to take rapid action with the aim of avoiding further spread. For the UK, my view is that we need to do all we can to stay clear of the virus. If we can make a case to encourage vaccine to be produced the question remains as to whether we're prepared to allow only those farms directly at risk to bear the brunt of the cost. In my opinion, this is an industry-wide challenge and the whole industry should be addressing it."

Mr Stocker says that, although the resistance Defra has shown to rolling out a nationally-funded vaccination strategy is understandable in the current era of austerity, NSA feels strongly that trade must be protected at all costs.

"I'd urge producers to seriously think about how an outbreak of bluetongue could impact the UK's reputation in terms of health status, particularly in light of the hangover which remains from

BSE and foot-and-mouth. We know from our French contacts that they are now having to accept living with the disease – but, given the potential we have to protect the UK through vaccination in advance of the spread to our shores, a strategy for funding is now essential."

Disease vigilance

NSA will continue its dialogue at a national level on a vaccine strategy and, more urgently, vaccine manufacture. In the meantime, discussions on the situation with colleagues in the Sheep Veterinary Society have confirmed that all sheep and cattle farmers must be vigilant to the risk and contact a vet immediately if there is any suspicion regarding stock.

Mr Stocker concludes: "There is no need to panic, but it is important that farmers are vigilant when checking stock and that, at an industry level, we are planning effectively."

Our expertise ... your choice...
with **Osmonds Premium, Thrivit and Essential Ranges**

Experts in
animal health
and nutrition

SINCE 1854

Premium Range

A premium quality vitamin, trace element & amino acid supplement with the Omega 3 Factor and Organic Chelates. Helps promote optimum health and wellbeing leading to increased performance including growth, fertility and vitality. Emulsified base to ensure easy flowing through drenching guns.



Thrivit Range

A highly concentrated vitamin and trace element supplement for cattle and sheep, containing chelated minerals. Helps promote growth and condition ensuring optimum performance and thriftiness. Formulated on an emulsified base providing fast and efficient administration (no gunging up in drenching guns) and absorption.



Essential Range

A uniquely formulated vitamin, trace element and chelated mineral supplement. Helps improve performance and condition through a specifically formulated, cost effective, nutritional boost. Emulsified base to ensure easy flowing through drenching guns.



Est. 1854

Osmonds

Animal Nutritionists & Veterinary Suppliers

Quality ✓ Reliability ✓ Palatability ✓

Visit www.osmonds.co.uk or call 01948 668 100

Bradeley Green, Tarporley Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 4HD

Improved nematodirus forecast launched to help protect lambs

By Lesley Stubbings, SCOPS

The success of the SCOPS nematodirus forecasting service, which has been provided for the last three seasons, prompted our recent work to improve the tool for 2016.

Last year a survey of service users showed that 60% of respondents significantly changed their approach to control of the *Nematodirus battus* parasite, while more than 90% made some change as a result of checking the forecast. With this positive response and the help of researchers at Bristol University, we have launched a much improved service, available now and through to the early summer at www.scops.org.uk/nematodirus-forecast.

Forecasting

This year the service includes major improvements to the forecasting model and, most importantly, features daily updates using weather station data. This means more localised, real time advice on the level of risk and the need for management actions, including treatments.

The model predicts



when nematodirus eggs will hatch in a localised area, giving early warning of the risk of a disease outbreak. It can do this because of the temperature-dependent synchronised hatching of the larvae, which means real time temperature data from 140 weather stations provided by the Met Office and Forecast.io can be used to predict the date of hatching and how long the larvae will remain infective on the pasture. This information is presented on to an interactive map, allowing farmers and advisers to select the nearest or most representative weather station. A single click reveals advice on how to relate the predicted risk to your flock.

Risk assessment

Height above sea level is provided for each weather station so the risk level can be adjusted for individual farms using the rule of thumb that hatch will occur roughly one week later for every 100m above sea level. Previous grazing management and history of nematodirus infections can be also used to assess risk and, although faecal egg counts cannot determine the need to treat lambs, they can be useful in showing where contamination is highest, identifying paddocks that are likely to be high risk next season.



The Bristol University team is also asking for reports of cases of nematodiosis or of eggs in faecal

Why the need for change?

Hannah Rose of Bristol University explains why improving the forecasting tool is so important for the industry: "Farmers can no longer rely on a standard timetable of treatments to avoid disease, because predicting when outbreaks might happen has become increasingly difficult due to variation in spring temperatures from year to year.

Faecal egg counts are also not a useful indicator, because the damage is done by the immature larvae. Sheep farmers needed a reliable warning system, so we have been working to improve this forecast."

Nematodirus fact file

- Nematodiosis is caused by the gutworm *Nematodirus battus*. It can be deadly and affects young lambs, typically from six to 12 weeks of age.
- Eggs are deposited on pasture by lambs the previous year and hatch together in spring, triggered by a period of chilling over winter followed by a period of time spent at 11.5-17°C.
- Risks are highest when we have a cold spell followed by an increase in temperatures.
- Young lambs take in large numbers of larvae as they graze, which damage their gut leading to foetid black diarrhoea (black scour) and death.
- Farmers should avoid putting young lambs on paddocks that may have been contaminated with nematodirus eggs the previous grazing season, particularly if they were grazed by ewes with young lambs.
- Young lambs should be treated to protect them through the period when there is a high risk forecast. More than one treatment may be necessary at three week intervals, dependent on the spread of ages in the group and if the high risk forecast is prolonged.

egg counts, for mapping anonymously alongside the forecast. This will enable us to interpret the risk forecasts and help with future development by providing more data to test predictions. Reports remain anonymous and take a few minutes on the website.

