

SCOTLAND

WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY

JANUARY 2022 EDITION

www.nsascotland.org



CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Jen Craig, Normangill, Crawford

Kindly sponsored by:



Welcome to our second edition of the NSA Scotland newsletter.

May I start off by wishing you all a Happy New Year. I hope 2022 is one of clarity and direction for the sheep industry and continuation of the elevated trade we have been experiencing for the past year.

2022 is going to be another busy year for NSA Scotland. We are working hard to put the final touches on our plans for NSA Scotsheep 2022, and we are very much looking forward to welcoming everyone to the McNee's at Over Finlurg for a long overdue day out!

We will continue to build on the work we have been doing for the past year. The industry led working group looking at sheep scab (delayed in part due to the pandemic) was resurrected at the end of 2021 with NSA Scotland taking on the role of chairing the group. We are

pleased to say that the focus on sheep scab will continue to progress as we look to form a pilot scheme in Scotland following the work which is already ongoing in the other nations of the UK. OPA is another significant sheep health concern which is becoming ever more prominent within the industry and is something we are looking to establish a similar working group to take action forward.

In November, NSA held a very successful next generation event at United Auctions Stirling Mart, which was extremely well attended. We

would like to thank all attendees and speakers for taking part and United Auctions for the use of their premises. We will be looking to build on this engagement with the younger generation across the region in the future and we are hopeful that NSA Scotland will be able to get around the country to engage with all our members more than we have been able to recently.

As ever, if you have any suggestions or want to get more involved with NSA Scotland please get in touch with us!

OFFICERS | NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND

WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY



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

10TH JANUARY

Scottish Government - Rural Stakeholders Meeting (4 Day Working Week)

13TH JANUARY

Ramblers Scotland - Scottish Paths Map and Landowners Meeting

21ST JANUARY

On Farm Meeting with Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands by kind permission of the Ivory Family (Doldy Farms) and Pamela Nicol, Farm Manager

28TH JANUARY

NSA Scotland ARMM, United Auctions, Stirling Agriculture Centre. Hybrid Meeting.

28TH JANUARY

NSA Scotland Dinner to be held within the Menteith Suite, Macdonald Inchrya Hotel, Grange Road, Falkirk, FK2 0YB.

31ST JANUARY

Scottish Government – Animal Health and Welfare General Stakeholder Group Meeting

Our events

12TH JANUARY

NSA Breakfast Club Webinar - Who will eat UK Sheep meat in 2022? A review of work abroad to promote your product.

[Register to attend here](#)

28TH JANUARY

NSA Scotland ARMM, 3pm United Auctions, Stirling Agriculture Centre, FK9 4RN. Hybrid Meeting. [Register here to attend by Zoom](#)

28TH JANUARY

NSA Scotland Dinner to be held at 7pm within the Menteith Suite, Macdonald Inchrya Hotel, Grange Road, Falkirk, FK2 0YB with an after-dinner speaker Jimmy Dick, a well known member of the Aberdeenshire farming community and current president of the Royal Northern Agricultural Society. **For more details and to book a table, please [click here.](#)**

2ND FEBRUARY

NSA Breakfast Club Webinar - UK Sheep breeds in the world: serving the international demand for UK Sheep genetics. Register to attend here 1st June – NSA Scotsheep 2022 By kind permission of Robert and Hazel McNee, Over Finlurg, Tealing, By Dundee, DD4 0QE. **For more information, [click here.](#)**

#Run1000

From 1st to 31st January Jen (NSA Scotland Chair) and Grace (NSA Scotland Coordinator) will be taking part in the #Run1000 challenge aiming to walk and run as many miles as possible to raise awareness of mental wellbeing in rural areas.



