

Activities report to NSA Board November 2021

This report refers to main activities in quarter 3 of 2021. Activities are presented under a set of common headings.

NSA policy, technical and research work

Brexit: Deal / no deal

Main implications of Brexit remain as; High costs of moving goods to EU (between £1600 and £4000 per lorry, and 30% less lamb going to EU since Jan 2021); Still no facilities to move live sheep to EU across the English Channel (breeding or store/slaughter) and as far as we are aware no sheep able to come via Calais either. There is trade waiting to happen but still no BCP facilities for live animals; a lack of migrant labour at processing plants; and the NI protocols relating to breeding sheep movements between GB and NI. On the latter issue Defra have recently agreed a new Scrapie Qualifying Scheme which allows sheep to be moved to NI once the selling farm has registered with the scheme. This is in effect what NSA were calling for which is a derogation for 3 years by which time people will need to have completed the 3 year transitional scheme. The application period for the SQS is open now and closes at the end of December. NSA has communicated this as much as we can via e news and via breed societies. These movements will only be farm-to-farm at the moment. Defra have also negotiated the possibility of Export Assembly Centres that avoid stock coming from NI to require a 6 month residency period before returning. This will help although the segregation needed at marts will probably limit the numbers taking this option up.

Brexit: Future farm support

England continues to progress with transition plans until 2027. Wales is expected to consult on its new farm support structures by the end of the year and has committed to continuing the BPS until 2024, and Scotland appears to have committed to keeping 50% of BPS indefinitely. Plans in England are progressing and a major announcement is expected late November over SFI details and CSS payment rates. The Farm Resilience programme is open which allows funded business advice visits to prepare for change, The Farming Investment Fund is to be launched in Mid November (funding capital items), along with the Farming Transformation Fund focussing on water, improving productivity, and from 2022 adding value. 938 applications to the SFI pilot have now been notified of their inclusion in the programme. Development of the SFI roll out standards for 2022 (to work alongside Simplified Countryside Stewardship) continues. The Pathway Health and Welfare programme is still in development although its been confirmed that it will commence with vet led health and welfare review visits in Spring 2022. NSA is heavily involved in development groups around a number of element of Pathway design although there have been some real challenges to the way Defra has approached this and a lot of uncertainty still remains.

Sheep in upland areas (including sheep stratification)

There has been no specific focus here except that hill and upland sheep farming is receiving dedicated input in all the Defra Future Farming programmes and any health and welfare related work. Upland sheep farming is also regularly featuring in our positions and statements on sheep farming and land use and climate change, and also in areas of sheep health with NSAs main involvement in the RDPE Scab programme focussing on Exmoor in the SW. Welsh Commons Forum is holding its AGM on the 15th November and we have also initiated a Welsh farming organisations meeting earlier the same day to discuss common positions and collaboration.

Sheep in arable rotations

As above this subject has just been being incorporated into our general work.

Integrating trees into sheep farming systems

As above. Our position remains that tree planting must be based on the right tree in the right place and we want to see trees integrated into a farmed landscape rather than mass forestry. We are also making the case with Defra and WG particularly that the emerging carbon credits market should be taken forward with

a caution. It should not disrupt social cohesion in rural areas, it should be based on sound science and evidence, and it should not allow polluting practices to continue/be justified.

Rewilding

Lynx, Wolves & other apex predators – no recent news

White Tailed Sea Eagles

Isle of Wight: birds released in 2019, 2020 and in 2021.

25 young eagles, from nests in Western Scotland, have been released, including 12 this year.

While this year's birds have yet to disperse away from the release site, the movements of the 2019 and 2020 cohorts have been closely monitored via satellite tracking and field observations. Rabbits, hares and goslings made up a substantial part of their diet alongside fish, shellfish and carrion. It was also able to record how some of the birds proved to be very adept pirates, stealing from buzzards, corvids and harriers. A number of sightings have been made and reported by sheep farmers.

Wild Ken Hill: decision made recently (end Oct) not to continue at this time due to concerns over predation.

Will continue to monitor IoW for input into further decisions

Beavers – open consult, closes 17th Nov

Sheep health and welfare (including NSA involvement in RHWG, RUMA, SAAG and SCOPS)

We are highly active in this area (and its one of NSA's main charitable objectives). The subject matter appears to be getting very congested and very active due to development of new related policies and the Pathway in England. But it makes sense with health in particular contributing to a reduced carbon footprint, increased productivity, better resource use, improved reputation, and better farmer satisfaction. The RHWG followed its conferences by workshops and is now trying to agree key areas of focus for health and welfare improvements. The group is working to co-ordinate consistent activities across the 4 nations but the jury is still out on its effectiveness and longevity. The recent VARS report shows a bottoming out of reductions in antibiotic use although with an overall 52% reduction based on 2014 use. The sheep sectors target is to collect data and the medicines hub should facilitate this. Vets inputting data based on prescriptions (with permission) is seen as a key part of success. SCOPS continues to do much good work and is developing protocols for anthelmintic resistance testing as well as inputting to a new APPG for animal welfare sub-group looking at sheep scab (as is NSA). NSA presented at the recent Sheep Vet Society conference and Kevin Harrison as NSA EC Chair has been appointed onto their committee to represent NSA. Phil is Chairing a new endemic diseases Pathway group, and Sean is part of a communications group planning for the more open launch of the medicines hub. Charles Sercombe (Trustee) has been appointed to the AHWBE (as an independent appointee although it creates a useful opportunity with his close connections with NSA). The RDPE scab project appears to be progressing well and is oversubscribed by farmers. Moredun have approached Defra for additional funds to accommodate more participants. On Exmoor NSA is leading the programme and is delivering this through the Exmoor Hill farming network and Ian May (NSA SW Manager). This is resulting in some useful links between the farmer network and NSA. Following a consultation by the Animal Welfare Council on castration, tailing, and other welfare topics the AWC are holding a day's face to face consultation with a number of organisations at the Sheep Centre Malvern in late November. Pain relief and anaesthetic use are without doubt raising in interest although as yet these products are only available off license/ and /or not recommended for use in young lambs. However the subject of these management operations are increasingly coming under scrutiny and are likely to need to be justified at some stage in the future.