More information at www.scops.org.uk. Bristol University's involvement in this project is using UK Government funding via the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

Treatment for nematodirus

Anthelmintics in the 1-BZ (white) class are still the treatment of choice for *Nematodirus battus*. Despite the widespread resistance of other worm species to the white wormers, nematodirus remains susceptible on the majority of farms and can be used even on farms with known resistance issues in other worms. However, we must be vigilant and report suspected cases of resistance. A faecal egg count 10 days after treatment to make sure no nematodirus eggs are present will confirm a successful treatment.

More on page 33 and 34.

White drench and nematodirus

By Lynsey Melville, Moredun

UK sheep farmers have been lucky in that, while many worms have developed resistance to the 1-BZ (white) drenches, nematodirus has not appeared to follow the trend – see the facing page for more details.

However, low levels of resistance have recently been identified in *Nematodirus battus* populations in the UK. Given how widespread the parasite is in this country, and the significant production losses it can cause, particularly in heavily infected animals, it is important for us to be aware of the situation. The acute nature of disease caused by this parasite means treatment failures of 1-BZ drugs could have a profound impact on mortality and productivity of young lambs.

White drenches remain the treatment of choice for the *N. Battus* parasite (pictured), but beware of recently discovered resistance problems.

The nematodirus parasite has a simple direct lifecycle, in which eggs pass out of the host in faeces, develop to the infective larval stage within the egg and finally hatch onto grass. Synchronous hatching occurs annually, resulting in very high levels of challenge from contaminated pastures. Acute disease occurs when synchronous hatching coincides with the grazing of young lambs. Generally for *Nematodirus battus*, the eggs deposited

during one spring/summer will not hatch until the following spring. In recent years, however, several reports have emerged of clinical cases of *Nematodirus* occurring later in the season and secondary peaks of disease in autumn; the reason for these changes in parasite behaviour are as yet unknown.

An AHDB-funded studentship is being undertaken by the Moredun Research Institute to identify the distribution of white drench resistance in nematodirus populations throughout the UK. The study aims to provide a benchmark of the current scale of resistance in this species and investigate potential risk factors associated with the development and spread of resistance. The output of this research could inform future management strategies and minimise the economic impact of resistance.

Analysis of *Nematodirus battus* populations from around 200 farms from across the UK indicate that the genes which code for white drench resistance in this species are present throughout the UK. Resistant genes were identified in around a quarter of the populations tested. Fortunately, the overall frequency appears to be relatively low. However, the wide distribution of resistant genes, even at low frequency, indicates that the potential for the development of clinical white drench resistance in nematodirus is widespread.

Focal points of high prevalence are being identified and further research will



be conducted to investigate the cause of this apparent localisation. Given that white drench resistance in *Nematodirus battus* appears to be at low levels in the UK at present, white drenches (1-BZ) are still recommended for the control of this parasite in lambs.

Unidentified resistance could lead to treatment failures and potential production losses in future years. Currently the faecal egg count reduction test (FECRT) is the test of choice for assessing drug efficacy and can be conducted by collecting samples on the day of treatment and 10 days later to calculate the reduction in parasite eggs.

DNA test

A further aim of this PhD project is to develop a novel DNA-based test to identify white drench resistance genes in *Nematodirus battus* populations. This test could be useful in the rapid assessment of treatment decisions and the evaluation of the need for alternative treatment strategies by determining whether eggs identified in post treatment samples are due to re-infection or as a result of anthelmintic resistance.

Within the next two years of the project we hope to gain a greater understanding of this parasite and the driving force behind this emerging resistance. The knowledge gained will inform future best practice advice, which in turn has the potential to minimise production and economic costs associated with anthelmintic resistance.

For further details of the project email lynsey.melville@moredun.ac.uk.

Worm boot campers are all set

By Lesley Stubbings, SCOPS

At the end of last year, NSA and SCOPS asked Sheep Farmer readers if they would like to join a 'boot camp' to shape up their worm control in 2016.

I am pleased to say we now have background information on 15 sheep farms that want to take part. They range from lowland early lambing flocks through to upland and pedigree flocks and, in terms of size, from less than 100 to more than 1,000 ewes. That means plenty of variation, which is really good. Most graze only sheep but some have cattle to bring into the mix. On the whole, they tend to be dissatisfied with their current worm control, though again this is variable, with some saying they are satisfied.

In terms of anthelmintic resistance, the group is typical of the industry in that

more than 80% have never tested to see if their wormers are working effectively. The majority have also either never used faecal egg counts (FECs) or only occasionally – so there are two things we will work on as the year progresses.

As I write, I am just analysing replies concerning what the participants do in terms of treating ewes around lambing. There is a really interesting split. Half always treat all their ewes; the others are split between treating most, some and very few, and there is also a broad mix of product group used. We will be talking about this with the group in the coming weeks and working out what actions they can take.