This is part of the Five Nations #Run1000 which challenges Scotland, Wales, England, Ireland and New Zealand in a competition to run a minimum of 1000 miles in January! It isn't about the speed or the distance, it is all about the taking part no matter how little the distance is, every mile is counted. And all money raised goes directly to supporting eight fantastic charities. Scotland's chosen charity this year will again be RSABI alongside 7 other fantastic charities, all of whom, provide mental health support for those within the rural sector. And if you can't take part then please do consider donating to #Run1000 and cheer all the participants on from afar throughout the month of January.

To keep an eye on Team Scotland's progress, [click here.](#)

CORDIALLY INVITE ALL MEMBERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES TO JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL REGIONAL MEMBERS MEETING (AGM) DINNER TO BE HELD AT

MACDONALD INCHRYA HOTEL, GRANGE ROAD, FALKIRK, FK2 0YB

ON FRIDAY 28TH JANUARY 2022 AT 7.00PM FOR 7.30PM

AFTER DINNER SPEAKER - JIMMY DICK, A WELL-KNOWN MEMBER OF THE ABERDEENSHIRE FARMING COMMUNITY AND CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL NORTHERN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The NSA Scotland Annual Regional Members Meeting (AGM) will be held at 3.00 pm, within the Conference Suite, Stirling Agricultural Centre, Stirling, FK9 4RN, which you are welcome to attend.

RSVP, FURTHER ENQUIRIES AND OTHER TICKETS BY FRIDAY 14TH JANUARY 2022 TO:

Euan Emslie - NSA Scotland Events Organiser & Secretariat
M: 07729 346135 E: euanemsle053@gmail.com

www.nsascotland.org Dress: Lounge Suits



NSA Lambing List Now Open

The NSA Lambing List is now open and ready for members to add details of any lambing placements that may need to be filled for the coming lambing season. Add your details at

www.nationalsheep.org.uk/lambing-list or contact NSA Head Office for further information.

Photo Credit: John Robson

NSA Scotsheep 2022



Show & Sale of Pairs Ewe Hoggs

Entries are now being accepted for the multi-breed show and sale of pairs of ewe hoggs which will feature at this year's event. It is anticipated that we will attract a strong line-up of ewe hoggs born in 2021 from well-known breeders across the country.

The judge for the pre-sale show is United Auctions' retired sheep auctioneer and sales director Matt Stevenson, Gargunnoch, Stirling and will have nine classes of pairs of ewe hoggs to judge from the classes exhibitors wish to enter in, and include 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.

Closing date for the entries is Friday, May 5 and an entry fee of £25 per pair (plus VAT) should be made payable to NSA Scotsheep. One entry ticket to the event will be supplied per exhibitor and further exhibitor entry tickets can be purchased for £10 (including VAT).

Sheep entered for the sale must be penned before 7pm on Tuesday, May 31 or by 7am on Wednesday, June 1, to allow judging to take place within pens at 9am on the day of the event.

Prize money per class includes £50 for first prize, £25 for second and £10 for third, with the overall champion attracting an additional cash prize of £100. All sheep entered for the show must be offered for sale which will be conducted by United Auctions at 4pm. If sheep cannot be uplifted by purchasers on the day, it is hoped that arrangements can be made for buyers to collect their purchases from the premises of the vendor within 14 days.

Planning is well underway for Scotland's leading sheep event NSA Scotsheep 2022, due to take place on Wednesday, June 1 at Over Finlurg, Tealing, Dundee.



Following a recent organising committee meeting with event hosts Robert and Hazel McNee, who farm a successful beef and sheep enterprise on the 740-acre unit, this one-day event promises to be a fantastic, informative day out, with a packed programme of events already in place.

Major sponsor for the event is Virgin Money, along with mainline sponsors of Agri-Lloyd, British Wool, Caltech-Crystalix, Scotbeef, United Auctions, MSD Animal Health, Shearwell Data, with support from Quality Meat Scotland so far.

"After a difficult period of no events in the farming calendar, Robert and Hazel, along with the NSA Scotland and the local organising committee, are really looking forward to welcoming farmers, enthusiasts and school children to Over Finlurg next June," said event chairman Willy Millar. "The farm is in a great location and will be of interest to all involved within the agricultural sector. We hope to welcome as many of you as possible to this major Scottish farming event."

