

SCOTLAND

WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY

JUNE 2023 EDITION

www.nsascotland.org



Kindly sponsored by:



CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

by Peter Myles, NSA Scotland Chair

"I think my one, is the best sheep in this class".

'I think my one is the best sheep in this class.' These are the thoughts that many sheep breeders will have as show season gets underway. Hours are spent selecting the best team, they are trimmed washed and brushed up, taken to the show, the last bit of muck removed, looking their best, then let out into the show ring. But beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and not all judges behold the same eye as me. Prizes can be thin on the ground till eventually a red rosette gets handed out and all misgivings evaporate.

Wee local agricultural shows are so important. They bind the rural social fabric of our community together, the volunteers who keep the whole thing running are invaluable and regardless of the weather, hardy, local souls treasure the opportunity to show off their quality stock and so much more. Some kind of main ring entertainment is laid on to the wow the crowds, sponsors, machinery trade stands and stall holders show off their wares. However, I would guess the highlight of such

events is the chance to catch up with old friends and colleagues and also to make new acquaintances.

I absolutely love The Royal Highland Show. I have been a member for a very long time and I punctuate my calendar as do many others by pondering 'was that before or after the Highland?' From the shirtless hours spent outside the 'Herdsman' to the more sober times now, meeting so many friends from far and near, on their annual pilgrimage. NSA Scotland has settled into its new site next to the MacRobert Shearing Theatre where the Golden Shears World Shearing and wool handling championships are to be held. We have a lot of plans for our stand so please look in and say hello. I personally get a kick out of meeting new people so do make yourselves known and let us catch up.

The Highland is also a major hub for politicians and influencers and we at the NSA

will be highlighting the importance of sheep and sheep production when speaking to the above. Take your chance, if you get it, be it at local shows or the Highland, to tell others regardless of their positions in the grand scheme of things how important our industry is to food production, soil health and the natural environment. Sheep in the hills and glens of Scotland achieve every goal set for 'net zero', so, don't let anyone take us for granted. When it comes to the countryside, we all deserve the red rosette for best in the class.

Our Events

For more information, please [click here](#)

22nd June – 25th June 2023

Royal Highland Show

28th June

NSA and Moredun webinar: Sheep vaccines, what's current and what's coming?

4th July

NSA Sheep Northern Ireland 2023

5th July

NSA Breakfast Club webinar

26th July

NSA Next Generation workshop - Top tips for training your sheepdog! Aberdeenshire

12th August

NSA AGM. Rutland Stud, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 9RD, by kind permission of the Godolphin Management Co. Ltd.

18th August

RoSA Webinar: Diversification

30th August

NSA Scotland post mortem day in conjunction with Glasgow Vet School.

Join us at the Royal Highland Show Thurs 22nd - Sun 25th June 2023

- AB Europe
- Allflex
- Blackface Sheep Breeders Association
- Caltech Crystalyx
- ClipFitter
- Elanco
- Galloway and Macleod
- Hebridean Sheep Society
- International Sheep Dog Society
- Mayo Animal Healthcare
- NSA Scotland
- Osmonds
- Oxford Down Sheep Association
- Shearwell Data Ltd
- Shetland Flockbook Trust
- Wool Display Area



Avenue M, Stand 1(B)

Directly beside the MacRobert Shearing Theatre which will host the Golden Shears World Shearing and Wool Handling Championships

Including wool spinning demonstrations, stock judging, sheep dressing, fleece competitions and much more!

Visit NSA Scotland at the Royal Highland Show!

NSA members and those with sheep industry interests attending this year's Royal Highland Show (Thursday 22nd - Sunday 25th June 2023) are invited to visit the NSA Scotland marquee situated on Avenue M, stand number 1(B), directly beside the MacRobert Shearing Theatre for a well-earned seat and refreshments (see map below). We can be found directly beside all the action of the Golden Shears World Shearing and Wool Handling competition in the sheep village!

