



National Sheep Association

Activities report to NSA Board May 2018

*This report refers to main activities since the January 2018 meeting.
Activities are presented under a set of common headings*

Tech and policy

NSA UK P&T Committee

The UK P&T committee met in Birmingham on 7th March for their 1st meeting of 2018. The meeting proper was preceded by a presentation and discussion from Aglive, an Australian company running livestock traceability systems who are planning to submit a tender for the Defra LIP. The purpose was to allow us to see what their system can do and to learn more about the UK sheep industry. Eddie Eastham (Chair of Northern region) was unanimously elected as UK P&T Chair. The meeting prioritised our Brexit positions relating to the future of farm support and also discussed the new Ag Bill command paper. Our position on the future of farm, support has now been discussed at UK P&T, Vice Presidents and several NSA regions. In addition it has been tested with Defra and WG. In addition the P&T committee discussed our research activities, the attraction of forestry as an option in comparison to sheep farming, and then a number of issues including carcass splitting/Lynx/Red Tractor Assurance/ Live exports/ sheep scab and dip disposal/Foot and Mouth national exercise/ Bluetongue/ and price reporting.

Brexit

A highly significant amount of time continues to be spent on Brexit related issues, attending meetings called by others, communicating with the press, and finalising and communicating NSA positions. It is sometimes difficult to be clear about the effectiveness of time spent but there is clearly a danger of debates going on without our input – our view either doesn't get accounted for, or we end up being out of the loop and left out further in future. The UK Livestock Brexit Group continues to meet monthly (26th Jan, 23rd Feb, 19th March and 20th April 2018) and is a really effective group that has been formally recognised by Defra and the devolved nations. NSA is a founding member of this group and also takes and prepares notes to support its operation. The group is proving particularly useful at sharing views and information and is now supported by Defra staff, AHDB staff, HCC staff, and has recently had a rep from Scottish Government and Welsh Govt confirmed to attend. In late April the group has a specific consultation meeting with Defra on the Ag Bill command paper.

We are at a fairly advanced stage of our NSA response to the Ag Bill Command paper and have requested feedback from the regions. Scotland region and NSA Cymru have both held specific meetings discussing the consultation and in addition to UK P&T we have had detailed discussions with NSA Vice Presidents. NSA officers will have attended at least 3 of the Defra consultation meetings (Northern, South West, and London).

Alongside the Ag Bill consultation we have developed our thinking for the future of farm support, having discussed this through various NSA groups as well as Defra and Welsh Govt. We appear to be



Chief Executive: Phil Stocker
A company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registration No 37818.
Registered charity in England and Wales (249255) and in Scotland (SC042853).



on a good track, my one concern being around the detail of the development of an initial farm plan. A set of slides outlining this position is available on request.

Connecting closely with the command paper, in April Defra released a call for evidence to inform decisions on live exports and welfare in transport – we are working on a response and Hamish Waugh, as someone with experience in this field is providing some information and views.

NSA is also part of the cross sector NFU chaired Brexit group. The next meeting is in Northern Ireland and will be attended by Edward Adamson and George Milne.

NSA is a member of 2 Defra farming round tables relating to Brexit, and is communicating closely with administrations in all devolved nations where appropriate. In Wales we are part of the evidence gathering and scenario setting Brexit group, and the land management group.

NSA Brexit positions generally appear to be well accepted and are helping NSA be seen as authoritative and respected.

NSA has become part of a new APPG on farming and Brexit, hosted and chaired by Julian Sturdy MP. This group has met once so far with George Eustice in attendance.

On the 25th April NSA gave evidence to the EFRA select committee on the subject of Brexit, expected changes in farm support, and the impact on farm businesses.

Trip to New Zealand. It was last year when NSA accepted an invitation to join a red meat industry visit to New Zealand this March. At the time we nominated Thomas Carrick to attend, as an NSA regional office holder and NSA Next Generation Ambassador. It was a huge commitment for Thomas with the trip being so close to lambing time and, when the family farm was hit particularly badly by the bad weather, he took the difficult decision to pull out. Joanne filled in at the last minute and found the visit very useful. She reports that, while the New Zealanders were keen to talk about future trade relationships, the UK delegation made it clear they were unable to have that discussion at this point in time. The trip therefore yielded the most benefits in the time spent with the UK delegation, seeing what the UK could learn from NZ post-Brexit, and seeing the current situation of the NZ sheep sector. [More information can be found online.](#)

TSE controls

In February the EU Commission, supported by Defra on behalf of the UK, voted in favour of removing tonsils, spleen, and ileum from the list of SRM, and allowing individual member states to determine the method of ageing 12 month old sheep for splitting. This will now allow us to progress with plans to change from tooth eruption to a calendar date. The date previously agreed by Defra and FSA is the 31st May although there is now a challenge from LAA and AIMS that this date is too soon. A fall back situation could be that we stick with the 31st May date but allow tothing to take place after this date. This would alleviate workloads involved with tothing sheep before the end of May but would allow younger sheep after the end of May (without teeth erupted) not to have to be split. It is reasonable to expect implementation in 2019 which will be after our formal exit from the EU.

Sheep and LFAs

Our Hill and Upland report continues to be used where at all possible to make the case for the importance of upland sheep farming. This case seems to be being increasingly accepted and indeed cited by our Sec of State as an example of where funding is needed and justified. It takes us into the subject of what type of sheep farming really delivers good environmental outcomes. It seems to be widely accepted amongst upland sheep farmers and others that it is traditional sheep farming that is most appropriate, using hill breeds, extensive grazing, and connected with the stratified system. Our work on heritage breeds is intended to support this view, creating a market demand for the types of breeds associated.

