

# Sheep Farmer

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2017/2018



A NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT  
ZONOSSES

WEIGH-CRATE WINNER ANNOUNCED

WOOLLY ROADSHOW REPORT

DISEASE SURVEILLANCE  
DASHBOARD LAUNCHED

NSA POLICY UPDATE

CYBERCRIME: ARE YOU AT RISK?

TMR FEEDING  
CAN REDUCE COSTS



your business your future

# At 20% sugar you can't 'beet' molassed Supabeet



- supa performance
- supa nutrition
- supa value

Don't miss the Sugar rush this winter



delivering you growth

Call your local merchant!

www.tridentfeeds.co.uk

## Uncertainty continues but outlook is positive

The clock ticks on and now, with less than 500 days to go, we still have no detail or certainties whatsoever about trade or the future of farm support for the sheep industry. There are indications of what may be and there are signals that are open to interpretation. But there's still not enough to allow sheep producers to make informed business decisions.

The 500 days may be extended for a further 700, or more, if we achieve a transitional period. But still nothing is clear. The UK and the EU have agreed positions on dividing the tariff rate quota held by New Zealand, but the Kiwis are making the case to the WTO that they want the flexibility to place the total volume into either nation if required – their 1 + 1 = 1 formula. And then there is the Irish border. We're far from any decisions being made about that and there is also a worrying absence of any real options.

But you have to have some sympathy with those trying to find a way through this massive task. There are legal and operational steps to be taken, consultations to be carried out, and hundreds of new staff – who are needed to get this job done – must be brought up to speed.

It feels as if NSA has been effective in getting the voice of sheep producers heard. Many politicians and civil servants are saying the right things about the sheep industry and are aware of its value and the risks it faces. We need to continue this work and do what we can do shape the future but, looking in the other direction for a moment, one of the most valuable things that we can do for our members is to help and play our part in preparing them for change. Because change is going to come and one of the keys to survival is the ability to adapt. We need to help producers to read the signs as well as they can and the do whatever is in their power to change their businesses accordingly.

### Identifying strengths

This doesn't mean that there must be one 'blueprint' for successful sheep farming. Indeed, we should be striving to use our diversity as a strength. But it does mean that we should all be looking



closely at our resources and strengths and making sure that we're making the most of them and tapping into their full potential.

In the future, some producers will see efficient productivity as almost their only goal. At the other end of the spectrum, some producers will see the

provision of public goods and benefits as equally important alongside their, hopefully, efficient sheep flock. And, of course, there will be much in between.

The New Zealand system is often highlighted as a model that we should follow, but I would say that the Kiwi experience should be understood, learnt from, and adapted to our very different situation here in the UK. We don't need to go through the pain that their sheep producers did in the 1980s. We have time for transition and we have much to learn regarding optimising grassland and livestock production, although our best is every bit as good as our New Zealand peers. Maybe part of the change that is coming will drive more people to where New Zealand producers are, but there are also things that they could learn from us about integrating production and environmental management and, of course, our domestic market creates a very different dynamic.

### Invest wisely

'Sweating your assets' is a term that many producers will have heard and, essentially, that is the best advice anyone could offer at the moment. Invest wisely and make those investments work hard, but don't undermine their value.

If my recent experience at the NSA Next Generation conference in Welshpool was anything to go by, we will have a positive future. With more than 125 highly enthusiastic and hard-working young people there (headed up by the NSA Young Ambassador group) and with the calibre of delegates as strong as the numbers, the conference served as the perfect example of what will be needed to succeed in the future. And with many organisations and individuals keen to come along and play their part in sharing information and giving guidance from experiences learnt, it also highlighted what a strong and collaborative industry we can be.

Sheep  
Farmer



December/January  
2017/2018 edition  
Vol. 36, No 6 ISSN 0141-2434  
A National Sheep Association publication.

### Contents

2	News round-up
4	NSA reports: devolved nations
6	NSA reports: English regions
8	NSA Winter Fair preview
10	Sheep Breeders Round Table report
12	Weigh-crate winner
14	Latest NSA activity
15	News analysis: cybercrime
18	Bedding options
20	<b>FARM FEATURE:</b> NSA Northern Ireland Region Chairman Brian Jamieson
22	Interest-rate increase update
24	TMR feeding
26	LAA comment
27	RamCompare project
28	Disease surveillance
30	Tackling liver fluke
31	Tagging benefits
32	Zoonotic diseases: reducing risk
34	Coccidiosis: control and treatment
36	Responsible antibiotic use
37	Woolly Roadshow report
38	BWMB update
39	Sheep directory
40	NSA Next Generation

The front page picture was taken by professional photographer John Eveson and features North Country Cheviot ewes being fed ahead of lambing time.

This NSA magazine is published with design and production services provided by Ladies in Print.

*Ladies in Print*

Email: ladiesinprint@outlook.com  
Tel: 01684 899255

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.

# 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

### Hannah Park

Communications Officer  
hannah@nationalsheep.org.uk

### Katie James

Communications Support Officer  
katie@nationalsheep.org.uk

### Gill Callow

Membership Secretary  
gill@nationalsheep.org.uk

### Abi Swaffield

Membership Recruitment Officer  
abi@nationalsheep.org.uk

### Helen Davies

Corporate Relations  
Sheep Farmer Advertising Sales  
helen@nationalsheep.org.uk

### Karen Sumner

Bookkeeper  
karens@nationalsheep.org

### Rachael Porter

Sheep Farmer Acting Editor  
Contact via NSA Head Office

Find us at [www.nationalsheep.org.uk](http://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. SCO42853). VAT No. 273 3469 44

## NSA Office Holders

Lord Inglewood  
Honorary President

David Gregory  
Honorary Treasurer

Margaret Dalton  
Chair of the Board

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

Dan Phipps  
Chair of UK Policy and Technology Committee

## NSA Project Partners

Bob Kennard  
Make More of Mutton Manager  
07415 855530  
mutton@nationalsheep.org.uk  
www.makemoreofmutton.org.uk

Edwin Harris  
Welsh Commons Forum Chairman  
01684 892661 (via NSA HQ)  
www.nationalsheep.org.uk/  
welshcommonsforum.org.uk

## NSA Regions

### Central

Alastair Sneddon  
Regional Chairman  
01629 812777  
alastair.sneddon@bagshaws.com

Anne Payne  
Regional Manager  
01142 883241  
anne@handbanktexels.co.uk

### Cymru Wales

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

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

### Eastern

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

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

### Marches

Antony Spencer  
Regional Chairman  
07973 301954  
antspencer27@aol.com

Hannah Park  
Regional Secretary  
01684 892661 (via NSA HQ)  
marches@nationalsheep.org.uk

### Northern

Eddie Eastham  
Regional Chairman  
01228 576382  
07770 732817  
eandreeastham@btconnect.com

Heather Stoney-Grayshon  
Regional Manager  
07966 699930  
heather@nationalsheep.org.uk

### Northern Ireland

Brian Jaimeson  
Regional Chairman  
bjami245@gmail.com

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

### Scottish

John Fyall  
Regional Chairman  
07837 291258  
chairman@nsascotland.org

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

### South East

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

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

### South West

Alan Derryman  
Regional Chairman  
01395 597836  
ahderryman@hotmail.com

# News Update

## Scab research

The University of Surrey Veterinary School is looking for sheep producers, who have experienced sheep scab in their flocks within the past 10 years, to help in a project investigating the spread of the disease and its economic repercussions.

If you would like to be involved then please visit: <https://surrey.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/sheepscab> and fill-out an online questionnaire. All respondents and any data generated will remain anonymous.

A summary of project outcomes will be published in a future edition of Sheep Farmer magazine. Your help will be very much appreciated.

## NSA Lambing List reminder

The NSA Lambing List is now open for business. This is a service enjoyed by many NSA members, set-up to match members who are looking for help at lambing time with agricultural or veterinary students, who are looking to complete a placement as part of their course. If you're looking to place an advert and haven't already, you can submit one online at <http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/lambing-list/>, or those without internet access can contact NSA Head Office for assistance.

The list is becoming increasingly popular each year and adverts are listed in the order they are received. So make sure you get yours in early to avoid disappointment. If you've never used the service before, more information can be found at [www.nsanextgeneration.org.uk](http://www.nsanextgeneration.org.uk).

## Annual Regional Members Meetings

The remaining six NSA Annual Regional Members Meetings (ARMM) have all now been confirmed. The business at each will include: election/re-approval of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer; nomination/re-approval of the regional Trustee Director; election of new committee members and endorsement of current members; a chairman's report; and a treasurer's report relating to the region's finances.

## Notice is hereby given that:

- The Annual Members Meeting of NSA Central Region will be held at the Bluebell Inn, Tissington, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 1NH, 7pm on Wednesday 24th January.
- The Annual Members Meeting of NSA South East Region will be held at the Angel Hotel, Gosport Road, Privett, West Tisted, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 3NN, 4pm on Wednesday 7th February.
- The Annual Members Meeting of NSA Northern Region will be held at the Tynedale Function Suite, Hexham Mart, NE46 3SG, 7.30pm on Tuesday 13th February.
- The Annual Members Meeting of NSA Scottish Region will be held at Airth Castle Hotel and Spa, Airth, Stirling-shire, FK2 8JF, 4pm on Wednesday 14th February.
- The Annual Members Meeting of NSA South West Region will be held at Exeter Livestock Centre, Exeter EX2 8FD, 7.30pm on Wednesday 21st February.
- The Annual Members Meeting of NSA Cymru/Wales Region will be held at the Royal Welsh Showground, Hafod y Hendre, Builth Wells, LD2 3SY, 2pm on Thursday 22nd February.

Members residing in a region are eligible to appoint a proxy vote on their behalf if they cannot attend the meeting, but this must be done in advance with NSA Head Office. Download a proxy notice at [www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events](http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events) or contact NSA Head Office.

## New NSA Chairman in NI

With three NSA Regions having recently held Annual Regional Members Meetings, NSA is pleased to welcome new NSA Northern Ireland Region Chairman Brian Jaimeson (pictured) on board. Office holders in NSA Eastern and NSA Marches Regions remain unchanged. Brian takes over from outgoing NI Regional Chairman Campbell Tweed. Find details of all regional office holders at [www.nationalsheep.org.uk](http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk)



## Merry Christmas to all our members

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our members. We hope 2018 is a prosperous year, whatever is in store! If you're looking for gift inspiration for a 'tricky to buy for' family member or friend, why not consider an NSA membership? Any NSA members purchasing this gift will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win a tempting lamb box, kindly supplied by Lanhill Lamb - perfect for the freezer for the coming months. This offer will run



until Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December. Contact NSA Head Office for details.

## Lynx 'licence' latest

Several months after the Lynx UK Trust submitted its licence application to release lynx into Kielder Forest, Northumberland, a verdict is still to be heard.

But at the beginning of November, while the licence application remained in the consideration process, NSA was made aware of an incident involving a lynx that had escaped from Borth Wild Animal Kingdom, based in Aberystwyth. The Eurasian lynx, the same species proposed by the Lynx UK Trust in its release application, is reported to have killed, in just one attack, seven sheep and traumatised several others in the flock.

The evidence seen by NSA strongly suggests that the cause of death was straight puncture wounds to the neck and subsequent internal bleeding. NSA's sympathy goes out to the sheep producer involved, who should also

be commended for supporting the zoo owners as they continued to try to capture the animal.

The lynx was eventually shot after straying into a caravan park, near Aberystwyth town centre, almost two weeks after its escape.

Ceredigion council said the decision had been taken to humanely destroy the wild animal after the risk it posed to the public increased to 'severe' following failed attempts to recapture it.

While assurances have been received from Natural England that it would not move forward with the licence application to release lynx without Scotland also agreeing, NSA feels that this level of collaboration should go even further, ensuring all devolved nations, Wales included, are adequately consulted ahead of any licence approval.



# NSA reports – devolved nations

## NSA Northern Ireland Region

By Edward Adamson, Development Officer



**Our Annual Regional Members Meeting was held on 20<sup>th</sup> November, ahead of an open meeting for all sheep producers.**

Several changes were made to Office Holders, which saw Brian Jamieson from Ballintoy taking the role of Chairman. He takes over from Campbell Tweed. Jonny Farmer, regional NSA Next Generation Ambassador, came in as Vice Chairman. Find full details of the Annual Members Meeting outcome on the NSA website. The NI Committee also welcomed a new member, Elizabeth Earle, who recently joined the Agrisearch team. The following open meeting was well attended by producers who heard Aurelie Aubry give an update on the research being carried out by AFBI, followed by the Robinson father-and-son team from Scotland. Both have an interest in sheep and excellent communication skills. The combination of their contributions, covering conventional thinking combined with modern and new research ideas, made the evening worthwhile and informative for the audience.

John Robinson studied Agriculture at Queens University, followed by research on ewe nutrition at Hillsborough. After a short spell at the University of London's Wye College he moved to the Rowett Research Institute, in Aberdeen, before settling at the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) now the Scottish Rural University College (SRUC). Here he continued in animal research until his retirement. He still has an Emeritus position at SRUC. His son Andrew is a vet and a partner in the Hawick Practice in the Scottish Borders.

## NSA Cymru/Wales Region

By Helen Davies, Development Officer



**In October we held a farm walk at Ben Anthony and Diana Fairclough's sheep unit.**

We were so lucky with the weather which, after an inspiring presentation from Ben, allowed delegates to enjoy a walk around the farm and appreciate what the couple have done in terms of grassland management and improving their flock. The 640-strong flock of Aberfield cross Tregarron Welsh ewes are lambed indoors. Rotational grazing is key to good grassland management on the unit. Although it may seem like hard work moving the electric fences, it has certainly paid off because the sheep looked in fantastic condition. Ben and Diana have also embraced new technology and have put themselves forward for various projects and schemes to further enhance their knowledge of the industry, which they are happy to pass on to other producers. Our thanks go to them both for their kind hospitality and making the 40 plus members, and friends, who attended most welcome.

Congratulations must go to Dan Pritchard, NSA Next Generation Ambassador, for winning the 2017 Farmers Guardian Sheep Innovator award. Dan, along with fellow Regional Ambassadors Caryl Hughes and Nicola Drew, attended the Sheep Breeders Round Table through support given by NSA Cymru/Wales Region.

The region also sponsored the Hill and Native breed section at the recent Welsh Winter Fair, together with a stand at the event where members, both old and new, were welcomed. It proved to be a busy fair with various activities, including mutton tasting, taking place on the stand during both days. Congratulations go to Richard Roderick, from Newton Farm in

Brecon, for winning the John Gittins award at the event.

I was invited to talk at the FUW Montgomery Farming Conference – along with HCC Chairman Kevin Roberts, Royal Welsh Chief Executive Steve Hughson, and Barclays' Adam White. In late November, I also met with HCC, alongside other industry partners, to further discuss the current market prices for light lambs.

We would also like to remind sheep keeper members that the annual inventory forms will be posted to all registered keepers from mid-December. If you do not receive a copy by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, please contact EID Cymru on 01970 636959. All forms to be returned by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018. CPH and Livestock Movement rules are also being updated during the next two years with the removal of CTS links, SOAs, and a new process for registering temporary land associations and temporary CPH. However, until you are contacted by RPW the rules remain unchanged. A fuller explanation of these rules will be communicated via the NSA Weekly Email Update and website. Please get in touch if you do not currently receive this update from NSA – see page three for Annual Regional Members Meeting information.

## NSA Scottish Region

By George Milne, Development Officer



**As I write this just ahead of our next committee meeting there will certainly be plenty to discuss, following several key meetings.**



Regional Chairman John Fyall and myself recently met with Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing to discuss several issues for the Scottish sheep sector, which included future support and trade as a priority. And Mr Ewing had a clear understanding of the consequences of these two points. Maintaining PGIs for the beef and sheep sectors was also discussed, as it will be a requirement for the UK government to put in place, prior to leaving the EU, a legal document to protect all PGIs that currently exist in Scotland and the UK. NSA was well briefed to speak clearly on this issue, as I had been part of the Scottish group invited to attend a meeting in Brussels on this subject. The group included representatives from QMS and the Scottish salmon and whisky industries and will be vitally important for any future trade deals. The Scottish upland sheep support scheme was also discussed with Mr Ewing and we took the opportunity to highlight our concerns.

I've also met with Michael Gove recently, who attended the Brexit farming roundtable meeting held in London. The



NSA Scottish Region held several successful sheepdog training courses in October.

meeting, organised by NFU, was well attended and Mr Gove gave an updated presentation on where he sees the current situation going forward around all Brexit issues. He covered many topics but highlighted three key points. Firstly, that any public money would be for public good, such as environmental benefits and access, while improving soil health and animal welfare. Secondly, productivity – improving yields while limiting inputs. And thirdly, volatility – the government knows that farming is exposed to this and wants to help. He also said the total support budget was guaranteed until 2022, but did not give details on payments and how they would be distributed depending on future agreements when leaving the EU.

