

NSA 2025 Event Attendance Guidelines for Breed Societies and Sheep Breeders around Bluetongue virus (BTV)

Our objectives

To ensure breed societies and sheep breeders can maximise the opportunities presented by attendance at NSA events.

To minimise the risk of disease transmission and protect the host farm and neighbouring farms.

To maintain the NSA's credibility and reputation by following evidence and best practice to minimise risks whilst recognising the importance of trade and livestock movements.

Recognising Uncertainty

At the NSA, we greatly value the presence and contribution of sheep breed societies and individual breeders at our events. These gatherings are a key platform to showcase British sheep farming and promote both established and emerging breeds and crosses. However, we recognise that this year presents unique challenges for everyone involved.

We fully acknowledge the uncertainty faced by breeders, societies, and the wider agricultural community. It's an uncertain time not just for our attendees, but for the NSA and our hosts as well. We want to approach this season with understanding, empathy, and proactive planning.

Disease Risk and Industry Responsibility

The risk of disease transmission, particularly in relation to notifiable diseases such as Bluetongue (BTV), is a significant concern. The potential economic and social impacts of disease spread are considerable. We have a collective responsibility to minimise this risk and to avoid any action that could compromise our sector's health, viability, or public trust.

The Value of live Sheep at NSA Events

The presence of sheep is a cornerstone of NSA events. They enhance the atmosphere, provide valuable educational and promotional opportunities, and showcases the best of UK sheep genetics. However, we must balance this with our commitment to protect our hosts, their neighbouring farms, and the wider industry.

We are working closely with each of our event host to develop tailored, farm-specific approaches that prioritise their confidence and biosecurity. We ask for your full support and cooperation in this process.

Compliance with Movement Controls

The impact and transmission of BTV during 2025 is uncertain. Movement controls across Great Britain and vaccination are the two main tools available to manage spread. Vaccination decisions are down to individuals and movement controls and restrictions this year will evolve according to what we experience. We expect all participants at NSA events to fully comply with current Defra and devolved nation regulations around sheep movements.

Breed Promotion Under Restrictions

We understand that these restrictions may limit the movement of sheep, particularly from areas under tighter control zones. To support societies and breeders:

- **We encourage breed societies to consider sourcing stock from areas local to the host farm** where feasible
- **If you are unable to bring sheep due to restrictions in place or requests from our host farms**, we will work with you to ensure you can still participate meaningfully. Breed societies that cannot bring stock should speak to respective event organisers about what can be done to allow effective breed promotion. This could be help with:
 - supplying electricity for visual aids,
 - furniture to make stands welcoming
 - or wider ways to promote societies and breeders through social media posts

Adapting and Moving Forward Together

We want every society and breeder to feel part of the solution – by protecting the industry, adapting to challenges, and continuing to promote their breeds. Together, we can still have a successful event, even without stock on-site should this be the case. The value of networking, brand presence, and sharing knowledge remains strong.

Breed societies are strongly encouraged to:

- Be proactive in communicating with NSA and the event organisers
- Follow all terms and conditions of your booking contract
- Reach out if there are concerns or special circumstances. Each situation will be handled on an individual basis

We are committed to working with you. By staying informed, flexible, and united, we can protect our flocks, our events, and our industry's future. Event organisers will keep attendees informed but in case of queries, please contact:

NSA Welsh Sheep – Helen Roberts helen@nationalsheep.org.uk

NSA North Sheep – Chris Adamson chris@nationalsheep.org.uk

NSA Highland Sheep – Euan Emslie euanemslie053@gmail.com

NSA Sheep South West – Sue Martyn suem@nationalsheep.org.uk

NSA Sheep NI – Ellen Moorhead ni@nationalsheep.org.uk

Thank you for your understanding. We look forward to welcoming you to our events.