



SCOTLAND

WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY

UPDATE FROM SCOTLAND

By Sybil Macpherson, NSA Scottish Region Chairman



Welcome to a snapshot of some of what's been happening in Scotland recently. As you will see, we have had a busy six months with the organising of NSA Scot Sheep, the Royal Highland Show, the introduction of our two NSA Next Generation Ambassadors, lamb promotion and numerous meetings across the country concerning CAP.

Following an exceptionally wet but relatively mild winter, came to everyone's relief, an early spring and (apart from 4th June!) an almost ideal summer. Recent weeks have seen soaring temperatures and it looks as if the snow drift on our highest hill at home may have melted before the end of July. However, the arrival of a pair of nesting sea eagles and a marked increase in the devastating condition plochteachd has impacted greatly on our lamb crop here.

Throughout Scotland lambs are finishing earlier this year and it is disappointing to see that some of the major supermarkets are choosing to promote lamb from the southern hemisphere rather

than supporting our excellent home produced lamb. NSA held a most encouraging lamb tasting at the Royal Highland Show and, along with QMS and NFUS, will be holding a promotion of Scottish Lamb across the whole of Scotland on the 23rd and 24th August.

CAP reform

Meetings concerning CAP meant many miles and much time was spent consulting with producers and Government officials in an effort to influence a fair and deliverable outcome. Scotland's unique and diverse make-up of land types, climatic conditions and farming enterprises meant this was challenging to say the least. The Scottish Government eventually decided to make use of a voluntary coupled scheme for sheep on farms that are reliant on the poorest of rough grazing for their business, recognising the likelihood of increased land abandonment and the importance of grazing livestock for environmental, economic and social benefits.

May I take this opportunity to thank most sincerely all who have given their valued and unstinting support, encouragement and time – it is greatly appreciated. I wish you all a prosperous and successful season.

NEW INDUSTRY INITIATIVE

By George Milne, NSA Scottish Region Development Officer

Television presenter Cat Cubie joined myself and other representatives from the Scottish sheep industry at the Royal Highland to unveil an exciting new Scotch Lamb PGI initiative.

This NSA Scottish Region, QMS and NFU Scotland initiative will see an unprecedented, united PR push behind Scotch Lamb and, while specific details are being kept under wraps, I can tell you that wide-scale Scotch Lamb sampling activity by farmers at supermarkets around Scotland will form a major part of it. This will take place over one special weekend celebrating Scotch Lamb, dovetailing with QMS's major marketing campaign and building on the success of 'Wham Bam Thank You Lamb', which communicates how simple it is to cook quick, tasty mid-week dishes with Scotch Lamb.

We are looking forward to working closely with QMS and NFU Scotland on this initiative and are delighted with the response achieved from farmers around the country who are keen to get involved. Every sheep farmer in Scotland can be a fantastic brand ambassador for Scotch Lamb and, by working together, we hope to drive home the message about the quality of our natural, grass-fed product, underpinned by the industry's quality assurance schemes.

BLACKFACE SHEEP BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION

SALE DATES 2014

EWE LAMBS	GIMMERS	OCTOBER cont	WETHER	SEPTEMBER cont
AUGUST	AND EWES	1 Longtown	LAMBS	13 Dalmally show
29 Stirling (Cal)	AUGUST	1 Thainstone	AUGUST	16 Oban
29 Newcastleton	29 New-castleton	2 Hexham	16 Dalmally	17 Longtown show
SEPTEMBER	9 Fort William	9 Fort William	27 Stirling (UA) Weekly	19 Dingwall Show
1 Stirling (UA)	15 Lanark	15 Lanark	2 Dingwall	26 Fort William
1 Castle Douglas	10 Dingwall	10 Dingwall	SEPTEMBER	27 Forfar Show
4 Ayr	16 Huntly	10 Dumfries	1 Stirling (Cal) weekly	OCTOBER
5 Newton Stewart	17 Castle Douglas	14 Longtown	2 Oban - Show	1 Lanark show
5 Hexham	18 Ayr	23 St Boswells	4 Dingwall	7 Longtown
10 Lanark	19 Newton Stewart	24 Hexham	9 Longtown weekly	9 Fort William
13 Dumfries	23 Oban	27 Fort William	8 Stirling (Cal) Show	14 Longtown
16 Huntly	25 Ayr	RAMS	10 Stirling (UA) Show	21 Longtown Show
16 Oban	26 Fort William	2 Newton Stewart		23 St Boswells Show
19 Hexham	19 Newton Stewart	4 Stirling (UA)		
22 Stirling (UA)	23 Oban	6 Ballymena		
27 Dalmally	26 Ayr	10 Dingwall		
23 Oban	27 Fort William	11 Dalmally		
OCTOBER	27 Dalmally	13 Hexham		
1 Lanark	27 Dumfries	13 Castle Douglas		
1 Longtown	27 Loughash	15 Oban		
1 Thainstone	27 Farm Sale	16 Lanark - Shearlings		
2 Hexham	27 Forfar	17 Lanark - Lambs		
6 Stirling (UA)	30 Lanark - uncrossed	20 Portree		
10 Dingwall	OCTOBER	24 Stirling (UA)		
14 Longtown	1 Lanark - Crossed	NOVEMBER		
23 St Boswells		6 Lanark		
		7 Fort William		