The Black Mountains Land Use Partnership, chaired by Phil Stocker, is starting to give us real value and a close and practical connection with the development of upland sheep farming and land management. NSA is not a partner but our involvement is close and beneficial for both parties.

While not relating to uplands alone the subject of trees and sheep has recently been debated and appears to reaffirm our existing position of there, being plenty of opportunity to integrate trees into farmed landscapes in the form of shelter belts, small areas of indigenous plantings, and many related public benefits. We can be proactively in favour of this type of approach whereas large scale block softwood plantations at the other end of the spectrum damage sheep farming, cause significant environmental damage, and bring little to local communities and economies. We are planning to update our sheep and trees guide in partnership with the Woodland Trust during the Spring and aiming to launch at Sheep 2018. Within the BMLUP SMS project all the project strands are underway; some 150 ha of bracken control (of various approaches); peatland restoration and management, the development of a payment for ecosystem services portfolio for carbon storage in peatlands; and visitor management and skill development in the area (including the appointment of 2 rangers to help to inform/control vermin/ control unsociable behaviour such as out of control dogs, off roading, and littering. The SMS is as much about learning as about doing (although doing is important to the partners) and there is extensive monitoring and evaluation being done. This work will inform future policy decisions in Wales and beyond.

Sheep and arable

Our work in producing the report 'The role of sheep in lowland rotational arable farming' still proves timely, in line with many comments being made by Ministers and farming commentators, and has also led to a small number of research/development opportunities. On-going 2-year research project in collaboration with Brown & Co., AHDB, Organic Research Centre (ORC) and Frontier Agriculture Ltd., investigating the benefits of sheep grazing within arable rotations for both the sheep and the arable farmers. Protocols have been established and the trial is set to begin June/July this year. This project will have our involvement and will be funded through iSAGE (innovation for sustainable sheep and goat production in Europe) research project with the results contributing as an innovative case study (WP4). Linking in to this, we have also been approached by Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) after the last SARIC meeting to collaborate in similar on farm trials to those described above. A decision on funding via SARIC is imminent.

Nicola attended the launch of a 'Grass and Herbal Leys Network', funded by ADAS in partnership with AHDB. The event was attended by a mixture of arable and livestock farmers, as well as researchers and industry bodies. The aim of the network is to improve communication between farmers as well as amongst farmers and researchers, with the end goal of allowing equal opportunities to adopt new practices. The network will be going live this year to highlight practices that could enhance sustainability in the future.

Since the last Board meeting NSA have become involved in the SEEGSLIP project - 'Sustainable economic and environmental grazing systems: learning from innovative practitioners' project. This 4-year project is funded by BBRSC, NES and ESRC, as part of a Global Food Security funding. The project aims to 'evaluate the agronomic and social impacts of livestock production systems in which ruminant animals are raised wholly on grazed and conserved pasture and forage (the Pasture for Life (Pfl) certified approach), and its potential as the basis of a sustainable UK wide system. The research will primarily investigate optimising the resilience of agricultural systems and landscapes whilst enhancing productivity and sustainability. It will also touch on how this relates to consumer discrimination, food habits and choice. NSA are a named collaborator on this project, acting as an industry expert as well as assisting with knowledge transfer.

There are a number of research opportunities stemming from active partnerships with Rothamstead Institute.

1. Nicola attended a 2 day 'Soil Quality and Health' workshop in February. The workshop gathered scientists from environmental, livestock and arable backgrounds to debate what soil characteristics / measurements could be used as a reliable measure for their end goals, which differed depending on background. After a 2 challenging days, the researchers at Rothamstead aim to use the data collected and networks created to create a Soil Quality Bayesian Belief Network, which should help farmers, researchers and even policy makers, make the right decisions at soil level for the desired output.

2. In addition, Rothamstead have approached us for our support with a research proposal known as EXPERINET - EXPERIMENTAL NETWORK for ecosystem and biodiversity research. EXPERINET aims to strengthen instrumented experimental installations as well as analytical/modelling platforms across

Europe, to allow improved (even optimised) services. It aims to then provide society with a better understanding of environmental changes and sustainable management practices. With BREXIT on the horizon and the government still in discussion on how to assess public value of agricultural enterprises, this may assist in benchmarking. Therefore, EXPERINET will aim to produce references, models and data products that can help policy makers and land managers in their decisions.

3. Finally, the ASSIST project (Achieving Sustainable Agricultural Systems) is investigating the integration of livestock in different pasture types. The general objective is to develop innovative grazing livestock systems which minimise inputs while maximising yield and build resilience to future environmental change. NSA are hoping to be directly involved in some of the research trials for this project, but due to unseasonal weather the project has been postponed until 2019 to allow the leys to fully establish before grazing begins.

Work with Woodland Trust. NSA has committed to re-issuing the Sheep and Trees booklet produced several years ago with Woodland Trust. The intention is for the booklet to be more clearly branded as an NSA initiative, be more representative of all areas of the UK, and include a message to policy makers about how trees should be integrated into farmland and not planted at the expense of farmland. The updated version will be launched at NSA Sheep 2018 with associated press and publicity work.