Raising serious concerns about the sheep sector's future regarding trade and support payments, particularly for the hill and upland sector, Mr Gove seemed to have a clear understanding of the consequences and that support would continue to be available in some format for hill sheep production.

NSA Scottish Region also met with QMS Chief Executive Alan Clarke recently. The meeting was initially to introduce our NSA team to Alan, and gave us an opportunity to put forward various concerns and suggestions gathered at the previous committee meeting. The agenda included current and potential export markets for Scotch Lamb, the Scotch PGI status and maintaining it after Brexit, the low consumption of lamb and possible ways to increase promotion and demand, monitor farms, the current marketing campaign, and lamb sampling in stores and ways of increasing the demand for light lamb. NSA Scottish Region recently supported QMS by attend some of the lamb sampling days in supermarkets and this has proved to be a worthwhile experience in connecting producers with the public and consumers.

The region also held several successful sheepdog training

courses for young enthusiastic shepherds to learn more about working their own sheep dogs. This was a fantastic opportunity for them and something that we intend to build on for the future – see page three for Annual Regional Members Meeting information.



## National Sheep Association 2018 Events

### NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair

Friday 9th February  
Melton Mowbray Market, Leicestershire.

### NSA Scot Sheep

Wednesday 30th May  
Kings Arms Farm, Ballantrae, South Ayrshire.

### NSA Sheep Event

Wednesday 18th July  
Three Counties Show Ground, Worcestershire.

### NSA South Sheep

Saturday 8th September  
South of England Show Ground, Ardingly, Sussex.

Entry to NSA Scot Sheep HALF PRICE for members; other events FREE for members (one membership card permits one free entry).

Join today at [www.nationalsheep.org.uk/membership](http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/membership)  
Event details at [www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events](http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events)

# AirStick

EID Tag Reader

DATAMARS

- Waterproof, rugged design**
- Management information using alerts**
- Download/import data via USB**
- Long life, rechargeable battery**
- Memory: Store over 1m records**
- LED, vibration and audio indicators**

www.roxan.co.uk/airstick

ROXAN

01750 724 110

sales@roxan.co.uk

www.roxan.co.uk

£599

# NSA reports – English regions

## Central

By Anne Payne, Manager

**Now that the sale season is largely over, with varying prices recorded, our Regional Chairman Alastair Sneddon shares a few observations.** Not least

is that there are more people looking to buy ewe lambs than shearlings. This would appear to be because there is an appetite to farm sheep without having the work and/or risk involved in lambing them. Consequently, the gap in price is closing between the value of ewe lambs and shearlings and, in some cases, the margin is very slim. This is particularly the case with second-quality examples, because those producers who want to buy shearlings to lamb want the best they can afford. The resulting two-tier trade now begs the question: would some sheep kept for shearlings have been worth more if killed as hoggets, rather than kept through to the autumn? With these thoughts in purchasers' minds, it has not been an easy season for selling sheep and enthusiasm among buyers of store lambs has been lacking after indifferent returns.

October saw 30 NSA members enjoy a day at John Gate's Cheshire-based farm. A fine day made for perfect conditions for John and his son Richard to share details of their farming enterprises. Together with other land parcels, the home farm comprises more than 49 hectares (120 acres), with an emphasis on keeping their system as straightforward as possible. The sheep enterprise consists of 600 Mule ewes, together with 150 Mule gimmers bought in annually and 100 pedigree Rouge. The main flock is lambed outdoors in April, with lambs sold deadweight. A herd of 100 suckler cows is run alongside the sheep enterprise and turkeys are produced for the Christmas market.

Our Annual Regional Members



Meeting (ARMM) has been set for Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018. It starts at 7pm and will be held at the Bluebell, at Tissington in Derbyshire, where regional NSA Next Generation Ambassadors will share their thoughts on how the programme has benefited their farming businesses. *Details of the Annual Regional Members Meeting can be found on page three.*

## Northern

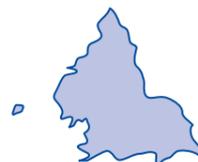
By Heather Stoner-Grayshon, Manager

**Back in September, some of our committee members and NSA staff attended the Westmorland Show and flew the flag for British lamb.** This included offering tastings in the food hall to the public, which I am assured went down a treat.

The region sponsored two young people to attend the Sheep Breeders Round Table Conference in Nottingham in November. Stephen Taylor, from Lancaster, and Edward Sutcliffe, from Halifax, were the lucky people chosen and I am sure both enjoyed an interesting weekend full of all things sheep.

NSA Northern Region, together with AHDB, is holding a Sheep Farmers Social Evening at Barnard Castle Mart on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December. The evening kicks off at 6.30pm with a pie-and-pea supper, followed by a demonstration on lamb selection for slaughter and an AHDB update on marketing activity. NSA will give a presentation on its ongoing work and what it does to represent your sheep sector. The event is free to attend. It would assist us in making sure there are plenty of pies if you could register your interest with myself or the mart office.

A committee meeting was held on



Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November. It was well attended with some lively discussion covering lynx, live exports, NSA policy documents, disease threats to sheep, responsible antibiotic use, and North Sheep 2019. The next meeting is scheduled for January 2018.

The Annual Regional Members Meeting (ARMM) is to take place on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018, at 7.30pm at Hexham Mart. Further details will be posted on the NSA website in the New Year. *Details of the Annual Regional Members Meeting can be found on page three.*

## South West

By Bryan Griffiths, Committee Member

**NSA South West Region members were treated to a fascinating and thought-provoking farm tour this autumn, courtesy of our Regional Chairman Alan Derryman.** Run on 243 hectares (600 acres), Home Farm, based at Sidbury, is run organically within the constraints of a stewardship scheme and supports 1,000 breeding sheep and 70 suckler cows. Alan explained the intricacies of maintaining the six 'families' that make up the entirely self-contained flock of Romneys. With the use of EID, he has

selectively bred productive ewes that can thrive solely on the steep, dry pastures where the farm is situated, near the south coast. The same philosophy has been applied to the herd of Stabiliser cows, with the emphasis on building a herd that will perform well on home-grown forage.

Viewed from a high vantage point, the farm presented a wonderfully picturesque scene of woodland, parkland and pasture and is a fine example of livestock production working together with the environment. Following the tour, those in attendance enjoyed refreshments kindly sponsored by local suppliers, Perkins, while Alan and Gwenan received a well-deserved vote of thanks. *Details of the Annual Regional Members Meeting on page three.*

## Marches

By Antony Spencer, Chairman

**We have had our first couple of frosts now and grass growth has finally slowed down.** It really has been a fantastic autumn in terms of grass growth and the lambs have done surprisingly well on what I would generally consider 'tidying up' grazing going into the winter months. I



A farm walk was held by NSA South West Region Chairman Alan Derryman in September.

think we have generally been very lucky here in the Marches region, with most producers I talk to having got their fodder in the barn or clamp without too much interference from the weather. There definitely seems to be a lot more forage crops around compared to other years, in fact some of the turnips look more like swedes. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for everyone and I hope it is a short winter for sheep-producer colleagues who have not been as fortunate as us.

The trade as held up well for the late summer glut, but numbers on farms are beginning to dwindle somewhat now with many opting to let someone else finish their tail-enders, particularly since what grass there is left is soon likely to disappear. Hopefully there will still be a strong trade for the old-season lambs and the store finishers will have more to look forward to than last season. Only time will tell.

I cannot believe it is almost a year since I took the chairmanship of the NSA Marches Region but, as they say, time flies when you're having fun. I am lucky to have a good team to work with, but it is always nice to see some new faces. So please don't be shy and remember all our meetings are open to everyone so do come and join us. *Details of the Annual Regional Members Meeting can be found on page three.*

## Eastern

By Jonathan Barber, Manager

**We held our Annual Regional Members Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October and we had a tremendous turnout.** I don't know whether

that was because everybody was happy or because our guest speaker was Charles Sercombe, who spoke about his role as NFU National Livestock Board Chairman. He touched on all the subjects he felt we should know about, from the next generation in the industry, to working with multiples, responsible use of antimicrobials, and many other aspects of his role. He certainly stimulated many questions from the audience and a lively discussion. Ratification of the region's officers took place at the meeting, which saw Dan Phipps reapproved as Chairman and regional representative to NSA English Committee. Thanks were given to Andrew Foulds for his representation, on behalf of the region, on the NSA Board of Trustee. His role finishes in January 2018 and Jonathan Barber was elected in his place. Robert Spink was elected as Vice Chairman. The committee was re-elected on block, with the additions of Lisa Adams and Louis Osman.

Members were happy with the events, farm walk and sales that had taken place throughout the year in the region.

NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair will take place on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February at Melton Mowbray. It promises to be an event not



to be missed, with free entry for you as NSA members and a wide range of activities, seminars, demonstrations, stands and competitions for all to take part in.

I have just returned from an excellent three days in Nottingham as Chairman of the Sheep Breeders Round Table. The title of the conference this year was: 'Thinking Positively'. There was record attendance of more than 200 people on each day and if you want to find out more, all presentations can be found on the NSA website, or check out Twitter using the hashtag #sbrt17.

NSA regions generously sponsored a number of younger sheep producers to come along and, without doubt, the next generation outnumbered the 'oldies', which is great to see.

## South East

By Bob Blanden, Manager

**As usual I am writing this ahead of time and, on this occasion, the Sheep Health, Wealth and Production Conference will have taken place by the time this report reaches you.** We have been fortunate enough to have secured an

outstanding collection of speakers. If there is anyone who has not seen the line-up, you will be disappointed to have missed the event. We are arranging to have the conference recorded and to make it available on the NSA website for those who were unable to attend. I would like to express my thanks to all the speakers and sponsors, as well as the University of Surrey School of Veterinary Medicine for hosting, and everyone who worked hard to ensure that the event ran smoothly. Thanks also to all the delegates who attended. I am quietly confident that this event will become a regular feature on a biennial calendar.

You will find the official notice for our Annual Regional Members Meeting (ARMM) on page three, but I am pleased to announce that we have managed to secure two interesting speakers as well as a report from our NSA Next Generation Ambassador's and our sponsored young person on the Sheep Breeders Round Table. This will include Gordon Wyeth, Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer of the Year 2016, who was unfortunately not able to speak to us earlier this year due to a bereavement. Gordon farms locally to Alton with 10,000 Romney sheep and is now an intermediate depot for British Wool. Sticking with the British wool theme, British Wool Chief Executive Joe Farren will be addressing us on some of the recently introduced measures he has implemented to reduce handling costs, to help improve returns to producers. No doubt he will have other subjects to cover. Finally, I'd like to wish all our members a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2018. *Details of the Annual Regional Members Meeting on page three.*



Some 30 members and friends enjoyed a Farm Walk in Central Region in October.

**FARMPLUS** Constructions Ltd

**TIMBER BUILDING SPECIALISTS**

Sheep Housing    Sheep Troughs & Barriers    Cow Housing

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

# Prepare for lambing at NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair

Come and join NSA Eastern Region, at Melton Mowbray Market, for an array of information, activities, demonstrations and competitions that will be of great interest to all sheep producers at its biennial Winter Fair on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

With lambing only a few months away for the majority of flocks, what better time to brush up on ewe nutrition, vaccinations and worming policies. Or perhaps consider adopting some new products for identification and handling. The event also represents a chance to look ahead to the grazing season, with an array of fencing and grassland management solutions on display.

With the increasing interest from arable producers on how to integrate sheep into crop rotations to help tackle black grass and improve soil fertility, this topic will feature in the day's seminar programme and in many of the exhibits at the event.

The main sponsors at the event will be MSD Animal Health, who will be discussing the industry five-point-plan to address lameness in flocks and, therefore, improve total flock performance. Recent survey results suggest a major reason for early culling of sheep is due to lameness, so it's a subject that many flocks need to get to grips with.

## Stock judging

There's a chance for everyone to test their stock-judging skills. And there will also be a competition for teams of young sheep producers. The Next Generation Team Challenge will be for teams of three; age 26 and under on the day. Teams will be asked to:

- Assess a pen of prime lambs
- Judge a group of breeding ewes
- Judge a group of terminal sire rams
- Carry out some sheep husbandry tasks
- Complete a questionnaire

This will be a short-format competition and will give visitors the time to take part in the competition, as well as visit stands and attend seminar sessions.



NSA representatives will also be on hand throughout the day to discuss its current and ongoing work on behalf of members.

Melton Mowbray market has excellent facilities, including a comfortable conference area, award-winning cafe, and plenty of undercover and outside space for the wide range of displays.

The event will run from 10am until

4pm and entry is free for NSA members (one membership card permits one free entry). Non-members will be charged £5.

More information is available from event organiser Jonathan Barber, NSA Eastern Regional Manager, in conjunction with Norfolk-based Ceres Solutions. Call 01953 607860 or email [carroll@ceresolutions.co.uk](mailto:carroll@ceresolutions.co.uk).

**NSA EASTERN REGION WINTER FAIR**

- Trade Stands
- Seminars
- Sheep Breed Exhibits
- Stock Judging Competitions
- Demonstrations

*New for 2018*

**“Next Generation Team Challenge”**  
for details contact

Organised by the National Sheep Association, Eastern Region. Tel : 01953 607860  
Email : [office@ceresolutions.co.uk](mailto:office@ceresolutions.co.uk)  
Admission - NSA Members FREE £5 for Adults, Free to Agricultural Students and Children under 18

# Don't give fluke a break

Providing choices, so you can select the ideal solution all year round...

**SPRING**      **SUMMER**      **AUTUMN**      **WINTER**

**Solantel**  
50mg/ml Oral Suspension for Sheep  
Closantel

FOR ANIMAL TREATMENT ONLY  
Keep out of the reach and sight of children.

**Closamectin**  
SOLUTION FOR INJECTION FOR CATTLE & SHEEP

**Triclafas Drench**  
Fluke Drench for Sheep

**Solantel**  
Oral Suspension for Sheep

**Norbrook**  
[www.norbrook.com](http://www.norbrook.com)

Closamectin® Solution for Injection for Cattle & Sheep [POM-VPS] contains 5 mg/ml ivermectin and 125 mg/ml closantel.  
Triclafas® Drench 5% w/v Oral Suspension [POM-VPS] contains 5% w/v triclabendazole.  
Solantel® 50mg/ml Oral Suspension for Sheep [POM-VPS] contains 50 mg/ml closantel. Further information is available from the manufacturer.  
Manufactured and distributed in NI by: Norbrook Laboratories Ltd, Station Works, Newry, Co. Down, BT35 6JP.  
Distributed in GB by: Norbrook Laboratories (GB) Limited, 1 Saxon Way East, Oakley Hay Industrial Estate, Corby, NN18 9EX. | 4365-LA(S)-GB-12/10/17

# Genetic evaluation report results debut at conference

Thought-provoking would be one way to describe delegates' response to the long-anticipated preliminary results of the RamCompare project, unveiled at the NSA Sheep Breeders Round Table in November. The project set out to compare the performance of progeny by different breeds for a range of traits. Data collected was used to carry out a combined breed analysis and determine whether commercial abattoir data could be used to produce EBVs for carcass traits.

AHDB beef & Lamb's Liz Genever says: "From an AHDB perspective, the focus is on getting a larger proportion of carcasses meeting market specifications. RamCompare provides the opportunity to feed carcass trait information into genetic evaluations. It will offer producers the tools to get a greater proportion of their animals meeting target specifications. We've got a massive opportunity here to get more lambs into that box and to move the industry forward."

RamCompare was launched in May 2015 and is the UK's first official progeny test. Six farms located across the UK were involved in data collection for phase one, which included:

- Ewe records – breed, age, weight, body condition score throughout the year and sire group
- Lambing records – including sire and dam, number born, birth weight, ease of birth, deaths, fostering information
- On-farm lamb performance – weights at around 56 days, 90 days and at sale. Ultrasound muscle and fat depth measurements were done at around 90 days
- DNA samples for future research
- Carcass information – carcass weight, conformation and fat class
- Saleable meat yield (by weighing primals) and tenderness score on loins (shear force) were collected from a proportion of the lamb crop (around 15 female lambs per sire)

Ram breeds used within the project were Charollais, Hampshire Down, Meatlinc, Suffolk, and Texel. During the first three years of the project, more than 360 natural service and around 180 AI rams were nominated for use, with some breeders now considering freezing semen for future nominations in subsequent years.

"It was about producing a comparison between five commercial breeds," explained Ms Genever. "These five were chosen because they tended to have the most history around performance recording and tended to be numerically significant within the UK. More than 70 rams were tested during the first two years of the project, and these were typically within the top 20% for carcass traits because it was our aim to get top performance rams onto the system."

