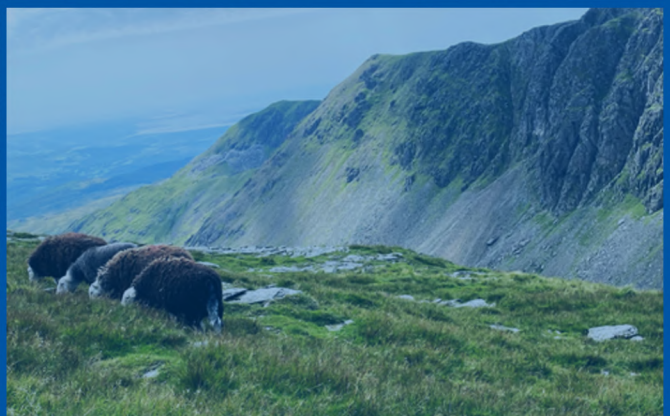


NSA

National Sheep Association

IMPACT REPORT

2025



A MESSAGE FROM THE NSA PRESIDENT



LORD INGLEWOOD

NSA President

We are currently living through a time of change in the countryside and agriculture. The future will have a place for sheep. That future could look different from now, but the form of that positive future is being forged, thanks to the unwavering support and representation from the National Sheep Association (NSA).

Most obviously, this process can be seen in the formal debates in and around agriculture and rural Britain in Parliament and the journalism they generate. But it goes much further than that. When such changes occur, there is a vast amount of discussion, consultation and debate among civil servants, lobbyists, politicians, academics and experts, of which most people are unaware. This is where NSA, under Phil Stocker's discerning leadership, comes in.

As a trusted participant in activities, NSA is putting the case for sheep at the forefront of

discussion. At the same time it feeds back to members and the industry more widely, often through conversations with the press and directly with members via the Sheep Farmer magazine, newsletters or NSA website. NSA can learn the way in which the wind is blowing and what is actually achievable and how we might get there.

In times like this, NSA working as the voice of the sheep sector really matters, and NSA is doing that persistently and reliably on your behalf.



A MESSAGE FROM THE NSA CHIEF EXECUTIVE



PHIL STOCKER
NSA Chief Executive

As an organisation committed to the long-term interests of UK sheep farming, NSA is driven by impact, even when that impact is not immediate or easily measured. Much of our work happens behind the scenes and unfolds over long timescales. Engagement in policy development, collaboration with researchers and sustained work across the sheep farming community often takes many years, sometimes decades. Whether influencing the future direction of government farming support, contributing to legislative change on traceability, movements, trade or animal welfare, or shaping wider debate, progress is rarely rapid – but it is meaningful.

The value of this work is not always visible in the short term. Environmental conditions, political cycles and external pressures all shape outcomes, meaning NSA's contribution is often only fully understood over time. Frequently, our impact is preventative: helping to ensure policies are workable, proportionate and grounded in the realities of sheep farming. In some cases, success is

reflected in what did not happen – outcomes that would have been more damaging without NSA's informed, evidence-based input. While this may not generate headlines, it delivers real and lasting value for the industry.

NSA is the only membership organisation dedicated solely to UK sheep farming, while recognising its place within wider conversations around land use, climate change, environmental stewardship, healthy diets, and fibre and textiles. Acting as both guardian and voice of the sector, NSA works to protect what sheep farming does well, while also challenging itself to adapt, evolve and withstand scrutiny in a rapidly changing world. Credibility and trust, within the industry and beyond, are central to this role.

Fundamentally, NSA acts as a bridge, connecting sheep farmers with policymakers, researchers, the public and other stakeholders whose decisions shape the sector's future. This first NSA Impact Report shows how that work translated into real progress during 2025, highlighting achievements that may not always be visible, but which collectively demonstrate the influence, reach and long-term value of NSA's role in UK sheep farming.

For NSA, our impact means securing meaningful, long-term progress for sheep farming. It's about shaping decisions, influencing policy and preventing harmful outcomes, so the sector remains viable, credible and resilient for the future.

NSA'S VISION

NSA exists to champion a strong, resilient and respected UK sheep sector, today and for generations to come.

It believes sheep farming plays a vital role in the UK's food system, landscapes, rural economies and cultural heritage. At a time of rapid change in agriculture, land use and environmental policy, NSA works to ensure sheep and those who keep them are understood, valued and fairly represented.