Finally, it is encouraging to see that more than half the group have used one of the two 'new' wormer groups (4-AD orange



Lesley will be working with the boot camp group through 2016

or 5-S purple). In the main these have been used as quarantine treatments, but also some have been used in the mid/late season for lambs. In the next issue we will have a more detailed update, as we get into some of the year's challenges with the group.

Full extent of resistance revealed

By Julie Finch, HCC

With the new lamb season upon us, here at HCC we are strongly urging farmers to heed the stark conclusions of our wormer resistance investigation – and to work with your vet to ensure drenches are working on the farm.



Resistance levels were high in the HCC study, even to moxidectin products.

to build and HCC is now leading a pan-industry awareness campaign in association with the UK's Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep (SCOPS) steering group to drive home to farmers that changes have to be made if flock health is not to seriously suffer in the not-too-distant future.

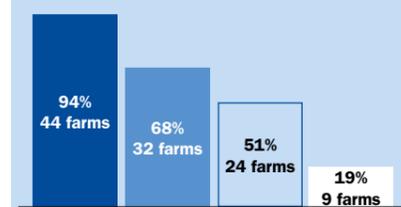
Wormer tests

Anthelmintic resistance means a wormer loses effectiveness because a proportion of the worms survive the treatment. It is really important to test after drenching and check for persistent worms, so you know which wormers work on your farm.

A HCC project, funded through the Rural Development Plan for Wales, ran from September 2014 to July 2015 and looked

Farms with anthelmintic resistance

- Benzimidazole (1-BZ white)
- Levamisole (2-LV yellow)
- Ivermectin (3-ML clear)
- Moxidectin (3-ML clear)



at 47 Welsh farms and the effectiveness of four types of wormer: benzimidazole (1-BZ white), levamisole (2-LV yellow), ivermectin (3-ML clear) and moxidectin (also 3-ML clear). The project showed a significant rise in resistance levels compared to a previous 2006 project. It revealed:

- Only one farm showed all drugs were still fully effective.
- 94% showed resistance to 1-BZ.
- 68% showed resistance to 2-LV.
- 51% showed resistance to ivermectin.
- 19% showed resistance to moxidectin.

More information from HCC at www.hccmpw.org.uk or SCOPS at www.scops.org.uk.

Wormer tips

- **Choose** the right product. Targeting the parasite(s) correctly means you get better results and reduces the risk that you will need to treat again.
- **Source** a narrow spectrum product where appropriate, to reduce selection for resistance to the broad spectrum groups.
- **Use** combination products only when they are necessary.
- **Administer** anthelmintics effectively and handle and store them correctly.
- **Do not** mix anthelmintics with any other product prior to administration.
- **Check** the product has been effective by carrying out a simple drench test. This will give you an early warning and will help to make sure you are using an effective product.

New programme to prompt change

HCC has launched ON-Farm 2016, a series of events aimed at linking its comprehensive research programme with providing practical and cost effective solutions for producers.

It has been estimated that if animal

health, environmental and genetic tips from HCC's ongoing research portfolio are implemented on farms they could save thousands of pounds in unnecessary expenditure in Wales.

Tips from four contributors at the

launch event at Gelli Aur College (see panels for details) were very positively received and quarterly meetings are planned with on-farm support also featuring at key industry meetings and shows.

The ON-Farm team's practical tips for profitable production

Controlling CODD

From Liverpool University's Joe Angell

- Adopt good biosecurity measures and quarantine all incoming stock for four weeks to avoid buying in contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD).
- Check sheep for sores on the top of the hoof, isolate affected sheep and treat.
- Disinfect equipment, including foot trimmers; bag and dispose of all hoof trimmings

Tackling liver fluke

From Liverpool University's Diana Williams

- Snails transmit liver fluke so, where possible, reduce snail habitats. For instance: ensure drinking troughs don't leak or create unnecessary wet areas; construct a hard-core/concrete pad for drinking troughs; and carefully manage grazing in rushy ground and wet areas during peak fluke season.
- Quarantine all bought in stock, test and treat.

Mitigating climate change

From Bangor University's Prysor Williams

- Improving technical efficiency can also mitigate factors that affect climate change. Some potential measures include:-
- Planting clover in grassland to fix nitrogen and reduce the need for non-organic fertilisers.
 - Improving ewe nutrition in late gestation to increase lamb survival.
 - Lambing ewe lambs to increase flock output.
 - Increasing lamb growth rates for earlier finishing .
 - Selecting pasture plants that minimise nitrogen losses, such as high sugar ryegrasses.

Exploiting genetics

From Dewi Jones of Innovis

- Using genetics to impact economic performance, it is possible to dramatically improve animals with the consumer marketplace in mind. Genomics are gaining ground but remember:
- Genomics and gene marker tests will not substitute for performance recording.
 - Genomics is most valuable for hard to measure traits.
 - Selective culling is a key first step to improve performance.



Pioneering solutions in animal health

Help your lambs thrive with known and optimum levels of the 4 essential trace elements

Tracesure® Traffic Lights for Replacement Lambs



- Copper ✓
- Cobalt ✓
- Iodine ✓
- Selenium ✓

- ✓ Single application lasts 6 months*
- ✓ Can be used with lambs over 20 kg
- ✓ Promotes health, vitality and growth, post weaning
- ✓ Balances out trace element deficiencies



Utilises unique Leaching Bolus Technology

- ✓ For non-replacement lambs use the Tracesure® Lamb Finisher range.
- ✓ For copper sensitive breeds use Tracesure® Co and Tracesure® Se/I.