The aim of the NSA Scotland marquee is to cover all aspects of sheep farming, whether it be promotion of our heritage breeds, housing the RHS Fleece competition, a place to seek information on genetic advancements or a place for children and those of all ages to come to learn all about the fantastic range of sheep breeds found in Scotland. Not only is this for the sheep industry itself but also provides a dual purpose to educate the general public on how the sheep industry caters for the needs of wider society, economy and the environment.

A substantial range of trade stands relating to the sheep industry including those showcasing breed societies, feed and mineral companies, breeding companies and those who are innovative with their development of new products and services for the wider sheep industry. Each trade stand is unique in its offering and as such provides great diversity for those entering the NSA marquee.

Scottish Sheep Industry Predator Survey 2023

Predator control is a vital part of conservation, wildlife management and food production. It has been increasingly evident amongst NSA Scotland members that predator attacks on sheep are a continuing occurrence. NSA Scotland has created a survey to compile evidence to present to Government and other key stakeholder organisations to support sheep farmers and crofters further whilst enabling change to facilitate sustainable sheep farming in Scotland. All Scottish sheep farmers are urged to complete the survey. It takes around 10 minutes to complete and will close to respondents on Friday 14th July 2023. It is available on the NSA Scotland website and Facebook page or by [clicking here](#).

NSA Scottish Region Coordinator Grace Reid comments: "It is particularly important that NSA Scotland gains evidence on this matter. We are all very aware attacks from predators are happening but to gauge the number of attacks is essential in the fight against the animals that threaten our flock animal welfare and profitability. In addition to this, we have seen a renewed interest in reintroduction activities which may be detrimental to the Scottish sheep industry. NSA Scotland is increasingly concerned around the contradictions which could arise in government policy and feel it is short-sighted of government to incentivise habitat creation and improved animal welfare whilst in the next breath encouraging species reintroductions which could severely damage the biodiversity of habitats we already have and severely impact animal welfare and our farming livelihoods. Please do share this survey far and wide to ensure there is a correct representation of the issues occurring today."



Aikengall will be an ideal location for NSA Scot Sheep

NSA Scot Sheep 2024 heads to East Lothian

A leading beef and sheep unit near Dunbar is set to host Scotland's national sheep event, NSA Scot Sheep, next year.

Organised by NSA Scotland, NSA Scot Sheep 2024 will be held on Wednesday 5th June 2024, at Aikengall Farm, Innerwick, Dunbar, East Lothian, where the Hamilton family; James, Charles and Harry, along with their mother Vanessa and their late father John moved in 1998, from Dykefoot and South Cobbinshaw in Lanarkshire.

"We are delighted the Hamilton family has agreed to host NSA Scot Sheep 2024," says NSA Scotland Chair, Peter Myles.

"The 2022 event will be a hard act to follow, but, Aikengall has all the ingredients for a terrific day out for Scottish sheep farmers; Great livestock, great hosts, and great views, what more could you want. Unless of course you want to see renewables; the impressive Aikengall wind turbines will generate considerable amount of interest as well as power on the day I'm sure.

"The farm is in a great location and provides a varied and successful business that will be worth a visit to see. NSA Scottish Region is very excited to work with the Hamilton family over the next year in preparation for the event."

Since taking on Aikengall farm where its 1900 acres (770ha) on the edge of the Lammermuir Hills, rise from 900 to 1200ft, the Hamilton family has extended their farming interests, incorporating the neighbouring 400 acre (160ha) farm of Thurston Mains in 2004, taking on the tenancy of the 1200 acres (485ha) farming unit of Nunraw farm at Garvald in 2010 and the 600 acre (240ha) farm of Barney Mains, Near Haddington, in 2022.

The Hamiltons also contract farm an upland unit of 2000 acres (800ha) at Heriot, Midlothian with the Walgate family. This has helped them grow their business and run over the farming units 2800 breeding ewes and a commercial herd of suckler cows, finishing all progeny on home grown feed and breeding replacements on a closed flock/herd basis, only buying in tups and bulls as required.

