

SCOTLAND

WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY

MARCH 2022 EDITION

www.nsascotland.org

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Jen Craig, Normangill, Crawford

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Where does the time go?

NSA Scotland recently held our 2022 ARMM (Annual Region Members Meeting) and I'm now at the beginning of my fourth and final year as Chair and what a year it is shaping up to be!

We announced some exciting and progressive changes to our committee and how the Scottish region runs during the ARMM. With a new structure and objectives being set out on a yearly basis, we hope to improve the work of NSA Scotland and use the time, which all of us volunteer to the organisation, much more effectively.

We also had a focus on OPA and I am really happy that we have been able to get an

industry led OPA working group established with Scottish Government that NSA Scotland will be chairing alongside the sheep scab working group. Both of these groups have great potential to make a difference in both of their specialised areas and I hope to be able to give more of an update in the next newsletter – so watch this space!

Newly appointed Chief Executive of QMS, Sarah Millar also gave us an update on her

plans for the role and we look forward to continuing to work with her and build on our working relationship (you will be able to find this on page 5).

As we slide into another lambing or indeed for those of you who are well underway, I hope it goes well and the weather is kind to us all and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Scots sheep on the 1st of June. It's sure to be a great post lambing day out.

OFFICERS | NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND

WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY

Find out more



Jen Craig

(Chair)

Biggar, South Lanarkshire



Maimie Paterson

(Vice Chair)

Dunblane, Central Belt



Euan Emslie

(Event Organiser and Secretariat)



Grace Reid

(Scottish Region Coordinator)
Clackmannan, Central Belt



Mary Dunlop *(Treasurer)*

Broughton, Biggar, Scottish Borders

NSA SCOTLAND

Our Diary

1ST MARCH

NSA Scotsheep 2022 Organising Committee Meeting

2ND MARCH

NSA UK Policy and Technical Meeting

7TH MARCH

RSPB Catch Up and Collaboration Meeting

11TH MARCH

NSA Scotland General Purposes and Policy Committee Meeting

21ST MARCH

Scottish Government OPA Working Group Meeting

25TH MARCH

QMS Beef and Lamb Marketing Group Meeting

MARCH/APRIL

Lambing!

Our Events

6TH APRIL

NSA Breakfast Club Webinar – The politics of numbers: What's the value of sharing flock figures? For more details, please click here.

4TH MAY

NSA Breakfast Club Webinar. For more details, please click here.

1ST JUNE

NSA Scotsheep 2022 by kind permission of Robert and Hazel McNee, Over Finlarg, By Tealing, Dundee, DD4 0QE.



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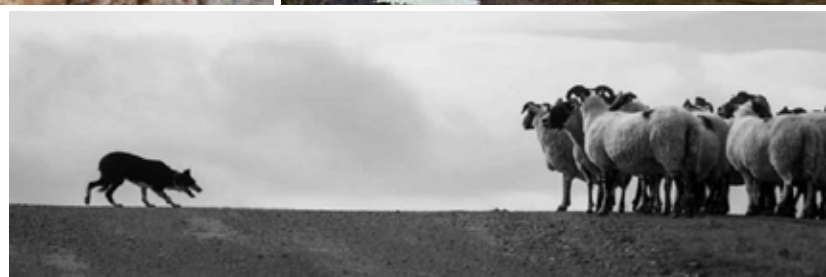
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NSA Scotland February 2022 Facebook Photography Competition Winners:



NSA Scotland ARMM 2022

On Friday 25th February 2022, NSA Scotland held its Annual Regional Members Meeting (ARMM) in a hybrid format via the online meeting platform 'Zoom' and in person at United Auctions Stirling.

The meeting was held to transact the election, reapproval and nomination of Office Bearers, Representatives, Regional Trustees, Directors and new Committee Members. In addition to this, attendees approved the minutes of the 2020/2021 ARMM held on the 13th January 2021 and received the NSA Scotland Chairman's and Treasurer's reports for the year 2021/2022.

Attendees voted the re-election approval of regional committee comprising of Jen Craig as Regional Chair, Maimie Paterson as Vice Chair, Mary Dunlop as Regional Treasurer and Aileen McFadzean and Peter Myles as Regional Trustees. Jen Craig was also re-elected as the Scottish representative for the NSA UK Policy and Technical Committee.