## Leading sires

Initial results are shown across a series of tables, which show leading sires within the project during the first two years. The results will be updated in May 2018, to include records for a further 1,500 carcasses for lambs born in late spring 2017 and finished later in the year. RamCompare results only rank the performance of animals on trial, which included rams in the top 1% for a trait across some breeds while others only saw rams in the top 25% put forward. The new carcass trait EBVs will appear as part of genetic evaluations for animals with acceptable accuracy values.

Signet Manager Sam Boon spoke about some of the headline figures of the study and highlighted that differences



on financial returns on carcasses of up to £7 were experienced by the producers involved, depending on sires used.

"This is despite the fact that all rams involved were already considered to be high genetic merit animals," he said. "Looking at the top 25% for eight-week weights, for example, there are a greater number of Suffolks, which rank highly here, alongside Hampshires. When it came to muscling, it is interesting to see the Meatlinc rank highly, but they have been selecting on muscle depth for years. "When we broke down data and looked at specific farm group, this became a consistent theme for the Meatlinc across the board. Suffolks also had a big influence in this category, partly due to their size. So it will be interesting to look at these in a weight-adjusted environment."

## Wider pool

"In terms of fat depth measurement, Suffolks and Hampshire Downs tended to be fatter, with Texels leaner and Charollais coming in at both ends of the scale," he added.

RamCompare is set to continue for the next three years, involving eight farms across the UK. A wider pool of performance recorded terminal sire breeds are now being included, with strong interest from several breeders outside of the original five used during phase one.

The biennial Sheep Breeders Round Table event is organised by AHDB Beef & Lamb, NSA, QMS, HCC and AgriSearch.

Find more information about RamCompare on page 27 of this issue.



POLYTUNNELS

SHEEP HOUSING

Invest in the best for lambing success

01962 772368

sales@mcgregorpolytunnels.co.uk

# Tips for maximising ram longevity and productivity

By Sara Gregson, contributor

A lot of money is often spent on buying quality rams, but some commercial sheep producers are disappointed when they get them back onto their farms. The results of a recent project suggest that with more attention to health and nutrition, rams could be active for much longer

Rams face considerable challenges, often moving from the relative luxury of a pedigree flock to the rigours of working life on a new unit with a limited, or no, transitional period and patchy preventative health programmes.

With growing concern about the short working lives of rams and the cost to producers, a recently completed research project set out to provide data to show how long rams actually last.

Funded by the Norman Hayward Fund of the BVA Animal Welfare Foundation, and carried out by independent sheep consultants Lesley Stubbings and Kate Phillips and vet Chris Lewis, the work has come up with some answers.

The 'Improving the Welfare and Longevity of Rams in Commercial Sheep Flocks' project gathered information from almost 600 UK sheep flocks, mainly through focus group discussions and an online survey, as well as more detailed data from several farms and surveys completed at shows and events.

## Project results

While the sheep producers surveyed online were generally satisfied with how long their rams were lasting, their expectations were not matched with reality. On average, they wanted them to work for four to five years, but in practice they are lasting for 3.8 years.

"On average, the respondents paid £516 per ram, with a wide variation in prices, but most falling between £300



and £700," says Lesley Stubbings.

"More than half the producers buy direct from a breeder and this reflects a growing trend across the industry. This direct relationship means that there is potential for more information sharing between vendor and buyer.

"Only a third of sheep producers always, or mostly, buy performance recorded rams, yet there is no difference in life-length between recorded rams and non-recorded animals. This might help dispel any criticism that high genetic merit animals do not last as long," she adds.

## Health management

Sheep producers identified health status as the highest selection priority when rams are bought. But their knowledge of treatments received by rams before they are sold is low.

They are also often left out of routine flock treatments, including vaccination programmes. With respiratory diseases and lameness high on the list of causes of ram death and culling, this is a significant oversight.

Quarantine is also a weakness that was identified on a large proportion of units. Only a small number of sheep producers isolate rams for the recommended minimum period of three to four weeks.

"There are two main reasons for this shortened quarantine time," says Ms Stubbings. "Firstly ram sales are often too close to tugging to allow time for a suitable quarantine period and, secondly, the level of trust between purchaser and vendor may overshadow the need to protect the flock from unseen problems, such as anthelmintic resistant worms."

## Ram KPIs

Average working life	4.5 years
Lifetime output	289 lambs
Cost/lamb reared	£1.99
Cost p/kg carcass (20kg carcass)	10p

Further recommendations in the report on health issues include adapting the five-point plan for lameness for rams, involving vets who can break open product packs and dispense small quantities of vaccinations for rams, and looking to develop a 'Clean Bill of Health' document. Vendors would complete this and purchasers could use it as a guide to future treatments and feeding.

## Ram feeding

"On farms where we monitored weight and condition, rams lost, on average, 9% of their bodyweight while working, but this reached 20% in some cases," says Ms Stubbings. "There is a need for clearer and more accurate guidance on ram feeding throughout the whole year.

"If we can improve ram health planning and nutrition then we can improve the working lives of rams and reduce the costs per lamb sold.

She adds that further development of the key performance indicators (KPIs) and sound benchmarking are also required if sheep producers are going to be able to manage and measure improvement in ram performance over time. "This will give them the confidence that keeping fit, healthy and fully capable rams is the most cost-effective strategy to follow."

# Couple scoop final NSA giveaway

One Monmouthshire-based couple are wasting no time in putting their new IAE lamb weigh crate to work, after winning the coveted prize in NSA's final prize-draw giveaway of 2017. Jenny Parry and Mike Smith, who farm in the Brecon Beacons National Park near Abergavenny, are delighted by their win.



"We never win anything, so obviously we were thrilled when we got the call," says Jenny. "It couldn't have come at a better time, with our main lamb-selling season ahead of us and our current weigh crate is definitely starting to show its age."

The couple reintroduced sheep production at their unit 10 years ago, after purchasing the farm they currently run. Their system, Jenny says, is extensively managed and comprises 400 Texel cross ewes from which all lambs are all finished off grass and sold through Monmouthshire Livestock Market. Given the couples other commitments, keeping the business efficient is key.

"As well as running the farm business, my partner Mike and I are also employed full-time off the farm in

an agricultural related business. And we also run our own company producing hand-crafted oak products for restoration projects," explains Jenny.

"As far as our sheep enterprise is concerned, we aim to produce good quality finished lambs as efficiently as possible, within the constraints of jobs, family and other business commitments."

After signing up at NSA Welsh Sheep

in May, Jenny says that she and her partner are looking forward to the next event – for business networking as well as catching up with friends.

## Look out for NSA's exciting 2018 prize draw

This fourth and final IAE lamb weigh crate winner marks the end of NSA's 2017 prize-draw giveaway, which has seen four lucky members scoop this incredible prize during the past 12 months.

Make sure you keep your eyes peeled for details of NSA's all-new giveaway for 2018, which will be announced in the next edition of Sheep Farmer.

New NSA members are automatically entered into the draw on signing up but, as an existing member, you can make as many entries into the draw as you like by simply recommending someone to join NSA.



# MEGASTART EWE & LAMB



- ✓ A free access feed tub used in the 4-6 weeks prior to lambing.
- ✓ Provides ewes with an excellent source of energy from sugars, starch and protected fat.
- ✓ Includes high quality MOS designed to improve colostrum quality.
- ✓ Vitamins, minerals and trace elements incorporated at optimum levels to achieve enhanced animal performance.
- ✓ High in Vitamin E and Selenium to promote a healthy immune system.



For more information call  
**01292 280909**

or contact your local merchant

✓ Available in 80Kg and 20Kg tubs.



www.scotmin.com  
info@scotmin.com



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

# Your voice for Sheep farming matters



THE NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION

NSA has regular prize draws and giveaways for new and existing members, check out our website [www.nationalsheep.org.uk](http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk) to find out more.

Individual UK Subscription £55  
Under 27's UK Subscription £27.50  
Eire, Europe and Overseas £60



**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 National Sheep Association) or call NSA Head Office on 01684 892661 to pay by card.

### Member's 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: .....

### Payer's 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: .....

If this membership is a gift please tick if delivery is direct to the new member and not to the buyer

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

### Member's Sheep Enterprise

No of commercial breeding females? .....

No of pedigree breeding females? .....

No of bought-in store lambs finished per year? .....

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



This guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit National Sheep Association will notify you 28 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request National Sheep Association to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by National Sheep Association or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society – If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when National Sheep Association asks you to
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

The Direct Debit Guarantee



Prize draw terms and conditions at [www.nationalsheep.org.uk/draw](http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/draw)

Please return your form to: National Sheep Association | The Sheep Centre | Malvern | Worcestershire | WR13 6PH

Tel: 01684 892 661 Email: [membership@nationalsheep.org.uk](mailto:membership@nationalsheep.org.uk) [www.nationalsheep.org.uk](http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk)

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



# NSA activity focuses on Brexit, live exports, and sheep health scheme

By Phil Stocker, NSA

**Work at Defra and the devolved administrations relating to Brexit continues, but few decisions have been made. Preparation is key here so that informed choices can be made once decisions emerge. The Withdrawal Bill (formerly referred to as the Great Repeal Bill) that will pass EU legislation into our statute books is now being considered by Parliament. A government Agriculture Bill white paper (also referred to as the Agriculture Bill 'command paper') is expected at the end of the year, as is the Environment Bill white paper (also referred to as the 'Environment 25-year plan').**

It has become even clearer that with some 40% of UK sheepmeat being exported (96% of this to the EU) and little hope of establishing equivalent alternative trade elsewhere in the timescales concerned, a trade deal with the EU (or at least a long transitional arrangement) that allows tariff free access for our lamb (and mutton) into the EU is critical.

## Wider messages

NSA's message to Ministers has got through, although this is no guarantee of success. Wider messages about the value and importance of sheep farming in the UK are also hitting home and I was told first hand, in a one-to-one meeting with Michael Gove, that UK grazing livestock farming is reliant on, and worthy of, support. This all relates to the wider environmental and social/cultural outcomes of sheep farming – and its role in soil management.

The principle for the future is highly likely to be one of livestock enterprises that should achieve viability through peak efficiency within 'natural boundaries', and 'contracts' for the delivery of a range of public goods and benefits. There's a good chance that the government will not allow UK producers to face what New Zealand's producers faced back in the 1980s, when subsidies were removed suddenly. We should expect RDP type capital investment support and measures to enable efficiency of production. In addition, although far from clear, we should also see measures explored to help us to weather market volatility.

The next few months will be vital, so we must continue to ensure that those in positions of power understanding the

## Brexit updates

- Improving collaboration between Westminster and the devolved nations
- Commitments to fair distribution of funds, but avoiding trade distortions, and a far stronger spirit of collaboration between our levy bodies too
- Strong suggestions of a two-year transitional period
- The likelihood of government support stability until 2022, but rapid change thereafter
- Intense debates on the future of NZ TRQ volumes, with NZ strongly opposed to the UK/EU position
- High levels of Defra preparation for export certification and border controls with third countries.

value of sheep farming to the UK. **NSA will continue to do this in whatever way it can but I believe that you, as members, can also play your part. I would suggest that as many individuals as possible should be contacting their MPs – by letter, telephone or email, or face to face.** This is about ensuring that our political 'servants' know the importance of ensuring that we have the economic and market conditions that allow us to thrive and succeed.

AHDB Beef & Lamb continues to add to its library of 'Horizon' publications relating to Brexit. Impact scenario publications for England and Scotland are now available, with a similar paper for Wales due out in the New Year. All are available on AHDB's web site.

## Sheep health

Members will remember NSA proposals, several years ago, for an RDP-type sheep health scheme that would encourage and support producers to 'do the right thing' to improve the health status of their flocks. Actions including advisory relationships with sheep vets, membership of accreditation schemes or the use of disease screening programmes and many more were proposed. As we approach Brexit, this thinking has re-emerged and the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE) facilitated a meeting recently with members of the Sheep Health and Welfare Group (of which NSA is a member) to discuss this approach. The AHWBE was surprised by the sheep sector's enthusiasm to move forward

on this. It could certainly help to tackle losses caused by disease and parasites that we already have clear answers to (PGE, Fluke, and abortions as examples). And we could also deal with some 'iceberg' diseases like MV and OPA. NSA still feels strongly that one of the big answers to this is to strengthen that sheep producer/sheep vet relationship and to use vets to prevent problems and increase efficiency, rather than to treat problems when they've occurred.

## Live exports

Both George Eustice and Michael Gove have clearly stated that they see Brexit as an opportunity to 'restrict live exports' – an activity they feel casts a cloud over the high welfare reputation enjoyed by the sheep industry. Michael Gove made it clear that breeding stock were not under threat and that they are perceived to have more reliable welfare conditions due to their higher value. However there is clearly confusion concerning the rationale and implications of what they are suggesting, namely that exporting or transporting sheep across water is 'cruel'. The reality is that any welfare problems are usually brought about by poor legal enforcement – something that is not consistent across EU states. And that's something that was made clear to the Secretary of State during our meeting with him. As a result, NSA has been in discussions with NFU, and more recently with other bodies, about the potential for 'assured export routes' with industry taking responsibility for overseeing agreed trade. The details of this need a lot more work, but it is a fact that there are ways to ensure and demonstrate legal compliance and to ensure good welfare conditions. We must also be ambitious if we want to keep this trade.



**ED&F MAN**  
EST. 1783

Liquid Products

# LIQUID FEEDS: A RUNAWAY SUCCESS

ADVERTORIAL

- Sugar content boosts rumen function
- Highly palatable, drives dry matter intake
- Low substitution allows better use of dry feed
- Free access feeding reduces stress
- Reduces risk of 'Twin Lamb' disease

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Richard Dobson	07764 344716
Mel Broughton	07717 341425
Dave Stanford	07767 873748
Danielle Goatley	07710 075824

Freephone: 0800 3898450  
[www.edfmanliquidproductsuk.com](http://www.edfmanliquidproductsuk.com)



## Molasses blends for energised ewes

Feeding high energy molasses blends to ewes in late pregnancy can have a big impact on lambing success, reducing the risk of twin lamb disease and boosting lamb vigour.

ED&F Man's Danielle Goatley points out, "Most ewes are coming into the winter in good condition. The key is to keep them in good condition, preventing them getting overly fat or losing too much weight, either of which can lead to reduced performance and the increased chance of metabolic disorders."

Twin and triplet bearing ewes have a particularly high demand for energy, especially glucose, and as they get closer to lambing this demand increases. If these energy and glucose demands aren't met, then ewes can suffer twin lamb disease/pregnancy toxemia. Around 70% of the lamb's growth takes place in the last two months of pregnancy. It is therefore vital to ensure that the ewe's nutritional requirements are met during this time.

To meet the high energy demands of the growing lamb, ewes naturally metabolise body fat in the liver, producing ketones. If the dietary energy supply is inadequate, excessive body fat is metabolised, leading to an excessive build-up of ketones to toxic levels and body condition loss.

The rule that prevention is better than cure is particularly true in this situation. Twin lamb disease can be prevented by feeding the ewe properly, in terms of both quantity and quality of feed supplied.

Start supplementary nutrients six weeks pre lambing date with an amount based on ewe condition, and where possible with predicted scanning information.

Singles: Low levels of supplement should be offered to avoid too large a lamb birth weight.

Twins: Medium level of supplementation where the aim is to ensure two viable and thriving lambs Triplets: Maximum care and attention is required and careful supplementation is required to ensure all 3 lambs can be carried and delivered successfully.

Sheep diets should be based around good quality forage, supplemented with appropriate energy and protein sources, as well as good sources of vitamins and minerals. Sheepmol and Sheepmol Plus are high dry matter, high sugar blends of cane molasses, glycerine and liquid co-products, formulated specifically for sheep. The unique mix of energy sources promotes healthy lamb growth and maintains ewe health.

As pregnancy progresses and the lamb grows, the physical pressure on the rumen increases and intake capacity is reduced. In this situation liquid feeds offer a number of unique benefits:-

- The exceptional palatability drives intakes when DMI can be reduced
- Low substitution rates mean more can be fed than would be the case with a dry feed without reducing forage intakes
- The high sugar supply boosts rumen function, meaning ewes get more from each mouthful consumed
- Free access feeding can reduce stress and the incidence of bullying or prolapse

ED&F Man offer a proven range of sheep supplementary products including the recently launched Sheepmol range, and if extra protein is required, Prime 20. All are high sugar, high energy liquids. The Sheepmol range has the added benefit of glycerine inclusion to reduce the likelihood of twin lamb disease.