Sheep identification and movement recording and reporting

The LIP is both delayed and well over budget – but still receives strong Ministerial and Defra support. The initial launch of sheep LIP which was due for November has now been set back until Spring 2022 due to budget constraints and the fact that a lot of effort is being put into cattle EID. A recent meeting was held to 'take stock' of where we are and it's agreed that while we will have a new sheep movements service as from 2022 little progress has been made with policy development which should have been running alongside the

development of the service. Approaches have been made between TDUG and Defra / AHDB and they have initiated internal discussions that are not yet resolved.

TSE controls

Despite pushing on a number of occasions no progress has been made with sheep ageing. We will continue to press for our previous proposals to be revisited.

Supply chain concerns (including price reporting, classification and NSA involvement in Hallmark scrutiny committee)

Industry group led by John Royle met 3rd Nov (Kevin Harrison attended for NSA) to discuss Sheep Carcass classification – points to be taken forward in a request from DEFRA for clear direction and a timetable for the next steps. It was also discussed at the Carcass Classification Scrutiny Committee (CCSC) on 9th November, with reinforcement of the action from the 3rd Nov meeting.

The continuation of CCSC was discussed on 9th Nov – agreed that Andrew Loftus & Charles Sercombe to prepare a letter to levy bodies, for CCSC members to sign, recommending that the CCSC should continue.

Farm assurance

The new RTA standards come into force from November although only two real changes to standards for sheep farmers – medicines training and health and safety policies. After much negotiation Bryan Griffiths has been appointed to the RTA B&L Board. We continue to keep an eye on whole life assurance but are fairly confident that sheep/lamb are not high up the priority list. We also press the point that the higher the standards go the more difficult it is to get sheep farmers started who have never been assured -and many producing store lambs (and finished lambs) have other markets that don't require assurance. It is an ongoing challenge to get RTA to understand the differences in structure of the sheep sector compared to other farming sectors.

Engagement with AHDB

AHDB is due to vote in Spring on its activities and the use of the money it collects from levy payers. There will be no 'yes/no ballot' and NSA added its weight to calling for this by writing to the Minister and Sec of State. However, to vote farmers will need to register as AHDB do not know who their levy payers are – NSA will assist in informing members and giving an honest and fair overview of the work AHDB does, including a piece in the December issue of Sheep Farmer. The proposed new governance structure of AHDB does look as though it will give greater say by levy payers in the formation of a new B&L Council and a routine vote on the priorities needed by industry. NSA continues to be a constructive friend to AHDB, providing criticism and advice where felt necessary. Engagement with HCC and QMS and LMC is ongoing, led very much by our regions.

Rural crime (including sheep worrying by dogs)

Q&A article with PC Dave Allen in the Oct/Nov NSA Sheep Farmer, providing useful guidance for members on how to deal with ongoing incidents, highlighting the need to report all incidents to enable any action to be pursued. An extended version of the Q&A article with PC Dave Allen in the Oct/Nov NSA Sheep Farmer has been uploaded onto the NSA website

Press release distributed by NSA on 15th October to remind farmers of the need for extra vigilance in the coming weeks, due to the half-term holiday.

NSA launched a children's competition to design a "Dog on the Lead poster" – NSA challenged children in three age groups, under eight, eight to 12 and 13-16 to design a new sign that asks dog walkers to keep their pet on a lead when walking in areas where sheep may be present. Max, age 9, from Kent won the competition

Ahead of the winter & Christmas period, NSA is working on a new leaflet to be distributed to the vet profession to highlight the need for pet owners, especially those owning a dog for the first time, of the need to take actions to prevent sheep worrying happening.

NSA is tracking new legislation as it comes into force: in Scotland the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2021 received Royal assent in May & became law early in November. In England the Kept Animals Bill has had its second reading and is now at the Committee stage, and finally a new Bill to establish a national Dog DNA database is waiting for its second reading.

Policy work in the devolved nations – see section on regional activities

Any other livestock research with NSA involvement not already covered

NSA Science discussion panel to have first meeting on 11th November to discuss: *“UK sheep are predominantly grass & forage-fed, they support the nutrient & water cycle and protect valuable carbon stores, and will help the industry to reach Net Zero.”* All invited Key Opinion Leaders have supplied references to support some or part of this, and will debate where the gaps are, with the aim of formulating actions to fill those gaps.

