



National Sheep Association

NSA Central Winter Fair will kick-start the year for sheep farmers

The NSA Central Region Winter Fair – to be held at Bakewell Market on Thursday 24th January – has the potential to ‘kick-start your 2013 farming year’, says NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker.

“Lamb prices are challenging and times feel tough at the moment – but the best way to respond is to move forward and look for ways to increase our resilience and success, both through maximising outputs and income, and through controlling inputs and costs. This is why I urge people not to miss this year’s Winter Fair – it has the potential to kick-start your 2013 farming year, providing plenty of inspiration and new, practical ideas to take home with you,” Mr Stocker says.

Ian Turner (*pictured right*), a member of NSA for over 20 years and a past chairman for Central Region, agrees and says he will definitely be there on Thursday, including for the seminar “Landscape, Leisure and Livestock: Have we got the balance right?”

As Farm Manager for Chatsworth Settlement Trustees, he feels has learned to get the balance right between “Landscape, Leisure and Livestock” and the leisure activities that take place in the beautiful surroundings of Chatsworth are staged within the context of farming. With two vast areas of Parkland (450 and 350 acres) which have to ‘look like an extension of the front lawn’ of the beautiful Chatsworth House, the only way to do it is to have animals to graze it – sheep on and off all year round, deer present constantly, and some cattle (about 80) in the summer.

The farming enterprises have learned to adapt to the numbers of visitors to the Park by not putting out new-born lambs till they are a month old (to stop people picking them up) and Ian agrees with NSA that there is a real need for an educational role with the general public about always having their dogs on a lead. In addition, the ELS, HLS and SSSI schemes help to support environmental standards in other ways, and they also go towards the capital costs of maintaining walls and field barns. The many leisure activities and attractions to the general public, such as visiting the House and gardens, the farm shop, using the caravan club site, going to the Country Fair and Horse Trials, and many other events, would be greatly diminished without the presence of the livestock.

As well as the leisure activities, Chatsworth have always run shearing courses annually, in conjunction with the Wool Board, to give youngsters in the area the opportunity to learn these skills. He welcomes the improved prices for wool in the past 2 years, and hopes to hear even better news from the seminar “Your Wool Board – Working for You”. As regards “Liver Fluke, Detection, Control and Treatment”, a seminar to be run by Novartis Animal Health, Ian and the team dose all of the breeding flock annually as a protection, because all their water sources for the livestock are from river beds, which automatically make their stock more vulnerable. As for the seminar “CAP Reform – update on developments”, we are all wanting to know what the proposals are likely to be, and whether they will correspond to the needs of the industry.

Others who will definitely be there include Kath Birkinshaw, another former chairperson, who commented that, “In this day and age of higher costs and limited resources, it is harder than ever to make a profit, so your decision-making has to be as up-to-date and informed as possible, so the Winter Fair is an essential event to attend”.

Current NSA Central Region Chairman, Bob Payne added: “There is something here for everyone, whether you are a school leaver, a new entrant to sheep farming, a student or an established sheep farmer. We hope this Winter Fair will help you to increase your knowledge and develop your business.”



Ian Turner sees sheep as an essential part of the mix of landscape, leisure and livestock on the Chatsworth Estate.