Genetic & knowledge transfer

The DEFRA funded “UK Sheep Genetic Improvement Scoping Study” is well underway, in partnership with SRUC, AHDB and AbacusBio. AHDB have begun the interview stage of this project with initial contacts being proposed by Phil Stocker to ensure the relevant breeds and sheep producers in all stratifications are contacted. NSA aims to ensure project outcomes are suitable for the sheep sector (project steering) as well as assist with knowledge transfer during and after the project.

Unfortunately, the commercially confidential genetic identification and improvement proposal involving the Myomax gene (in collaboration with CIEL, Tesco & APB) was unsuccessful. Despite this, there was a large amount of positive feedback from the funders on this project. Therefore the aim is to tweak and resubmit this proposal later this year.

Work with SCOPS. NSA is now delivering paid-for services for SCOPS, managing its new website and communications work. Little money is changing hands initially, as this is a trial – and there is a natural cross-over with NSA activity and it is beneficial for us to be linked to and to support responsible messages on anthelmintic use and the positive work of SCOPS. The work is being absorbed by the NSA communications team and will be reviewed in time.

Technology Transfer:

Research – NSA continues to increase its presence in more formal research work areas and with the livestock research position in full swing, it allows a more proactive role to be taken by the NSA. NSA's contribution to the iSAGE project in terms of direct deliverables is almost complete. Efforts are currently being focused on data analysis of all sustainability assessments conducted for the project. The 3rd annual project meeting is scheduled 24th / 25th May where results will be presented to date. NSA will be continuing to report on this project and assist with the next stages including life cycle analysis (LCA) in the UK. The first draft report of sustainability assessment data is expected December 2018.

All iSAGE case studies discussed in the last report (NSA NGA, Flock Health Club, Natural anthelmintic use in lambs) are underway or complete. Any preliminary data will be disclosed May 24th/ 25th. The SARIC proposal (Restoring soil heath through re-integration of sheep and leys in arable rotations”) discussed in the last report is still ‘in waiting’. Results for the funding application are expected late May/early June. If successful, NSA will act as an industry expert / advisor.

NSA education:

NSA has been approached by a number of research students for advice and in some projects, justification on current or up and coming projects. These include:

- MSc student at Cambridge University – Project Investigating farmers livelihoods
- PhD x 2 Rothamstead – Social projects (Multifunctionality of sheep, How best to approach KE)

- Undergraduate student Open University - Sustainability issues such as support for smallholders, sheep welfare and farming in remote mountain areas
- PhD student Oxford University – Evolution of Ram on Ram mating behaviour
- College student (Hadlow) - Lab grown meat and effects on agriculture

There are 4 foreign Erasmus groups who have requested NSA support for their study tours. These are:

- Turkish Erasmus study tour - Interested in the structure and running of our breed societies
- Swiss study tour – Interested in our general sheep industry (the stratified system, breed adaptations, disease control/prevention)
- Finland study tour – wish to:
 - o Visit well managed sheep farms, meet farmers and have discussion with them about the production and key figures. Economy, management etc.
 - o Learn about producing and marketing of breeding animals.
 - o Learn about branding and marketing of sheep products
 - o Learn about efficient sheep grazing and forage production for sheep.
- German study tour - Is it possible to give up docking the tail of the lambs?

In most of these tours, remuneration has been offered for the time/help organising, and where possible, some of the information is being delivered in house at NSA Malvern, rather than send to other organisations.

Sheep Health and Welfare:

There have been a small number of anecdotal reports of SBV in 2018 lambing flocks but none appear to be submitted for analysis – therefore we have little knowledge of actual incidents. .

Blue Tongue – numbers of cases identified by surveillance in France continue to rise although significantly there are no clinical cases being reported. Work has been being conducted on movement controls in the event of an outbreak and there is still Ongoing discussion about zones and movements in and out of such zones. . It appears to be agreed that fully vaccinated and converted stock (evidenced) will be allowed to move as will stock for slaughter in most situations. The Defra core group still have more work to do on this subject.

While welfare has featured large in policy positions, with Michael Gove leading the charge for higher welfare standards leading to premium markets, NSA has been making the case that welfare has a good foundation in most sheep farming systems (extensive, able to display natural behaviour) and that the focus and opportunity is sheep health – investing in sheep health through future farm support programmes will lead to efficiency and productivity gains, better carbon footprints, and better welfare too. This view is gaining favour and the two main areas of welfare focus externally are live exports and non-stun slaughter. NSA is proposing a live exports assurance scheme to take ownership of regulatory compliance and impose our own practical/acceptable standards. For non-stun slaughter we are advocating limited trials to demonstrate recoverable stun.

The Wellcome Trust submitted a funding bid for a 4-year project aiming to “develop new ways of understanding and intervening in livestock disease and welfare” September last year. This bid was successful and aims to kick-off September 2018. NSA will be acting as the lead industry collaborator for sheep health/welfare section and funded for its contribution.

In November 2017 NSA was approached to assist a 3rd year vet student at Liverpool University conducting a PhD project researching the UK distribution of *Echinococcus granulosus* in a number host species including dogs, sheep and cattle. This project is under ethical review from Liverpool University and due to the recent strikes, has taken longer than expected to grant approval. Once approved, NSA has already designed a method for contacting members within our database to request participation on this study so we are just waiting for the go ahead.