In addition to giving visitors the opportunity of a farm tour to view the family's pedigree and commercial sheep and beef enterprises, NSA Scotsheep, will also include trade stands, educational exhibits, practical working demonstrations, competitions, seminars, workshops and the show and sale of pairs of ewe hoggs. The organising committee is pleased to inform that 170 commercial, educational, sheep breeders and breed societies have carried their bookings forward from 2020, with stand bookings now open.

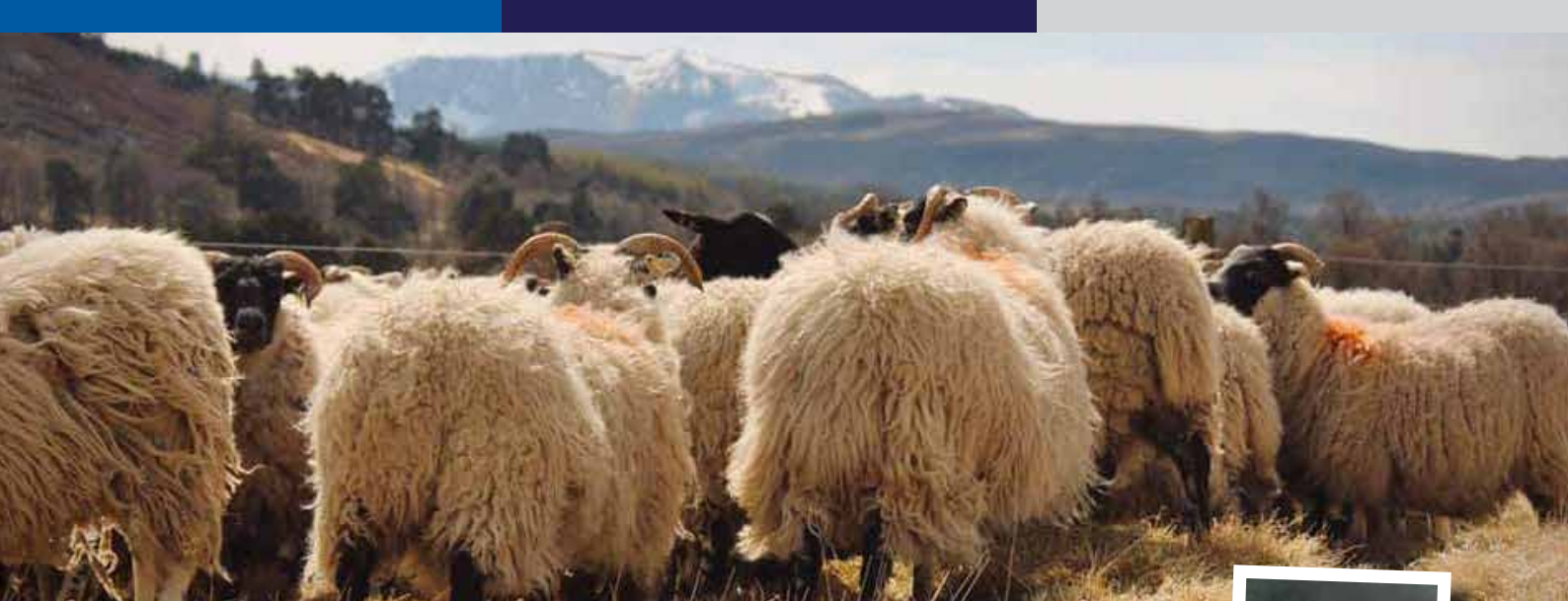
Support NSA while shopping



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.

Information on the event and the show and sale of pairs of ewe hoggs, including entry forms is available on the [NSA Scotsheep website](https://www.scotsheep.org.uk) or by contacting NSA Scotsheep 2022 Organiser:

Euan Emslie on Tel: 07729 346135 or Email: euanemslie053@gmail.com



Coordinator's Comment

Coordinator
Grace Reid



We have made it to 2022! But what lies in store for us? We have been promised new farm policies, strategies and further uptake of advancing technology, which to date, have all been a bit of a letdown...