Following the business of the ARMM, NSA Scottish Region welcomed Dr Chris Coussens from the Moredun Research Institute who delivered an update on OPA (Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma) and its hold on the Scottish sheep sector. This also provided the opportunity for a very welcomed question and answer session whereby the constraints of controlling and overcoming this very challenging disease were explored. NSA Scotland have recently been asked to Chair the newly formed Scottish Government OPA working group which coincides with the Scottish Government sheep scab working group whereby both will be tasked with progressing stances and initiatives surrounding animal

health and welfare priorities specifically within the sheep sector.

NSA Operations Director Joanne Briggs also joined the meeting to give an update on recent NSA activity and NSA Scottish Region Coordinator, Grace Reid gave an update relating to policy work.

NSA Scotland Chair Jen Craig comments: "The region will still have some difficult decisions to make this coming year to get us back on track but I am confident that the plan for the next year and indeed further into the future will allow us to go from strength to strength. This however will be my last year as Chair as it is my intention to stand down at next year's ARMM, so consider yourselves forewarned. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the NSA Scotland Committee and members for their continued support over the past year and here's hoping we get to see a lot more of each other in 2022!"



Research in a Nutshell – OPA Control



Support NSA while shopping

If you are shopping on Amazon this year, please consider adding NSA as your Amazon Smile charity. This means the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the amount you spend on Amazon to NSA. And there's no catch. It's Amazon's way of paying back to society through 'socially responsible shopping'. To make sure NSA can benefit from what you spend on Amazon, head to smile.amazon.co.uk and either create an Amazon account or log into your existing Amazon account. Search for 'National Sheep Association' in the charity search function (not 'NSA') and select us as your chosen charity. Then enjoy some guilt-free shopping, knowing every penny you spend on Amazon is helping NSA carry out its work for the sheep sector.



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For further information please contact

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Jen Craig - Scottish Region Chairman
Tel: 07585 604385 Email: j.normangill@hotmail.co.uk

Maimie Paterson - Scottish Region Vice Chairman
Tel: 01786 823129 Email: auchenlay@gmail.com



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Coordinator's Comment

by Grace Reid, NSA Scottish Region Coordinator

What lies in store?

We always have a full agenda when it comes to policy due to the wide-ranging nature of the sheep industry and those who work in it. Eye watering fertiliser costs, uncertainty surrounding Covid recovery, diminishing self-sustainability and brand new foreign trade deals all present a headache – and we haven't even mentioned the new era of Scottish agricultural policy! Rising costs of production are a real concern even for the least intensive of our farmers and this has been a recurring theme since the dawn of time but now we have something new to contend with.

Threat or Opportunity?

It really depends on the way you look at it - each devolved nation is taking its own approach. Scottish Government have recently published their [Vision for Agriculture](#) which sets out the principles and values which will be put at the heart of frameworks to pave the way for Scotland's future agriculture support regime from 2025 onwards. What we must not forget is the true cost of losing our productive farmland. Generations to come will be presented with ever challenging choices to make simply because of the effects of time - a rising population, climate change, disease, technology etc. Given the correct policies and support, we could ensure our domestic food supply food is much more sustainable and beneficial to the environment than ever before but there needs to be careful planning and mindset application. It is very tempting to jump on to the bandwagon particularly when something seems too good to be true. We can no longer think of climate change, nature recovery or food production in isolation. We can however consider the protection of natural resources, rural economies, heritage, the health and wellbeing of people and finally the sustainability of local food production and consumption. Its not too late to evaluate the options before leaping into action. Luckily for us, sheep are already part of the solution.

OPA Focus

We have started 2022 with an animal health and welfare theme and are pleased to announce that NSA Scotland have accepted to Chair the newly established Scottish Government OPA (Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma) working group in addition to the Scottish Government sheep scab working group. Whilst it seems that OPA is very widely spread, there is no current cure or treatment for sheep farmers once it has been found in their flock. What we do know is that it is a virus which affects the cells in the lungs whereby tumours form and replace normal lung tissue. It can be transmitted predominantly via aerosol routes, via infected colostrum and milk and it has an incubation period from months to years. Unfortunately, housing, trough feeding and high stocking densities all help the spread of OPA and diagnosis can be particularly difficult even with regular ultrasound scanning. All ages and breeds are susceptible which means that this is only going to become a much bigger problem if steps are not taken as a priority. But what can be done? The Moredun Research Institute have had dedicated experts working on this disease for quite some time and the hope is to put this research to use with funding to ensure the historical foundations of our flocks can continue into the future.