NSA's vision is: sheep farmers who are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed to best practice, supported by strong networks, evidence-based policy and practical information.

A wider public and policy environment that recognises the contribution sheep make to society, from producing high-quality food and fibre to managing landscapes, supporting biodiversity and sustaining rural communities.

NSA is the only organisation wholly dedicated to the success of the UK sheep sector. With members in every part of the UK, and a structure that reflects the diversity of sheep farming across the four nations, NSA is uniquely placed to represent sheep farmers at national and devolved levels, support the next generation of industry leaders and provide long-term, credible leadership for the sector.

NSA brings its vision to life through four connected pillars:



Economics

Supporting a viable and profitable sheep sector that rewards good practice, underpins rural economies and enables long-term investment.

Environment

Championing sheep farming as part of the solution, contributing positively to climate goals, land management, biodiversity and resilient farming systems.

Health

Promoting high standards of animal health and welfare, supporting disease prevention and responsible medicines use, and encouraging evidence-based approaches that improve flock resilience, productivity and long-term sustainability.

Society

Strengthening the people and communities behind the sector, inspiring future farmers and building understanding between sheep farming and the wider public.

In delivering this vision, NSA looks outward influencing policy, working in partnership and speaking up for the sector, and inward, ensuring resources are used effectively, responsibly and in the best interests of members and the industry as a whole.