What have we been doing?

In 2021, NSA Scotland covered many policy topics ranging from environmental challenges (including trees, carbon and biodiversity), animal health and welfare in the form of OPA, scab, transport, sheep worrying and castration and tail docking; species reintroductions; trade via GB to NI (and many other Brexit fall outs); ongoing Access Code issues (which reared their ugly heads in the peak and troughs of Covid lockdowns); and finally, a number of consultations which covered wool, hunting with dogs, future support, sheep worrying and animal welfare in transit to name just a few. But what else can be achieved and should be prioritised in the near future?

What will we be doing?

In short, all of it! The Scottish sheep industry deserves the widespread support and recognition of the challenges it faces on a daily basis. Our members new and old, continually juggle many plates which all have significant importance and cannot be set down. NSA Scotland are much the same. We strive to ensure all corners of the sheep industry are well represented at a Governmental but also at an industry level. Stakeholder collaboration and communication has been a keen focus of NSA Scotland which will continue to be built upon in the upcoming years. Whilst it is vitally important to have individual stances, it can similarly be crucial to have a collective voice which has the strength and support of agriculture in its entirety.

New Challenges?

Sheep farmers are a breed which are unlike any other. Food production is usually at the key of all of our endeavors with a multitude of strategies and approaches to get us to where we want to be - this is nothing new. To stand the test of time going forward, we need to be equipped with the tools and resources to conquer everything that is thrown at us. Devolved policies are differentiated for a reason. However, when our produce is marketed across the UK it is increasingly difficult to get our key messaging across to the consumer and the wider public to stand out particularly when the market is congested with 'alternative'

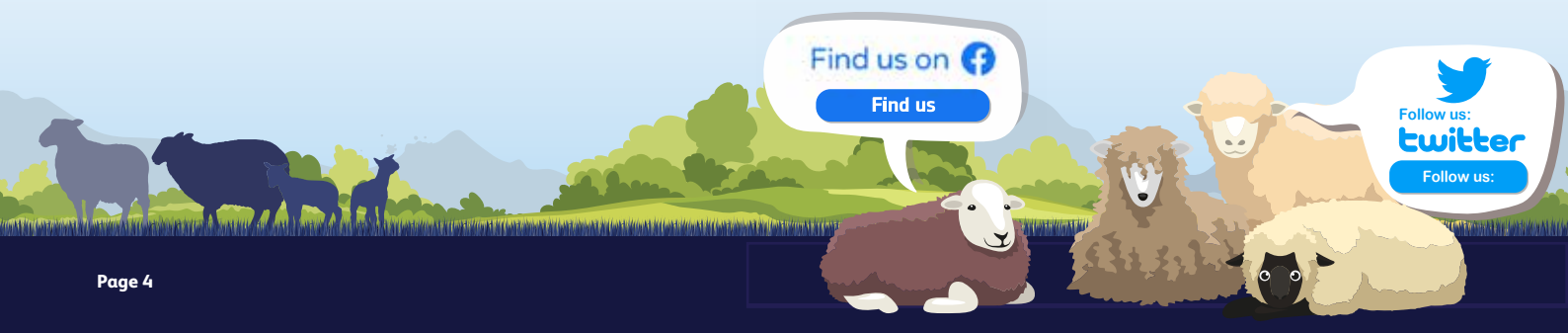
products. On a national basis, we need to have the confidence and fundamental education and communication of farming practices, food supply and not to mention responsibility of access taking in the countryside to ensure informed decisions can be made. Carbon and environmental aspects will no doubt be enshrined to ensure the protection of the few resources that are available.