ANIMAX
veterinary technology

To find a supplier in your area or for advice about our products call 01359 252 181 or visit www.animax-vet.com

*Exact product lifespan depends on species & conditions

Using abattoir condemnations to make flock improvements

By Emily Gascoigne, Synergy Farm Health



Abattoir condemnations can be hugely costly for flocks, be it the whole carcass or just a part of it. The cause of condemnations often results in lost flock performance on the farm too, so using abattoir data to inform and adapt existing practices, with particular reference to parasite management, is a positive thing to do.

The cost of disposal may not always be immediately apparent to you as a producer (with some exceptions, where huge costs are incurred) but the overall financial implication for the industry as a whole means we must reduce losses and make lamb production more efficient and sustainable going forward.

Meat inspections

Slaughterhouse legislation means abattoirs have to carry out ante-mortem inspection of livestock and post-mortem inspection of carcasses, to declare meat and offal fit for human consumption. They are also required to return this information to the submitting producers. In its most basic form, abattoir feedback will list animal weights, carcass grades and number of animals submitted, along with any rejections. With the ever increasing use of electronic identification recognition, this feedback is increasingly accurate and available and more processors are linking it to individual UK numbers. There are still some challenges with returning the



While regularly treating farm dogs is essential in preventing tapeworms, also advise dog walkers of their role in protecting sheep.

Understanding abattoir feedback terminology

Term	Rejection reason	Responsible parasite
Liver cyst	<i>Cysticercus tenuicollis</i>	<i>Taenia hydatigena</i>
Muscle cyst	<i>Cysticercus ovis</i>	<i>Taenia ovis</i>
Liver lesion	Liver fluke	<i>Fasciola hepatica</i>
Lung lesion	Pneumonia/pleurisy of the pluck	
Local abscess	Injection site abscess	
Local bruising	Bruising from impact or wool pull	

information to the relevant producer (for example, store finishers may not be the source of historic pneumonia infections) but things are definitely improving. Rearer-finishers can certainly apply the data returned to their business, and finishing units can apply active disease observations to their units.

As a vet in practice, my most common phone calls on abattoir feedback are related to understanding the terminology used – see table for common causes of rejection and the terms frequently used.

The *Taenia hydatigena* tapeworm is the most common cause of liver rejection in the UK, with AHDB figures showing it was responsible for 742,000 rejections in 2012 compared to 582,000 due to fasciola lesions (liver fluke) during the same period.

Parasite lifecycle

The adult stage of this tapeworm is found in the small intestine of dogs. Eggs are shed in the faeces and picked up by grazing sheep. The parasite migrates via the blood stream from the guts to the peritoneum and embeds in the liver. Here small cysts are formed, which are recognisable to the naked eye on meat inspection and are known as *Cysticercus tenuicollis*. The migration is unlikely to cause huge production losses unless it occurs in large numbers, in which case liver disease is observed through poor lamb growth.

Dog infection occurs as a consequence of eating infected animals, either through raw meat feed or consumption of fallen stock. Animals do not establish immunity to *T. hydatigena* and lesions are frequently observed in animals of all ages.

Treatment of this condition in sheep is not effective or feasible, so preventing infection should be a priority. Top tips include prompt disposal of fallen stock, not feeding offal to farm dogs, regular worming of farm dogs with a praziquantel-based product every six weeks to kill the

adult tapeworm, and clear sign posting of footpaths to warn dog walkers of the role they play.

Taenia ovis is another dog tapeworm and utilises the same lifecycle. Because of the dispersion of the cyst via the bloodstream, we often see *T. ovis* cysts in some of the biggest muscle systems in the body, such as the main muscles of the leg, the heart, diaphragm and masseter muscle, as well as seeing it occasionally generalised throughout the carcass.

Condemnations

Generalised infection leads to whole carcass rejection, which has a huge impact for flocks as the producer has to absorb the cost. AHDB recorded 66,500 lamb carcasses rejected in 2012 (0.78% of slaughtered sheep). As with *T. hydatigena*, *T. ovis* will not cause disease in people but will affect meat quality and visual appeal of the final product.

Again, control is more feasible by preventing dog infections, with regular worming of farm dogs, avoiding grazing of footpaths with lambs destined for slaughter and prompt management of fallen stock.

Most flocks are familiar with **liver fluke** when receiving abattoir feedbacks but, in my experience, few are utilising the data to its full effect. Meat inspection



To avoid condemnation from injection site abscesses, inject in the right place and use an automatic needle sanitisation system on multi-animal guns.

is essentially a comprehensive post mortem examination on otherwise healthy animals, so feedback is a useful monitoring tool as part of a fluke management plan developed with your SQP and veterinary team.

While the cost of liver disposal may be minor and incurred by the processor, there are substantial costs back on the farm with increased mortality and decreased daily liveweight gains. Prompt identification of increasing liver fluke burdens can enable flocks to reassess their management on farm and consider if treatment is needed, grazing of which pastures is leading to infection of lambs at what time of year and, at its most simple level, if there is liver fluke on the farm.