The Association is supported by Honda, Chancell, NFU, Watson Seeds, 3R Energy and Border Toyota

For further information on the breed contact Aileen McFadzean Tel: 07768 820405 aileen@scottish-blackface.co.uk



NSA SCOTTISH REGION SUMMER ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHT SHEEP FARMING AT ITS VERY BEST

Incessant rain throughout the day failed to dampen enthusiasm at NSA Scot Sheep 2014, with the 200 trade and sheep breed society stands reported brisk business as visitors headed undercover to get away from the relentless downpour.

The scene was set by the Duke of Montrose, NSA President, who officially opened the event by highlighting the many challenges all sectors of the agricultural industry will have to face in the future, including sheep producers.

"We have less than 20 years to deliver 40% more food, 30% more fresh water and 50% more energy to meet the demands of a rising world population, the rapid development of emerging economies and shortages of land, water and energy," he said. "Agriculture, including the sheep industry, is going to have to grasp every innovation and opportunity on offer."

Sheep sector services

The NSA Silver Salver for services to the Scottish sheep industry was presented by Richard Lochhead, Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, to Dave Turner, former head of agriculture at Oatridge College (now part of SRUC) for his tremendous support of young people, including organising NSA Young Shepherd of the Year and shearing competitions.

The horrendous weather meant the farm tour by tractor and trailer had to be abandoned, as well as the inter-region sheepdog trial, prize money for which will be presented at the Scottish National Sheepdog Trials.

David Leggat of United Auctions, who chaired the event organising committee,

NSA SCOT SHEEP FACT FILE

Venue: Quixwood Farm, Duns, Berwickshire.

Date: Wednesday 4th June.

Attendance: Estimated 6,500 people.

Young Shepherd of the Year: Euan Orr.

Sheep shearing: East Central (Calum Shaw and Grant Lundie).

Stockjudging: Fiona Donald (open), Jennifer McCreath (under 27) and Philip Anderson (under 19).

Trade stands: Rough Fell Sheep Breeders Association (breed societies), Carrs Billington (indoor) and Glendale Engineering (outdoor).

paid warm tribute to the committee and all those who helped and acted as stewards on the day, as well as trade exhibitors, breed societies and sponsors, particularly main sponsor Bank of Scotland.

He says: "Cancelling the farm tour was extremely disappointing for our host farmers, John and Iain Macfarlane, who put in a huge amount of time and effort into arranging the day, and also for those attending. It's sad that so many visitors were unable to see for themselves the tremendous job the Macfarlane's do in producing top quality commercial lambs that hit the market at the top spec, but at least some people were able to attend an open day a couple of weeks later to view the flock of 1,800 sheep and the suckler herd of 750 cows."

The farm walk saw much better weather and a crowd of 80 visitors, as George Milne, NSA Scottish Regional Development Officer, reports: "We enjoyed an excellent farm tour, where we saw the full sheep enterprise and also three groups of suckler cows with calves at foot. We also saw a range of grass plots planted and maintained by Watson Seeds and explained by Johnny Watson on the day, and SRUC were present to talk to us about the importance of soil structure in achieving a good grass sward."

Highland highlights

Not content with organising two top-notch events for sheep farmers, NSA Scottish Region also turned their attention to educating and entertaining the public at the Royal Highland Show in mid-June. The remarkable qualities of sheep and the diverse range of products that can be made with their wool were showcased, and the practical elements of sheep farming were brought together with the high-end fashion world. Scotch Lamb tastings were also on offer to the thousands of visitors passing through the marquee. Sheep breed societies and pens of top quality stock were displayed side-by-side with beautiful wool-inspired clothes and products for the home. Other attractions included spinning, weaving and upholstery demonstrations, as well as

FARM WALK



Grassland information was provided by Watson Seeds on the farm walk.



The Macfarlanes sheep showed themselves off in the better weather.

an array of beautiful fleeces that had been judged on their quality and versatility.