# Cybercrime is a growing threat to UK sheep industry

By Karen Wright, contributor

**Cybercrime is a growing threat across all businesses and sheep producers are not exempt. The NSA recognises the increasing threat of cybercrime and its responsibility towards helping to protect its members. "Hackers are getting cleverer, they keep changing their approaches and even the savviest of us can be caught out," says Chief Executive Phil Stocker.**

"Although it's not 'good' news, it helps if members can share their experiences if they are affected by cybercrime so we can warn others," he adds. "It's an on-going battle."

Mr Stocker speaks from experience too; finding out after some months that his credit card had run up a debt of £18,000, way over the credit limit and used in unusual places.

"It was several months before the card company picked up on this. The fraudsters had managed to get my bank to change my address, so that I didn't receive my statements. Luckily the loss was covered by the card company, but it was a very unpleasant experience."

## Growing concern

And it's an experience that's on the increase. Rising concerns about cybercrime have been highlighted in responses to the NFU Mutual's annual rural crime survey, which revealed that it was farmers' fastest rising concern.

"We're now seeing reports that sheep producers are increasingly being targeted in scams that are simple but effective, particularly at times when criminals know BPS is being paid and farmers' bank accounts are likely to have money in them," says NFU Mutual's Rural Affairs Specialist Tim Price.

"Cybercrime can be conducted from the comfort of criminals' own homes, and relies on small businesses not having effective computer protection software in place – or failing to spot that they are being scammed."

The Mutual NFU urges sheep producers to take some basic precautions to protect themselves from cybercrime, such as using up to date anti-virus software and keeping firewalls switched on and running software 'patches' immediately. Insuring against cybercrime may also be considered.

"Never divulge passwords, PIN numbers or card or reader generated codes to anyone," says Mr Price. "And if you're presented with an unusual request or pop-up during an online banking session asking you to enter security information, close the session and check with your bank's online banking helpdesk. Be extra vigilant."

## Double check

And it is well worth checking out a phone number from the bank's own web site before calling to confirm account payee details. "Check out data on farm machinery for sale too and, if you are thinking of buying it and paying on line, wait until it has been inspected and verified as genuine."

HSBC's Head of Agriculture Neil Wilson also urges producers to be on the lookout for scammers at certain times of the



Tim Port.

Kreseda Smith.

year, when they know that farmers have money arriving in their account. He highlights some key 'do's and don'ts' to help producers avoid cybercrime:

- **Never disclose security details.**

A genuine bank or organisation will never ask you for your PIN or full password in an email, on the phone, or in writing. Question what and why you are being asked for the details, and make sure you know who you're talking to.

- **Don't assume an email or phone call is authentic**

Just because someone knows your name and address, or details like your mother's maiden name, it doesn't mean that they're genuine. Criminals can falsify phone numbers and pose convincingly as bank employees or trusted officials. Often, they'll try to trick you into revealing security details by telling you that you've been a victim of fraud.

- **Don't be rushed or pressured into making a decision**

Under no circumstances would a genuine bank or other trusted organisation force you to make an on-the-spot financial transaction or transfer. Nor would they rush you while you pause to think. Slow down, so that you can consider your actions.

- **Stay in control**

Have the confidence to refuse unusual requests for personal or financial details. It's easy to feel embarrassed when faced with unexpected or complex conversations. But if you don't feel in control of a discussion, it's fine to end it straight away.

- **Listen to your instincts**

If something feels wrong, question it. Criminals aim either to pressure you or to lull you into a false sense of security while your defences are down. Whether you're busy with other activities or relaxing at home, think carefully about the information you're giving.

"For some time now, producers have been heavily targeted by fraudsters using telephone scams, known as 'vishing', where callers claim to be from their bank," says Lloyds' UK Head of Agriculture Andrew Naylor.

"Vishing scams trick unsuspecting victims into divulging online banking credentials, or coerce them into taking steps that allow the criminal to access their bank account," he explains.

Cybercrime, though, is the next step



Cybercriminals could be watching your online activity.

up. Malicious software, known as malware, is used to gain access to computers. Emails are sent from what appears to be a legitimate source, including an attachment or link containing the malware. Once these are clicked on or opened, fraudsters can then gain access to confidential information and money.

"Another type of cyber fraud is ransomware," adds Mr Naylor. "Fraudsters dupe the recipient into clicking on a link in an email, or on a website, that delivers a virus to the computer, locking down your personal data so that you can't access it. The criminals then demand that you pay a 'ransom' if you want access to be reinstated."

The recent The Times Tech Summit in London warned that security threats against internet-connected devices were growing because it was so easy and cheap for criminals to buy ransomware on the web in buy-one-get-one-free deals where you can share the profits with people who have written the code.

And with increasing connectivity – with more technology connected by WiFi – the issue of cybercrime is likely to get worse, according to Harper Adams University's Kreseda Smith. Completing her PhD in farm crime, she has spoken to many producers on issues of crime including cybercrime and has found them to be increasingly worried about the latter.

## Security software

"And few are aware of the level of security they need," she says. "The very minimum is a firewall but they should also have software that regularly checks mobile data and Wi-Fi on their devices, regardless of their system. No one system is exempt from the threat of cybercrime."

Farms are in rural and often remote areas and have been plagued with poor connectivity to broadband. "But the danger is



Neil Wilson.

Andrew Naylor.

that producers blame poor connection as the reason that they can't get onto the internet or pick up WiFi," she adds. "In fact, it could easily be hackers that are blocking the system."

And as we rely more on the internet and WiFi, so the problem will intensify. "We're moving increasingly towards automated farming systems, with WiFi-enabled farm machinery. Thieves can steal a tractor with keys, but in the future they may hack into Wi-Fi devices to take them."

And the increasing amount of farm data held on computers and sent via the Internet also poses as an opportunity to hackers, bent on damaging farm records, taking financial information and generally creating disruption.

"Producers must make sure that their data is backed up safely," she adds, admitting that the industry should take a coordinated approach to protecting and keeping farmers fully aware. "What we're doing now is not enough. This is a rapidly growing problem."



## Premier Sheep Drench

Have the trace elements in your stock been washed out this summer?

Drench 3-5 weeks prior to lambing to maximise livestock performance.

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

**Not all mineral drenches are the same**



Contact Jonathan Guy  
T 01886 880482  
M 07866 607466

E [jganimalhealth@aol.com](mailto:jganimalhealth@aol.com)  
W [www.jganimalhealth.com](http://www.jganimalhealth.com)

# Straw shortage: what alternatives are available?

**There's an acute shortage of straw this year – the result of poor weather, particularly in Scotland, but also increasing demand by biomass burning plants, which draw heavily on straw supplies from eastern England. This will push up the cost of bedding housed systems on many units this coming winter – and the cost may well remain high for years to come. So what are the alternatives if straw is unavailable?**

Sawdust, woodchips, miscanthus, and PAS 100 green waste compost are just some bedding-material options available to sheep producers, which could prove to be competitively priced compared to straw this winter.

And, looking longer term, ever increasing demand and prices for cereal straw in the UK mean that it could be increasingly costly for sheep systems to rely on buying in straw for housing during winter, fattening and lambing.

## Woodchip option

This is even more of a concern in areas such as Wales, which have a low prominence of arable systems. So says a report carried out by Farming Connect and Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC Meat Promotion Wales), alongside several academic partners, to assess the use of woodchip as bedding for livestock.

Work at IBERS, Aberystwyth University, found that growing lambs actually showed a preference for

woodchip compared to straw. There was no difference between woodchip and straw as bedding on animal behaviour, average daily gain or food intake. Lambs were fed hay as well as concentrates during this period, but the lack of straw as bedding did not lead to animals housed on woodchip eating more hay.

A further study investigated lambing onto woodchip compared to straw and found there to be no differences in behaviour or lamb survival. Much more woodchip was used during the lambing period than straw, but the study concluded that, if produced on farm, the cost of woodchip could be significantly reduced.

Woodchip should have a moisture content of less than 30% to maximise the absorbency of the material. And producers must ensure that the woodchip source is appropriate and that only clean woodchip (not contaminated with glues or plastics) is used.

In order to use woodchip effectively – and appropriately – the sheep unit must also be properly set up to support its use. The bedding must be mechanically handled, meaning that sheds must be able to be driven into to apply woodchip. And woodchip storage is also important, if producers want to buy in bulk and keep costs down. To

complete the cycle, woodchip bedding, as with straw, has been demonstrated to be compostable. That said, the composting process takes longer compared to straw and 'immature' compost should not be used on land until fully broken down. This can take between two and three years.

On the plus side, re-using the woodchip for bedding the following year can not only save space and money from buying in a full supply of woodchip again, but the process also aids the composting process by adding extra nitrogen to the material.

## Slat solution

Another solution, particularly in areas where the cost or availability of straw is an ongoing issue, could be the installation of slats. Slats are used in most sheep housing in Northern Ireland, according to CAFRE's Sheep Technologist Eileen McCloskey. "Most use wire mesh slats. But we've installed plastic slats here at our new sheep unit – they're textured to ensure good grip and not too wide, which means that they're also suitable for young lambs."

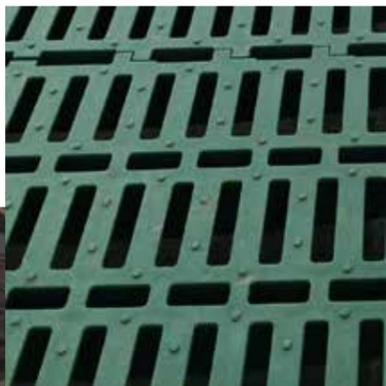
The plastic slats installed at Glenwherry were originally developed for pig production systems, but are now being used on some sheep units

Key to success of slats is having appropriate 'traffic' on them. "If the 'foot fall' is too low, the slats will become dirty. It's important to have

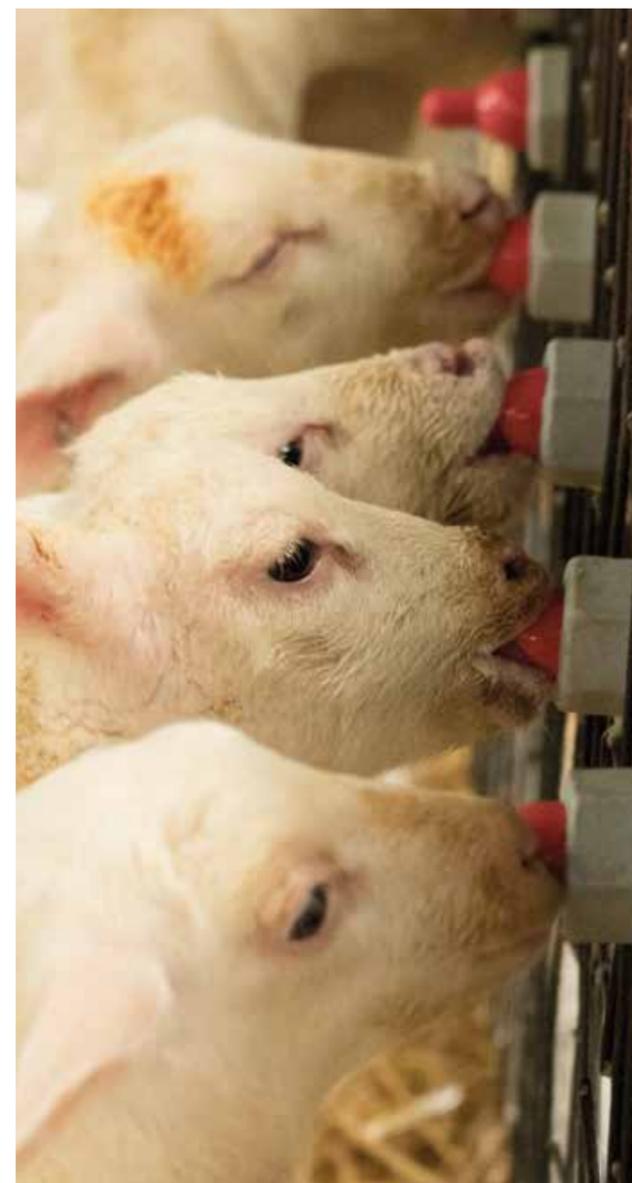
enough ewes on the slats to ensure that faeces is pushed through and they stay clean," she says.

Dr McCloskey believes that the plastic slats are well worth the investment. "The sheep are comfortable and settled – slipping isn't a problem and the slats offer a sure footing. And it's easy to clear wool from the slats, which can be a problem with wire mesh floors. Wool doesn't stick to the plastic slats.

"The slats have also proved to be strong and durable. I think some producers are a sceptical about the strength of plastic slats, but if they're installed correctly with plenty of support then they're extremely strong."



Sheep on plastic slats at CAFRE's Glenwherry unit.



# LAMLAC®

Number 1 for over 40 years

## Helping you rear strong, healthy lambs

Our expert team offer husbandry and management support, to help you get the most out of your flock.

www.lamlac.co.uk Freephone: 0800 919808

Follow us Like us Watch us

volac

# Ewbol

Productive  
Healthy  
Profitable

ForFarmers Ewbol range provides quality ewe and lamb feeds for all systems.

The benefits of feeding ForFarmers Ewbol range:



For more information speak to your local account manager or call 0845 722 8853

info.uk@forfarmers.eu  
 www.forfarmers.co.uk  
 ForFarmersUK



for farmers  
the total feed business

# Flock expansion is key to mitigating future volatility

By Hannah Park, NSA

**An expansion plan is just one of the vital ingredients required to ensure the continued success of his business, according to Ballycastle-based sheep producer Brian Jamieson.**

With a keen eye for growing and developing his farm, expansion plans are the focus for the family business, which he runs in partnership with his brother, Lyle. For them, success is all about utilising grazing potential for maximum returns. This is particularly important because Brian is looking to boost sheep numbers during the next few years, and to move a more intensively run system to gain the best return from the land.

Despite the commitment this growth brings with it, representing the sheep industry through various channels is also important to Brian, and most recently this has seen him assume the position of NSA Northern Ireland Region Chairman, in November 2017, as well as representing Northern Ireland on the NSA's Finance and General Purposes committee.

## More ewes

Back home at Ballintoy, in County Antrim, the family beef and sheep unit comprises more than 110 hectares (272 acres). The ground is a mixture of lower lying and higher altitude grazing. Around 70 hectares (173 acres) is used for crop production and grazing, with the remaining 35 hectares (86 acres) of rougher ground used for grazing sheep. Approximately 70% of the farm's land is owned, with the rest in conacre. A portion of this sees Brian work closely with the National Trust, a relationship that he is hoping to develop into something longer term in the future.



Brian Jamieson.



Some of the hoggets Brian purchased this year.

Expansion plans are now in motion, which Brian says began after his father purchased 45 Scottish Blackface ewes in September 2016. These will be used as a starting point to breed some Mule replacements into the flock.

The farm currently runs 300 commercial Texel and Suffolk cross ewes, alongside 60 ewe lambs retained in 2016 as replacements. A suckler-beef herd of 50 cows, put to a Limousin bull, make up the beef enterprise. Resulting calves are sold as stores, at around 12 months old, through Kilrea and Ballymena markets.

"This has been our second year working with the Scottish Blackface, which have definitely required a change of mind-set," says Brian. "They seem to be adapting to the conditions, though, and are performing well. Aside from increasing breeding ewe numbers, we wanted to increase the prolificacy into the flock and that's why we decided to go for Mules.

"These will, ultimately, be crossed with the Texel for a finishing lamb and we're looking to get Mule numbers up to between 50 and 100 across the total flock during the next few years. My main

aim is to breed a lamb for the prime market so, once I have my numbers stabilised, the Scottish Blackface might be phased out."

## Scanning rates

Although the focus is for the farm to breed its own replacements, Brian explains a one-off purchase of around 60 hoggets was made in 2016 to aid expansion plans. These hoggets will be added to the main flock next year, alongside the best of the 60 ewe lambs retained. The majority of these will be kept and lambed as yearlings, apart from the best ones that were put to a Charollais ram this year.

Brian says he is hopeful of achieving scanning rates of close to 170% at the beginning of January. And he is looking to improve on this figure with the addition of Mule genetics into the flock from next year.

All lambing is done indoors and begins during the second week in March. "We've recently spent a lot of time, effort and money on sheep housing, resulting in the addition of a new shed for lambing and handling," he says. "The weather can be rough anywhere in

got away with it.

"From a financial point of view, we need a system where one person can manage between 250 and 300 ewes independently. So we're gearing everything to be as efficient as we possibly can."

Lambs are drawn and sold liveweight from June onwards. A small amount of additional concentrate is offered annually, depending on seasonal factors, with a view to getting the year's lamb crop away by the following November. This is particularly important, according to Brian, because all ram lambs are kept entire.

## Minimal inputs

"Obviously the main aim is to make as much money as we can from these lambs. And if we can do that with minimal inputs then that's the way to go. We try to present well and we keep all the rams entire, because I find that this greatly improves growth rates and it makes no difference when it comes to selling them at market.