Necessity is the mother of invention

Sheep can be seen as easy targets as their management is incredibly flexible compared to other production systems. Thus, the reason why our industry is at the greatest threat from trees and land availability. Again, our younger generations and new entrants need provisions in place to ensure early business viability and uptake. Our members are not unreasonable when it comes to employing new policies and ideas (just have a look at how many farmers take a keen interest in what their neighbours across the country are doing as an example!). Practical solutions which can be implemented has been the core stance of NSA Scotland consultation responses. To change the direction of capital funding completely will only result in many unintended consequences and further reduce the national flock and our workforce directly. This is the time to be exploring options and ensuring they can be made widely available. Communication is imperative! Efficient farming and crofting will have residual benefits for the industry, the Government and the public. Whilst flexibility and diversity are vital for survival, it is worthwhile remembering the paths we have taken to get to where we are.

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.



Keeping an Eye on Scottish Markets

Neil Wilson, Executive Director,
Institute of Auctioneers and
Appraisers in Scotland



THE INSTITUTE OF AUCTIONEERS
AND APPRAISERS IN SCOTLAND

As we hit the depths of winter and the turn of the year approaches it is always worth reflecting on the year past, but more importantly look ahead to what the future holds. 2021 has been a strange old year for us all and the Scottish livestock auction markets are no different. Our members have gone from enforcing physical distancing in the early part of the year to receiving a welcome boost of withdrawal of many restrictions just in time for the backend sales through to facing increased restrictions again as we head into 2022 as the Omicron variant bears down upon us.

Keeping up with Covid

Throughout all this, the trade for quality sheep across all grades has been terrific and it continues to underline the importance of the live ring to the sheep sector as a place for transparent trade and price discovery. Markets have tended to feel like safe places for much of that time, however over recent months IAAS have seen a significant slip in compliance with the COVID baseline measures, especially around the wearing of face coverings. Whilst we continue to work with Government and our livestock market members on improving compliance, we also need the support of you, our customers, and visitors to markets to also play a part. When you are attending the market please follow all of the baseline measures by wearing a face covering, unless exempt, registering for Test and Protect and regularly washing and sanitising your hands. These small things will help keep us all safer and protect a hard-earned trade for livestock into 2022.

Getting Lamb Into Scottish Schools

The Lamb for St Andrews Day campaign led by IAAS alongside NSA Scotland, QMS, Scottish Craft Butchers, John Scott Meat, Woodheads and NFUS was a resounding success in 2021. With your help we donated over 30,000 portions of lamb to schools across the country. Most of this was to hard pressed Home Economic departments to make lamb burgers and wraps with their pupils. Look these up on social media to see some really supportive comments from schools – much different to the normal red meat bashing we see these days!

We also had primary schools having lamb on their lunch menu and Jim Fairlie MSP managed to get a member's motion raised in Scottish Parliament on St Andrews Day to specifically talk about Scotch Lamb – look it up on the Scottish Parliament website, I am sure it will give you another confidence boost as MSP's widely praise the work you do. Interestingly, many school HE departments just do not have the budget to cook with red meat in their classes instead using cheap chicken for recipes. I am considering whether my farm business should 'sponsor' our local school HE department by providing red meat for pupils to cook with on a more regular basis. This might cost me a few hundred pounds per year, but it seems like a good long-term investment to ensure that the positive messages about red meat, and especially lamb, can be delivered by putting this wonderfully nutritious protein in the mouths of my future consumers.

This is one of the main reasons that George Purves has persevered with his promotion of Lamb for St Andrews Day since he and Willie Mitchell came up with the idea back in 2009. The uptake this year, 190+ schools and over 30,000 kids, shows that we can make a difference to our future consumers when we work together as an industry. Farming support with this campaign was really appreciated and our auctioneers are delighted to be able to lead the charge with that support behind them. We are already looking at how we can make the 2022 campaign even more effective and we would be delighted to hear your own feedback on how we can improve.