James Hamilton, who lives at Aikengall, says: *"It will be a great pleasure and honour for us as a family to host such a prestigious event for the sheep industry in Scotland. We are looking forward to welcoming fellow farmers and seeing friends old, new, and not met yet to Aikengall, next June!"*

The Hamilton's lamb 1400 head each year at Aikengall, comprising 700 Blackface ewes bred pure for replacements, with the remaining 700 Blackface ewes crossed to the Bluefaced Leicester for producing Scotch Mules, where the females are retained for breeding. 1400 Scotch Mule ewes are put to the Texel tup and lambed at Nunraw in March.

The farms also support a beef enterprise of 900 spring calving commercial cows, based on the Simmental breed using Simmental, Lincoln Red and latterly Aberdeen Angus bulls.

Progeny that isn't suitable for breeding is finished on the farms and sold deadweight.

Barley and wheat are grown at Thurston Mains and at Barney Mains where Charles now lives, with extra barley sold for malting and wheat for milling if specification can be achieved.

The natural environment is treated as an equal enterprise on the farm with various stewardship schemes, latterly Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)/ Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) having played a significant role in the development and improvement of infrastructure and habitats on the predominantly upland unit at Aikengall.

As well as this, Aikengall also hosts Aikengall Wind Farm with Community Wind Power Ltd which became operational in 2009, comprising 16 Vestas V90 wind turbines. These wind turbines have a tip height of 125 metres, and each has a generating capacity of 3MW, generating enough electricity to power approximately 31,500 homes and based on displacing around 54,200 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide per annum.

James explains: *"Driving the productivity and efficiency of the livestock and farms gives us great pleasure and we are pleased to see that. What's good for the pocket is also good for the environment, with carbon sequestration and carbon 'notsetting'; both increasing as management and software as well as hardware technologies used improve."*

Organisation of the event will be in the capable hands of an enthusiastic local committee chaired by Colin MacPhail, who runs his own agricultural and rural business consultancy business as well as having farming interests on the family farm on the Isle of Mull.

Event organiser Euan Emslie will be happy to provide details on the event, sponsorship opportunities and trade stand information to interested parties. He can be contacted on 07902 540985 or euanemslie053@gmail.com



(l-r) Harry, James and Charles Hamilton at Aikengall



Coordinator's Comment

by Grace Reid,
NSA Scottish Region Coordinator



Lynx Reintroduction in Scotland?

In late May the potential for reintroducing lynx was debated in the Scottish Parliament, after a parliamentary motion by the SNP's Kenneth Gibson received cross-party support to engage this discussion. The motion highlighted the moral and ecological case for the species' return, and how lynx reintroduction could make Scotland's natural world 'richer and stronger' via a managed reintroduction, following appropriate assessments.

NSA Scotland advocates for the diverse tapestry of habitats and biodiversity across farmland. Protecting these habitats that exist, the species that are at risk right now and the people managing them should be the priorities for government. However, NSA members across Britain and notably Scotland have been at the sharp end of species reintroductions, from poor consultation processes, illegal releases, no management strategies and no mitigation, exit or recognition of the impacts to farming businesses and livelihoods.

We are increasingly concerned around the contradictions which could arise in government policy and feel it is short-sighted of government to incentivise habitat creation and improved animal welfare whilst in the

next breath encouraging species reintroduction which could severely damage the biodiversity of habitats we already have and severely impact animal welfare and our farming livelihoods.

The argument that lynx will only feed on deer is not accepted. There is no doubt sheep will be an easy target for predation by the Eurasian Lynx if released and a major concern of those who farm in Scotland. Evidence has shown that some European flocks suffer disproportionately greater losses, especially small flocks of less than 50 sheep and that 'hot spot' locations persist where lynx are present. These hotspots appear to be associated with the proximity of sheep to lynx, the configuration of pasture and woodland, and the clustering of sheep in small paddocks. As Scotland has experienced greater land use change than Europe has seen comparisons cannot be made between the UK and Europe due to the vast land scale and landscape differences.

NSA believes it is absolutely imperative there is a clear plan in place for responsibility of the reintroduced species, especially when it comes to maintaining our sheep industry, the natural environment, possible increased footfall and subsequent consequences – traffic, litter, fencing, pathways, gates, damage to crops, fields, and livestock attack incidents.