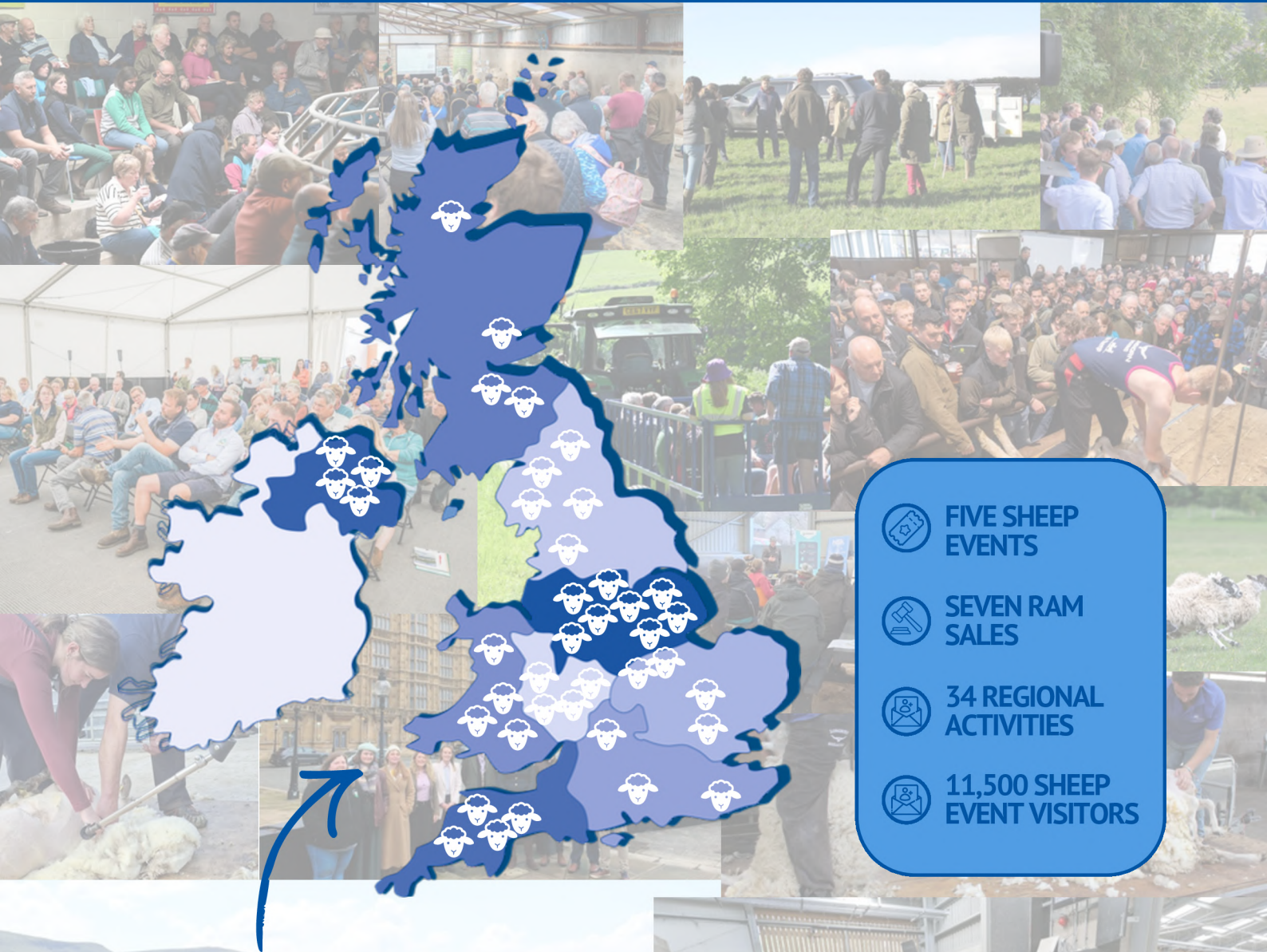
THE VOICE OF THE UK SHEEP SECTOR



NSA EVENTS 2025

Connecting farmers and strengthening the sector.

57 events were held across the UK in 2025. These included NSA Sheep events, NSA Next Generation events and regional activities.



THIS MAP SHOWS THE SPREAD OF NSA EVENTS IN 2025

These events provide trusted spaces for knowledge exchange, peer learning and debate, ensuring farmers are informed, connected and better equipped to respond to change.



DELIVERING VALUE FOR MEMBERS

NSA RAM SALES

Over 3,180

Rams sold

£975

Ram sale average

Over £3 million

Invested back into industry¹

NSA Ram Sales are recognised throughout the industry as well-respected multi-breed sales offering rams that have all been individually inspected for health and quality before entering the sale ring. As one of the benefits of NSA membership, only members can enter their stock into NSA sales.

In 2025, following news on bluetongue restrictions, seven sales were held across England and Wales.

AWARENESS OF RURAL ISSUES

2,000

Sheep worrying signs distributed to members²

NSA holds an annual campaign week each spring to raise awareness of the serious issue of sheep worrying by dogs. NSA has also increased its involvement with police rural crime teams.

NSA GRAZIERS LIST

2,000

Views on NSA Graziers List webpage³

30 +

Graziers and landowners connected

Connecting arable farmers with NSA sheep farming members to allow individuals to find grazing in their area, and arable farmers to find livestock to graze their land.

NSA LAMBING LIST

238

Placements added in 2025

More than 49,000

Page views of the NSA Lambing List⁴

An NSA member benefit, offering a match-making service that helps veterinary and agricultural students gain essential work experience and NSA members find help at lambing time.

NSA ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

Over 4.8 million

Views on Facebook and Instagram

More than 5,600

New followers on social media⁵

NSA has a number of social media channels to inform the industry of the most up-to-date issues affecting the sector and highlighting topics of interest to followers. In 2025, NSA introduced TikTok to its communications.

SHARING NEWS AND KNOWLEDGE

92

Press releases sent in 2025⁶

50

Email newsletters to members

Further forms of NSA communications are press releases to the agricultural sector and the NSA Weekly Email Update, sharing NSA activities from the week, news and events with members to keep them informed and engaged.

1. Based on the total recorded number of sheep sold at NSA Ram Sales in 2025.

2. Total number of NSA public information signs distributed freely to NSA Members.

3. Based on the total number of visitors to view the NSA Graziers List (nationalsheep.org.uk/graziers-list) in 2025.

4. Based on the total number adverts posted and visitors to view the NSA Lambing List (nationalsheep.org.uk/next-generation/lambing-work-experience) in 2025.

5. Based on the 2025 Meta analytics for NSA social media channels.

6. Based on the total NSA press releases published to mainstream, national, local and agricultural press in 2025.

NSA'S INFLUENCE ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

COLLECTIVE EFFORT FOR LONG TERM GAIN

Working with members, NSA Regions, committees, industry partners and fellow agricultural organisations, NSA continues to be a respected, evidence-based voice for sheep farming – influencing policy and investing in the future of the sector.

NSA works consistently and constructively behind the scenes in industry meetings with Defra and other government departments, influencing decisions at the point they are shaped rather than after they are made.