Warning system

For farms with a particularly high fluke challenge, lambs finished off the ewe may be a useful early season indicator of fluke burden for the year ahead – although take care with this, as in a particularly wet year the high risk period of acute fluke might actually be earlier than those first lambs are finished. Other important tools for early season diagnostics are the NADIS fluke forecast at www.nadis.org.uk, knowledge of the grazing, a history of fluke diagnosis on farm and faecal and serological testing.

Injection site abscesses are typically caused by the introduction of

NSA update

Abattoir feedback is an area where NSA is particularly active, pushing for a better system for producers. While the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is legally obliged to have a collection and communication of inspection results (CCIR) system, the current list of hundreds of diseases is not practical and, therefore, not widely used. NSA has had input into a standard list of common post-mortem observations that all abattoirs would work to in a consistent fashion in order to provide feedback to individual producers and enable industry trends to be captured.

AHDB is already supporting a trial using this list and the next step is a wider consultation to seek the views of the whole industry. There has been suggestion that meat hygiene inspectors will not support the change, but NSA feels that an improved system is essential and that abattoir training and technology must be put in place to enable progress.

bacteria via needles when vaccinating or administering other medications. Ideally the rump muscles should be avoided for intramuscular injections, and subcutaneous injections should preferentially be given under the skin of the neck. Ideally an automatic needle sanitisation system, such as that offered

by Sterimatic, should be used for all injections when a multi-animal gun is used; new needles and syringes should be used for individual animal treatments. These abscesses often result in large regions of trimming, often in the most valuable region of the carcass.

Bruising is typically the result of rough handling at moving. Handling or pulling of the fleece on sheep should be avoided, especially given that it potentially causes pain as well as damage. Stress is known to reduce carcass eating quality and animals should be handled as quietly and calmly as possible, in well maintained handling facilities.

Further information available from kill sheets includes grades of animals (conformation and fat coverage) and weights of animals. Average daily liveweight gain can be evaluated for groups of lambs. Although it may be skewed by multiple factors throughout the year, such as creep feeding of a mob, it is useful as a general indicator of lamb growth.

Carcass grading may also prove useful when multiple tups, breeds or management systems are used on farm to compare inputs and carcass results. Ideally, more than 75% of carcasses sent finished from the flock should be achieving the target grade (which is R3L unless specified otherwise by the buyer).



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

Trial work supports role of British wheat distillers in feeding sheep

Trial work conducted at the Nottingham University, titled the **Environmental and Nutritional Benefits of Bioethanol co-products (ENBBIO)**, has identified British wheat distillers as a viable, cost-effective alternative to imported proteins, such as soya.

The project showed wheat distillers could be fed up to 20% of dry matter in high yielding dairy cow diets, giving the same performance as more conventional soya-based diets.

Bethany May, Trident Feeds Ruminant Nutritionist, says similar inclusion for rations in lactating ewes will work, maintaining their energy requirements for milk production, while further trials in sheep have shown that including wheat distillers in creep feeds to push early growth in lambs is also beneficial.

"Historically, whisky derived distillers didn't feature in sheep diets due to their high copper content," says Miss May. "However, British wheat distillers, a co-product from Vivergo Fuels bioethanol production, is produced in a steel factory and has a low copper content, hence they can be fed safely to sheep."

On supplementary feeding of ewes, Miss May says post milk yield is reached three to four weeks post lambing and mothers of multiple strong lambs have considerable nutritional stress for a sustained period of time.

"Both energy intake and protein quality, in particular the level of rumen by-pass protein, is crucial to the quality and quantity of milk supply," she says. "From late pregnancy to early lactation, the ewe's potential dry

matter intakes will increase by up to 70% so, to meet this need, the provision of a simple, cost-effective and flexible blend should be considered.

"Along with increased DM intake, her energy requirements increase from around 16 MJ/ME/day for a late pregnancy twin-bearing ewe to up to 30 MJ/ME/day during peak lactation when outdoors."

Avoiding acidosis

If considering a cereal-based diet, Miss May says to take care that the rapidly available starch does not upset the rumen, causing acidosis and reducing milk quality. One way to avoid this is feeding cereals as part of a balanced ration.

"Including feed sources with a slower rate of rumen fermentation than cereals reduces the risk of digestive upsets. They can also stimulate dry matter intake, providing more nutrients for milk production. With low-copper levels and high protein content, British wheat distillers can complement traditional fibre feed sources."

Once lambs start to move away from milk, Miss May encourages producers to consider getting their rumens developed as quickly as possible. "Relying on forage and the ewe's milk alone will not maximise development and you may experience checks in growth around weaning," she says. "Palatable creep feed in a compound or blend will encourage dry feed intakes and avoid this."



British wheat distillers have been included in a recent study by Nottingham University.