The great tree debate

We have seen a significant emphasis on tree planting targets, carbon credits alongside many other initiatives in recent years which pose a great threat to Scotland's critical mass and livestock enterprises. In Scotland alone, as a nation we must plant 18,000Ha of trees every year. There is no doubt that nature restoration, biodiversity and climate change mitigation will have a part to play in Scotland's future. However, it must be said that other industries must honour the responsibilities of their actions and not just 'farm' out (pun intended) the hard or awkward bits when the finger of blame is being pointed in terms of reducing emissions and other areas of current focus. Agriculture simply will not be able to fix everything and it is this undertaking which many of Scotland's farmers feel lumbered with.

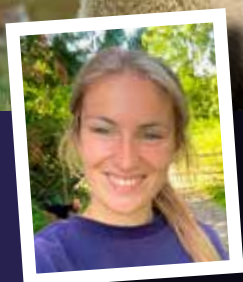
There has been a notable loss of agricultural identity in rural areas however, land remains the one constant which is finite. With more mouths to feed than ever (despite reducing livestock numbers) food production must remain at the forefront of agriculture's endeavours. We ultimately look at the finite resources available in terms of land with people themselves in the form of skilled stockmen and women being considered in this light no matter their age or entry to the industry. The sheer flip of land use change is yet again making it more difficult for the next generation and others to get a foot on the farming ladder never mind expand their farming capacities. Commercial forestry in modern day is eating up huge areas of land. Many of which have already established steadings and infrastructure which is incredibly valuable to livestock enterprises and in today's terms are a considerable advantage to those with limited resources. If at all possible, can we not save some of this infrastructure to enhance agricultural activity, not diminish it?

Negative perceptions are associated with both large scale forestry and farming depending on which circle you enter. As contradictory Government policy evolves and continues to change, farmers are being forced yet again to make blind decisions as they wait further

information and unintended consequences to manifest themselves. Frustratingly we find ourselves in the position that a future budget is yet to be established for the Agricultural sector as a whole amongst other things despite the fact that there is no time to be wasted on farms and crofts when livestock and crops are involved. The function of private investment in new and upcoming markets must be approached with caution. Whilst there are many reasons for this, tree planting and green energy alternatives are consistently knocking on the door and continue to be a viable options to those who have reached the end of their own personal farming careers. Ultimately, the choices of those who make such decisions must be respected but they do make it that much harder for those who are left to continue supporting the nation. Whilst we must be under no illusion of the challenges in front of us but what have we learned from the past to make any sort of difference?

Looking forward, detail on how the Agriculture Bill and support package will embed food production, climate adaptation and resilience in Scotland's agriculture sector remains undefined and absent from the information regarding the proposed support package framework for farmers. Scottish livestock production has a vast number of positive environmental, economic and health benefits and should not be lost at the expense of implementing arbitrary livestock reduction targets which many continue to propose. Scotland does have a legal requirement to meet climate change and emissions targets, but many are forgetting there is as much of a legal requirement to implement a 'just transition' and sustainable food production is a vital component.





NSA Head Office policy update

by Emma Bradbury, NSA Policy Manager

Individual farm Vet Attestations & Export Health Certificates

As of December 2023 the way export health certificates are issued for products being exported is changing, requiring evidence that animals used to make food, drink and agricultural products are from farms which have had regular veterinary health visits. This decision was made mainly due to the incoming changes to European export health certificates, that from the 13th of December 2023 will require a veterinary attestation to qualify. With the quality assurance schemes gaining earned recognition, meaning that any quality assured livestock automatically meet the new requirements of the export health certificates.

We are circulating the below information to help members understand what is required and hopefully answer some of the questions which may be circulating in the industry.

What is an export health certificate?

An export health certificate (EHC) is an official document that confirms products being exported (including products from your farm that a third party is exporting) meet the health requirements of the destination country.