Any other consultations not covered under topics above

Closed consultations to which the NSA has responded:

DIT Ext Aff: FTA India: responded 27-Aug-21

DEFRA: British Wool Review – Stakeholder Evidence Questions: responded 26-Aug-21

AWC: Tail docking & castration: responded 27-Aug

DEFRA: Local Nature Recovery Strategies: how to prepare and what to include: responded 02-Nov-21

Welsh Gov: New Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework - Implementation Plan: responded 26-Aug-21

EFRA Labour Shortages in the Food and Farming Sector: responded 15-Oct-21

Open consultations:

DEFRA Landmark consultation launched on the reintroduction of beavers in England: due 17-Nov-21

DEFRA Labelling for animal welfare: call for evidence: due 06-Dec-21

DIT UK prepares for trade deal with Gulf Cooperation Council: due 14-Jan-21

More general topics (updated if and when activity occurs)

- **Genetics** - progress is being made on rationalising the Ovine Semen Archive and slow discussions are ongoing over the value of a wider farm livestock gene bank. NSA is ‘hosting’ a session at the Sheep Breeders Round table on a practical discussion around the diversity of sheep breeds and genetics
- **Trade and marketing (including NSA involvement in work addressing red meat consumption concerns e.g. Veganuary etc)**
 - Trade: 30% fewer exports into EU, slightly more into middle east, less import from NZ (<50% of current quota). Indicators are for more investment in the domestic market, improving self-sufficiency (ref. NFU Back British Farming day 15/09)
 - Australia – no update on AIP, market access still in negotiation, with timing to sign imminently & implementation in summer 2022
 - Can/Mex – working through consultation responses, will publish a public bundle before negotiations commence planned for later in 2021.
 - India – intent to launch negotiations in Nov, public bundle to be launched in advance
 - CPTPP – in process of demonstrating compliance, part of which is going into a number Working Groups (WG) & negotiations commence 30 days after the WGs finish. China & Taiwan have also applied to join – not expecting that to influence timescales.
 - Gulf Cooperation Council – consultation runs 08/10 to 14/01 – 6 countries, huge opportunity, some issues to understand e.g. halal.
 - US – working through some changes, such as the Small Ruminant Rule

- NZ- reached AIP, seen by Gov as important precursor to joining CPTPP – plan to finalise details in coming weeks, legalise text etc – will take some time to complete. Protections for some sectors beef, sheep (increase to WTO quota) have been requested by industry, but likelihood is low.
- The new and long awaited Trade and Agriculture Commission has been established – in time to look at the Australia deal before its finalised and of course the New Zealand deal too.
- **Wool**
The wool price is reported to have improved somewhat with demand at auctions having strengthened. NSA submitted our views on the future of British Wool to Defra as part of a limited consultation they held. Copies of our response were shared with British Wool and are available on request. Our communications with BW are ongoing and strong and they have recently spoken to NSA Scots region committee.

NSA communications and knowledge exchange work

Press work

Press activity continues at a high level with another good number of press releases issued during the third quarter of the year. A total of 28 press releases were issued to press and other media during the three months, slightly higher than the previous two quarters of the year so far.

July, August and September saw many varied topics being the focus of press releases but some significant campaigns such as Love Lamb week during the time period did influence some communications activity. Also during the period NSA reacted to several announcements from Government / Defra and began to share press releases promoting the sustainable nature of sheep farming in the lead up to the COP26 conference at Glasgow in November.

Press releases have once again gained much attention from both farming and general press. This has led to NSA Chief executive Phil Stocker taking part in several radio interviews. NSA has regularly been mentioned in national press including The Telegraph, The Times and the Daily Mail as well as local press and both national and regional farming press also.

With press releases issued via a mailing platform it is possible to track the open rate of the press releases sent. During the third quarter press releases had an open rate of 27%, higher than the industry average. The table below shows the press releases put out in the past quarter per week and their different focuses as well as the social media reach for posts that have been placed on social media relating to the press releases.

The social media reach of NSA's press releases is growing significantly – this is in line with an increased social media audience once again but also perhaps general recognition from the wider industry and media of the high amount of activity of the association and subsequent work to communicate this with press, the farming sector and the wider public.

Sheep Farmer magazine – see recent editions

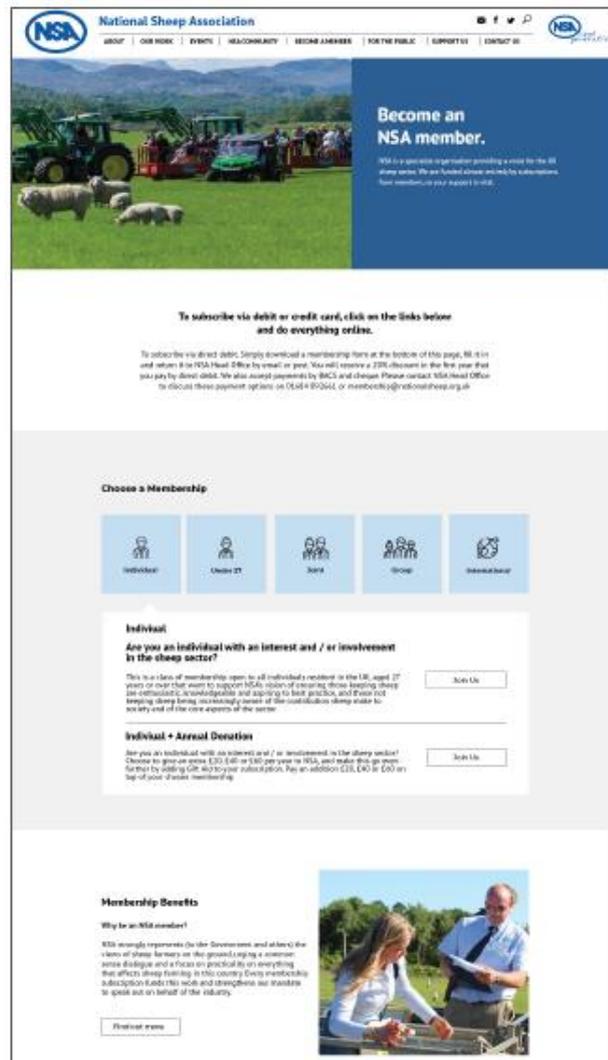
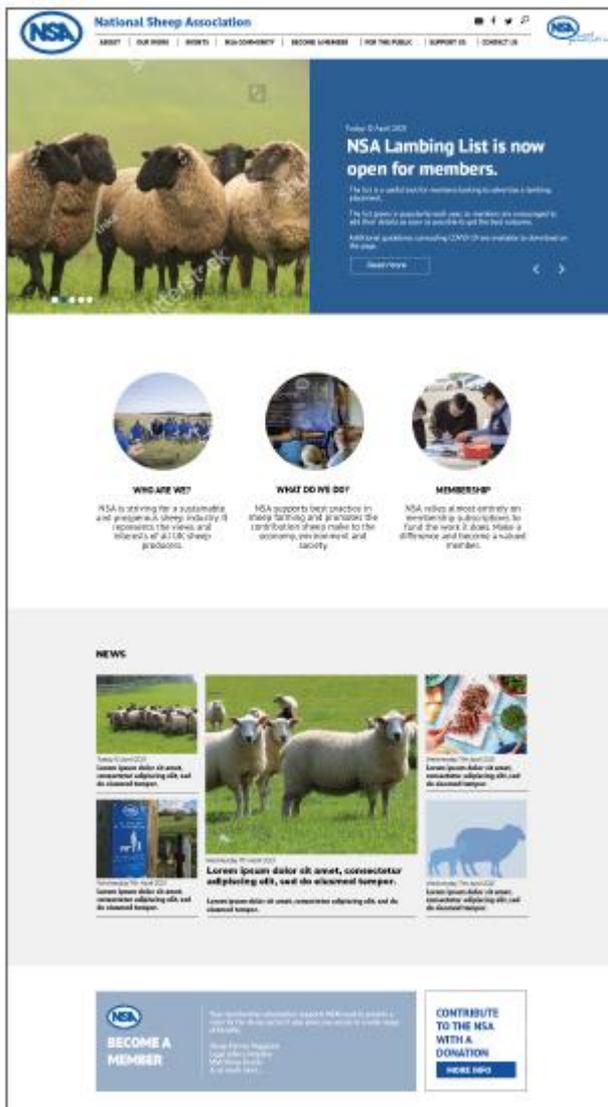
Weekly Email Update