Sheep scab work continues and reports suggest it has become a worsening problem over the autumn/winter months, worsening in numbers of cases but also due to reported scab mite resistance to the ML injectables. Helen is discussing this with her contacts in the Wales sheep scab working

group and Phil / Nicola have been in discussion on how best to take this forward. At this time, Nicola is looking at innovative farmers and whether the NSA could work with them to locate farmers interested in taking part in a sheep scab eradication/control program within specific areas. If successful, this could be a method for securing funding and allowing NSA to play a collaborative role in numerous projects at any one time. The 2 day sheep scab workshop in January was a highly informative event that will launch more work in this area. We organised a sheep scab event in the Black Mountains to link with the existing work going on there although this had to be cancelled due to the snow. Disturbing news came back from the Env Agency consultation on permits and licences for sheep dip disposal, with significant increases in cost for initial permitting and annual charges – at a time when we are likely to be encouraging farmers to use dips more. A meeting facilitated by Defra and the AHWBE between industry and the Env Agency is being planned.

The subject of antibiotics use continues as a high priority although little additional work has been being done over the last couple of months.

There has been no recent progress on decisions over the release of Lynx into Kielder, however we are aware of a national park meeting on this subject and the notes for this meeting look as though the NP are raising questions. There has been no official word from Natural England although the informal signs are encouraging.

Sheep worrying/attacks:

Our work on sheep worrying and dog attacks continues. This Spring our focus has been on a social media campaign that received substantial attention and has led to some media work.

The short case study on dog worrying produced by Dr Garcia from One Welfare is complete. Peer review has been successful. It is expected to be published later this year. Once published, we will use this to highlight further our proactive role in increasing public awareness and reducing sheep attacks.

CAP

Not CAP specifically but our domestic agriculture policy took a step forward in March with the launch of the Agriculture Bill command paper. The 25 year Environmental plan was released in January/February, the Ag Bill is being consulted on, and a food policy is supposedly being developed via the Government's Industrial strategy.

Trade & marketing

Trade continues to be the first priority relating to Brexit discussions and still much of the UKLIBG meetings are taken up with related subjects such as the future trade arrangement with the EU, the development of new markets, health certification, tariff rate quota shares relating to existing EU import quotas (see above).

NSA continues to feed into AHDB market development strategies with the aim of influencing their spending and activities. At all times we are pushing to maximise the spend on marketing, product development, and promotions both in our domestic market and overseas. We wrote to Jane King, CEO of AHDB about the recent consultation on the sale of MLCSL, and as a result have met with Hallmark and are due to welcome both to our next UK P&T meeting in June. NSA has been invited to be part of an industry forum looking at this sale over the summer months. Our recent criticism of AHDB spend profile has resulted in another meeting being planned with senior AHDB staff.

The next Smokies working group took place on the 19th January where the group agreed a Standard Operating Procedure and protocols for microbiological testing. The next step led to a meeting with VMD on the 23rd April where protocols and approaches for veterinary medicine residue testing were discussed. This meeting felt positive with a suggested way forward being identified – the next steps are to produce a draft set of protocols for discussion in early July.

The NSA Heritage Breeds market feasibility study is well underway and we submitted our end of phase 2 report to the Prince's Countryside Fund, and had our work approved with the release of funds for phase 3 which is consumer and end market research. [

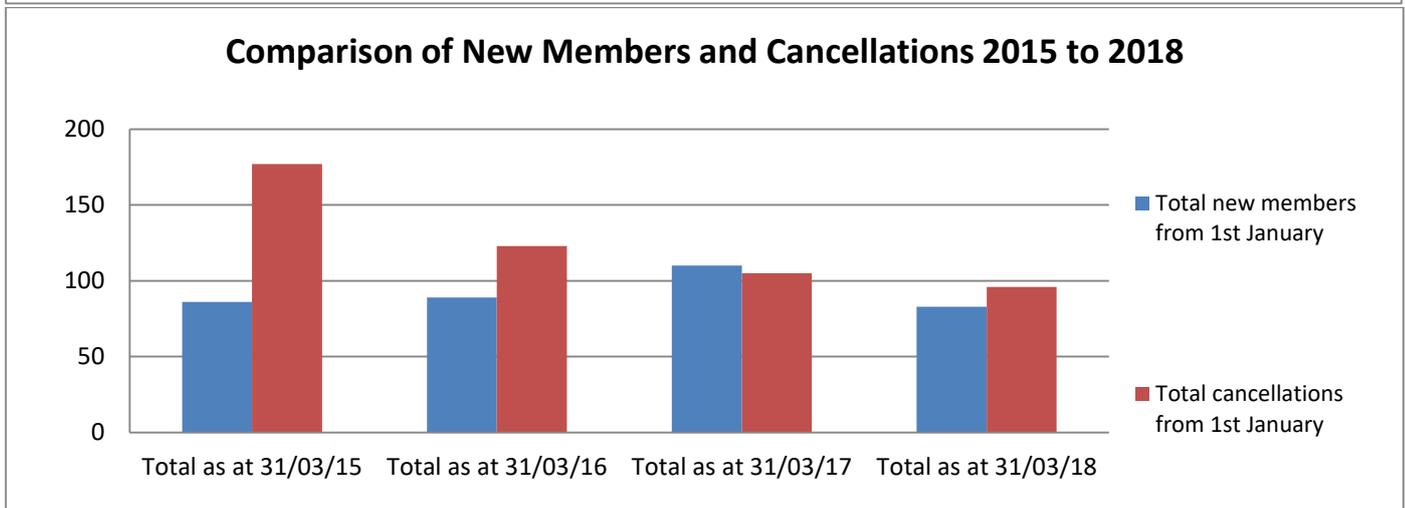
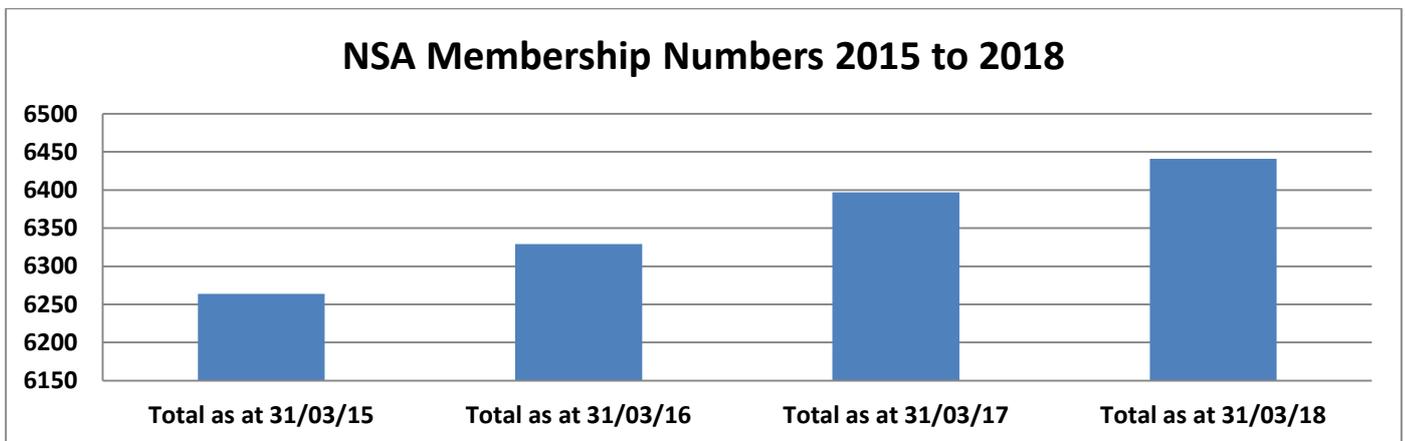
Electronic identification, movement recording, and alternatives to 6 days standstill