New Products

Lick for ewes with lambs

Rumenco has launched a new block specifically to support ewe lactation post-lambing. The Graze DUP bucket is 16% protein, 80% of which is digestible undegradable protein (DUP), to encourage milk production and help lambs grow faster. Rumenco says the lick can replace concentrate feeding in pasture-based system where ewes have more than 4-5cm of fresh grass. It costs 6.7p for the average intake of 300g per ewe per day. [More at www.rumenco.co.uk](http://www.rumenco.co.uk).



clean panel has fixtures for three teats and four blocks to divide up the feeding space (pictured here with goat kids). The system comes with three yellow colostrum teats and three standard ones, at a cost of £200+VAT. Contact your local stockist or call Dairy Spares on 01948 667676.

Better lamb rearing

A new separator system is available to stop lambs being pushed off teats on automatic feeding machines by pen mates. Dairy Spares says the addition to its Milk Bar range means artificially reared lambs enjoy longer feeding sessions and cause less damage to the teats, with reducing teat chewing leading to less milk waste and drier bedding. The easy-to-

Reduced bale damage

A new bale handler is claiming to reduce damage to forage by putting an end to ripping silage wrap.



The Flexibal from Alo has smaller rollers (89mm diameter compared to the existing 129mm) to allow easier access to bales. It is of particular use for bales that have settled over the winter, become squashed in storage and/or are difficult to access. The company says: "The generous length and diameter of the rotating steel tubes mounted on two stone fork tines means bales are handled with precision. When the tubes are removed, the fork tines can be used for handling pallets up to 1,000kg and a spike." *The product, costing £1,025, will be available from this summer.*

Feed takeover

NWF Agriculture has purchased the Cumbria-based company Jim Peet Agriculture. The acquisition sees NWF increase its supply base of 100,000 tonnes of feed by an extra 50% and take over two well-placed production facilities in Northern England. NWF says it has expansion plans for both plants.

Preparation and presentation key to maximising wool value

Working closely with producers to help maximise returns is just as important as its work trading quality British fleeces, say the British Wool Marketing Board.



BWMB can obtain the best value for wool by encouraging and enabling producers to do their bit to produce a high quality, saleable product. The two key areas that make a difference and significantly improve clip quality are good preparation and good presentation.

Wool preparation starts with shearing, which done efficiently is essential for both flock management and to generate the best returns at farm level. Once learned, shearing is a skill for life and is currently enjoying a revival amongst the younger generation. Approximately 1,000 people attend BWMB shearing courses each year, either to learn afresh or to brush up and perfect their skills. These courses are run by instructors with 20-25 years' experience, who advise on techniques that boost fleece value.

Colin MacGregor, BWMB Shearing Manager, says: "It is essential to shear the sheep cleanly and on the skin. Cutting the wool staple only once gives the maximum staple length and therefore potentially more uses, increasing the value. Our courses give individuals the proper techniques that, with practice, will ensure they shear cleanly and present their wool in the best form to maximise revenue."

For the 2016 season, BWMB shearing training courses will run from May to the end of July, with bookings taken from springtime. Numerous shearing competitions are also held throughout the UK each year, which Mr MacGregor believes takes shearing to the next level.

"These competitions are hugely popular with the public and are very good PR for the industry," he says. "They also provide a great opportunity for young British shearers to meet and learn from shearers from across the world."

Fleece presentation

Presentation is the second key contribution the producer can make to improve wool quality. To achieve highest returns, fleeces should be presented and wrapped correctly, in the best possible condition, before sending them to BWMB. Only fleeces that have been wrapped can be graded and paid for at fleece wool prices. Unwrapped fleeces can only be valued as 'broken' wool, which has a lower value.

Mark Powell, BWMB Chief Operating Officer, says: "A fleece should be shorn from the sheep in one piece. To avoid a price penalty, all claggs and daggings should be removed before being wrapped on a clean, dry surface."

The sides should be folded in before rolling as tightly as possible, from the britch end to the neck. The fleece can then be secured by tucking the neck wool back inside the fleece. Fleeces should be wrapped skin side out, with the exception of Scottish Blackface, Rough Fell and Herdwick, which should be presented staple side out.

Mr Powell adds: "There are several key factors to avoid during packing. Wool from different breeds and types should be packed separately, as should any oddments. Packing hill wool

alongside lowland wool can cause cross fibre contamination, as can coloured wool with white wool. Both scenarios will reduce the value of higher quality fleeces. Additionally, hogg wool should be separated from ewe and wether wool. Finally, remember to label each separate wool sheet before delivery."

On request BWMB offers free ram fleece assessments. Each ram's fleece should be labelled individually, packed into a separate sheet and delivered to any of the grading depots to be assessed by the regional manager. For a small fee, on-the-hoof assessments are also available on farm.

BWMB offers a range of training programmes and educational resources designed specifically to improve the quality of wool.



With a few breed exceptions, fleeces should be sent to BWMB skin side out.

As part of its UK-wide quality control process, two years ago it introduced a Clip Presentation Certificate which recognises the cleanliness of wool, standard of wrapping and overall presentation and packaging of fleeces. In 2015 it awarded 1,500 certificates, and with the on-going commitment from producers this is expected to continue to rise.

Through these many initiatives the BWMB is committed in continuing to support shearers at all levels and in ensuring wool producers maximise the value of their wool.

British Wool Marketing Board

THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL
WITHIN THE BEST OF WOODS

Your Wool Board Working For You

Shearing training

Haulage

Regional Depots

Grading

Auction

Exhibitions

The British Wool Marketing Board works with over 40,000 sheep farmers collecting, grading and selling their wool at auction.
Wool made in Britain, used in thousands of products worldwide... and loved by millions.