The NSA members' Weekly Email Update has been sent to approximately 4000 people each Friday during the last quarter, this includes mailings to members (for whom we have email addresses), breed society representatives and a complimentary list, which includes Defra and devolved Government representatives. The average open rate of the email has increased from 28% to more than 30% during the past quarter – This is particularly encouraging when summer can typically be a time of less engagement with the email update as people are working outside during the longer daylight hours more or can be taking holidays /

annual leave. Open rates were high during April and the first half of May but typically has dropped away as we move into the summer months. The open rate is well above the industry average of 19% indicating its value to recipients.

Website

Significant progress has been made to modernise the home page / livery across all the NSA websites. The main NSA website (www.nationalsheep.org.uk) is currently under construction and work is estimated to be completed before the end of November. See below for an example of how the website will look. Once this work is complete, work will move onto the major event sites and eventually the NSA Next Generation and NSA Scottish Region websites will see improvements.



Social media

The past three months have seen the growth of NSA's social media pages.

At the end of the third quarter of 2021 the NSA Facebook page following had increased by 517 to 18,187 people. NSA saw an overall increase in Twitter followers of 146 to a total of 12,854.

Both accounts continue to receive high levels of engagement on other content shared throughout the quarter.

Posts performed well across a range of topics, particularly on Love Lamb Week, in-person and online events and Ram Sales.

The top three performing Facebook posts for the quarter were:

1. A short film created by Matthew Fearon during the NSA Next Generation Shepherd competition was shared to mark the beginning of Love Lamb Week. It reached over 31,000 people and was watched over 27,000 times. If you wish to watch the video, please contact Becky or Katie.
2. A post advertising NSA Cymru/Wales Region's farm walk (the region's first since Covid-19) reached 18,200 people and received 510 engagements.

Don't miss NSA Cymru/Wales Farm walk next week, at Cwm Farm, Talgarth, LD3 0EE.

The farm is a 300 acre all grass hill farm with ground lying some 600 to 1200 foot above sea level with grazing rights on the Black Mountains running to 2,500 feet.

 Tuesday 14th September, 3pm... See more



3. A video from the Marches Region Young Shepherd Competition reached approximately 16,400 people and was watched more than 18,000 times.

The top three performing Twitter posts were:

1. "Could you be the new 'Face of Love Lamb'? Find out more and apply at ..."
13,131 people reached and 46 interactions with the tweet.
2. "We are kicking off our countdown to COP26 first thing tomorrow morning with a Breakfast Club webinar on Nature Recovery! Be sure to join to gain inspiration and share your experiences too 🐑"
10,201 people reached and 175 interactions with the tweet.
3. "📄 Entries for NSA South West Ram Sale close today 📄 Find an entry form and sale rules at..."
5,385 people reached and 57 interactions with the tweet.

Email campaigns

Throughout the last quarter, targeted email campaigns have been sent to non-members who have previously expressed interest in NSA activity or membership, and to members. There were five campaigns this quarter which advertised NSA membership benefits, the Solway competition. NSA has this quarter begun using discount codes to target cancelled and potential members, to incentivise them to sign up.

Public-facing activities

Love Lamb Week took place at the beginning of September with NSA working alongside levy boards once again to promote the sustainable benefits of sheep farming and of course the delicious versatility of lamb. In addition to press releases and the heightened activity of Love Lamb week on social media (reaching more than 140,000 people) NSA also led a new competition during the week searching for a new 'face of Love Lamb' to lead social media activity of the Love Lamb accounts year-round. This was to build more of a following for the social media pages and also show consumers the every-day efforts that go into producing lamb for the nation year-round, not just during one week in September.