SPEAKING OUT TO SHAPE OUTCOMES

Throughout 2025, NSA has spoken up and challenged issues affecting the sector, from farm assurance to future farm support.

NSA helped to trigger the Farm Assurance reform, challenging its efficiency for low input sheep systems.

Later on in the year, NSA helped to influence the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) during its initial stages, capital grants as well as future farming programmes across all UK nations.

LONG-TERM THINKING FOR PROGRESS

As a key part of the NSA vision, work has continued in 2025 to be part of and to share progressive health and welfare initiatives with members.

NSA has been central to the co-design of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, along with the initiation of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) taskforce of vaccine supply and availability.

NSA supported and was part of extensive industry research on flock health, including providing a financial contribution to the production of a louping ill vaccine.

Work by NSA has influenced livestock genetics programmes through projects and the enviro-index. NSA continues to make the case for the recognition of genetic diversity in national sheep genetic programmes.

NSA remains an active contributor to industry work on carbon capture and emissions measurements.

NSA has also led development of a sheep welfare strategy and supported national initiatives via the Ruminant Health & Welfare Group.



UK Government



Veterinary Medicines Directorate



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



NSA'S INFLUENCE ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY



LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

NSA continues to provide thoughtful challenge on major issues such as species reintroduction, slowing and reframing the debate whilst ensuring livestock welfare and rural community impacts are fully considered.

NSA has and will continue to champion sustainable sheep farming. The NSA Sheep and the Sustainability Agenda (produced 2024) has been shared widely throughout 2025, helping to establish a credible, farmer-led platform on this topic.

NSA contributed to Baroness Minette Batters' Farming Profitability Review in 2025. Following its release at the end of 2025, NSA hopes to work with government to help shape future thinking coming from the review.

Plans also began in 2025 for the flagship event of the association, NSA Sheep Event 2026. A key date in the sheep farming calendar that provides opportunity for discussion on the issues explained here, networking and learning.

REGIONAL ACTION FOR NATIONAL BENEFIT

In 2024, NSA Cymru/Wales Region invested £60,000 into the Wales Veterinary Science Centre to help fund the Enferplex antibody test to screen for potentially devastating flock disease.

The Welsh Region has also shared input into the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), Sheep Advisory Board, Sheep Scab Industry Group and Livestock Identification Advisory Group (LIDAG).

NSA Northern Region has taken steps, funding a science and literature review on sheep grazing for nature, alongside a successful Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) bid that will see this new project begin in 2026.

NSA South West Region ensured farmers' voices were heard ahead of proposals to release White-tailed Sea Eagles around Exmoor.

In Northern Ireland, NSA spoke out to retain the MV status of the Region and called out Daera for the lack of recognition for the sheep sector in farming support.

NSA Scottish Region has remained firm in beliefs that lynx should not be reintroduced to the UK, and continue to discuss the issue with those proposing the idea. The region has also been involved in sheep scab working groups, the sheep industry leadership group and conversations with government around destocking and traceability.

QUIET PROGRESS. COLLECTIVE EFFORT. LONG-TERM GAIN.

2025 has shown what can be achieved when NSA members, regions, committees, staff and partners work effectively together.

NSA's role is to make policy fairer, workable and more effective for sheep farmers, often through detailed engagement that happens well before issues reach the headlines.

By influencing policy early and consistently, NSA helps ensure farming support, regulation and welfare initiatives are practical, evidence-based and workable for sheep farmers across the UK.



KINDLY SUPPORTED BY



SUPPORTING FUTURE FARMERS

In 2025, NSA Next Generation expanded its support for young sheep enthusiasts, contributing to growing the next generation of sheep farmers and sector professionals across the UK.

SHEPHERD COMPETITIONS

NSA Marches Region and NSA Eastern Region held their Next Generation shepherd competitions, along with the competitions held at NSA Sheep South West, NSA Sheep NI, NSA Highland Sheep and NSA Welsh Sheep through the summer.

The winners of regional competitions will be put forward to represent the region and compete for the national title at NSA Sheep Event 2026.

VISIT TO WESTMINSTER

In 2025, NSA Next Generation delivered a two-day visit to Westminster, designed to immerse sheep farmers in UK agricultural policy and decision-making processes. A group of young shepherds from across the UK had an in-depth experience of how legislation, regulation and policy are shaped and how it impacts the sector.