"Everyone has their own opinion, but I am very much in favour of livestock

Northern Ireland but here, where we are on the country's north coast, it can be particularly exposed at times. We used to lamb everything outdoors, but stock numbers were a lot lower then and extra help was more readily available, so you

*Right: Scottish Blackface ewes were purchased in September 2016 and introduced into the flock.*



A suckler-beef enterprise is run alongside the flock.

## Farm facts

- Ballintoy, in County Antrim, comprises more than 110 hectares (272 acres) – a mixture of lower lying and higher altitude grazing.
- 300 commercial Texel and Suffolk cross ewes, plus 60 ewe lamb replacements
- 50-cow suckler-beef herd put to a Limousin bull
- Indoor lambing, commences second week in March
- Lambs sold through livestock market
- Ram lambs left entire, so aims to sell by November

markets and we get on well selling our lambs there. Without them, I do feel we'd be very much at the beck and call of the conglomerates. Although you know the pence per kilogramme that you'll receive when selling deadweight, I don't think that lambs have killed out as well as some people had hoped this year – unless they had been meal fed.

"I imagine some producers might have been disappointed with their return. We get on well with our lambs in the market. They are presented well, and I'm usually happy with the price I achieve."

Brian also says that, with increasing numbers, he's also seen additional benefits for his business. "Our grassland utilisation and management has improved significantly since we expanded stock numbers. Whereas before we would have perhaps

understocked fields, now we've been able to keep on top of grazing much more easily. This has helped us to finish lambs more efficiently. A total change of rams in autumn 2016 has also improved output, and will continue to be something we do on a regular basis."

By tuppung time in 2018, Brian says he is aiming to put 350 to 400 ewes to the ram subject to market factors. "We know that the next few years will present particular challenges with the uncertainties surrounding Brexit. Of all the agricultural sectors, the sheep industry has the potential to be the most at risk because of our reliance on exports. But to be a sheep producer you need a short memory, something we'll no doubt be drawing on to face what the next few years have in store."



# First rate increase for a decade

By Natalie Hallett, Old Mill Accountants



**November saw the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee raise the interest rate, for the first time in a decade, by 0.25% to 0.5%. While this is good news for savers, in reality the increase merely puts us back in same place as 2016 before a cut in rate was made from 0.5% to 0.25% in reaction to the decision to leave the European Union.**

The last time the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) raised rates was on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and, at that time, the interest rate was increased from 5.5% to 5.75%. We may have a while to wait before we get back to those sort of interest rate levels. The Bank of England has been keen to stress that, to balance the interests of borrowers as well as savers, any further increases will be gradual.

## Further rises

This increase may not have a great effect but the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, signalled that he thought there would be further rises to come. So, if you or your family have a mortgage or loans, make sure you understand how higher rates could impact on your bills.

The current interest rate of 0.5% remains low and although we have seen banks and building societies deposit rates edge up in the past month, they are still far lower than we have seen in the past.

It can be tempting to look at alternatives to cash deposits when savings rates are so low. While we believe that investment portfolios are likely to deliver better long-term returns,

this is not a risk-free option. So moving funds from a safe environment to one where capital is at risk needs to be considered carefully and as part of a longer-term plan.

Banks or building societies remain the safest place to keep cash in the short term. Keeping enough money easily accessible on deposit is a high priority for your financial security and this should be one of the foundations of your personal financial plan. Resist the urge to commit this 'emergency' money to longer-term investments, even though you may be given the promise of a higher investment return. The prospect of higher returns usually comes with higher risk or the inability to access your money quickly.

## Cash reserves

Although you should be holding adequate reserves of cash, over longer periods of time the return on deposits struggles to keep pace with inflation. Inflation is rising and is significantly higher than the rate of interest you earn on most deposit accounts, so this money is effectively losing value each year.

With increased borrowing seen in farming businesses during the past few years, in order to keep up with technological advancements and to take advantage of the generous tax reliefs given for capital spending, the impact the interest rate rise could have on borrowing costs, and therefore cashflow, could put pressure on your farm's cash balance.

Anyone worrying about the impact that this may have in their business should be thinking about calculating their cash inflows and outflows and be thinking forward to see where their cash balance, or indeed overdraft, may end



Natalie Hallett.

up. This could push sheep producers to be even more cost conscious with many considering if any costs can be reduced to compensate for the additional borrowing cost.

## Fixed-rate borrowing

Now may also be the time for producers to be proactive with their bank managers, perhaps looking to fixed rate borrowing rather than variable rates in order to know where you are with cash flow. Many producers are loyal to their bank, but it may be worth investigating if another bank could offer a more attractive rate for your borrowings – particularly if this could free up more cash in your business. It may also be worth considering moving large overdraft balances, which are often on much higher interest rates, over to a fixed-rate loan to help budget your monthly costs and stay on top of your cashflow.



# WE COVER SMALL FARMS, LARGE FARMS AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

**From sheep farmers to arable farmers. Flower growers to poultry farmers.**

We are the UK's leading rural insurer with our Farm Select insurance. But we want more farms to benefit from our great cover and local service. That's why we've introduced Farm Essentials insurance – designed to meet the needs of smaller farms.

As your local agent, I'm close by and can provide expert advice and hands-on support when you need it.

Find your local Agent  
[nfumutual.co.uk/agent](http://nfumutual.co.uk/agent)



We pay  
**98%**  
of all farming claims<sup>†</sup>

 **NFU Mutual**  
INSURANCE | PENSIONS | INVESTMENTS

<sup>†</sup>98% of farm insurance claims paid based on annual settled claims 2014 – 2016, excluding claims not pursued by the customer.

The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited (No. 111982). Registered in England. Registered Office: Tiddington Road, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7BJ. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. A member of the Association of British Insurers.

**Give them the best start in life**





**LAMB FORCE<sup>®</sup>**  
**PREMIUM COLOSTRUM**

**"HIGHEST CONCENTRATED COLOSTRUM PER LITRE"**  
\*FW Jan 16, Murray Corke, Cambridge University

Contact your local Downland retailer or telephone 01228 564498

Buy Online at: [www.downland.co.uk](http://www.downland.co.uk)

**DOWNLAND<sup>®</sup>**  
PARTNERS IN FARMING HEALTH

# TMR can reduce feeding costs

One Welsh flock has shaved £4 per ewe off its pre-lambing feed costs by switching to feeding a total mixed ration. The flock, a Farming Connect Focus Site comprising 885 Lleyn and Texel-cross ewes, is based at Hundred House, a 162-hectare (400-acre) upland farm near Llandrindod Wells in Wales, and is run by Keith Williams.



His pre-lambing feeding system incorporates a treated soya product and high quality silage. Mr Williams had traditionally fed twin- and triplet-bearing ewes concentrates up to twice a day, starting from eight weeks pre-lambing, but he wanted to reduce both feed and labour costs.

## What is protected protein soya?

- This feed is added predominantly, to dairy rations. It is not commonly used in sheep systems.
- It contains a high level of digestible undegradable protein (DUP), which makes it a highly palatable feed that can be fed on its own or used in a variety of diets.
- Adding it to sheep rations has the potential to offers producers considerable savings on time, cost and labour compared to conventional approaches where rumen degradable protein (RDP) can be overfed.

outwintered on a forage crop before they were housed 30 days before lambing. At this point they were

ewes didn't push forward when fresh feed was added."

Dr Nakielny stresses that the success of the system relies on high quality silage and that the beneficial effects of protected soya protein can only be fully realised if silage has a minimum ME of 10.5.

"Feeding a lower ME silage means that extra energy is needed in the diet. Straight soya or other higher energy feeds can be added to the diet to help ensure a balance of energy and protein in the crucial run up to lambing."

## Nutritional requirements

Analysis of the 2016 cut clamp silage at Mr Williams' unit revealed that it had an ME of 10.9% with a dry matter of 34% and crude protein levels of 14.4%.

Dr Nakielny says that it is important not to overlook other nutritional requirements. "His ewes are supplemented with vitamin and mineral supplements to match the silage analysis," she says, adding that ewe body condition score must also be assessed in the run up to lambing and action must be taken if needed.

Mr Williams calculates that the new system has saved him around 51 hours in labour during the lambing period. He doesn't employ any staff apart from a lambing student for two weeks during the lambing period.

Ewes were previously fed up to twice a day for 56 days, but that has been reduced to 30 days, once a day. "And it now takes me just 10 minutes a day to feed, which means I have more time to get other work done."

introduced to the new ration with 50g of the protected protein allocated per foetus carried.

The new system incurred an initial outlay of £4,750 in a new mixer wagon but, based on the cost savings, Mr Williams says the machine will pay for itself within two years. He had been feeding 23 tonnes of concentrates but wanted to reduce his costs to maximise output per ewe.

By changing the feeding system, he says he has not only made savings on feed but flock health has improved too.

When ewes were fed concentrates – up to 1.5kg per head per day just before lambing – there were some issues with acidosis and twin-lamb disease.

Feeding a balanced TMR ration has reduced the number of cases according to Farming Connect's Catherine Nakielny, who oversaw the trial.

"It means that high levels of starch are not being fed and helps to avoid the metabolic upsets that feeding high levels of compounds can sometimes cause," she says.

Prolapses, which can be due to feeding high levels of concentrates, have also decreased in number. "And ewes fed the TMR diet also seemed more content and rested for longer periods," she adds. "During observation, 20% of

## Tips for TMR feeding

- Ensure there is adequate feed space
- Ewes must be in good body condition
- Good quality palatable silage is vital and this should be tested in appropriate batches
- The system is easier to implement if ewes are fed indoors pre-lambing so it may not be feasible for outdoor regimes

## Bolus to minimise trace element imbalances in your flock's diet

# Tracesure®

The highest density of trace elements in any bolus\*



1 The bolus is given using the appropriate applicator



2 The bolus lodges in the rumen/reticulum



3 Trace elements leach from the bolus at a regulated rate to provide optimal supplementation for up to 6 months

- ✓ Correct supplementation for every animal
- ✓ Optimal size/density prevents premature regurgitation
- ✓ Superior performance reduces production costs



- COPPER OXIDE
- COBALT
- IODINE
- SELENIUM

Tracesure® products are also available without copper

\* Statement relates to boluses commercially available in the UK on date of publication

Call +44(0)1359 252 181  
Visit [www.animax-vet.com](http://www.animax-vet.com)

f Animax Limited

**ANIMAX**  
veterinary technology

# Survey highlights crucial role of livestock auction markets

Taking advantage of new and emerging market opportunities, and making use of the vital role of the livestock auction mart system, can lead to a positive outlook for 2018. So say leading industry figures and recent research conducted on behalf of the Livestock Auctioneers' Association (LAA). But what are the opportunities ahead, and how can sheep producers take advantage of future prospects?

"First and foremost, it is crucial to understand market demand and fluctuations at different times of the year," explains LAA Chairman and Auctioneer at St Asaph Livestock Market John Brereton. "For example, we see the export carcass trade into Europe as important year-round trade for the UK industry. But the export market will vary, with heightened demand at certain times of the year."

"The livestock auction market system is well-suited to reacting to these demands, providing a competitive buying environment where purchasers can select the product they want. Equally, vendors are able to sell in suitable lots and batches to achieve the best price and satisfy this demand."

Mr Brereton's view is backed by research undertaken earlier in the year by the LAA, in which some 93% of producers surveyed, across all livestock sectors, confirmed that they bought or sold through the livestock auction system during the calendar year.

The research, conducted during two major industry events, identified several key catalysts drawing both buyer and vendor to the live sale ring. Access to professional staff and marketing advice scored highly, as



LAA Chairman John Brereton.



did the ability to present livestock for sale in suitable lots.

"Auction marts offer a marketplace for all categories of stock and the ability to sell in suitable batches, often with the help and guidance of the auctioneer, which helps achieve the best price," says LAA Executive Secretary Chris Dodds.

"Particularly with lambs, for example, the need to select sale batches in level lots for size, conformation and finish is critical if the best price is to be achieved. The auctioneer is always best placed to guide on market trends and requirements."

This customer-centric service certainly helps, particularly when negotiating a year that has seen both highs and lows. Knowing when and what to sell can be critical.

"The lamb trade in 2017 started strongly and this was maintained in the early part of the year," says Mr Brereton. "We did see this wane during a mixed summer, before an uplift later in the year. Speaking now, as we head towards the Christmas period, we are in a steady position – perhaps even a little firmer than the same time in 2016."

"The uplift in trade towards the end of the summer was, in part at least, aided by the Muslim festival Eid al-Adha. The Halal market is vital to the industry and livestock markets gear up at these times of the year."

The livestock auction market system lends itself perfectly to providing expert advice to vendors, which means that purchasers have access to exactly what they demand, when they need it.

The Muslim calendar is based on the moon, with Eid-al Adha going back approximately 10 days each year. So it is crucial to know when lambs will need to

be born by to meet Qurbani specifications, or indeed when Qurbani animals will be purchased.

"The livestock auctioneer can advise on the specifications required for Qurbani animals, and when to bring them to the market," adds Mr Brereton.

With Brexit and trade deals remaining top of the agenda, it is not only the Halal market that presents opportunity, as many look towards new and emerging markets.

"UK produce is in demand across the world, and with livestock auction markets embracing new technologies, and communication platforms, the industry is well-suited to supply emerging markets outside of the EU."

The encouraging findings from the LAA's independent research certainly indicate that the UK livestock auction industry has an important role to play in both the home and international markets as we head towards a post-Brexit era.

Presented by Mr Brereton during a reception at the House of Lords, hosted by the LAA's patron Lord Inglewood, the survey results also confirm that sheep producers are not simply following tradition.



LAA Executive Secretary Chris Dodds.

"It is particularly pleasing to note the very small number, just 4%, of respondents stating that they used the market as it is something that has always been done," says Mr Dodds.

"While there are many following in the footsteps of previous generations by selling through the live sales ring, the survey outcomes clearly highlight that producers are choosing to utilise the system as they see tangible benefits and returns. First and foremost, returning a good profit and securing a fair market price will be the key drivers, and clearly the livestock auction market is delivering."

# Breeding values will help more lambs hit market specification

The preliminary results from the first two years of RamCompare, the UK's first commercial progeny test, were made available to the sheep industry at the Sheep Breeders Round Table in late November.

During the first two years, data was collected from nearly 6,000 lambs sired by more than 70 different rams used on six commercial farms and fed into genetic evaluations. Artificial insemination (AI) was used to link farms and years, enabling the farm or year effect to be removed within the genetic evaluation.

## Increased accuracy

Data collected included sire, dam, birth date, birth weight, ease of lambing, eight-week weight, 90-day weight, muscle and fat depth at 90 days, carcass weight, and conformation and fat class. This new information has been analysed and has increased the accuracy of four existing estimated breeding values (EBVs) – eight-week weight, scan weight, muscle depth and fat depth – used in the genetic evaluation for terminal sires.

Before RamCompare, carcass data from terminal sires was not used in genetic evaluations. The carcass value was predicted from ultrasound and computed tomography scanning. Through RamCompare, the information collected from progeny via the abattoirs has led to better understanding of the carcass merit of the rams. As a result, three new EBVs (carcass weight, carcass conformation and carcass fat class), and one new index (overall carcass merit) have been developed.

These EBVs mean that commercial producers can select rams that will improve the percentage of their lambs hitting specification and breeders can have access to additional information on the carcass traits of their rams.

## Ram results

Table 1 lists the top 10 rams for overall carcass merit. The top ram was Handbank PRH1500573, bred by Anne and the late Bob Payne and nominated by Peter Baber. Handbank was a natural service sire used on one farm and the figures were based on 67 lambs. He ranks as number one for carcass weight EBV and number five for carcass



Table 1. Ten leading rams for overall carcass merit (2016/2017)

Ram ID	AI/NS	Breed	Owner/breeder (both if different)	Progeny/farms	Carcass weight EBV	Carcass conformation EBV	Carcass fat class EBV	Carcass merit index
Handbank PRH1500573	NS	Texel	R M & E A Payne/Peter Baber	67 / 1	2.00	2.11	-0.67	13.96
Roxburgh Shot Gun Willie EJR1101108	AI	Texel	Mr John Elliott/Messrs D M & S Prince	142 / 3	1.25	2.56	-1.21	10.90
Perygelli PAP1501802	NS	Texel	Alwyn Phillips	67 / 1	0.97	2.18	-1.32	8.98
Wedderburn Peleus 15WNY02086	AI	Charollais	J D R & J L Corbett/Barber, Walton, Dunkley & Oughton	72 / 2	1.29	0.83	0.02	8.32
Hans Fokker 95 T79:13:095	AI	Suffolk	Mr & Mrs H F Porsken	57 / 2	1.34	-0.09	1.46	6.83
Whitehead 64T1500471	NS	Hampshire Down	Robert & Kay Vincent	81 / 1	0.97	1.50	2.46	6.72
Stonedge Wallykazam YDP1500991	NS	Texel	Messrs D M & S Prince	157 / 1	0.42	2.32	-2.30	6.67
Foulrice On Ramcompare 14DG04690	NS	Charollais	C W Marwood & Son	217 / 1	0.75	1.60	0.02	6.61
Dalby Malachite 12PE01501	AI	Charollais	C R Sercombe/Walton, Gregory, Moseley & Greenow	144 / 3	0.86	0.77	0.31	5.90
Sandyknowe Sole Trader Y13:13:161	NS	Suffolk	Messrs Malcolm M Stewart/Messrs T C & C A Harding	47 / 1	0.81	1.04	2.04	5.41

### Key

- Number of progeny/farms
- Carcass weight EBV [range 1.72 - 2.00]
- Carcass conformation EBV [range 2.43 - 2.64]
- Carcass fat class EBV [range 2.44 - 3.47]
- Carcass merit index [range 10.75 - 13.96]

Notes:  
BLUP run date: 01/11/17.  
Analysis type: Carcass traits,  
AI = artificial insemination,  
NS = natural service

conformation EBV.