The competition successfully found two excellent new 'Faces of Love Lamb' – Amy Matravers, a sheep farmer from Leicestershire with a farm shop / butchery and an on-farm children's after school and holiday club (focussed on farm production) and Ernie Richards from Herefordshire, NSA Next Generation Ambassador. Amy and Ernie have now begun their Love Lamb activity and are already increasing the following of the page.

Farmer-facing meetings and activities organised / attended

Again, activity has been very quiet with not much happening because of events being cancelled due to Covid. Online presence is still very strong with the breakfast clubs proving to be very popular with both members and non-members. We are in the process of rolling out evening talks across all the regions so I will hopefully be able to report back in the next report on the success of them.

Other areas of NSA activity

NSA Next Generation

Ambassadors

Activity for the 2020/2021 group of Ambassadors disappointingly came to a premature end in September. Following a very successful meeting of the group at the beginning of the quarter in Northumberland a number of individuals were unable to continue their commitment to the programme leaving it unviable to run for the remainder of the year.

Despite the programme bringing in some valued new regional contacts to NSA the combination of Covid-19 affecting delivery sessions so significantly and several of the group's changing personal circumstances meant that a number of Ambassadors were unable to offer the commitment to the programme asked of Ambassadors at the start of 2020.

All ambassadors were contacted individually to confirm the situation with an invitation extended to those in the group who wished to continue to apply to join the programme again when applications open for the 2022 group in November. An invitation and encouragement was also given for all of the group to remain involved with their regions with some initial plans now in place at Head Office to arrange a series of Next Generation regional gatherings to bring all previous ambassadors hopefully back in to regional and national activities.

NSA Next GENE-eration

NSA joined with Rob and Jo Hodgkins of Kaiapoi Romneys during the third quarter to facilitate a new NSA Next Generation initiative, that gifted five Romney rams to deserving young sheep farmers in the UK. The rams were made available by Rob and Jo Hodgkins as part of a grant they received from the Frank Parkinson Agricultural Trust to import bloodlines known to carry the Myomax double muscling gene. Applications for the five rams opened in July with almost 80 young sheep farmers applying to receive a ram. Following a series of shortlisting activities by NSA Head office and several regional officeholders a final shortlist of 12 was reached. Following a zoom interview process with NSA and other industry representatives an agreement was reached to in fact gift six rams to some truly deserving young sheep farmers from across the UK. The lucky recipients collected their rams in September. Plans are now in place to repeat the success of the initiative in 2022.

Engagement with NSA-affiliated breed societies

With events being quiet engagement with the Breed Societies has been quiet but we have continued to send out the quarterly newsletter that is proving to be popular

Regional Next Generation shepherd events

Several NSA regions held NSA Next Generation Shepherd training and competition qualifying events during the summer months and in to September. Successful young shepherds from the events will now proceed to the national finals of the competition at NSA Sheep Event 2022.

George Hedley Memorial Award

Nominations for the 2021 award have been received and the voting papers sent out to Trustees and Vice Presidents.

British Heritage Sheep

The BHS scheme has found considerable support within the sheep sector and beyond, and increasingly the time seems right for such an initiative. However, despite many applications to potential funding bodies, funding has been difficult to secure, due to Covid and other factors. One funder has shown positive interest, the Worshipful Company of Farmers, but only for £500. The BHS Board has decided to apply for a new Defra Innovation grant to cover the full funding requirements of BHS, and plans to use the services of specialist company Granted Ltd in securing this on a 'no win no fee' basis. We are seeking to work with AHDB and North Wyke as technical and research partners and with NSA as the farmer link. The bid has to be made by end of November and we are including blockchain technology (for customer assurance and traceability), the devt of a taste grid, and a sustainability assessment to assess whether (and give evidence) slower maturing systems (such as low input hill and upland farming) can be as climate friendly as faster throughput approaches, as innovations. This would challenge the simplistic view that fewer days to slaughter means a more climate efficient production cycle but without challenging the fact that efficiency and productivity is important. (optimising rather than maximising).

A BHS website is about to be launched, together with a webinar for main interested parties.

Register of Sheep Advisers (RoSA).

The RoSA Board is now meeting on a quarterly basis, with Phil and Dan representing NSA and plans to add Liz Genever as a director too. A Steering Group has been formed to report into the Board, and NSA and BASIS are meeting monthly to sustain communications. In addition to press releases, social media activity and newsletters to continue attracting advisers to join the register, a webinar has been held to encourage event organisers to offer CPD points. Sustained activity will be needed in this area to ensure RoSA members can collect enough CPD points each year to remain on the register. NSA South East Region's SHAWP conference offered RoSA points and we are looking to get points on NSA Breakfast Club webinars and wherever else appropriate.

Regional activities (to include NSA ram sales)

The Wales & Border Ram Sales successfully hosted our two sales this year, but with the ever changing situation with Covid and different rules in the devolved nations it was somewhat challenging. The Early sale had an entry of 313 with 73% sold and a turnover of £141,970.50. The Main sale entries were surprisingly good, given that so many sales had sprung up after we had to cancel in 2020. We had 3789 entered, 3235 forward (85%), 2849 sold (88.1%) with a turnover of £1,979,013.61 with increased averages across the board. There are several large consignors who we know will return next year (they only entered 1 sheep to retain their ballot place) and this reflects well for 2022. The RWAS were fairly helpful with a discount for both sales but all our costs continue to rise. We will meet with the RWAS early in 2022 to discuss the situation going forward. Due to the Covid situation we were not able to carry out an NSA inspection at either sale. The situation improved in early September and we re-instated the inspection

procedure, but then a few days before the sale (when the schools reopened) there was a serious local spike and we took the decision to cancel, giving breed societies the option to do their own if possible.