The insightful visit also included dinner with Tim Farron MP, discussions with Daniel Zeichner MP, Alistair Carmichael MP and senior Defra officials. The visit was completed with meetings on trade and the UK market with the New Zealand High Commission and Marks & Spencer.

WORKSHOPS

The workshops equipped young people with practical skills and knowledge essential for successful sheep farming careers. These sessions followed themes of shearing, parasite management and pre-lambing advice, catering to all experience levels, including real-world, hands-on learning.



- FOUR NEWSLETTERS
- FIVE WORKSHOPS
- SIX SHEPHERD COMPETITIONS



NSA REGIONAL ACTIVITY

A SNAPSHOT OF 2025



NSA Northern Region

2025 was one to remember. We held an interesting meeting on carcass balancing in February and then held NSA North Sheep in June which had an incredible turnout - despite the weather! In July, we held a competition for young sheep farmers at the Great Yorkshire Show and then studied sustainability together in October. In 2026, we will be looking for our region's shepherd for the national competition at NSA Sheep Event, see you there!



NSA Scottish Region

This was a busy year for us. NSA Highland Sheep took place in June, proving a resounding success. Other highlights included the Lamb for St Andrew's Day Dinner and the Royal Highland Show. Looking ahead, we invite you all to join us at NSA Scotsheep in June. This will be an exciting platform to showcase innovation and Scottish sheep production.



NSA Northern Ireland Region

This year we held NSA Sheep Northern Ireland. The event was a huge success. Thank you to all involved. We also had space at the Balmoral Show, which was excellent. In September, we joined Cafre and Teagasc for an Uplands Symposium, looking at all upland livestock farming can offer for the environment. We look forward to a year reconnecting with members in 2026 and hope to see you at Balmoral.



NSA Central Region

What a great year we've had! It all began with a fantastic sheep post mortem discussion, presented by Ben Strugnell. This was followed by a farm walk with NSA Next Generation Ambassador William Roobottom. We also held two enjoyable field days and a farm walk at Edale National Trust farm. Thanks to all involved! We can't wait to see what 2026 has in store and look forward to catching up at NSA Sheep Event.



NSA Wales/Cymru Region

The region had a busy year, involved in a range of policy discussions, along with a number of activities for members. In May, we held NSA Welsh Sheep, which was a brilliant day and thanks goes to all involved. The region also attended seven farm walks in September with Farming Connect's annual series of farm visits. We look forward to many more exciting events in 2026 and hope to see many old and new faces through the year.



NSA Eastern Region

2025 was a fantastic year for NSA Eastern Region, with a successful farm walk on a warm dry day in June and a memorable Next Generation Shepherd event in September, held in tribute to Cameron Farnan. This inspired the next generation and showcased the region's talent. 2026 promises exciting opportunities including field days, which always provide valuable experiences and strengthen our community.



NSA Marches Region

2025 was an exciting year for NSA Marches Region. We began the year with a fascinating meeting discussing the opportunities and myths surrounding halal meat. We were encouraged by the standards at our Next Generation Shepherd competition and wish our winners luck at NSA Sheep Event 2026. In October, we had a brilliant day with specialist dog trainers to help train sheepdogs. We now look forward to 2026 and everything it has to offer.



NSA South West Region

We held NSA Sheep South West in June, which was a spectacular day, blessed with good weather! We later held a webinar to discuss bluetongue and the impact it could have on flocks. Just days later, we had our ram sale, which had incredible clearance and proved a great success. The region also enjoyed a farm walk in autumn, looking at carbon from a farming and business perspective. In 2026, we look forward to hosting more events to connect and learn with members.



NSA South East Region

The year began with a fascinating Annual Members' Meeting. We then enjoyed a fabulous farm walk in East Sussex, shortly followed by our ram sale. Though the major event for our region this year was the Sheep, Health, Wealth and Production (SHWAP) conference. As for 2026, we look forward to our Next Generation Shepherd competition, annual ram sale, farm walks and field days which will all make for great events to socialise and learn together.



DRIVING INNOVATION FOR THE FUTURE OF SHEEP FARMING

NSA is a respected partner on many key industry research projects.

Its strong network puts NSA in a great position to provide advice for research projects, as well as the ability to identify, organise and host farmer focus groups, distribute farmer surveys and provide a strong interaction with industry stakeholders.