The Defra led Traceability Design Board (now called Traceability Design Users Group) continues to meet regularly, the aim being an all species database for movements combined with a Livestock Information Programme. The programme has received confirmation of funding support for 2 years at least from HM Treasury, following support and backing from Michael Gove and Lord Gardiner. The plan includes AHDB as a deliverer of the programme, with likely use of some levy money to back the Treasury funds. Policy discussion is just commencing on subjects such as the future of the 6 day standstill, batch movement reporting, paperless moves etc, and two meetings are planned, one with Christine Middlemiss, new CVO. In Wales confirmation has been given from the Cabinet Secretary that there will be no immediate roll back of the quarantine units policy.

Farm Assurance

Main activity on RTA during the last couple of months is around the Terms of Reference for the B&L Board and the TAC. RTA is challenging the rights of industry bodies to select individuals to represent them on the Board (David Raine has been doing this for NSA for the last 7/8 years and wants to stand down). A number of bodies involved in the RTA B&L Board recently wrote to RTA CEO Jim Moseley to make the case that the ToR were wrong and it should not be RTA's choice as to who was asked to represent the industry bodies although this request was rejected. NSA can find a way through this and it is likely that RTA will be informed of the people we consider (giving their 'approval') before we choose the person we want to represent us. We continue to be on good terms with RTA through some challenging discussions. English Committee will decide in May who they want to put forward for this role with the candidates potentially including Adam Watson and Jim Stevens. TAC membership is likely to remain as Bryan and Phil (providing the new ToR allow this). This process has identified that whole life assurance is clearly on the future agenda.

Membership Report for Board Meeting May 2018 – 1st Quarter 2018



Recent press coverage

- 2018 began with a concerted effort by the NSA Communications team to issue more press releases. 24 press releases were issued in the first quarter of 2018, compared to 16 for the same period in 2017.
- The majority of NSA press activity for the first quarter has been responding to ongoing work related to Brexit and proposed legislative changes, as well as coverage of the busy period of annual members meetings and subsequent changes to NSA officeholders.
- Press releases on the ongoing issues of live exports post-Brexit and the long-awaited decision on lynx continue to receive the greatest response from press.
- Press releases produced by NSA and issued by Pinstone Communications publicising NSA Sheep 2018 have ensured some good coverage for the event already, throughout the agricultural press.
- The quarter ended with NSA's annual sheep worrying campaign. This was a social media campaign (more below) and press releases were used to highlight the issue and NSA activity. The campaign received (and continues to receive) good support from local and national press.
- Other press coverage has included the NSA lambing list service and press releases issued on behalf of SCOPS.

Website

- Website traffic has fallen during the first quarter of 2018 from 27,124 visits in January to 19,143 visits in March. There is often a drop around lambing time, and it being more pronounced this year is presumably linked to the prolonged winter meaning our members have not spent time browsing the internet.
- Visits to the website from a mobile device continue to remain high, with approximately 60% of visitors using a mobile device to access the internet.
- February and March saw a peak in visits to the website from new users (81% and 82% of visitors). This could be due to increased usage of the lambing list by students at this time or as a result of increased flow of traffic via wide-reaching social media posts on dog worrying.