We continue to be challenged by other multi breed sales, which are less expensive than the NSA sales, but most people seemed very pleased to be back at Builth and hopefully things will return to some normality in 2022, although I think the new normal is somewhat different!!

NSA Cymru/Wales

NSA Cymru committee meeting 15th Nov was on the Royal Welsh Showground with others joining by Zoom. Welsh Govt officials joined the meeting to discuss the Livestock Identification, Registration & Movements consultation. Winter Fair preparations and the up-and-coming NSA Roadshow on the 14th Dec were discussed.

NSA Cymru held a farm walk in Sept near Talgarth where up fifty people attended.

NSA Cymru will be part of a panel to discuss Nature recovery, biodiversity etc as part of COP Cymru on the 25th Nov. Phil will represent NSA on this panel along with people from HCC, FUW and NFU Cymru.

NSA Development Officer has been helping an NSA member with the problem of Dip disposal and attended Pest Smart meeting to discuss this issue and raised the problem with NRW and WG.

Welsh Govt will announce free testing for Sheep Scab in the near future with a National Programme to control Sheep Scab to be announced for 2022/23.

Many other meetings have been attended over the last few months via Teams and Zoom with HCC to receive updates on the Stoc + project, Hill Ram programme etc. WG EU Transition Agri Food supply chain group, Carcase Classification, WLBP Board meeting, Reforms to Animal Welfare & Transport, Net Zero Wales plan briefing and COP Cymru.

NSA Scotland Activity Report for NSA Board Meeting – 17th November 2021

(Topics covered)

Monday 16th August

- Farming Roundtable Meeting attended by Grace Reid.

Friday 20th August

- Extraordinary NSA UK Policy and Technical meeting attended by Jen Craig and Grace Reid.

Monday 23rd August

- NSA Scotland Executive Committee and Committee Meeting.

First hybrid meeting for the region held at UA Stirling and via Zoom.

Friday 27th August

- Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers (SAMW) Meeting attended by Grace Reid.

Carcase classification and price reporting, castration and tail docking of lambs, abattoir availability, future supply chains and Covid/Brexit implications on the sheep industry. Key themes such as skills development, labour shortage and disease and animal welfare themes overlap in both organisations particularly in relation to abattoir availability. Cleanliness of livestock was also discussed.

Wednesday 1st September

- NSA UK Policy and Technical Meeting to be attended by Jen Craig and Grace Reid.

Wednesday 8th September

- IAAS Meeting attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson and Grace Reid.

Discussion around communications and work of #LambforStAndrewsDay and involvement between NSA Scotland and IAAS. Horizon scanning embarked upon and plans for further collaboration were considered.

Monday 20th September

- Animal Welfare Committee Working Group – Castration and tail docking of lambs workshop attended by Grace Reid.

Extensive discussion surrounding factors of both on farm production and supply chain requirements, with animal welfare alongside costs of production and implementation at the heart of the dialogue. Prior to the meeting a demonstration of the Numnuts device which is currently operating in Australia and New Zealand.

It was very clear that this is a topic which could have unintended consequences due to the many variances in sheep breeds, production systems, farm types, weather patterns, management practices and numerous other factors which contribute to the wider sheep industry structure today. It is noted that the last time the AWC visited this topic in 2008, no substantial outcome was reached. There is no current indication as to what the outcome of this consultation will be.

Monday 27th September

- Scottish Government Animal Health and Welfare General Stakeholders Group Meeting to be attended by Grace Reid.

EU Exit and Covid update with a general discussion on EU Animal Health regulation and vet services. Brief update *on the progress relating to the recent FAWC Animal Welfare in Transit consultations with responses still being analysed by Scottish Government. Stakeholders have been assured that there is the commitment to work with other GB administrations to change transport legislation through a series of working groups. It was made clear that although a GB approach would be preferred, the unique interests of Scottish producers will be protected in future legislation. It is anticipated it will take a few years for practical proposals to be put in place however, it remains critical future unintended consequences are minimised. Scottish Government now feel they are ready to discuss the ongoing issue of sheep scab in Scotland and have been gathering evidence to date alongside engaging with Defra and the Welsh Government. It is expected that all information will be put forward to industry in the near future with a working group formed to discuss matters further.*

Monday 11th October

- NSA Scotland Committee Meeting

Thursday 14th October

- Scottish Government ARD Stakeholders meeting to be attended by Grace Reid.

Update on the payment strategy published in February this year, Covid-19 vaccine passport requirements and future policy. *It is anticipated that a new Scottish Agriculture Bill will be laid in 2023 and will come into power in late 2024. A new payment strategy will follow in 2026 with a formal consultation launching in 2022. The aim will be to be set out how Scotland may be aligned with the EU, how to continue direct payments and how to ensure there is quality food production alongside biodiversity loss and climate change mitigation. Stakeholders made it clear that discussions should be moving forward at pace to ensure our members have time to adjust, implement and future proof their businesses not only in terms of finance but also longevity.*

- NSA Scotland/QMS Catch Up.

COP26 communications, marketing plans for Veganuary/#LambforStAndrewsDay.

Friday 15th October

- Sheep scab working group discussion attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson and Grace Reid.

Plans to take forward a Scab Working Group by the end of the year in Scotland. Jen Craig agreed to Chair the working group. Scottish Government have been collecting information on the scab projects operating in England and Wales. A meeting was agreed to be set up with Moredun for a further update.

Tuesday 19th October

- QMS Cattle and Sheep Standards Setting Committee meeting to be attended by Grace Reid.