NSA Annual Sheep Worrying Survey

As part of its ongoing work to highlight the serious and devastating issue of sheep worrying by dogs NSA has launched its annual survey on the topic to gain an up-to-date insight on its continued severity and impact on the UK sheep industry. It is no secret that sheep worrying incidents by dogs cause significant welfare concerns for sheep and serious upset to sheep farmers whose flocks are affected. To continue to raise awareness of these incidents and find ways of improving education, guidance and cooperation we are inviting all UK sheep farmers, whether they have experienced issues with sheep worrying or not, to contribute to the survey that will be open from now until 25th March 2022. For more information on the issue of sheep worrying by dogs and NSA's work on this issue please visit www.sheepworrying.org.uk

SHEEP WORRYING BY DOGS CAN COME IN MANY FORMS. 
National Sheep Association
www.sheepworrying.org.uk

Keep your distance from livestock, and ensure dogs are on a lead.

BARK CHASE BITE KILL



Information and advice can be found at www.sheepworrying.org.uk

Phone: Location:

Get caught up on NSA Policy Areas

Throughout 2021 and continuing into 2022 NSA have embarked upon a series of webinars under the 'NSA Breakfast Club' banner which are solely policy related and cover many topics and showcase all of the corners in which we represent our members. If there is a topic you feel is missing, please get in touch and we will be more than happy to explore it.



Want to get in touch?

If you have any queries, content suggestions or want to feature in the next edition of this newsletter please contact Grace at grace@nationalsheep.org.uk or 07787 142858.



Building the narrative on the positive impact of the Scottish Red Meat Industry

Sarah Millar, newly appointed Quality Meat Scotland Chief Executive



2022 certainly feels like the year of promise. Covid-19, whilst still representing the largest public health risk of modern times, does feel like it's in retreat, and finally; after two years of home working, and Zoom meetings, we can start to look forward to warmer days filled with face-to-face industry events such as NSA Scotsheep and the Royal Highland Show.

2022 also represents a year of change, as of April 2022 I will take on the role of Chief Executive of Quality Meat Scotland. Having started life on the family hill farm near Carnwath, it is an enormous honour to have been offered this opportunity, and I look forward to working with the Scottish committee of NSA and the wider Scottish red meat industry to develop opportunities for our Scottish sheep sector going forward.

Building sustainable foundations

And despite the ever-present rhetoric around the rise of plant-based foods, I believe that there are opportunities for the Scottish red meat sector to grasp - particularly around our ability to produce sustainable, nature friendly red meat protein as part of the circular economy- a core element of the Scottish governments climate and environment strategy, that even has a Scottish Government Minister (Lorna Slater, of the Green Party) appointed to oversee implementation.

Scotland, with its long history of mixed farming systems, is well placed to take advantage of the circular economy, and to use this to its advantage in the marketplace. Data from Kantar highlights that 30% of Scottish shoppers could be defined as 'eco active' in 2021. By 2030, this number rises to 62% if the same rate of growth is maintained, giving a huge opportunity for our Scotch brands with the traditional circular economy mixed farming systems at their heart to align with their values and provide opportunity for the Scottish red meat supply chain.

Younger generation approach

QMS, using insight and data to underpin our marketing and communication work, has developed a number of innovative tools to build the narrative around the Scottish red meat sector's circular economy credentials, particularly aiming this at future consumers in our school children. November 2021 saw the launch of 'Mission Sustain', an interactive sustainability game designed to highlight the decisions

farmers and crofters make around farming and food production. And just last month, in January 2022, 'The Farming Circle of Life' was launched, showcasing the Scottish red meat industry's place within the circular economy in a simple, engaging tool. Both these developments will be seeded out as part of QMS's Farming Foodsteps work, which takes the key messages around red meat

and farming into our primary and secondary schools around Scotland, fully aligned with the Scottish curriculum and making it easy for teachers to embed farming and food production into lesson plans and resources.

Tackling politicians

And these messages aren't just going to our educational establishments. Throughout 2021, QMS has worked to recharge its public affairs strategy, recognising that key decision makers in Scotland don't always have strong backgrounds in food and farming production. This led to a key piece of work in late 2021 alongside NFUS and SAC Consulting, whereby every councillor, MSP and MP in Scotland was offered the chance to get out onto a farm ahead of COP-26 and see first-hand what actions farmers and crofters are doing to tackle climate change and produce food. The results of this are certainly evident if you watched the Scotch Lamb for St Andrews Day parliamentary debate. To hear politicians from every corner talking positively about Scottish sheep production, and Scotch lamb was a real heart-warming moment, and proof that collaboration between organisations and showcasing our industry at its best can bring tangible results that we can all benefit from.