Social media

- The reach of social media posts on Facebook and Twitter continues to grow. Support and/or interest for NSA pages continue to increase with 8,857 Facebook likes and 9,634 Twitter followers. This compares with 6,600 and 7,683 on Facebook and Twitter in Q1 of 2017.
- During the first quarter of 2018, NSA activity on Facebook and Twitter has been high. This has resulted in NSA posts reaching almost 600,000 accounts for this time period. This means 600,000 people will have seen, interacted or shared a post produced by the NSA. Of this, approximately 250,000 of these posts have been viewed on Facebook, with the remainder making an 'impression' on Twitter.
- Posts have covered a range of topics during the first quarter covering events, highlighting important issues or simply interacting with interested parties on more light-hearted matters.
- The most popular posts for the first quarter have been part of the NSA sheep worrying campaign (more below) but other popular posts have covered:-
 - January – Intros to the 2018 Next Generation Ambassadors, and the NSA Lambing List
 - February – GHMA going to Samuel Wharry, and the 'Beast from the East'
 - March – SCOPS post revealing results from research on worming of ewes at lambing time

Sheep worrying campaign 2018

NSA National Sheep Association
Published by Katie James (?) · 23 March · 🌐

SHEEP WORRYING BY DOGS!

Starting tomorrow to highlight the ongoing problems our UK sheep farmers are experiencing with attacks on their flocks NSA will be filling your Facebook feed with case studies, statistics, photos and more to raise awareness to the wider public.
Help us to spread the word by sharing and getting involved.... [See more](#)

Help to keep me safe this spring
GET INVOLVED!
#TakeTheLead
#ShepherdSelfie

Get more likes, comments and shares
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

39,506 people reached [Boost Post](#)

143 1 Comment 361 Shares

- This year’s NSA campaign was an intensive week of Facebook and Twitter posts (recognising the powerful role of social media to reach a wide-ranging audience, for free!) The week was chosen to coincide with the official start of British summertime and the beginning of school Easter holidays, when more people start going into the countryside.
- Posts were added to both Facebook and Twitter each day using the industry recognised hashtags #Takethelead and #Shepherdselfie to encourage interaction from others on the posts.
- NSA produced a series of graphics to accompany statistics, case studies, photographs and more to highlight the devastating effect that sheep worrying can have. The graphics were very well received and likely caused a significant increase in interaction, with one of NSA’s most popular social media posts of the year so far including one of the graphics produced.
- The approximate reach of the campaign during the one intensive week alone was more than 250,000 people. This included almost 198,000 Facebook users and almost 140,000 followers on Twitter.
- Press interest as a result of the campaign increased in comparison with the NSA survey carried out in 2017 and previous years.
- The most popular posts during the weeks campaign were:-
 1. Campaign launch on Facebook – reached more than 39,000 people
 2. RSPCA survey results on Facebook – reached almost 39,000 people
 3. Dog breeds all guilty on Twitter (pictured) – 14,677 impressions



Tweet activity

National Sheep Assoc @natsheep
We thought this needed sharing again....

Any breed of dog can chase sheep - they are NOT just having fun.

It is NOT fun when a heavily pregnant ewe aborts its lambs.

It is NOT fun when a farmer finds a devastating scene of attacked sheep in his field.

#Takethelead pic.twitter.com/EeL8XnWpVv

Impressions

Total engagements

Media engagements

Retweets

Likes

Detail expands

Link clicks

Profile clicks

Hashtag clicks

NSA Next Generation

- The NSA Lambing List has worked well again this year, although we need to be careful about managing expectations, as the number of farmers using it is beginning to out-weigh the number of students available for placements.
- The match-making service NSA offers to connect young people looking for a job or work experience continues to be popular, and so a new page has been created on the NSA website. This page lists everyone looking for an on-farm work experience placement or job, with NSA members encouraged to use the page through a link provided in every edition of the NSA Weekly Email Update. Young people who are also NSA members are given priority and higher profile in the Weekly Email Update.
- NSA once again supported the European Young Shepherd of the Year competition, sending a UK team of four individuals. Sponsorship plus support from AHDB Beef & Lamb was secured to cover travel costs. Once again, UK competitors massively dominated the competition. It was a shame that competitors from outside the UK/France were very thin on the ground. The winner was Dafydd Davies – [more here](#).
- The UK final of the NSA Next Generation Shepherds Competition will be part of NSA Sheep 2018 in July, and plans are in place to give this higher profile in NSA communications and on the NSA stand on the day, including sign-in being held in this area.
- The 2018 NSA Next Generation Ambassador group was selected in early January and the group of 12 individuals met for the first time in mid-February. They are a very strong group again and

the first session was a considerable success in terms of the group getting along and the NSA messages delivered. Thank you to the regions for helping with a very difficult selection process, and those people who hosts/met with the Ambassadors at the first session. If you are unaware of who the Ambassadors are this year [click here](#).

- Future plans for NSA Next Generation will be up for discussion at the Board meeting in May.

Breed Societies / Breed Society Forum

- Breed societies were all invoiced for their affiliation in January. At the same time, they were given opportunity to review/add reps on regional committees to be able to vote at Annual Regional Members Meetings.
- The NSA Breed Society Forum is on Thursday 3rd May. As in previous years, uptake from societies in low with about 20% responding to the invitation. However, the day is set to be very positive and useful for the people who do attend. We expect just less than 40 people to be there. [View the agenda here](#).

NSA Regions

Cymru/Wales region – report from Helen Davies

NSA Cymru has held its first meeting of the year when we went through two papers that Phil presented to us. One the Agricultural Bill consultation and the Future farm payments paper. There was much debate around these papers. Our next meeting is in August. NSA Cymru took an active part in Exercise Blackthorn with Helen Davies and Kate Hovers attending. NSA Cymru committee was asked to help at the Sheep Event with plenty of names coming forward.