What is a veterinary attestation? This is evidence provided by a vet and used by the Official Veterinarian (OV) when signing the EHC which accompanies products being exported. Attestations are required for the purpose of obtaining an export health certificate for products of animal origin including food for human consumption and animal by products, and live animals, not intended for human consumption to Member States of the EU and Third Countries. The attestation will give evidence that at the time of the visit the farm was free from a number of stated notifiable diseases, and that there is a good standard of disease control and biosecurity. It is a standard form is available for vets to use and in the future, there may be on line options to register this evidence but this is not yet available.

I already do a self-declaration what's changing? As of December 2023 the method of self-declaration for carrying out export health certification is changing to Official Veterinarian (OV) declaration only.

Do I need to do one? The exporter must apply for an EHC if they are exporting or moving animal products, or live animals or from Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) to, or through:

- the EU
- non-EU countries
- Northern Ireland

Farms supplying the exporter must provide the vet attestation to give evidence of a reasonable level of disease control. You will also need a transit EHC to transit through an EU country.

What if I am a member of an assurance scheme? Membership of the main national assurance schemes qualify as being compliant without the need for a standalone vet attestation.

Qualifying schemes are:

- Quality Meat Scotland (QMS)
- Farm Assured Welsh Livestock Beef and Lamb Scheme (FAWL) (Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers Ltd (WLBP))
- Red Tractor

Do I have to have a separate Vet visit?

No. These visits are in place for the purpose of disease prevention and the detection of biosecurity risks. This does not need to be the sole purpose of the visit and can be combined with other visits covering routine work, providing that all species present at the premises are considered. For example, routine bTB testing, flock health plan, blood testing etc.

How often do I have to have a visit? Visits should occur at least once during a 12-month period.

Do I need to keep records? Signed attestations should be provided to and retained by establishment operators as a source of evidence to provide official veterinarians (OVs) certifying relevant export health certificates (EHCs).

I have more than one CPH what do I need to do? Business with more than one County Parish Holding (CPH) number will need to have all holdings assessed for the relevant species to enable the vet to issue the declaration.

I don't export any animals or animal products, I only sell in the UK, do I need to do one? You only need a veterinary attestation if for example, you sell direct to a meat processor, sell through a fat market or directly to a finisher or you export directly to the EU or Northern Ireland.

I'm not sure if I need one, what do I do? Speak to your vet, they have a wealth of knowledge and will be able to advise you and your specific farming set up.

This new requirement is coming in in December 2023 – do I need to do anything now?

Yes. In the period between now and December you are advised to ask your vet to provide this attestation when they are out on farm conducting any routine visit. It is strongly advised not to leave this until December. At the time of writing it has not been agreed how the attestation will follow stock through markets or collection centres but its most important that farms have the attestation in advance of December or when they first start selling after that date.

If you have any further queries on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact policy@nationalsheep.org.uk

Next Generation matters



Scott Dey is a new entrant farmer from NE Scotland

Scott Dey, a new entrant sheep farmer from Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, was one of nine young farmers selected earlier this year to take part in an insightful trip to Westminster representing NSA Next Generation.

Here Scott explains his experience of meeting with the people in power and the opportunities it gave the group to have their say on their farming futures.

Being a new entrant in agriculture is a massive challenge to anyone but help is out there such as that which NSA Next Generation provides, including the recent NSA Next Generation Westminster trip, that was an opportunity not to be missed. The chance to grasp the knowledge of English agricultural policy and getting to meet with Lords and the top team at Defra was the main appealing factor behind my application.

I set off on an early morning flight from Aberdeen to London and met with the other delegates where we had the opportunity to enjoy a dinner at the famous Farmers Club in Whitehall, London, joined by NSA Chair Dan Phipps. We had plenty of time to discuss our thoughts on the upcoming visit to the Houses of Commons and how we, as new entrants, could influence the future via our role in agriculture.

A sharp, sunny morning brought the start of the second day of our trip to London. Our first call was a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament which was a great experience to see Westminster Hall and meet Phil Stocker, NSA Chief Executive. The history was evident throughout the tour and it was a great opportunity to see how such amazing buildings such as the House of Commons and House of Lords operate.