Despite the trial being dominated by high-index and high-EBV recorded rams, the difference in performance between the three best and three worst rams on each farm averaged £3.69 per lamb, with several farms seeing benefits exceeding £5 per head. This work clearly demonstrates the financial benefit of selecting recorded rams on their EBVs and matching these to a given production system.

## Animal performance

The full results are available at [www.ramcompare.com](http://www.ramcompare.com). It is worth noting that RamCompare results simply rank the performance of animals in the trial. In some breeds, rams in the top 1% for a given trait were nominated, while in other breeds only the top 25% of animals were nominated. The tables can only rank the

performance of those animals on test, so conclusions about breed differences should be made with caution. In many cases, differences in EBVs between leading animals may be small and, as always, accuracy values should also be taken into account.

At the time of launching the preliminary results, a proportion of lambs were still being processed. Final results will be published in May 2018.

RamCompare was funded by AHDB, HCC, QMS, Agrisearch and Sainsbury's. More than 10 other partners worked to ensure that the project was a success and many remain part of the project as it continues into a second phase. RamCompare phase two will collect data from lambs for a further three years with new breeds, eight farms and a research institute involved.

# Dashboard highlights regional and national disease risks

By Amanda Carson, Animal Plant and Health Agency  
**In June this year, APHA's Surveillance Intelligence Unit launched the GB Sheep Disease Surveillance Dashboard.**

The GB Sheep Disease Surveillance Dashboard has been developed by APHA to share the diagnostic information that is gathered from submissions to the veterinary surveillance network in Great Britain, in other words to APHA's Veterinary Investigation Centres in England and Wales, to SRUC's Disease Surveillance Centres in Scotland, and to APHA's network of universities and other partners who provide post-mortem services under contract <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/documents/surveillance/maps/england-wales-map17.pdf>

To find your nearest VIC or partner PME site, use APHA's postcode finder on the Vet Gateway: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/postcode/pme.asp>

The interactive dashboard, which can be found at [https://public.tableau.com/profile/siu.apha#!/vizhome/SheepDashboard\\_/Overview](https://public.tableau.com/profile/siu.apha#!/vizhome/SheepDashboard_/Overview) illustrates diseases diagnosed in sheep across GB in an attractive and interactive format.

Diseases of interest can be selected by county, region or across GB by using the interactive map. Filters can also be used to show diagnoses by time period and age group of sheep. Vets and sheep producers can now quickly and easily access information on the most common diagnoses in an area, or learn where specific diseases have been diagnosed.

To give some context, a broad indication of the sheep



Screenshot of the GB Sheep Disease Surveillance Dashboard

population is provided, based on the number of sheep per square kilometre in each county, according to the Annual Sheep and Goat Survey:

- Low sheep density: up to 40 sheep per square kilometre
- Medium: between 40 and 80 sheep per square kilometre
- High: more than 80 sheep per square kilometre

A higher count of diagnoses may be due to more

submissions from a county with many sheep or sheep holdings, better vigilance among the local sheep producers and vets, or more use of the GB surveillance network in a particular area. Diseases not requiring a laboratory diagnosis, or in flocks whose veterinary practice has its own diagnostic facilities, won't be represented in the data. These limitations mean that the data and maps can't be used to make inferences on the amount of disease within, or to make comparisons between, individual counties or regions.

The diagnostic information that the dashboards are based on is updated monthly.

## Dashboard highlights

Above right is a graph showing the most commonly diagnosed diseases in sheep during July, August and September 2017 with internal parasites contributing most to deaths in sheep that were submitted to the GB surveillance network for veterinary investigation. Trace element deficiencies, for example selenium, and Pine, due to cobalt deficiency, are commonly diagnosed in growing lambs that are failing to thrive during this time of the year.

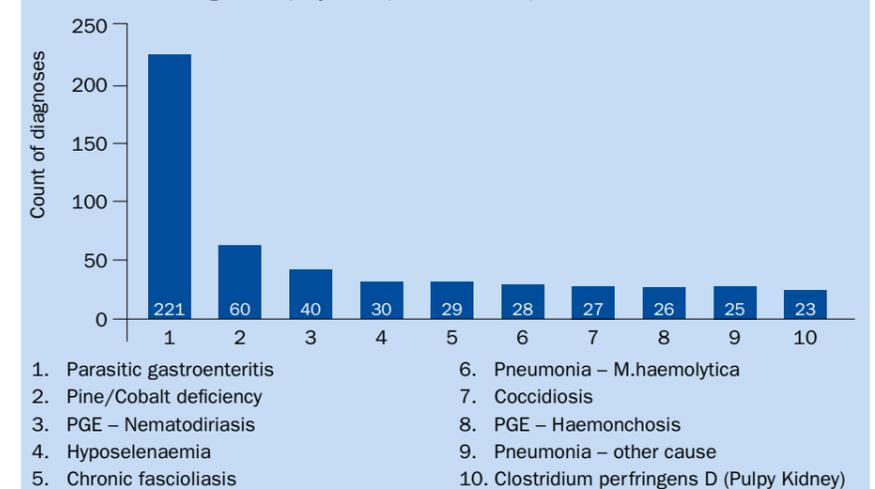
Looking forward and using the combined data for the winter months December (not including 2017) January and February from 2012 to 2017, allows possible prediction of common diseases to consider as potential threats to sheep health. Diagnoses for abortion are not included in the graph on the right.

Again internal parasites, including worms and fluke, are commonly diagnosed as well as those diseases that manifest as ill thrift in older sheep, such as Johne's and OPA. Listeria

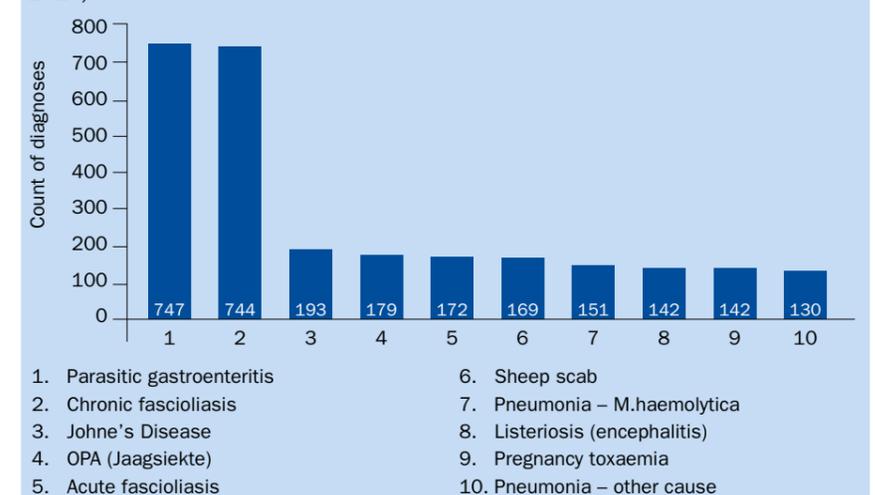
Table 2: Causes of abortion in sheep from January 2012 to October 2017

Abortion – Enzootic	2,004
Abortion – Toxoplasmosis	1,271
Abortion – Campylobacter	850
Abortion – Schmallenberg	474
Abortion – Not listed	434
Congenital abnormality	342
Abortion – Salmonella	163
Abortion – Listeria	161
Not listed – reproductive	74
Abortion – T. pyogenes	57
Abortion – Salmonella Montevideo	46
Abortion – Salmonella Dublin	45
Abortion – Bacillus licheniformis	43
Abortion – Yersinia sp	41
Abortion – fungi	10
Abortion – Q Fever	4
Abortion – Salmonella Typhimurium	1

Most common diagnoses (July to September 2017)



Count of most common diagnoses winter months (December to February, 2012 to 2017)



(encephalitis) is often associated with ingestion of soil, either from feeding sheep directly on the ground or from silage.

## Abortion causes

Looking back over the past five years (January 2012 to October 2017) we can also show the main causes of abortion that have been diagnosed following submissions to the GB surveillance network.

This shows that there are many different causes of abortion and demonstrates that getting a diagnosis is important to inform prevention and flock health management. The two most commonly diagnosed causes – Enzootic and Toxoplasma – are both preventable by vaccination. These diseases, as well as Salmonella and Q Fever, are also zoonotic and can be transmitted to humans. So producers need to be aware if these are present on the farm so steps can be taken to protect public health.

Another dashboard view shows what diseases have been seen in a specific



area. The example here shows Cumbria (a county with high sheep density).

To learn more about how the dashboards works go to the APHA Vet Gateway and select 'Disease Dashboards', or you can follow this link: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/vet-gateway/surveillance/scanning/disease-dashboards.htm>. Here you will find guidance on how to use the dashboard and a link to an explanatory video on YouTube.

We welcome feedback, so if you have any comments or suggestions on the dashboard tool, please send them to [SIU@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SIU@apha.gsi.gov.uk)

# VERSATILE FEEDERS USED INSIDE AND OUT

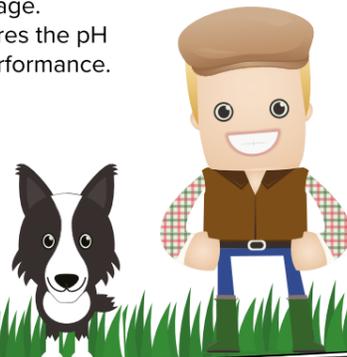
## HOW THEY WORK

**3IN1FEEDERS limit intake.** After 5 minutes of licking out of a slot, stock can no longer stick feed to their tongue becomes it becomes dry. This results in stock consuming small amounts of supplement 10-15 times/day. **Feeding once per day quickly diminishes rumen pH.** This limits the ability to obtain energy from your cheapest feed: pasture and forage.

Feeding supplement little and often ensures the pH remains optimal which leads to higher performance.

## WHAT THEY OFFER YOU

- ✓ Best value volume/investment
- ✓ Feed cheaper grain ration safely
- ✓ No wasted supplement on floor
- ✓ Increase grass conversion
- ✓ Reduce prolapse issues



08000 786030  
[www.3in1feeders.co.uk](http://www.3in1feeders.co.uk)

3IN1  
 FEEDERS

# Take steps to protect flocks against liver fluke this winter

By Lesley Stubbings, SCOPS

**When it comes to liver fluke, deciding whether to treat or not, which products to use and what management actions**

**are needed can be daunting. The level of risk from liver fluke varies from year to year, by region, individual farm, and even down to field level. So how do you navigate the options to find the right approach for your flock?**

The good news is that there is information and advice available that can help. This year SCOPS and COWS have teamed up to pull together all the information available across the UK to help livestock producers and their advisers to assess the risk to their herds and flocks. Combined with clear advice on the tests available and the interpretation of the results, we aim to make decision making easier, as well as more accurate and effective.

## Regional updates

Firstly, there are monthly updates, which are available via the NADIS parasite forecast (<http://www.nadis.org.uk/parasite-forecast.aspx>). For example, in early October, NADIS was predicting:

- Western Scotland and South Wales at 'high risk'
  - Eastern Scotland, North West England, South West England, and North Wales at 'medium risk'
  - Central and Eastern regions of England at 'low risk'
- With access to a wide range of



Farm history	If there is any history of liver fluke on the farm then there is a threat. New risks can also arise if you have made any environmental changes. For example, taking on some rougher or wetter grazing, or areas with drainage problems or ponds, which may pose a new threat.
Snail habitats	Areas on the farm where the intermediate host, the tiny mud snail, can thrive, create a high risk. For example, muddy patches and around water troughs. These snails are key to the life cycle of liver fluke and they can multiply the potential infection up to 500 times. So a small muddy area can represent a significant liver fluke population.
Spring grazing	If snail habitats were grazed by sheep in the first half of the grazing season, the risk that snails have become infected is higher. And so is the risk of large numbers of liver fluke in that area, later in the season.
Summer grazing	If these areas are then grazed by sheep again, from late summer onwards, the sheep will have been exposed to the high level of infection and the high risk will continue throughout the winter.

information sources, we aim to add a more regionalised view to the general forecast. And, so far, the feedback from the regions supports this forecast.

In September cases of acute fluke in sheep were confirmed in Cheshire and positive coproantigen results were also reported in samples taken from lambs in South West Scotland. Parasite Watch farms in South West England and South West Wales also report cases of liver fluke infection.

Watch out for updates during the winter on the SCOPS, NSA and COWS websites. We will also be issuing alerts on social media and to the press.

## Tailored approach

Armed with this information, the next step is to carry out a risk assessment for your flock:

1. Check the fluke forecast for your region and talk to your vet or

## Table 2: Tests to discuss with your vet or adviser

Fluke egg detection	Faecal samples are examined by a lab and if adult fluke are present in the sheep they will detect fluke eggs.
Coproantigen	This is a newer test that can detect fluke infection between two and three weeks earlier than fluke egg detection.
Blood tests	These tests assess liver function, providing an indication that liver fluke may be present. Serology also detects the antibodies that the sheep produces in response to liver fluke infection (positive results two weeks after infection).

2. Make sure you investigate any sudden deaths in sheep. A post mortem is still the most definitive evidence of liver fluke. If you are selling stock to an abattoir then ask them for feedback the condition of livers.
3. Discuss the various tests available (see Table 2) and treatment options with your vet or animal health adviser, including any management actions you can take, such as avoiding the highest risk fields, housing early, and administering quarantine treatments.

Check for updates and get more information on testing and product choices at: [www.scops.org.uk](http://www.scops.org.uk)



Mud snails: the intermediate liver fluke host.

# Tagging lambs from birth can improve flock management

**As a simple but effective management practice, tagging lambs from birth enables producers to build a greater understanding of their flock's performance. The extra precision that gathering real-time data offers allows better management decisions to be made, according to Allflex's Helen Sheppard.**

"Knowing the exact weight of individual animals within the flock is a simple way of reducing guess-work and ensuring lambs and ewes are being managed efficiently and cost-effectively," she explains. "Whether it be for calculating medicinal dosages, monitoring growth rates or evaluating genetics, every detail counts when it comes to ensuring livestock are being produced to the correct weight and quality."

Whether finishing lambs for slaughter or breeding stock for sale, combining electronic identification (EID) technology with a handling system and electronic weigh crate allows producers to record each animal's weight throughout its lifetime – and to potentially pick up health issues at an earlier stage.

"The data captured by weighing lambs from birth and at regular intervals throughout their lifetime means that flock managers can scrutinise each animal's records, identify where

improvements can be made and deliver a more commercially valuable product based on the performance of their individual farm," says Ms Sheppard. "And if your weighing system is compatible with an EID tag reader, collating the relevant data for each individual animal needn't be time-consuming or burdensome."

"Button tags are ideally suited to new born lambs," she says. "Applying these at between 12 and 48 hours after birth enables shepherds and flock managers to easily scrutinise each animal's performance throughout its life to determine if the current management regime is working effectively and to identify where improvements can be made."

With early market lambs, where growth rates are critical, weighing animals from birth and monthly thereafter (or weekly as they approach final finishing weights) allows producers to quickly and accurately understand and assess the value of varying feeding regimes and to make the most

efficient and cost-effective use of the farm's resources.

With later born lambs, regular weighing provides huge benefits in terms of managing grazing and feeding more effectively and achieving consistent finishing weights as required by modern contracts.

"EID tags also provide a faster, more accurate and reliable way of generating and maintaining individual animal records compared to relying on an old-fashioned pen-and-paper system," says Ms Sheppard. "And because it costs the same to tag a lamb at birth as it does to tag an animal prior to slaughter, it makes sense to tag all lambs at, or as near to, birth as possible."