Trust in the supply chain by consumers. A review of the current standards was conducted with proposed changes discussed. A full report will be sent through before the new standards go live after board approval (March 2022).

Wednesday 20th October

- NSA Scotland Committee Policy Subgroup meeting attended by British Wool.

Andrew Hogley and Jim Robertson attended to provide an update of the current market and initiatives being undertaken by British Wool. Engaging with members was discussed alongside the recent Defra review, shearing training, processing techniques, imports of wool and high street shop/ travel industry usage.

Monday 25th October

- QMS Beef and Lamb Marketing group meeting to be attended by Grace Reid.

Health and Education update provided by Alix Ritchie and Jen Robertson – new Farming Foodsteps resources to be shared. QMS meat Voucher Scheme explained for more schools to get involved and engage with the red meat industry. An overview of the beef and lamb markets since the group last met was provided which opened a discussion about the impact of the skilled labour shortage. Marketing & communications plans to cover COP

26, January Reputation campaign, Scotch Lamb for St Andrews Day, Christmas 2021, and a new digital experience project which will be launching in Spring 2022 were also discussed.

Monday 1st November

- Scot Gov Sheep Scab meeting attended by Phil Stocker and Grace Reid.

Overview from Stewart Burgess (Moredun) on English RDPE project and highlighting steps which could be taken in Scotland. Agreed that next Scab working group meeting will take place on 9th December 2021. Claire Hyndman and Stewart Burgess to draft a paper by mid-November for consideration of the working group.

Tuesday 2nd November

- NSA Finance and General Purposes meeting attended by Jen Craig.

Wednesday 3rd November

- Scot Gov OPA meeting attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson and Grace Reid.

Dr Chris Cousens (Moredun) provided an update of her work on OPA. Currently ultrasound scanning is the only reliable way of determining the possibility of an animal having OPA. No vaccine has been developed, further testing arrangements are required along with additional vet training to determine accuracy. *Additionally, any breed is susceptible and it is the case that a negative lung scan does not necessarily mean the sheep in question does not have OPA. Animals do have the potential to get infected and do not have any side effects as a result. It is these silent carriers that need to be identified.*

- NSA Regional Managers and Secretaries meeting attended by Euan Emslie and Grace Reid.

Thursday 4th November

- Cattle/Sheep/Goat Movements GB>NI With Industry attended by Phil Stocker, Aileen McFadzean and Grace Reid.

[SQS Scrapie scheme, role of markets and export assembly centres.](#)

Monday 8th November

- Farming Roundtable Meeting attended by Grace Reid.

[COP26, 4 day working week trial in Scotland.](#)

Friday 12th November

- NSA Next Generation Winter Conference, UA Stirling.

Monday 15th November

- RSPB meeting attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson and Grace Reid.

Wednesday 17th November

- Scottish paths map landowner meeting attended by Grace Reid.
- Edward Mountain MSP Scottish Outdoor Access Code Members Bill meeting attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson and Grace Reid.

Upcoming Meetings:

Monday 22nd November

- Farming Roundtable Meeting to be attended by Grace Reid.

Wednesday 24th November

- Scottish Craft Butcher AGM to be attended by Grace Reid.
- NSA Scotland Committee Meeting

Monday 6th December

- Farming Roundtable Meeting to be attended by Grace Reid.

Wednesday 8th December

- NSA UK P&T meeting to be attended by Jen Craig and Grace Reid.

Thursday 9th December

- Scot Gov Scab Working Group Meeting to be attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson and Grace Reid.

Wednesday 15th December

- Scottish Government ARD Stakeholder Group Meeting to be attended by Grace Reid.

Monday 20th December

- Farming Roundtable Meeting to be attended by Grace Reid.

Friday 28th January

- NSA Scotland ARMM

NSA Scotland Communications

NSA Scotland are delighted to announce the first edition of the new NSA Scotland Member Newsletter. This will be published on a bi-monthly basis to keep NSA Scotland members up to date with what is happening in the Scottish Sheep industry and within the organisation: [NSA Scotland Newsletter\Final November.pdf](#)

Other significant external meetings – attended by Phil unless otherwise stated

August

- 3rd Carcase Classification Scrutiny Committee
- 9th TDUG
Monthly Genebank meeting
- 10th Interview for RBST The Ark
Sheep Sector Welfare Workshop
Black Mts Land Use Management Partnership
- 12th Paraguay Genetics call
- 13th LCAG
Lincolnshire Radio interview
- 16th Welsh Water Mega Catchment Project meeting
- 18th Wiltshire TB Group meeting to present on TB in sheep case in Wilts
- 20th Livestock Information Ltd meeting
- 23rd Black Mts SMS meeting
Interview with Islam Channel UK
- 24th RoSA Board meeting
BHS meeting
- 26th Mike Gooding RCMG meeting
Paraguay Genetics call
- 27th LCAG
- 31st RDPE Scab Project Management meeting
Update UK-NZ trade talks call

September

- 1st AHDB Reputation Group meeting
- 2nd RoSA funding call with Patrick Goldsworthy
Rathbones call
AHDB webinar
ELMS Local Nature Recovery meeting
- 6th AHDB Medicine Hub Industry Liaison Group meeting
Charlotte Desborough Defra meeting
Monthly Genebank meeting
- 7th Defra Agricultural Productivity Task Force meeting
Trade Advisory Group meeting
Defra Pathway Sheep Health Subgroup meeting
Animal Welfare Labelling Call for Evidence, call with Defra
RoSA meeting
- 8th SCOPS
Defra Pathway Sheep Health Subgroup debrief call
Black Mts Land Use Management Partnership
- 9th John Wilkes USA call
RUMA
Paraguay catch up call
- 10th LCAG
Katherine Flynn, Defra call