Future Support Schemes

We were then introduced to Lord Inglewood, NSA President, along with Defra officials and other representatives to hear an update on their plans for new farming schemes. A notable key difference in Scottish Agricultural policy is that there is still a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) in place for the foreseeable future for farmers and landowners. England is in transition to rule out BPS in favour of alternatives whereby Defra want to see where grant support is being spent and how it is impacting land use rather than a lump sum of money being transferred into farmers accounts. As I am a new entrant and do not have any land of my own, I am not eligible to make a claim and therefore take a keen interest in new farming



Scott joined other motivated young sheep farmers for the visit

schemes which may benefit those who find themselves in the same position as I do.

Lamb consumption and supply

It is hard to believe why we, as a collective nation need to import lamb from other countries and why supermarkets, Defra and Levy boards such as QMS cannot work together to make good home-grown food more readily available on our shelves. This was a major topic of conversation during our trip along with the declining number of farms and farmers.

I can see one reason for the good trade in the UK is that a lot of New Zealand lamb is being used in the Asian market relieving the competition in the UK. We all as young shepherds had a view that we weren't getting a good service from local abattoirs experiencing long waiting lists. Defra did explain this was more than likely down to staff shortages and thought that helping abattoirs with apprenticeship schemes would hopefully help overcome this problem and encourage more individuals into the industry. Unfortunately, we ran out of time to continue discussion on these topics but plan to join a Zoom meeting to express more feelings and concerns we have and hopefully get a voice heard for young sheep farmers all over the country.

An insight into the M&S supply chain

After a quick hop on the tube across London to Paddington we found ourselves at the headquarters for Marks and Spencer. Lunch was kindly provided with a presentation given by the Agricultural team and their operations. It was really interesting how they split into different sectors to focus on. I believe that M&S are the best supermarket, priding themselves in high quality animal health and welfare checks with their 'M&S Select Farms'. The process of getting onto this program does mean an on-farm inspection which goes alongside QMS Farm Assurance and I am sure most farmers in Scotland find this a frustrating task having to be in an office more instead of actually being on the farm caring for animals and working to the best of their ability. Ultimately, I do believe this is something we might have to fight for to be able to group these inspections together as they are all looking for the same tick boxes and could potentially cover all bases.



Value Added Products

Following this, we kindly got invited through to one of the M&S laboratories where we were given a lamb butchery demonstration. The M&S butcher showed how they have improved their skills of trimming the fat off cuts that can lead to unwanted gristle and explained the importance of finishing lambs within specification. From a young person's point of view, it was very interesting to see how the butchers are able to sell the product to the best standard possible after the value of time and effort put into rearing this lamb to this stage. With the visit coming to an end we all headed off back home with great inspirations in our head and the hope we had done other young shepherds in the industry proud by standing up and having our say.

One of the most valuable experiences was getting to meet likeminded people that are keen on sheep farming. We were able to share our views on different topics whilst speaking about our own flocks and work life to give vigor to go try new things out and the confidence to succeed. If NSA do run this amazing trip again, I would definitely encourage anyone to sign up and take part in it - you will not be disappointed for what it has to offer!

Young farmer focus

Name: Scott Dey

Age: 23

Farming enterprise: 120 ewes comprising of a mix of both hill and park type Cheviots. These are put to traditional Blueface Leicester tups to produce Cheviot mules with the females all being sold for the commercial breeding market through Aberdeen and Northern Marts, Thainstone. Wethers are sold store at weaning through the ring at Thainstone as well.

Ground/Location: I rent all ground that my sheep are kept on meaning I have no security on any land. This can be a struggle as times but after building up good relationships with local farmers and landowners I'm starting to see a pattern and timetable to where I keep them at certain times of year. I live in a village called Kemnay in North East Scotland. A nice part of the country where I see my business working well.