Taking on the world market

Sticking with the theme of collaboration, another positive result from 2021 was the change in market access to America for Great British lamb exports. Building on this in 2022, QMS's Market Development team have been working across the supply chain to build export opportunities for Scotch Lamb, and in March will attend the SIAL America, taking place in Las Vegas to promote Scotch Lamb to key importers and distributors- an exciting time for something that has been long coveted by Scottish sheep farmers.

Only an email away!

One of the hardest challenges of the last two years working from home has been the lack of face-to-face engagement with our members and levy payers. This is something we at QMS are keen to change now Covid rules permit. If you have a discussion society, show society, breed society or club meeting that you feel would benefit from QMS input, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us: info@qmscotland.co.uk and we would be pleased to arrange attendance from a member of the team.





Next Generation Matters

James Scott, United Auctions, Stirling

My name is James Scott, 23 years old from Stirling, having originally grown up on a mixed beef and sheep unit at Wester Biffie, Maud. More recently I have been involved in sheep work at Dad's croft at Fisherie, Turriff and increasingly assisting with farm operations with my fiancé, Cerrie and her father Fenwick, on their Farm at Tormaukin, Glendevon.

Forging a career away from home

Recently I joined United Auctions as an auctioneer, covering mainly the West Coast of Scotland. It was always evident that full time employment was the way forward for me as the farm wasn't big enough to warrant going home full time. Auctioneering prevailed as the obvious choice to remain fully in the industry. Assisting on the farm at Tormaukin in the evening and weekends keeps a keen interest and therefore allows me to maintain the perspective from both sides of the fence.

Looking towards the future

To be successful in farming at a young age now, I believe we all need to stick together for the greater benefit of the industry as a whole. However, opportunities for young people to get into farming are too few and far between to come across. Undoubtedly the industry will look totally different in 10 years' time. Ongoing political restructuring, export regulations and

antibiotic resistance are among the main issues. However, I feel one of the biggest things for the next 10 years is the number of farmers coming nearer to retirement with nobody to follow on with many being bought by bigger units or getting planted. I'd encourage any farmers in this situation to look into options of contract farming opportunities to ensure the progression of the industry and to allow opportunities for new and young entrants a way into farming.

Involvement with NSA Scotland

I enjoy being on the NSA Scotland Committee as it gives me an opportunity to meet new people and have my finger on the pulse of what is going on whilst also enabling me to have my input into the future shape of the Scottish Sheep sector. I would encourage anyone who is strongly minded on aspects of policy relating to the industry to come forward and get involved with NSA Scotland.



Keep an eye out on the NSA Next Generation website for updates on exciting opportunities for young people in the industry! [Click here.](#)

Or if you would like to feature yourself in this section, get in touch with grace@nationalsheep.org.uk



Meet our Scottish NSA Next Generation Ambassadors for 2022!

Perry Parkinson (27) Dumfries and Galloway

As an employed shepherd at SRUC's Barony campus in Dumfries and Galloway, Perry revels in the opportunity to run 500 North of England and Scotch Mules in an environment that is open to trialing different ideas for the benefit of the systems sheep flock and the sector as a whole whilst educating the next generation of sheep farmers.

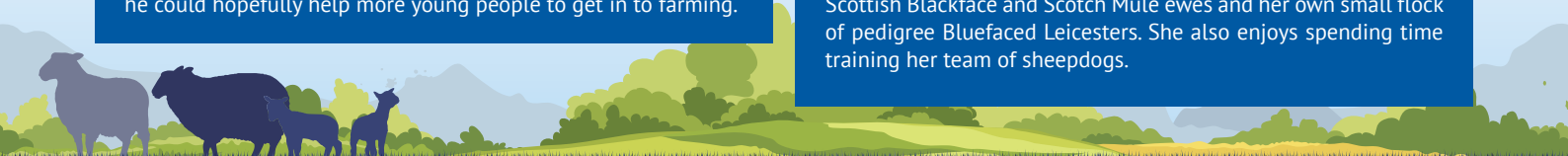
Perry says he applied to become an Ambassador as he wanted to challenge himself, learn more and put himself in a position where he could hopefully help more young people to get in to farming.



Karyn McArthur (28) Aberdeenshire

Varied interests and involvement within the sheep sector, Karyn says, makes her very open minded meaning she recognises there is not a 'one size fits all' way of farming. With this in mind she applied to join the Ambassador programme to allow her to challenge herself to dive deeper into learning more about the wider sheep industry.