You can find out more about British wool and the work of the British Wool Marketing Board at:
Web: britishwool.org.uk Telephone: 01274 688 666

Flying start for NSA ambassadors

NSA brought together its 2016 Next Generation Ambassadors for the first time at the end of February, beginning the process of arming these 12 individuals with the skills to drive forward their own careers and the sheep sector as a whole.

This is the third year an Ambassador group has been selected, as part of the NSA Next Generation project to support the future of the sheep industry through young people. Having been through a rigorous selection process, the 12 high calibre individuals will now attend five delivery sessions through the year, arming them with business knowledge, personal development and sheep farming skills.

The first session focused on the current situation within the UK sheep sector, the world stage for sheep meat and factors that influence supply and demand. There were also workshops on genetics, body condition scoring and flock health planning.

Joanne Briggs, who coordinates the project for NSA, says: "We finished the first session with a farm visit led by Kate Robinson, who is an NSA Next Generation



Ambassador from the first intake in 2014. It was a sign of the success of this programme that she was able to lead the group around the farm where she is employed as a shepherd and point out the areas she has developed in recent years and what she plans to do next."

The NSA Next Generation programme is funded by the NSA regions and delivered by NSA in conjunction with a number

of partners and supporters. Thank you to AHDB Beef & Lamb for sponsoring the first session, and Philip and Charlie Whitehouse for hosting the farm walk.



Regular updates through the year

The 12 NSA Next Generation Ambassadors for 2016 have been asked to write monthly blog entries for the NSA Next Generation website. Check out the start of these inspirational year-long records in the "Profiles" area at www.nsanextgeneration.org.uk, and enjoy a small taster here.

Robert Spink (24) Norfolk/Suffolk border

My scanning results for this year were pleasing, at 203% and no empties. Although things were a little slow to get going, the lambs on the ground are looking strong and ewes are in really good order. The ewe lambs will be lambing in May.

February saw the last of the store lambs leaving the farm, and my intention is to run a much larger number of these this year.

The biggest excitement has been the arrival of my first working dog, Titch (pictured). Training will soon be underway,



but I am more concerned about myself than the dog as I have much to learn too! The warm sun of the last couple of days gives a glimpse of what is to come, and it will be more than welcome.

Alex Olphert (23) Hampshire

The ewes expecting triplets are doing well, being fed maize silage and haylage. Having 450 in one field (pictured) has meant we have been checking them two or three times a day though, making sure none have got stuck on their back or prolapsed. The singles are on haylage with nuts being introduced as they get closer to lambing to try and make sure they have enough milk to get as many of the spare triplet lambs fostered across.

The twins are far simpler, slowly returning closer to the farm and grazing cover crops of oats. I'm looking forward



to when they're home though, as it'll be much easier to check and manage them. It's always nice to see how the ewes look at this point - but it's scary how they can change so quickly.

Ellen Helliwell (22) Gloucestershire

With the lambing shed to set up and sheep, cattle, pigs, poultry and goats to feed and bed up, we have been keeping busy even before lambing! The first lambing group was out on green manure over the winter and were brought in to the lambing shed after being dagged and vaccinated. Any lameness issues were treated and then ewes grouped according to condition, number of lambs carried and due date. We are now well into lambing, with most of the early ewes and lambs out in the field enjoying the odd days of sun. The later batch has moved into the shed, and the goats are just starting to kid. The majority of the shearlings in the first batch produced big, strong lambs, so we're hoping for more of the same now!



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

CAMBRIDGE
QUANTITY WITH QUALITY
CROSSBREDS OF DISTINCTION
Details from: Alun Davies, Pharm House, Willaston, Neston CH64 2TL
Tel: 0151 327 5699
Email: d.a.r.davies@liv.ac.uk
www.cambridge-sheep.org.uk

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

DORSET DOWN
FAST FINISHING LAMBS OFF GRASS
Dorset Down Sheep Breeders' Association
Havett Farm, Dobwalls, Liskeard, PL14 6HB
01579 320273 secretary@dorsetdownsheep.org.uk
www.dorsetdownsheep.org.uk
KING of the PRIME LAMB breed

HAMPSHIRE DOWN
for details contact:
Richard Davis
01 494 488 388
richard@rickyard.plus.com
www.hampshiredown.org.uk

LLEYN Sheep Society
Secretary 01758 730366
Promotions Officer 079666 99930
promotions@lleysheep.com
www.lleysheep.com

Meatline
THE RAM FOR QUALITY LAMB
For details of your local breeders call
Tel: 01904 448675
www.meatline.co.uk

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

LLEYN
Lleyn Ewe with Texel Lambs
[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/lleysheep) [Twitter](https://twitter.com/lleysheep)

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

North of England Mule Sheep Association

THE ORIGINAL & BEST MULE
(Bluefaced Leicester x Swaledale or Northumberland Type Blackface)
For full Auction Mart Sales List
Contact Marion Hope
Telephone 01387 371777
e-mail: nemsa@btinternet.com
website: www.nemsa.co.uk