Wales and Border Ram Sale – report from Jane Smith

Nothing to report

Northern Ireland Region – report from Edward Adamson

I have been appointed onto a subgroup of the N.I. Animal Health and Welfare Group to look at an N.I. Animal Health Strategy. We have had several meetings and the work is hoping to have a strategy formed by September.

Past Chairman Campbell Tweed and myself met with Gerard McGivern, chairman of L.M.C. and had an interesting discussion on a range of topics pertaining to the sheep industry.

As a member of the FQAS Sub group looking at FQAS Standards we have reviewed and updated the Beef and Lamb Standards.

I represented NSA at an Agricultural Show in Kiev, Ukraine and had several meetings with key players there.

As a member of The Greenhouse Gas Red Meat Subgroup we have a renewed focus and are now looking at how we might reduce ammonia levels in the environment.

In the run up to Balmoral Show there have been a number of meetings.

NSA was a sponsor at the IFEX Festival in Belfast which included The World Master Butchers Challenge where we supported The Competition for The Senior Lamb Dish.

We attended a PR meeting held by The Ulster Wool Board to introduce our new Board representative.

I acted as chairman for a sheep industry Open Day hosted by The Hampshire Down Club

Scotland – report from George Milne

11/1/18 Attend NFU Brexit round table meeting in London.

23/1/18 ARD stakeholder meeting in Edinburgh. Requested the need to have LFASS money paid out earlier.

26/1/18 UK Livestock group meeting in Birmingham

8/2/18 Attend Blackface sheep breeders meeting to update them on Scottish region policy work. Travel to Glasgow and attend NFUS AGM and dinner.

13/2/18 Attend Animal health stakeholder meeting in Edinburgh. Raised the need to have a joint industry government meeting to discuss moving to age identification instead of teeth up to identify when sheep need to be split.

14/2/18 NSA Scotland held its ARMM & Dinner on the 14th February at Airth Castle. Chairman, John Fyall welcomed members and gave a report on the years activities. George Milne gave a presentation on extensive recent policy work carried out by the region. Sybil MacPherson retired from her second 3 year term as a trustee and was replaced by Peter Myles. Maimie Paterson continues as Treasurer. Ian Duncan Millar then acknowledged the NSA Scotland region for the good work they do on behalf of the industry and thanked them for their continued involvement with the Moredun. The meeting closed with a presentation by Emma Harper MSP. Parliamentary Liaison Officer to the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity.

A highly successful, enjoyable dinner followed the meeting where the 70 members and guests were served Scotch lamb legs kindly donated by Scotbeef, proving to be a highlight of the evening. The lamb was carved at the tables by selected guests with Michael Ritch showing his talent and winning the best carver on the evening. Our after dinner guest speaker was Lord Duncan, who is a Conservative politician, currently serving as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the both the Scotland Office and in the Northern Ireland Office. The evening concluded with two presentations made by last year's NSA Next Generation Ambassadors, Rory Gregor and Alister Warden on their experiences gained from the highly successful course. A charity raffle raised £560. NSA Scotland would like to thank all those who helped and contributed to a very successful day.

15/2/18 Travelled to Edinburgh to meet with government official to discuss recent slaughter house closure and impact on the industry.

Scottish government announced this week that. "Hill farmers and crofters can now expect to receive 100% of their 2018 Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS) grant, it has been confirmed. Subject to expected changes to EU CAP regulations, the move follows this week's draft Budget and will result in more than 11,000 farmers and crofters receiving their full grant rather than a 2018 parachute payment worth 80% as was previously announced by Cabinet Secretary in March earlier this year."

20/2/18 Attended Parliament for a meeting to organise Parliamentary reception to be held on 16 May

21/2/18 Meeting in Edinburgh with John Scott's sheep sector review group

22/2/18 QMS Board meeting. Not an NSA day but for your information.

23/2/18 UK Brexit meeting, Birmingham

27/2/18 Meeting in Edinburgh with Fergus Ewing. Chairman and myself in attendance. Meeting organised to discuss industry issues following the AGM.

6/3/18 Scottish committee meeting cancelled. Office/Prepare paper on tree planting v's sheep farming for UK policy meeting. *See notes below for reference.

13/3/18 Climate change stakeholder meeting in Perth.

14/3/18 Meeting with Scottish Association of Meat wholesalers in Aberdeen to discuss lamb supply and current prices.

15/3/18 NSA Scotland committee meeting held in Stirling.

16/3/18 Meeting with Royal Highland show to discuss the arrangements for this year's NSA marque at the show.

20/3/18 ARD stakeholder meeting in Edinburgh.

23/3/18 FMD exercise. Meeting to discuss the planned future UK exercise.

11/4/18 Meeting on farm with ALDI red meat buyer in Scotland. To discuss future working partnerships with Aldi including working with them at the RHS.

19/4/18 QMS Board meeting. Not NSA but for reference.

20/4/18 UK Livestock Brexit meeting in Birmingham.

21/4/18 Scottish Association Meat Wholesalers conference and dinner in Glasgow.

25/4/18 FMD exercise with stakeholders and government.

Future dates.

16/5/18 organising a parliamentary reception to present “The Complimentary Role of Sheep in Upland and Hill Areas” and “The Benefits of Sheep in Arable Rotations” to 60 invited guests and press and MSPs.

30/5/18 Scotsheep to be held at Kings arms farm, Ballantrae.