Karyn currently splits her time between working for a sheep breeding company, assisting with her family's flock of 800 Scottish Blackface and Scotch Mule ewes and her own small flock of pedigree Bluefaced Leicesters. She also enjoys spending time training her team of sheepdogs.





NSA Scots Sheep 2022

As the busy spring season approaches, farmers can look forward to a well-deserved day out thereafter on Wednesday, June 1 at NSA Scots Sheep 2022.

The event, due to take place at Over Finlarg, Tealing, Dundee, DD4 0GE, by kind permission of Robert & Hazel McNee, with Virgin Money as major sponsor, is shaping up to be a terrific event, with plenty to see and learn throughout the course of the day. The couple moved to the 740-acre unit in 2011 and have built up a well-known farming enterprise, producing top pedigree and commercial cattle and sheep, whilst also making huge improvements to the steading and farmland at Over Finlarg. Robert and Hazel have just recently had a busy month of bull sales, selling Limousins, Luings and Simmentals at Stirling and Castle Douglas to a top of 11,000gns for the Luing, Finlarg Zinedine.



Things to see and do

A packed programme of events, which includes farm tour, seminars, demonstrations, competitions and the show and sale of ewe hogs will run throughout the day at Scots Sheep, with a few new additions introduced by the organising committee headed by neighbouring farmer Willy Millar. As of the beginning of March, over 180 trade stand entries have been accepted and four entries have been placed for the new fencing competition. Special features of the day include an invitational sheep dog trial, sheep dressing, crook making, ram MOT, as well as many others. A vast variety of workshops and seminars will take place within three separate areas of the farm buildings, with the show and sale of ewe hogs held at the end of the day when conducted by United Auctions.

Show & Sale of Pairs - Ewe Hogs

There are classes for Bluefaced Leicester, Mules, North Country Cheviot, Blackface, Suffolk, Texel, any other native breed, any other continental breed and any other cross breed, with both MV accredited and non-accredited sheep eligible for sale.

Supported by: Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), there are a number of mainline sponsors to include Agri Lloyd, British Wool, Caltech, MSD Animal Health, Scotbeef Ltd, Scotmin Nutrition, United Auctions and Shearwell.

For any enquiries, please contact Event Organiser Euan Emslie, on 07729 346135 or euanemslie053@gmail.com

Get yourself a ticket!

Visitor tickets will go on sale online within the next 10 days (by mid March) at £20 per head and £10 per head for NSA members – keep an eye out on the NSA Scots Sheep website and social media pages!



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Veterinary Corner

Ed Hill – Thrums Vet Group



For most, with flocks scanned, we are now in the final run-up to lambing time. Getting nutrition right at this time is just so important – get it right at lambing time and many of the diseases that can afflict us at this time of year; watery mouth, joint-ill, mastitis and twin lamb disease to name, just a few just don't make an appearance. One tool that we are increasingly using on sheep farms is a "Metabolic Profile". This is a blood sample across a small subset of the flock three weeks or so pre-lambing, to ask the ewes how they are responding to the diet that is being provided to them. Is it matching their requirements for energy and protein? Often the results provide reassurance, but if not, we can make adjustments in enough time to see off any impending problems. Far better to deal with an issue proactively rather than firefighting a disease outbreak!

I've also been busy lung scanning a few flocks as part of OPA control. Those farms that I've been scanning on for a few years now are showing really positive results – one flock I'm just back from scanned at 3.5% positive last year and is now down to 1.3%, and this is coupled with lower on farm mortality over the past year. Positive ewes are identified in time to be sold and achieve cull value, rather than dying on farm (and spreading the disease to their pals before they do so!).

Many of my farms I'll advise doing a fluke egg check at this time of year. Chronic fluke in the run up to lambing can cause real drag on body condition with resultant issues, as well as infecting the pasture for next season. Testing +/- treating would be especially important in a year like this where the winter has been relatively mild and fluke may have continued to circulate. Indeed, many of the samples that we have examined have been positive for fluke eggs. If treatment is required, it's generally a good idea to stay away from the triclabendazole products and reserve these for the time of year when we are more concerned about immature fluke causing acute disease.

SRUC Veterinary Services Update

In the past month, Schmallenberg virus infection has been diagnosed in a lamb from a Scottish flock which displayed fused joints and an abnormal brain. In addition to this, ovine abortions have been diagnosed from the usual suspects of EAE (Enzootic Abortion of Ewes), Toxoplasma, Campylobacter, Salmonella and Listeria.



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