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For further information please contact
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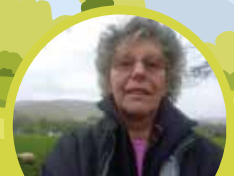
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(Interim Chair)
 Edzell, Angus



Grace Reid
(Scottish Region Coordinator)
 Clackmannan, Central Belt



Euan Emslie
(Event Organiser and Secretariat)



Mary Dunlop
(Treasurer)
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Find out more



Get the best from your working sheepdog with NSA Next Generation

Going back to basics, highly experienced and respected sheepdog trainers will lead two training clinics which will include demonstrations and opportunity to ask questions, providing useful guidance from highly respected trainers.

Wednesday 26th July - Aberdeenshire
 Experienced sheepdog trainers Michelle and Gary Bruce
 Near Udny, Aberdeenshire, AB41 6SJ





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Veterinary Corner

Ed Hill – Thrums Vet Group

As I write, spring finally seems to have arrived. It's certainly taken its time, with much of lambing time here being cold and wet. That said, apart from one or two cruel nights in early April, our flocks here faired pretty well in terms of lambing performance. With so much moisture about during April and May the grass grows well, but with it so does the parasite risk. For us the peak nematodirus hatch varies anywhere between mid May and late June. This year saw late May as the peak, and as ever, the SCOPS nematodirus forecast remained invaluable for giving my farmers the heads up that treatment for at-risk lambs was required earlier than in previous years.

The difficulties with vaccine supply has been a major concern for us during the spring and early part of the summer. Thankfully the supply of some clostridial vaccines has so far has been unaffected, meaning growing lambs should be protected against clostridial disease and pneumonia. However, the supply of other widely used vaccines has been very sticky, which in turn has put pressure on alternatives which are now running short, just when we want to be vaccinating spring born calves with these vaccines. The manufacturers of the vaccine to prevent orf changed a few months ago and despite being assured there would be no problems with supply, this proved not to be the case meaning we will have several groups of lambs in the practice not protected. Thankfully anti foot rot vaccines now seems to be back in stock with no issues, hopefully this remains the case as vaccination is a critical part of lameness control for flocks who have issues with infectious lameness. Going forward, hopefully the manufacturers can do more to ensure supply of these vaccines critical for the welfare of our animals. For now, the best policy seems to be order what you can well in advance; things like vaccinating for toxoplasma and enzootic abortion don't need to be done until a month pre-tupping but it might just be safer getting this done during the summer rather than leaving it too late if possible.

Fly season will soon be upon us. Every year we seem to say "it's an exceptionally bad year for flies", but I think it's probably right that we accept the exceptional as the new normal now – warmer, wetter summers mean that flies will continue to be a menace year on year. The choice of product for fly protection will depend on a number of factors such as duration of protection required, meat withhold period and if ticks and/or scab need to be controlled as well. Every year we'll be involved in a number of cases of apparent treatment failure of the pour on products. Almost all of these come down to incorrect application of the product. It's



very important to apply them using the correct application gun in the correct fashion as directed on the package – otherwise it may not work as desired. Some of these products are not cheap, so it's worth making sure they're used properly. The other occasion where they may not work as well as desired or last as long as stated is if there has been heavy rain during, or shortly after product application. Where possible only apply the product in dry and settled weather (easier said than done, I know!).

This is also the time of year to be thinking about teasers. A vasectomised teaser ram can be a really powerful tool for tightening and shortening the lambing period, with all the knock-on benefits of this with a compact lamb crop. Ideally a teaser should be 'created' six weeks prior to use, though in practice it could probably be a bit less. Lambs and shearlings are easier to operate on than mature rams and should have a longer working lifespan too. For maximum effect the ewes should be kept away from sight, smell and sound of any teasers and true rams for at least a month leading up to tupping. Teasers should then be introduced to the ewes no more than 14 days before the tups go in. Approximately two teasers per 100 ewes should be used. And since they're going to have a lot of work to do in a short space of time, the entire rams should be fertility checked and worked at a ratio of 1:25-30.



Correct application is essential to ensure efficiency of fly preventative treatments



NSA Scotland Newsletter

Remember to have a look at the previous editions of the NSA Scotland Newsletter on our website. [Click here](#)

SHEEP SCAB

Have you got all the facts you need to protect your flock?

Sheep scab, caused by infestation of the skin with the scab mite costs the UK sheep industry >£80M per year.