*Forestry v's Sheep production

Facts: - Tree planting

Land value is worth more to a seller than sheep farming

Scotland to increase tree planting targets from 10,000 ha/annum to 15,000 ha/annum by 2015.

22million trees planted to 33 million trees planted/year

2020-2021 12,000 ha /year

2022-2023 14,000 ha/year

2024-2025 15,000 ha/year

Increase the use of timber from 2.2 million cubic meters/year to 3 million cubic meters by 2031

Confor claim employs 25,000 people and delivers £1 billion in annual economic value to Scotland

Less than 20% of Scotland land area has trees planted. Very low area compared to other EU countries.

Benefits from tree planting.

Manage soil and reduce erosion

Improve animal welfare- shelter

Shelter for crops

Water management improvement

Cut pollution

More energy efficient – as a fuel

Added revenue

Trees provide habitat for pollinators- nesting birds etc.

Trees help with wildlife conservation

Facts: - sheep farming

Sheep production in Scotland 2016

6.83 million Sheep in Scotland

Occupying 14,900 holding (farms)

2.62 million Breeding ewes

3.32 million Lambs

800,000 others

Value

Finished sheep and lambs was £203 million

Wool clip was £6.4 million

Sheep account for 7% of total income from Scottish farming sector

Produces 61,000 tonnes of sheep meat per annum

Benefits from sheep farming- see the complementary role of sheep in upland and hill areas.

Delivering public goods- food source and wool production

Managed grazing- environmental benefits

Water management

Biodiversity – carbon

Social benefits- tourism and recreation

Economic benefits- supporting people and local businesses.

Grants and support

Forestry commission Scotland:-

Highland Native woodland target area

Native pine £3,600/ha

Upland Birch £2,790/ha
Native Broadleaves £ 3,600/ha
Low density Broadleaves £1,170/ha
Deer fencing £9.90/m

Sheep support

Basic area payment 10 euros/ha
LFASS £63.5 million gross /year
Scottish upland sheep support scheme £ 60-80 /head on ewe hogs.

Notes

Figures are for Scotland only

Trees once planted means that ground cannot return to agriculture. (Or very difficult)

Tree planting at the current target rates will change the Scottish landscape for ever, effecting tourism and the landscape visually.

Sheep farming means people. People who actually live, work and maintain the rural communities.

Land is under pressure and a rare commodity. The demand for land is not only from forestry but also from Biomass production, development and energy production. (From wind turbines and solar panels). We must protect our land.

Profit and support for sheep farming must increase to remain competitive with other sectors.

Significant external meetings and contacts not covered above (Phil S, Hannah and Joanne)

11th Jan NFU Chaired industry Brexit meeting
12th Jan Defra Farming productivity group meeting
16th Jan Took part in filmed EU Activ debate
17th Jan Ram sales and UKP&T meeting
18th Jan Board meeting
19th Jan Skin on Sheep working group meeting Cardiff
22nd Jan TDUG meeting
22nd Jan Hannah gave a talk about NSA/the sheep sector to agricultural students at Taunton College
23rd Jan Defra Core Group meeting on Bluetongue and F&M
24th Spoke at Curlew conference Builth Wells
24th Central region ARMM
25th Jan Meeting with Jim Mosley RTA
26th Jan UKLIBG meeting
1st Feb Meeting with Phil le Grice Bicton and Duchy colleges
2nd Feb BMLUP SMS Project Board meeting
5th Feb TDUG meeting
7th Feb NFU roundtable Brexit meeting
7th Feb SE region ARMM
8th Feb English committee
9th Feb Eastern region winter fair
13th Feb Northern region ARMM
13th Feb Joanne represented NSA at a SCOPS Steering Group meeting
14th Feb Joanne represented NSA at the quarterly SHAWG meeting
14th Feb Scots region ARMM
16th Feb SW Ram sales meeting – ram longevity
19th Feb TDUG
20th /21st Feb NFU conference
21st Feb Hannah represented NSA at first meeting of the National Priority Delivery Group for Livestock Offences
21st Feb SW region ARMM
22nd Feb NSA Cymru ARMM
23rd Feb UKLIBG meeting
26th Feb Minette Batters NFU briefing
26th Feb Took part in Westminster debate
27th Took part in Prince Countryside Trust Clarence House forum
27th Feb Met Lord Inglewood

27th Feb Joanne represented NSA at the quarterly RUMA meeting, and accepted an invitation to become a RUMA Board member
28th Feb WG evidence and scenario setting group meeting
7th March UKP&T
8th March Met with CIWF to talk live exports
8th March F&M national exercise table top meeting
8th March Met with Defra to discuss NSA future of farm support
9th March Vice Presidents meeting
19th March UKLIBG
27th March BMLUP SMS project Board meeting
28th March New APPG meeting
29th March AHDB workshop on industry crisis management
5th April Met with Tim Render Environment Director WG
11th April Met with David Peace of Hallmark
12th April TRQ workshop with WG
16th April Met with Michael Seals Chair of AHWBE
16th April TDUG
17th April NSA Cymru meeting Builth
18th April Met with Richard Tyler of BBNP to progress heritage funding bid
19 April FGP
20th April UKLIBG
23rd April Skin on Sheep meeting with VMD – VMR protocols
24th April BMLUP site visit with WG officials
25th April F&M national exercise
25th April Gave evidence to EFRA select committee on future of direct support
26th April UKLIBG Defra consultation meeting on Ag Bill
27th and 28th Sustainable Food Trust conference