Next Generation

As part of its commitment to the next generation of sheep farmers, NSA Scottish Region staged a lamb dressing competition in conjunction with the RHASS on Sunday afternoon, where 10 to 26-year-olds competed in two classes to show their skills at presenting a sheep for a show or sale. Euan Orr of Tarbrax, West Calder, 'won the double' by adding the senior dressing title to his Scot Sheep Young Shepherd award, while the junior dressing title went to David Moir of Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire.

ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW



Models showed off the latest in wool-based fashion.



Dave Turner receives his award from Richard Lochhead.



George Milne encourages visitors to enjoy Scotch Lamb.



Persistent rain did not deter the crowds.



NSA Next Generation Ambassadors Andrew Prentice and Jennifer Craig meet Richard Lochhead.

SCOT SHEEP



The Duke of Montrose opens the event.



Euan Orr, NSA Scot Sheep Young Shepherd of the Year Champion and NSA RHS lamb dressing winner.

SCOTTISH CAP DETAIL GETTING CLEARER

By George Milne, NSA Scottish Region Development Officer

Of all the CAP stakeholder meetings I have attended about CAP, the most recent one finally made it feel like we were reaching a conclusion about how the policy will be implemented in Scotland.

Not everyone will like the details of the package but at least now we know how our farms will be affected and take action where we can to protect our businesses. I think each and every livestock farmer in Scotland needs to consider that it looks increasingly unlikely that payments will reach bank accounts in December 2015 on time. The EU allows a payment window from December through until June so take this into account when drawing up cash flow forecasts.

Meanwhile, a crucial date the Scottish Government has already dealt with is the 1st August deadline for all EU member states to inform the Commission of some major CAP decisions. For Scotland it looks likely that these will have included:-

- A three-region model for area payments

– region 1 at €220, region 2 at €35 and region 3 at €10.

- A transition period from 2015-2019 to move from historical to area-based payments.
- A cap of €400,000 on payments to individual businesses.
- Basing the initial value of payment entitlements on the 2014 claim year.
- Adding sporting estates to the negative list (i.e. inactive farmers) unless they can prove they can meet three defining criteria to show they are actively involved in agricultural activities.
- Providing three Voluntary Coupled Support schemes – a mainland beef scheme of €100/head, an island beef scheme of €160/ and an upland sheep scheme (only on offer in region 3) of €100/ewe hogg – to be revisited in 2016 if required.

Roughly speaking, this coupled support for upland sheep farms equates to €25 per



The CAP package was a major talking point in the seminar area at NSA Scotland. Sheep earlier in the summer.

ewe (assuming one ewe hogg produced from four breeding ewes). There is still some detail about greening to be firmed up, but this does not require to be submitted to the Commission until 1st October and 15th December. The so-called Scottish clause (which would see a minimum stocking density used to trigger activity in order to receive an area based payment) will require to be submitted to the Commission by the 31st January 2015.

SURVEILLANCE FARM A KEY PART OF SCOTTISH FLUKE ACTION GROUP

It is just over 12 months since the first tests were carried out on the Scottish Fluke Action Group's surveillance farm to help give vets and farmers more case study information on liver fluke.

The surveillance monitor farm is run by George Milne, NSA Scotland Regional Development Officer, near St. Andrews on the east coast of Scotland. This is not a part of the world where fluke would be expected to cause major losses, but in the winter of 2012/13 that is exactly what happened.

He has been regularly testing sheep on the farm since July 2013 to provide a snapshot of what is happening on his farm, in a project funded by the Scottish Government and Novartis Animal Health and supported by Moredun Research Institute, Scottish Rural College, University of Edinburgh, Parkside Vets and NSA.

"Although fluke numbers have luckily decreased from the dreadful winter of 2012/13, the disease is still a problem

and needs attention at all times of the year if good control is to be achieved now and in the coming years," says George.

At the moment the group is monitoring this year's infection so it can build a control plan for the autumn and winter. This year's lambs are ideal to check levels of infection, as they have not encountered fluke before and a sample blood test of 12 animals will see if they have been exposed to fluke since they started grazing. This time last year the lambs were infected but this year the levels of infection are much lower. This does not mean fluke will not be an issue this autumn and winter, but it may start at a different time. Dung samples are also being tested from a group of sentinel animals to see how the level of fluke increases. This will aid decisions about when to treat and when/if to graze animals on lower risk pastures.



The Scottish Fluke Action Group surveillance farm was established in April 2013 with Sheila Voas, Scottish Chief Veterinary Officer.

George adds: "Every farm is different, as is the fluke challenge every year, so it is important to speak to your vet or prescriber to discuss a farm specific monitoring and control programme." Watch for more updates from George's farm at www.nationalsheep.org.uk.