Mites resistant to the ML injectables have been found in Scotland so correct diagnosis is crucial to give the correct treatment, at the right time and to all animals not just those showing signs



Sheep scab mite

What are signs of sheep scab?

- Scab is characterised by yellow scabs, restlessness, scratching, loss of wool and loss of condition

How is it spread?

- Scab is spread by direct contact with infested animals, but as the mite can live off-host for 16-19 days, scab can be spread via fence posts, handling equipment, trailers and shearing equipment



If you suspect your flock has scab, you must report it to APHA and should seek advice from your vet on controls.



Treatments

- A blood test is available for sheep scab and can diagnose the disease before clinical signs appear, reducing the spread
- OP dipping is an effective means of controlling scab and also kills mites resistant to the MLs but must only be used as a plunge dip

Never allow dip to enter a watercourse and ensure you have a permit from SEPA prior to disposal of waste dip to land.

More information can be found at: <https://www.scops.org.uk/external-parasites/scab/>


OVINE PULMONARY ADENOCARCINOMA (OPA)

ADVICE FOR FARMERS

OPA is a lung cancer in sheep caused by a virus, Jaagsiekte sheep retrovirus. OPA tumours may develop in as little as 4-9 months and the disease is always fatal.

The virus is spread between sheep by the respiratory route and also via colostrum and milk.

Warning signs of OPA?

- 
- Unexplained loss of condition
 - Breathing difficulty
 - Evidence of excessive fluid from the nose when the head is down (half cup full, usually clear, sometimes foamy, often has a consistency similar to washing-up liquid)
 - Cases of pneumonia that don't respond to antibiotic treatment (or improve but then deteriorate several weeks later)
 - Deaths, particularly at times of stress such as bad weather, lambing time etc.



Actions to take?

- Veterinary investigation to confirm the cause of illness or death.

Options if OPA is confirmed:

- Minimise close contact - e.g. housing, feeding troughs.
- Test-and-cull - currently ultrasound scanning is the best method to identify OPA as early as possible. Discuss this with your vet to weigh up advantages and limitations of the technique. Your vet may advise sheep with inconclusive scans to be isolated and re-scanned six weeks later.
- Cull sheep identified with signs of OPA at scanning immediately - OPA cases will always die and meanwhile they can transmit virus to other sheep in the flock.
- Cull lambs of OPA affected ewes - The lambs are very likely to have been infected with virus and may develop OPA.
- Isolate purchased rams and scan every three months.
- Replacement of whole flock - Re-establishing a flock risks introducing other diseases, or re-introducing OPA - take veterinary advice.

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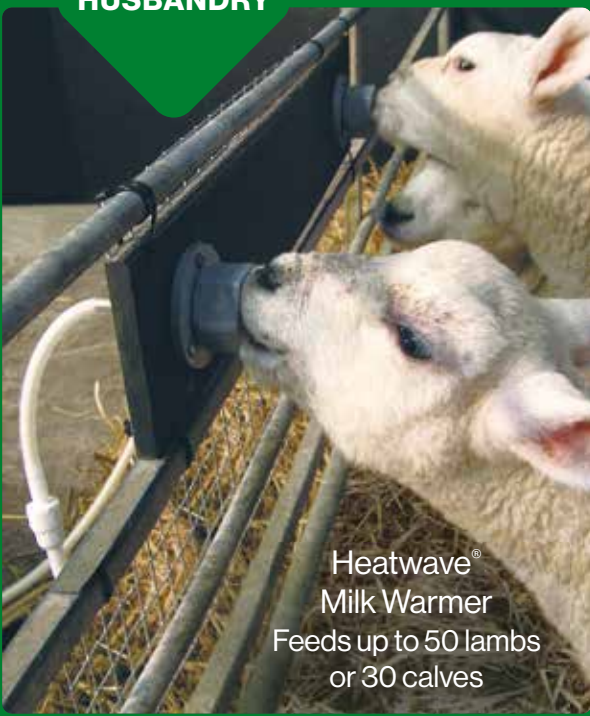
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