Your continued support of the live auction system is also appreciated. It remains the only truly transparent price discovery system for livestock and we know that it remains the benchmark and foundation pricing system for all other buyers and sellers of livestock, whether that be processor or private. Using IAAS members to trade livestock means that you are dealing with professionally qualified people who abide by the IAAS Code of Conduct and Conditions of Sale offering you a high level of assurance that your stock will be professionally handled and marketed with clear payment terms. This is a reassurance that other unregulated private agents cannot provide.

Finally, thank you for your custom across all IAAS members in 2021 and we hope to see you for another buoyant year in 2022.



A word from the Craft Butchers on your street

*Gordon King, Executive Manager,
Scottish Craft Butchers*



Scottish Craft Butchers have always made sure that local Scotch Lamb is available to the consumer across the country. Many local butchers buy from local farmers or through their local market. This short supply chain is something to highlight in these modern times where the consumer is much more focused on carbon footprints and sustainability.

In my own experience, the butcher's shop that I worked in was very near a famous hotel which had a Michelin starred restaurant within. The chef was a champion of using local suppliers and as such we supplied him with a range of Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb. His brother was a local sheep farmer who we had bought from over several years. It was a natural progression for us both to highlight this local supply chain to not only the shop customers but the restaurants discerning patrons. The relationship was one that involved a regular meeting, usually in the shop, between all 3 parties to discuss how the arrangement was working and to see if the quality of the product was matching the requirements of both the shop and the restaurant. Over a mug of tea various topics were discussed from grass moisture to carcass size to the size of the eye muscle on the loin. The working relationship continued for many years after I had moved on, but the conversations had showed that communication is key to all parties showing the high-quality Scotch Lamb to the consumer. The attention to detail shown at all stages of the process was something that all consumers found fascinating.

The challenge these days is that there is a large age group in society who will say they don't like the taste of lamb but will happily eat a donner kebab (smearred in chilli sauce) on the way home after a night out!

In today's online world many of the butchers and farmers can use social media to share the same story. For "Love Lamb Week" we encouraged local farmers and butchers to show pictures of the Lamb in the field and then on display in the chill. Both the farmer and the butcher tagged each other in their posts to let the consumer know exactly where the lamb was from and who was selling it. The upshot is that the consumer knew that the farmer and butcher knew each other well and knew each other's expectations in the working relationship.

A strong working relationship between the membership bodies is essential too. Over the last 18 months the communication and engagement between stakeholders in the food industry has been excellent. Scottish Craft Butchers were delighted to send our training assessor, Sean Graham, along to the NSA Next Generation Winter Conference at Stirling in November.

The chance to let the younger generation of sheep farmers see how the butcher will prepare the products to tempt the consumer was invaluable. The questions asked by the young farmers were on point and Sean enjoyed the interaction.

We also had the pleasure of hearing a presentation from Grace Reid at the Scottish Craft Butchers training awards, about the work of NSA Scotland with many of our members and awards finalists commenting to us later that they found what Grace had to say fascinating.

With the young farmers and young butchers fully convinced about the positive message we have to tell about Scotch Lamb it is now time to spread that news to the younger generation of consumers. This collaborative working going forward is essential to grow the demand for the high quality, locally sourced Scotch Lamb that Scotland farmers and butchers are renowned for.



Next Generation Matters

Michael Ritch, East Fingask, Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire

Summer 2022 will be the start of my 10th year since I officially came home to work on the family farm at East Fingask outside Oldmeldrum in Aberdeenshire alongside my father, grandfather and tractor man Kenny. Looking back, I don't know where the time's gone! At that time, we were farming about 700 acres with 100 Aberdeen Angus x suckler cows taking everything through to finishing whilst growing around 450 acres of malting barley and buying varying numbers of store lambs to finish through the winter.



Selecting the right genetics and breeding policy

The introduction of the breeding sheep flock to our farming system in 2015 has been a great success and having spent the last 5 years building up the flock, we are now realising the fruits of our labour with the fantastic trade for prime lambs at present, long may it continue! We have a very simple outdoor lambing system, lambing everything in 3 weeks from the 1st of May. We've used Logie hybrid tups from the start and lamb replacements as hogs with a strict culling policy which is set to get stricter still now that we are up to desired stocking numbers. The sheep venture has been a steep learning curve and every year we learn and adapt the system to try and improve.