Through its involvement in projects in 2025, NSA has helped to deliver:

- Real data from real farms, not desk-based assumptions
- Evidence to support upland and native breed systems
- New ways to add value to sheep meat
- Practical tools for lower-emission, more efficient flocks
- Stronger farmer voices in policy and scheme design

Together, these projects are helping to ensure sheep are recognised as part of the solution for food production, the environment and rural livelihoods.

In 2025, NSA helped to promote innovation and the future of the sheep sector by involvement in many important projects, including these four innovative pieces of research:

British Heritage Sheep Meat Traceability Project

Determining whether sheep meat can be distinguished by breed, age and grazing location, paving the way for more targeted marketing beyond simply selling 'lamb.'

This project is laying the groundwork for farmers to differentiate their sheep and secure better prices, especially for native and heritage breeds.

Forage for CH4nge

By measuring methane emissions from sheep grazing natural upland pastures, this project aims to provide real-world evidence that low-input systems can be efficient and play a role in reaching net-zero.

Land Use for Net Zero (LUNZ) – Grassland Resilience

Showing how sheep fit into future land-use systems that deliver profitability, soil health, biodiversity and net-zero goals.

This project provides evidence that keeping sheep in the system improves resilience and supports future schemes that recognise grazing as a public good.

Breed for CH4nge

Breed for CH4nge aims to promote the breeding of sheep that naturally produce less methane, without compromising health or performance.

The project is creating practical breeding tools that allow farmers to select low-emission sheep as part of normal breeding decisions, not as a bolt-on requirement.

This work ensures future farming policy and practice is built on real-world evidence from sheep systems, protecting both farm viability and public confidence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

* NSA Gold Supporters

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- Farmgene
- Agriconnect
- Rurtec Ltd
- Virbac Limited
- Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC)
- Tornado Wire
- Logic
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- McCartneys
- Datamars
- Rumenco & Nettex
- Trident Feeds
- Suzuki GB
- AHDB
- MSD Animal Health
- British Wool
- The Woodland Trust
- Ceva Animal Health

Supporters and partners help NSA to continue doing the work it does and help extend the impact of NSA.

Find details about corporate support at nationalsheep.org.uk/support-us

* NSA Corporate Supporters

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- NIAB
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- XL Farm Vets
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- Shearwell Data
- Co-op
- Thomas Bell & Sons Ltd
- Bedmax Shavings
- Welshpool Livestock Sales
- Clipfitter
- Gallagher
- Rappa

THE VOICE OF THE UK SHEEP SECTOR



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

As we close the chapter on another dynamic year for NSA, we are energised by the momentum building into 2026. This year is already offering a rich programme of regional activities, workshops, ram sales and specialist shows that will bring sheep farmers together to share insight, expertise and innovation. From early-year regional members' meetings to NSA Sheep Events in the summer followed by a suite of ram sales, there will be no shortage of opportunities to connect and learn.

At the heart of the year will be the flagship NSA Sheep Event in July at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern, where we'll once again showcase the very best of our industry - from trade stands and specialist seminars to pioneering competitions and the next generation of shepherding talent.

NSA is also pushing forward on the policy front. It continues to advocate for a sheep sector that is both sustainable and profitable, engaging with evolving farm support mechanisms, environmental policy and market transparency measures that matter to flock keepers. It will continue to speak on behalf of sheep farmers and their questions around future farm support and regulatory work to bring greater clarity and fairness across supply chains.

Equally exciting is the growth of NSA Next Generation, empowering young leaders with workshops, ambassador opportunities, policy engagement and fantastic competitions designed to build skills and confidence for tomorrow's challenges.

Together, these events, voices and actions will help shape a resilient, innovative and forward-thinking sheep sector in 2026 and beyond. We can't wait to see you in 2026.

NSA 2026 Events

10
JUNE

WEDNESDAY

NSA Scot Sheep

*Wedderlie Farm, Gordon,
Berwickshire*

*By kind permission of the
Tilson family*

28
JULY

TUESDAY

NSA Sheep Event

*Three Counties
Showground, Malvern*



NSA is only able to do this work thanks to the support of its members, partners and supporters.

By joining, engaging with your region, attending events or sharing our work, you help strengthen the voice of the UK sheep sector and shape its future.

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