## Improving efficiency

She adds that, depending on the individual farm's current performance indicators, the money saved by reducing inputs, such as anthelmintics and labour, as well as optimising the farm's grazing resources and avoiding contract penalties by ensuring all livestock are sold within specification, will pay for the necessary EID reading equipment and electronic weigh scales in a relatively short time.

According to SRUC, using EID technology in conjunction with an auto-drafting weigh crate can reduce labour requirements by between 30% and 40% when handling sheep. Using EID derived data can also improve net margins by approximately £4 per ewe.

"No matter what the age or target weight of the animals being monitored, regular weighing can also improve other areas of flock management," adds Ms Sheppard. "For example, knowing each animal's weight will ensure vaccines, drenches and pour-on medicines are administered at the correct dosage and will minimise the risk of drug resistance by preventing the over-application of susceptible medicines."

"Closely monitoring the weight gain of offspring can also result in improved breeding decisions by providing a better understanding of which genetic inputs are, or are not, delivering the requisite results. With accurate data to hand, flock managers can then make appropriate alterations to ensure their breeding programme remains on track."



Mini button tags are placed one-third of the way along the ear with the female part of the tag inward, to prevent snagging and improve retention.

ACT NOW  
limited time offer

## Let FarmersGuardian bring you joy, with a special free tractor toy



Subscribe today and choose one of four 1:32 toy tractors by Britains

- Pay as little as £2.60 per issue
- Access to exclusive subscriber benefits
- A perfect gift

FREE GIFT!



To subscribe call **0330 333 0056** and quote the code

# Zoonotic diseases: managing and reducing the risk of infection

By Victoria Fisher, Farm First Veterinary Services, South Wales



**Producers spend a lot of time handling sheep, particularly around lambing time. They also spend a lot of time thinking about all the diseases that can infect ewes and lambs, spread through the flock and, ultimately, damage profits. But how often do sheep producers stop and consider their own health and, particularly, the nasty diseases that sheep can pass on to humans?**

If staff work on the unit or producers run an 'open' farm with public access, steps must be taken to ensure health and safety guidelines are met, including assessing the risk of people contracting zoonotic diseases.

Zoonotic diseases are those that can be passed between animals and humans. They tend to cause mild symptoms, but some can be potentially fatal. And there are several diseases that can be transmitted between sheep and humans without direct contact. These include toxoplasmosis, which is often contracted by ingestion of contaminated cat litter. Table 1 outlines many of the zoonotic sheep diseases and some of the clinical signs the infections can cause. It's important to remember that sheep may look completely healthy and still carry zoonotic disease, such as E coli O157, which can be serious in humans.

## Direct contact

Diseases such as anthrax, brucellosis, giardiasis and louping ill are, thankfully, rare in the UK. The others are seen relatively frequently. But studies have shown that most are declining, although it is likely that many are under-diagnosed, such as orf. There are several ways of catching an infection from a sheep. These include direct contact with an infected animal's fluids, such as faeces, placenta or saliva. This can be by accidental ingestion of faeces through poor hand-washing; bites or scratches; contamination of an open wound or inhalation. Most of the pathogens that cause diarrhoea are spread by inadvertent ingestion of faeces. Infection can also be the result of direct contact, whereby the pathogen has been transmitted on an object such as contaminated clothing or equipment, rather than by direct contact with the animal. Vector-borne is typically when insects, such as ticks or midges, carry the disease and then transmit it when they bite the host.

Table 1: Zoonotic sheep diseases

Disease	Pathogen	Signs in humans	Signs in Sheep
Anthrax	Bacteria	Skin lesions, respiratory disease, death	Sudden death
Brucellosis	Bacteria	Prolonged fever, sweating, arthritis, weight loss, headaches	Abortion
Cryptosporidiosis	Protazoa	Diarrhoea, fever, vomiting, stomach pains	Diarrhoea
E-coli O157	Bacteria	Stomach pain, diarrhoea	Diarrhoea
Giardiasis	Protazoa	Skin lesions	Diarrhoea
Louping ill	Virus	Fever, flu-like symptoms, neurological	Neurological
Orf	Virus	Skin lesions	Skin lesions
Ovine Chlamydosis	Bacteria	Flu-like symptoms, miscarriage	Abortion
Q-fever	Bacteria	Flu-like symptoms, chronic disease, birth defects	Abortion
Toxoplasmosis	Parasite	Flu-like symptoms, abortions, birth defects, ocular disease	Abortion

Anyone can be infected with a zoonotic disease, but not all will succumb to the infection or show symptoms. People who are most at risk of developing a zoonosis are those who have lower immunity. These include young children, elderly people and those suffering from another disease, pregnant women, and people with suppressed immune systems. These groups of people should be particularly careful when in contact with sheep.

One of the most common zoonosis seen in the UK is Cryptosporidiosis, which results in scouring in young lambs and calves and is caused by the parasite *Cryptosporidium parvum*. This is hardy and difficult to kill. People usually contract cryptosporidiosis from handling sick animals, drinking contaminated water, or eating food that has been contaminated. In 2016 there were around 4,000 cases of human cryptosporidiosis. As with animals, this parasite causes diarrhoea, stomach pains and dehydration, but can also induce vomiting in people. Symptoms will normally occur a week after initial infection. There is no specific treatment in humans, most cases will recover with adequate rehydration but some can develop further complications.

Orf is another relatively common zoonotic disease. It is caused by a virus that usually infects an open wound/cut and results in painful, swollen, blistering skin lesions in both humans and sheep. In sheep the lesions are found around the lips and mouth (see Figure 1), but in people they can occur anywhere there is an open wound. Infections usually occur after handling sheep with orf lesions. Orf is dramatically under-diagnosed in people, probably due to producers' self diagnosing without seeing a doctor.

As in sheep there is no specific treatment for orf. The wounds will heal unaided if they are kept clean and do not get a secondary infection, which may require antibiotics. But

to prevent infection, wear gloves when handling/treating affected animals and keep any cuts or abrasions clean and covered with a waterproof dressing. Producers should also be careful when handling the orf vaccine because scratching yourself with it, or getting the fluid into cuts, can cause the disease.

Enzootic abortion – Ovine Chlamydiosis (EAE) – is a bacterial infection of sheep and goats, and is the most commonly diagnosed cause of abortion in these species. And this disease can be transmitted to people by handling infected ewes, particularly around lambing time, or handling still-born lambs and placenta. It can also be transferred on clothing.

## Serious risk

In most humans the infection will cause mild flu-like symptoms, but pregnant women are at risk of developing a serious, even life-threatening condition and are also at risk of suffering a miscarriage. For this reason, it is vital that any pregnant women avoid ewes around lambing time, and that they avoid handling clothing that may be contaminated as well. It is advisable that separate clothes are worn in the house to those worn on the farm. The live sheep abortion vaccine for EAE can also cause human infection, so pregnant



Orf infection.

women should also avoid handling this.

Toxoplasmosis is another common cause of abortion in sheep. Unlike EAE, this is a parasitic infection that is transmitted in contaminated cat faeces. Cats normally pick up the infection from eating infected sheep meat. There are misconceptions that toxoplasma is only a risk to pregnant women. Data from England and Wales, for 2016, showed that of 335 reported cases in humans, only 42 were in pregnant women. Infection during pregnancy runs serious risk of miscarriage or birth defects in the brain or eye of the child. In non-pregnant people, toxoplasma can cause flu-like symptoms (approximately 20% infected) or the parasite can travel to the eye, brain, lungs or heart resulting in symptoms related to the affected organ. There are specific treatments available if toxoplasmosis is a confirmed diagnosis.

So how can producers can protect themselves, staff and anyone else who visit their farm? The most effective way is to wash your hands with soap after handling animals, particularly before eating or drinking. NHS research states that effective hand washing should take 20 seconds (the equivalent of singing the 'Happy Birthday' Song). Hand wipes, gels or sanitisers should not be used as a substitute for soap.

## Avoid touching

Another simple way to limit exposure is to not eat or drink when working with animals. And also ensure that vulnerable people avoid touching animals, particularly animals that are unwell or giving birth.

If producers are concerned that they, or someone who has been on their farm, may have contracted a zoonotic disease then they should contact their GP or call NHS 24 Scotland or England (Dial 111) or NHS Direct Wales (Dial 0845 46 47). Be sure to mention recent contact with animals, as most zoonotic diseases are rare. They can then give you advice on health care and treatments where necessary.

Further information can be found via the National Health Service (NHS), Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

**AG Polytunnels**

9m x 18m  
(30ft x 60ft)  
100 ewes size  
£2350 +VAT

Other sizes available

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

**“Using EiD tags from birth means I can easily scrutinise each animal's records and make more profitable decisions.”**

Jamie Wild, Redhill Farm, Oakham

Tagging early enables you to get a better understanding of your flock by gathering real-time data. This data allows you to build a clear picture of each lamb's performance and can be used to make informed health management, breeding and marketing decisions leading to improved efficiency and profitability.

Contact your local agricultural merchant or call our customer services team on 0845 600 9070

The Allflex UK Group Ltd

COX & RITCHEY FEARING Allflex

# Controlling coccidiosis in lambs

By Dave Bartley and Beth Wells, Moredun  
**Coccidiosis is caused by a single-cell parasite called Eimeria (see Figure 1) and is most often seen in young lambs aged between four and eight weeks, that have been exposed to a high level of oocyst challenge.**



Above: Coccidia sample from sheep.  
 Left: Potentially contaminated feed trough.



some lambs will continue to contaminate the environment with oocysts.

Oral anticoccidials should be administered to lambs just before the peak oocyst challenge is predicted (usually at between four and eight weeks of age). In circumstances where infection pressure is high, a second treatment may be required about three weeks after the first.

Treated lambs should be moved to clean bedding or uncontaminated grazing, such as fields that did not run lambs in the previous season, where possible.

## Preventative approach

A popular preventive measure is to incorporate a coccidiostat (decoquinate) into the creep feed. This requires a veterinary prescription. However, there are disadvantages to this blanket method of control. The success of this treatment depends on each lamb consuming sufficient creep feed, at a young age, to provide adequate protection against challenge. And timing of coccidiostat use is extremely important to ensure that lambs are exposed to low levels of coccidia so they build up natural immunity, but not high challenges that will result in clinical disease. It is advisable to consult your vet before administering medicated feed.

Decoquinate can also be administered as a preventative treatment in feed to ewes for 28 days around the lambing period, to reduce the shedding of coccidial oocysts. The timing of the treatment will vary between management systems, but should be administered when oocyst shedding by ewes is likely to be a hazard to lambs – before, during or after lambing.

## Premium Quality Red Lump Rock Salt



- Imported and graded by us • No waste
- Largelump 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'



Figure 2: Lamb scour with mucus and flecks of blood.

That said, there are disadvantages to blanket treating ewes. Preventative treatment of ewes with an anticoccidial around lambing time can help to reduce contamination of buildings/pastures with oocysts, but may delay the acquisition of natural immunity in young livestock.

And, as some lambs will have become infected with coccidia oocysts that have overwintered on pasture, medication of ewes alone may not prevent coccidiosis occurring in the lambs.

All ewes are also medicated, even though they are clinically unaffected by coccidia.

## Gut damage

Lambs with a severe coccidial infection will invariably become dehydrated and will require supportive rehydration therapy to aid replacement of fluid and electrolytes.

The damage to the gut caused by coccidial infection can persist for some time. So it is important to treat lambs as soon as the disease is confirmed.

It is also worth emphasising that, in some flocks, coccidial infection may occur concurrently with the roundworm *Nematodirus battus* and this will exacerbate the clinical symptoms of disease. Any coccidia control programmes for outdoor lambs need to take *Nematodirus* infection into consideration and lambs may also need to be treated with a suitable anthelmintic where appropriate.

Always consult your vet for a differential diagnosis and for treatment advice.

# STOCKMAX

## PINE SHAVINGS

# BEAT INFECTION WITHOUT ANTIBIOTICS



Dozens of sheep farmers who now use our STOCKMAX pine shavings in their lambing pens tell us that it reduces their losses from infection and their need for antibiotics.



We think this is down to the power of the pine we use to make STOCKMAX. Science has proved that pine really does kill harmful bacteria such as E.Coli, and our

customers confirm that it works in practice.

So before you start lambing this year, please contact us to find out more, and save yourself lambs, time, costs, labour – and antibiotics.



For more information  
 please call us on **01668 213467**  
 or visit **www.stockmaxshavings.com**

Nutritional	Infectious agents	Stress
Dietary change	Parasitic disease ( <i>Nematodirus</i> , <i>Giardia</i> , <i>Cryptosporidium</i> )	Transportation
Plant poisoning	Bacterial disease (e.g. <i>salmonella</i> , <i>E. coli</i> )	Weaning
	Viral disease ( <i>Rotavirus</i> , <i>coronavirus</i> )	Cold, wet weather

## DALLAS KEITH

**The Specialists In Animal Feed Supplements**

**500kg FEED & MINERAL BLOCKS**  
 CAREFREE SUPPLEMENTATION

500kg blocks in bio-degradable boxes delivered shrink wrapped on pallets

- HIGH SPECIFICATION FEED AND MINERAL BLOCKS FULLY WEATHERPROOF
- PROTEIN FROM HI PRO SOYA MEAL, MOLASSES AND FISH OIL FOR ENERGY
- 24 HOUR ACCESS TO SUPPLEMENT FOR SHY FEEDERS
- LABOUR SAVING FEEDING SYSTEM, TRIED AND TESTED
- MADE TO ORDER, SPECIALS NO PROBLEM
- REDUCED WASTE, SAVES MONEY OVER BUCKETS

Dallas Keith Ltd, Bromag Industrial Estate, Burford Road, Witney, Oxon OX29 0SR  
 Telephone: 01993 773061 / www.dallaskeith.co.uk

# Call for careful use of antibiotics

By Sara Gregson, contributor



**Results from research carried out on 207 sheep farms has shown that most producers are using low levels of antibiotics, compared to cross-industry targets for other sectors, such as dairy. But there is wide variation and there is still work to be done**

A new survey carried out by several vets looking at antibiotic usage in sheep has highlighted that on average sheep producers are using 11mg per population correction unit (PCU). This is relatively low compared to the 50mg/



PCU target set for all livestock sectors in the UK.

However, there is no room for complacency. In total, 80% of use occurred in the 39% of flocks where per animal usage was more than 9mg/PCU.

"I work with my sheep customers to review how we use antibiotics and our attitudes towards them," explains sheep vet Emily Gascoigne, from Dorset-based Synergy Farm Health.

"Each time we administer one it is considered an investment. We need to ensure a rapid return to health for the affected animal, but equally consider how we might minimise ongoing use. Vet and producer collaboration is essential for this.

## Discussion group

"We have been actively benchmarking our antibiotic use in our commercial flocks during the past 12 months, and offer specially designed 'Safe Use of Medicines' courses for sheep producers. Flock health planning is also an essential part of building a strategy of low antibiotic dependency," she adds.

In May Miss Gascoigne ran a discussion group meeting with 20 clients, asking them what their perceptions were about their current antibiotic usage on farm. A SWOT

analysis was carried out and discussions held on how to treat the antibiotic 'hotspots' of lameness, abortion and neonatal diseases.

Sheep producer Alex Thorneycroft-Taylor hosted Miss Gascoigne's antibiotic benchmarking meeting at the Sydling Estate, near Dorchester. He is making great strides in reducing the use of neonatal antibiotics by concentrating on hygiene in the lambing shed, particularly in his autumn-lambing flock of Poll Dorset ewes.

"We bed up the lambing pens with fresh straw three times a week and use a human baby-bottle steriliser to clean all the feeding bottles and tubes," he says.

## Colostrum quality

"We also concentrate on making sure that the ewes are in the best condition for lambing, so they can produce large amounts of high quality colostrum. They are fed home-grown hay and a sheep nut, and just before lambing we switch to silage. This ensures that we have plenty of colostrum for the newborn lambs and we don't use oral antibiotic any more."

Alan Derryman, another of Miss Gascoigne's clients, runs 900 New Zealand Romney ewes on his farm in Sidbury, Devon. He lambs outdoors in April and manages the flock on a low-cost, forage-based system.

"I think we have to be careful with antibiotics and only use them when appropriate," he says. "I don't treat every lamb that is born and only use the right product to solve a particular problem. One example was when we had an outbreak of CODD in a batch of ewe lambs. If you don't hit diseases like that hard, you won't get rid of them – so then it is worthwhile to use antibiotics."