- 13th TDUG
Agri-food Trade Advisory Group call
Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan discussion
- 14th Defra Sheep Health Pathway follow up meeting
NSA Cymru Farm Walk
- 15th Interview with Olivier Royant
Ruminant Health & Welfare Steering Group
NFU Food Report Launch
Defra Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Task & Finish Groups meeting
- 16th James Wright, Breedr call
Welsh Gov ABC for Sheep & Tourism call
- 17th David Butler re MSD article
- 20th SVS Conference
- 21st RoSA funding call with Patrick Goldsworthy
Defra Sheep Health Pathway meeting
Welsh Gov ABC for Sheep & Tourism call
Uplands Alliance Steering Group meeting
- 22nd Matthew Jordon interview for PHD work
BHS meeting
Defra, Future Farming & Countryside Programme call
Interview for Farming Today Sheep Exports
- 23rd APHA/Moredun Sheep Scab webinar
- 24th LCAG
- 27th RDPE Scab Project Management meeting
- 28th Defra Farm Innovation Programme meeting
NFCU catch up call
- 29th NFU Farming organisations roundtable meeting
Farming Today interview
Call with N Saphir, Sir John Beddington, Patrick Holden, Chris Donnelly, John Geldard
- 30th AHDB Medicine Hub Industry Liaison Group meeting
- October
- 1st AHDB meeting
Defra Sheep Health Pathway meeting
Defra Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Task & Finish Groups meeting
- 4th Defra Sheep Health Pathway follow up meeting
BHS meeting with KTN
- 5th Welsh Gov Commons Act meeting
Red Tractor meeting
Animal Welfare Committee meeting
- 7th National Emergency Epidemiology Group Training Workshop
Interview with Countryfile
Defra ELM Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme: Soils Standards
Latin American Sheep Genetics Trade Group call
- 8th LCAG
- 11th AHDA Managing Anthelmintic Resistance call
RSPCA call
John Wilkes USA call
- 12th Defra ELM Engagement Group call
Defra GB-NI Livestock movements industry meeting
- 13th AHDB Reputation Group call
Ruminant Health & Welfare steering group call
- 14th Red Tractor call with Jim Moseley

TDUG
 Agri Expo call

15th Interview with RAU student

19th Defra Future Farming & Countryside Programme, Commons sector call

20th Defra Katherine Flynn call
 Defra ELM Stakeholder call
 Premium Sheep & Goat Health Scheme Scrapie meeting

21st Defra ELM Sustainable Farming Incentive Agroforestry Workshop
 Dept for International Trade, Trade Advisory Group, NZ call

22nd LCAG
 BHS call
 Defra Sheep Health Pathway Working Group call
 Dept for International Trade, Trade Advisory Group, NZ call

25th Defra, Charlotte Desborough call
 Defra Call for Evidence Animal Welfare Labelling
 RDPE Scab Project Management Meeting

26th RoSA call
 Welsh Gov, Net Zero Wales Plan Briefing call
 Latin American Sheep Genetics Trade Group call

27th Sheep Scab meeting

28th Meeting with John Geldard and Chris Donnelly
 Defra Sheep Health Pathway meeting
 Federation of Cumbria Commoners/NSA Northern region meeting

29th H&H Agri Expo, Carlisle

November

1st BHS meeting
 Sheep Scab Working Group call
 Sheep Health Pathway meeting debrief call
 Inward Genetics trade mission call
 Black Mts Land Use Management Partnership

2nd Defra Hannah Jordan, livestock worrying call

3rd Agrifest S.W. Exeter

4th Interview with Radio Lincolnshire
 AHDB call with Will Jackson
 DAERA cattle/sheep/goat movements GB>NI with industry
 Defra Welfare labelling call for evidence discussion
 Call with NFU & NBA
 AHDB Medicine Hub Industry Liaison Group
 APHA Industry Group meeting – bTB in sheep

5th Sheep Breeders Round Table call
 BHS call

Appendix – Press releases issued and their social media reach

Week commencing	Press releases issued	Social media reach on press release links - Facebook
5 th July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Future farming schemes 2. Environment Secretary's climate change comments 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3.8k 2. 3.7k
12 th July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NSA response to National food strategy 2. The return of the ram sales 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2.6k 2. 7.7k
19 th July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NI protocol 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6.1k
26 th July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SCOPS dipper accreditation 2. One year to Sheep Event 3. 3. Sheep worrying reminder for school holidays 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4.6k 2. 6.3k 3. 3.3k
2 nd August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Second Solway winner 2. Love Lamb call to action 3. Northern region next gen event 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 9.2k 2. 14.8k 3. 2.7k
9 th August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sheep farming sustainability 2. NSA calls for increased sheep worrying action 3. Evaluation of breed variety / change to nation flock 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3.8k 2. 4.8k 3. 3.1k
16 th August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Next GENE-eration winners announced 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6.7k
23 rd August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SCOPS quarantine advice* 2. Search on for new face of Love lamb 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2k 2. 6.1k
30 th August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NSA begins countdown to COP 2. Eorganic Erasmus project 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1.3k 2. 3.5k
6 th September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final ram sales coming up 2. Shabby is the new chic webinar 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2.3k 2. 1.4k
13 th September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Landscape lacking lambs – COP 2. Love Lamb week review 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3.4k 2. (Series of social media posts through the week)
20 th September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NSA responds to sweeping statements made by media 2. Lifting of US ban on lamb imports 3. Welsh Govt White paper 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1.5k 2. 4.7k 3. 1.6k
27 th September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One month until SHWAP 2. Meet the faces of Love Lamb 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2.6k 2. 11.8k