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

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

ROUGE
The easy lambing terminal sire producing quick growing lambs with excellent meat to bone ratio.
Secretary: Sue Archer
Tel/Fax: 024 7654 1766
email: secretary@rouge-society.co.uk
www.rouge-society.co.uk

THE BRITISH VENDEEN SHEEP SOCIETY
Vendéen
www.vendeen.co.uk
"Make both ends meet with the modern Vendéen"
For more information contact the Secretary on 07855 124325 or info@vendeen.co.uk

Baber 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

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

NSA

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

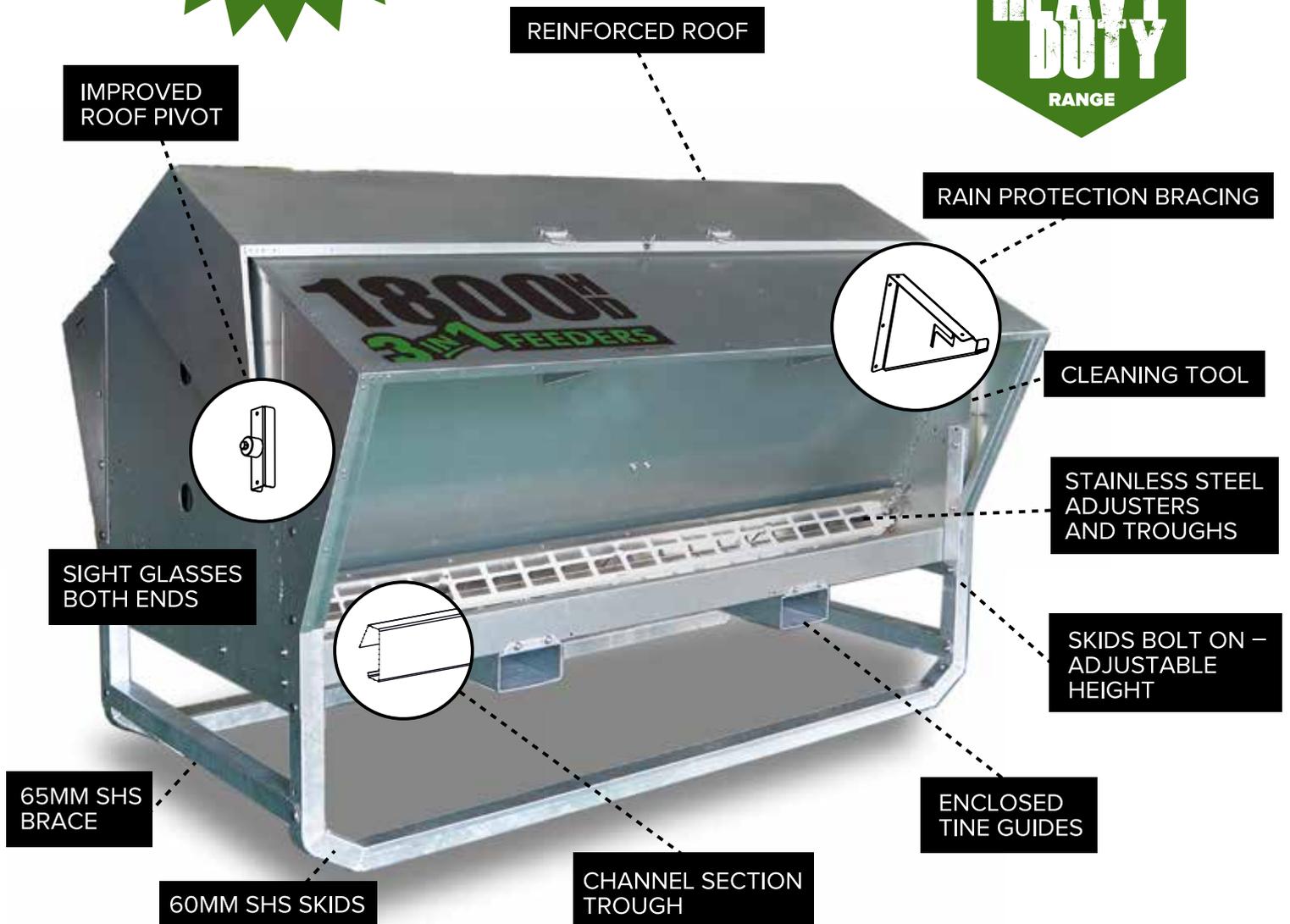
NSA South Sheep
Tuesday 7th June
Pythouse Farms,
Tisbury,
Wiltshire.
www.southsheep.org.uk

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

**NEW
RELEASE**

THE ALL-NEW 1800HD

**HEAVY
DUTY**
RANGE



Controlled creep feeding to maximise profit

Young lambs and calves require a developed rumen to digest pasture and convert it into weight gain.

Without a developed rumen, early pasture (that is highly soluble) will leave the animal before it is digested, wasting your cheapest source of energy and protein.

To get the most from your pasture, **begin creep feeding early. Supplementing starch (pellets or grain) to lambs at 2 weeks of age and calves at 4 weeks** will

transition the rumen to help digest pasture and **convert into weight gain.**

After the rumen is developed (lambs at 8 weeks of age and calves at 16 weeks) you are able to increase profit by controlling the supplement (200g/day for lambs and 750g/day for calves) to complement the rumen and maximise pasture digestion.