## Producer SWOT analysis on antibiotic use

### Strengths of current practice:

- Critically important antibiotics in humans are not routinely used in Synergy Farm Health sheep flocks
- Extensive systems – few periods of intense housing
- Controlled/low levels used with producers working with Synergy Farm Health
- Effective and cost-effective vaccines available for, for example, footrot and chlamydial abortion
- Detailed health monitoring and flock plans already in place for flocks working with the practice

### Weaknesses/vulnerabilities of current practice:

- A lot of sheep movements within the industry – biosecurity can be a challenge
- Indoor lambing can concentrate infectious disease if sheds are overstocked
- Antibiotic resistance seen in relation to joint-ill and watery mouth

### Opportunities for the future:

- Electronic identification to help record repeat offenders for diseases such as lameness and mastitis
- Benchmarking – to spot usage trends
- New vaccines against, for example, CODD, E coli and joint ill
- Novel therapies
- Brexit?
- Ewe nutrition – can this be improved?

### Threats to be aware of:

- Brexit and evolving legislation
- Developing bacterial resistance in the future
- No or slow development of new antibiotics
- New and emerging diseases

# Crowds flock to The Woolly Roadshow 2017

**In March 2016, as a result of their experience with the Wool Ride that was organised by the Campaign for Wool in October 2014, Derbyshire-based woollen mill owners David and Karen Griffiths launched 'The Woolly Roadshow'.**

This 5.5-metre display trailer, towed by a Land Rover, is an educational promotion of British wool, British sheep and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. It incorporates a display of woollen yarn, carded fibres, knitwear, woven items and other products made from wool. There is also an audio video display showing lambing, shearing and wool processing. The Woolly Roadshow is also supported by the National Sheep Association, British Wool Marketing Board (BWMB), Lister Shearing, Burgon & Ball, Ty-Mawr Lime, Woolcool, Solidwool, and Rappa.

## Major demand

David and Karen Griffiths opened their woollen mill – Griffiths' Mill – in 2009. And within 12 months they had established a major demand for their services from smallholders and crafters requiring small batches of fleece processing. By 2015 they were even selling their own range of carded fibres and yarns to customers throughout the UK and overseas, including Australia.

They are extremely passionate about British Wool and wanted to do more to promote it. So, at a meeting in October 2016 with BWMB's Joe Farren and RBST's Tom Beeston, David and Karen put forward the idea of a UK tour to promote British wool for UK Wool Week 2017. "We were fed up with seeing Merino, primarily from the southern hemisphere, being promoted during UK Wool Week," says Karen. "We understand that the Campaign for Wool is promoting all Commonwealth wool, but here in Britain we have more breeds of sheep than anywhere else in the world and we have a wool suitable for every purpose.

"It's about time we made a stand in this country for British sheep producers

and British wool. We need the public to understand what we are producing and its qualities. All the wool on our trailer is British, we have long wools, lustre wools, downs breeds, crosses and primitives. There are lots of different textures for people to feel and colours to see."

After months of planning, The Woolly Roadshow Wool Week Tour – supported by Griffiths' Mill, British Wool, NSA, RBST, SHB Hire and NFU Mutual (Uttoxeter & Burton) – started on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in Castle Square, Caernarfon. "We chose each of the venues for a specific purpose. Caernarfon Castle was built by Edward I with taxes he imposed on the wool merchants. It was also the location for the Investiture of HRH The Prince of Wales in 1969. His Royal Highness is Patron of the Campaign for Wool, RBST, the Badger Face Welsh Mountain Sheep Society, the Lleyn Sheep Society, and the North Country Cheviot Sheep Society," explains David. "We were also supported by local sheep breeders around the country. In Caernarfon, Mike Parry-Jones brought along some of his Llanwenogs for the day."

## Commuter comments

On the Tuesday the venue was Buchanan Street, a pedestrianised area in the middle of Glasgow and the second largest shopping area in Britain. The Woolly Roadshow was joined by RBST Caledonian Support Group members Donna and Dougie, as well as Castlemilk Moorit, Shetland and Hebridean sheep. "It was great to see the morning commuters stop dead in their tracks and smile when they saw the sheep," says Karen. "So many people said 'this has made my day', 'thank you for supporting British farmers', and 'I've never seen a real sheep – I've only seen them on television'."

She adds that dozens of people just stood with their mobile phones taking photos of, and selfies with, the sheep.

During the Hundred Years' War, many weavers relocated from the continent to



The Woolly Roadshow at Caernarfon

East Anglia due to increased taxation on wool from England. So the Wednesday saw the team outside The Forum in Norwich, where they were joined by Dameon Layt with some of his Norfolk Horns.

On Thursday Exeter Cathedral hosted The Woolly Roadshow on Cathedral Green. Historically the city was the centre for the wool trade in the south-west and, at its height, it had at least three purpose-built cloth markets. The first market opened in 1538 by Henry Hamlyn, the Mayor who established a weekly market for fleece, yarn and kersey (a type of coarse cloth).

## Busiest day

In a successful bid to beat London traffic, The Woolly Roadshow rolled into Green Park, London, at 5.00am on the Friday morning. The team was joined by Tom Davis, from Mudchute Park Farm, with Oxford Down and Southdown sheep. "This was by far our busiest day," says Karen. "The number and variety of people who came to talk to us was amazing and included commuters, local residents, students, and tourists from the UK and around the world."

On the Saturday and Sunday the team were at the Bakewell Wool Gathering, at the Agricultural Business Centre. "This show is very well attended and attracts wool enthusiasts from across the country. We were greeted by many old friends and made lots of new ones. They were amazed at the area we had visited in a week," says David.

"Overall, we had a lot of interest throughout the tour," adds Karen. "We've had fantastic support from many individuals, organisations and companies. All believe in British wool, British sheep producers, and British manufacturing. We've also learned a few lessons for next time."

The Woolly Roadshow attends numerous events around the UK throughout the year and the schedule for next year is already being planned. One event already confirmed is the third British Wool Fashion Show at the Royal Three Counties Show. This runs from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2018. This event brings together clothing made in Britain by skilled crafters and professionals from 100% British grown and processed wool. For further details on the British Wool Fashion Show, or to discuss other events or sponsorship, please contact David on 07970 820815 or email david@griffithsfarming.com

# British Wool takes its natural-fibre story to consumers

British Wool has been active during the past few months promoting the benefits of using wool in both interior design and fashion to a wide range of consumers.



"While wool producers are aware of the huge versatility wool has in a range of situations, many consumers are largely unaware of what can be done with wool," says British Wool's Head of Marketing Graham Clark.

"Attendance at key consumer events, such as Grand Designs held in October, are central to this promotion that saw British Wool working with a number of leading manufacturers.



This was an excellent opportunity to raise awareness on the benefits of British wool and to work collaboratively with manufacturers and retailers.

"It was also an invaluable way of collating market intelligence. The event was incredibly busy and there was considerable interest in our stand. It was a great way to start educating consumers on the many benefits of buying British wool-based products," adds Mr Clark.

A focus on retail promotion has seen British Wool feature North Yorkshire-based producer and contract shearer Richard Wilson in a range of point-of-sale promotional materials.

Featuring a range of key marketing messages, the promotion focuses on the adaptability and hard-wearing qualities of wool as a flooring material.

"The objective is to catch the eye of consumers and build a story around the theme on the benefits of wool. We want consumers to look for our crook-mark symbol and know that they are buying an



Above: The British Wool stand at Grand Designs 2017. Left: Richard Wilson.

authentic, natural British product."

Featured producer Richard Wilson is the fourth generation of his family to farm at Beckwithshaw, near Harrogate, where runs a 1,300-strong flock of Dalesbred ewes. He also shears 20,000 sheep each year, with fellow shearer Dion Jones.

Mr Wilson says that the opportunity to work with British Wool to help promote the values of wool is an exciting opportunity. "Wool is one of the most versatile natural products around. And I'm proud to be producing it. Many people aren't aware of how many benefits there are in choosing a wool product and I'm honoured to be working with British Wool to explain this to consumers.

The new marketing materials, which are available to retailers, include full store feature displays, show cards, banners and labels. And they all feature five key messages about British wool.

"Wool is fire resistant, hard wearing, easy care, sustainable and hypoallergenic. These make wool an

ideal choice for flooring material. British wool is also highly versatile and can be used for other interior items, such as upholstery," says Mr Clark.

He adds that a new short film has recently been launched that takes viewers through the fascinating story of British wool, from the sheep to the point of delivery.

"Focusing on harvesting the wool, the film shows viewers the actual process of on-farm flock management, sheep shearing and the fleece collection process. It also looks at the grading of the wool at a depot – a vital process for British Wool, which has the most varied wool clip in the world.

"Finally, we see the wool being sold at the fully computerised auction, in Bradford, which sells 30 million kilograms of wool every year."

This three-minute film shows the journey of wool and the many people involved in harvesting the fibre. But it also highlights the important work of British Wool in supporting producers to maximise the value of their wool.



Richard Wilson is the face of British sheep producers in the new short film – 'The British Wool Story'.



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

**British Berrichon**  
The HARDY, EASY LAMBING, EASY CARE sheep  
Contact Sue Powell for information  
01989 770071 / 07974 360807  
Email aileen@btconnect.com  
www.berrichonsociety.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

**DORSET DOWN**  
FAST FINISHING LAMBS OFF GRASS  
Dorset Down Sheep Breeders' Association  
Havett Farm, Dotwells, Liskeard, PL14 6HB  
01579 320273 secretary@dorsetdownsheep.org.uk  
www.dorsetdownsheep.org.uk

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

**Cambridge**  
Now providing genotyped rams of known prolificacy potential  
Details from Alun Davies  
Cambridge Sheep Society Secretary  
01513 275699  
alundavies392@btinternet.com  
www.cambridge-sheep.org.uk

**CHAROLLAIS**  
A Chop Ahead of the Rest  
www.charollaisheep.com  
01953 603335  
office@charollaisheep.com

**Southdown**  
Great on ewe lambs  
Details from the secretary  
Mrs Gail Sprake  
01986 782251  
secretary@southdownsheep.com  
www.southdownsheepsociety.co.uk  
The breed that makes ends meet

Be the smarter investor, use a Border Leicester  
See what it can do for your flock!  
It's as easy as ABC...  
Added conformation  
Built to last  
Cross it with any breed  
Contact: Katie Kelley, Secretary 01556 660155. 07920 855440  
www.borderleicesters.co.uk

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

**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

**MANX LOAGHTAN**  
Low input producer of gourmet quality lamb and mutton  
Fine, naturally coloured wool  
Ideal conservation grazer  
Breed Secretary, Kim Everett, 01580 852691  
www.manxloaghtansheep.org

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

**EXLANA**  
Less work and more profit  
The fully performance recorded woolshedding breed, selected for resistance to worms.  
Tel 01985 845063 / 01647 252549  
www.sig.uk.com

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

**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

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

**NEMSA: North of England Mule Sheep Association**  
SIMPLY THE BEST!  
The success of the North of England Mule has assured its place through the country's leading commercial flocks. Why have mutton when you can lamb?  
www.nemsa.co.uk  
Details from Marion Hope  
01387 371777  
nemsa@btinternet.com

**suffolksheep.org**  
The leading domestic Terminal Sire Breed  
enquiries@suffolksheep.org  
028 2563 2342

**SHROPSHIRE SHEEP**  
The versatile, tree-friendly breed  
Contact Claire Jakeman  
07766 238346

**NORTH COUNTRY CHEVIOT**  
The ideal crossing sire for all hill ewes  
The ideal ewe for producing mules and half-breds  
Profit from Quality Store Lambs  
Visit www.nc-cheviot.co.uk  
Contact 07834817710 or secretary@nc-cheviot.co.uk

**BRITISH ROUGE SHEEP**  
The easy lambing terminal sire producing quick growing lambs with excellent meat to bone ratio  
Secretary: Patricia Imlah  
secretary@rouge-society.co.uk  
01651 862920  
07803 897419  
www.rouge-society.co.uk

**EASY CARE**  
LOW MAINTENANCE  
NO SHEARING  
EXCELLENT MOTHERS  
HARDY  
Take the stress out of shepherding  
www.easycareheep.com  
info@easycareheep.com

**NSA 2018 Events**  
NSA Eastern Region Winter Fair 9th Feb, Melton Mowbray Market  
NSA Scot Sheep 30th May, Kings Arms Farm, Ballantrae,  
NSA Sheep Event 18th July, Three Counties Show Ground  
NSA South Sheep 8th Sept, South of England Show Ground  
More details at  
www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events

**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

**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 07950 256304 or info@vendeen.co.uk

**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

**WELSH MOUNTAIN SHEEP SOCIETY PEDIGREE SECTION**  
Established 1905  
Tel: 01745 730949  
secretary@welshmountain-sheepsociety.com  
www.welshmountain-sheepsociety.com

# Successful NSA event inspires the next generation

More than 100 young people with an interest in the sheep industry joined NSA for its annual Next Generation event in November. Held this year at Welshpool Livestock Market, the excellent location attracted a strong crowd from both sides of the border and it was fantastic to see individuals, as well as agricultural colleges, turn out to enjoy what the day had to offer.

Supporting the sheep industry's next generation is a major area of work for NSA, which involves a huge range of activities including training and scholarship signposting, Next Generation Shepherd competitions, job and work experience advertising, as well as the NSA Next Generation Ambassador group.

With the aim to attract everyone with a passion for sheep farming – from

new entrants looking to get a foot in the door, through to those wanting to expand an enterprise or take on more responsibility in a long-established business – the day provided an ideal platform for information sharing.

## Workshops

A series of interactive workshops and sessions made up the bulk of the day, with attendees choosing to attend four out of seven on offer during the afternoon. These followed a series of introductory talks from young sheep producers, each working within a different farming set-up, as well as Powys-based sheep producer, Rhidian Glyn, welcomed the crowd by sharing his experiences of building his enterprise and recently securing an FBT.

## Richard Taylor, Wiltshire

### Building your own sheep enterprise

Building a sheep enterprise from scratch is no small task, but it's one that Richard Taylor has embraced since establishing his brand, Lanhill Lamb. Starting with less than an acre of land and eight lambs, he has built his flock up to more than 70 breeding ewes and counts lamb boxes, local pubs and restaurants, farmers



markets and his own spit roast service among his outlets. "I run my entire flock by offering conservation grazing and grassland management to a number of clients, so I don't pay a penny for grazing. It's constantly challenging, but so rewarding when I look back to see how far my flock has developed during the past few years," he says.

## Caryl Hughes, Wrexham

### Taking on more responsibility on the family farm

The road to becoming a partner alongside her parents in the family's sheep and beef enterprise, based in Llangollen near Wrexham, has seen Caryl Hughes grasp many opportunities along the way. She spent several years working away from home in the local area, as well as travelling to New Zealand and managing a 243-hectare (600-acre) Snowdonia hill farm for 12 months with the National Trust and Wales YFC in 2013/14 (as part of the Llyndy Isaf Scholarship Scheme). "Don't feel forced to head straight home if it isn't the right decision for you," says Caryl. "I'm at a point now where I've got the experience to take home, and I'm enjoying working alongside my parents. I recommend that everyone should take the opportunities given to you before feeling forced to make any decisions."



Four young producers took to the stage to welcome attendees, each having taken a different path into sheep farming.

## Matt Haydon, Staffordshire

**Working as an employed shepherd**  
The opportunity, three years ago, to take on a shepherd's role at JCB farms, producing lamb for the Daylesford Organic brand, is one that Matt Haydon says he could not turn down. With a flock comprising 2,400 Lleyn and Lleyn cross ewes, 800 Gimmer lambs and 240 performance-recorded Lleyn ewes,

Matt says it is a unique role. "Working alongside all other sectors can present its staffing challenges, so you've got to be able to communicate as a team," he says. "We've got control of the whole supply chain here, and are constantly faced with the challenge of improving efficiencies. And this is what we are striving to do."



**Think you have what it takes to be a 2018 Next Generation Ambassador?**  
Held as part of the NSA Next Generation project, the Next Generation Event also saw applications open – for a one-month period – for the 2018 NSA Next Generation Ambassador group. The group is made up of 12 individuals from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Successful applicants will be selected to take part in a mixture of five technical and personal development sessions throughout the year. Find details of delivery sessions in previous years and an online application at [www.nsanextgeneration.org.uk](http://www.nsanextgeneration.org.uk).



## Lisa Adams, Suffolk

**Working as a self-employed shepherd with your own flock**  
Recognising the challenges that sheep farming posed in the area she grew up in, Lisa Adams moved to Suffolk, in January 2013, and took on a full-time shepherding job. She says: "It's always a balancing act to manage my own flock while being employed elsewhere. I'm very aware of



bio-security risks and, at times, my flock has to come second. But it does give me the chance to experience working

on much larger set-ups than I would be doing on my own. "Moving to a new area was daunting, but you have to get out and put yourself out there. Just knocking on doors and asking for grass-keep is a great way to meet the neighbours."





# MAINTAIN CONDITION DURING PREGNANCY



## EXTRA HIGH ENERGY

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



TYPICAL DAILY COSTS  
**3-5p PER EWE**



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

Follow Crystalyx UK