Looking to the Future

We are currently experiencing the highest prices for our beef, lamb and cereals that I can recall, but with that has come the increase in cost of our inputs. What gives me confidence in the future success of my sheep flock however is that compared with the cattle and arable enterprises the inputs are minimal. I think the key to an efficient and profitable enterprise is simplicity. The more simple it is the less there is to go wrong! Despite all the bad press farmers have received of late regarding climate change and the environment etc. I have high hopes for a bright future, after all everyone's gotta eat and there's nothing more tasty than lamb!

Let's hope the next 10 years are as good, if not better, than the last!

Where we have got to

Today we are farming 1250 acres, with just shy of 200 cows, 750 acres of arable and a flock of 1000 ewes. This expansion was made possible by two opportunities. The first being a nearby block of land which came up for sale in 2015 which is now the main base for the ewe flock and the second was the offer from a neighbouring farm in 2017 to set up a contract farming agreement, both of which we snapped up with great enthusiasm. I think we've now reached the optimum level for each enterprise to complement one another and are now entering what I'm calling the consolidation phase where we can focus on improving efficiency and performance.

Taking part with NSA

My participation in the NSA Next Generation Programme in 2016 was a real confidence booster, being able to discuss with other young shepherds the pros and cons of our systems and the reasons why we were doing things a certain way gave me confidence that I was on the right track. I would highly recommend any young Shepherds out there to get involved with the NSA Next Generation Programme.



Click here to keep an eye out on the NSA Next Generation website for updates on exciting opportunities for young people in the industry!

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

Veterinary Corner

Ed Hill – Thrums Vet Group

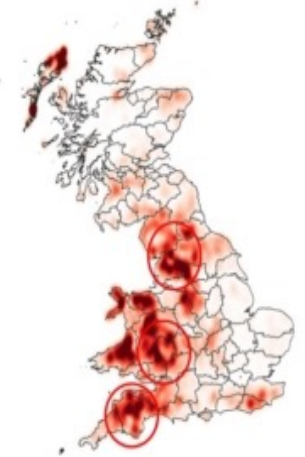


Sudden deaths

The winter months between breeding and lambing tend to be a wee bit quieter on the sheep vet front, however, there's still plenty to keep us busy. Recently we have dealt with a few outbreaks of pneumonia in lambs, that unfortunately often present themselves as sudden deaths. Deaths in lambs at this stage are always disappointing, especially given the value of them just now! In most cases lambs will have had two doses of a combined clostridial and pneumonia vaccine in the summer but with further investigation we usually find something suppressing the immune system and allowing the pneumonia viruses and bacteria to take hold. Typically, this is either a significant worm burden or a trace element deficiency, which can easily be corrected but ideally should be prevented in the first place with proactive health planning. Additionally, it is possible to boost the pneumonia protection for at-risk animals with a further vaccination going into the winter period. To discuss best pneumonia prevention in lambs, give your sheep vet a quick call.

Sheep scab

January tends to be our most frequent month for diagnosing sheep scab, as the mites become more active in the colder months and due to the purchasing and mixing of store lambs through the winter. We are lucky here in Angus that we don't see too much of the problem compared to some other parts of the country, but we would expect to deal with a handful of outbreaks a year. Additionally, there are growing concerns over resistance in the scab mites to the injections that are sometimes used to control the problem. We now have a very effective blood test available for detecting scab and following tupping or at pregnancy scanning is a good time to check in on the status of the flock. This can identify a problem before it becomes a full-blown outbreak, or indeed with a negative result avoid having to use drugs at all. Thus saving money and avoiding unnecessary drug use which may well lead to resistance developing in both scab mites and gut worms.



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Further information from the Website or Organiser
Euan Emslie - Tel: 07729 346135 Email: euanemslie053@gmail.com

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