

SCOTLAND

WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY

MAY 2022 EDITION

www.nsascotland.org



CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Jen Craig, Normangill, Crawford



As I write this, we are getting well through the inbye lambing and the ewes on the hill are just starting, and they have done so with a bang!

The last few weeks weather has been much nicer to both stock and the humans looking after them - I sincerely hope it will continue for us all.

NSA Scotsheep 2022 is approaching at an alarming speed, and I cannot wait for the industry to be able to have its first proper day out post Covid. Hazel and Robert have put so much into the event that I am delighted they are finally going to be able to host it and what a venue it will be. The NSA Scotland stand at the event will be well worth a visit with Grace

our Regional Co-Ordinator being on hand to speak to members and making sure I'm going in the right direction at the right time. She really is an asset to the Region and the Organisation as a whole.

We also have some other exciting news to share and that is the relocation of our marquee at this year's Royal Highland Show. Not only is it a different location but it will be a different look and feel with some exciting things happening. This may come as a surprise to some of the regular show attendees but we are hopeful that the opportunity will continue to showcase the very best that the Scottish sheep industry has to offer. So make sure to

keep a look out on our social media pages and in the NSA weekly email update to find out what we'll be up to and how you can get involved!

Despite uncertain times due to Covid, Brexit and many other changes, I'm glad that NSA Scotland and NSA as a whole have been gaining members at a steady pace over the past year. We pride ourselves on representing and catering for the Scottish sheep industry and value communication from our members. We are pleased to have you on board so please do come and speak to us over the summer and let us know your thoughts and more about what we can be doing for you.

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WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY

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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

3RD MAY

NSA Scotsheep 2022 Media Day

10TH MAY

Scottish Government Animal Health and Welfare
General Stakeholder Group

11TH MAY

Welfare in Transport – journey times for sheep and
cattle meeting

23RD MAY

RSPB Follow Up meeting

25TH MAY

NSA UK Policy and Technical meeting

23RD – 26TH JUNE

Royal Highland Show 2022

Our Events

4TH MAY

NSA Breakfast Club Webinar. Putting food on the
table: the future of food security?
[For more details, please click here](#)

5TH MAY

NSA Breed Society Forum. The forum will provide
an opportunity for breed society representatives
and other interested sheep farming parties to hear
updates from NSA on work specific to the country's
pedigree sheep sector and will give those attending
a platform for discussion on current issues.
[For more details, please click here](#)

1ST JUNE

[NSA Scotsheep 2022](#) by kind permission of Robert
and Hazel McNee, Over Finlarg, By Tealing, Dundee,
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BUY YOUR NSA SCOTSHEEP 2022 TICKET NOW!

Visitor tickets are now on sale, online at
www.scotsheep.org.uk

Adults £20, NSA members £10, Children 15 years and under FREE.

Group bookings of more than 10 people £15 and free International
Visitor tickets to be booked and paid for in advance with Event
Organiser, Euan Emslie (07729 346135 / euanemslie053@gmail.com).



Coordinator's Comment

by Grace Reid, NSA Scottish Region Coordinator

The same old? In previous editions, we have touched on carbon, animal health and welfare, supply chains and the value of sheep in the environment. However, most importantly there is the need to focus on the future livelihoods of our sheep farmers and crofters and safeguard by whichever means to be able to provide for the rest of the population whether it be in health, social or economic terms. One of the problems being in an ideal world that money would not be a limiting factor nor would weather or any of the other volatilities that we experience every day. Grass is coming on well as we near the start of May and sometimes we wonder if it is ever going to come but as always, something tends to grow (eventually).

What does rewilding/reintroduction mean? – Depends on who you ask! I attended a meeting in late March of this year which explored the idea of a sustainable rural future in Argyll which revolved upon the conflicts of conservation and land use with a particular focus on rewilding and the reintroduction of Lynx as discussion points. To be clear, this was not an exercise linked to any proposed reintroduction application, more one to explore stakeholder perspectives. The outcome from the discussion clearly being that we

need to learn from the mistakes of other projects and thoroughly prepare for the consequences (unintended or otherwise) of actions made. Whilst many of our members and sheep farmers in the West Coast of Scotland have had enough of species reintroductions to last them several lifetimes (and more), it was clear from the outset that considerable caution, wariness and uncertainty was associated with just the mention of such a topic. This meeting not only highlighted the many surrounding factors which are everchanging and influential both in the past, present and future, but the many different perspectives of those who live and breathe the area in which they inhabit (and at which point of their life they may be in). In general, lack of people, resources and funding seemed to be at the forefront of everyone's mind whether it be linked to food security and production or otherwise – this can be said for Scotland as a whole. Another common theme which arose however, was the many different ways in which 'rewilding' was interpreted with no single agreed definition amongst attendees. This can be said for many differing policy issues which have arisen over the years – differing definitions, meanings, understandings, undertakings, implications, applications, the list goes on... Will we ever come to an outcome in which everyone will agree upon?

NSA Sheep Worrying by Dogs Survey 2022 - Results

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to fill out this year's NSA sheep worrying by dogs survey. Frustratingly the problems being caused by out of control dogs are still all too common with the accompanying stress, anxiety, cost and overall experience being something which can ultimately be avoided by responsible dog ownership. Despite toughened laws put in place last year, Scotland still sees sheep worrying incidents with many very ranging degrees of severity and consequences. The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2021 came into force on 14 November 2021, increasing the investigative powers available to the police, and stiffening the penalties (fines of up to £40,000 and/or a 12-month prison sentence) for people who allow their dogs to worry or kill livestock. In spite of this, 2022 survey results have shown that 79% of Scottish respondents said that one dog was usually involved in a sheep worrying incident, with the most common outcome being injury rather than death. Although 72% of Scottish responses currently display warning signs asking the public to keep their dog on a lead around livestock, in line with previous survey results, UK wide respondents once again reported an increase in the incidence of attacks.

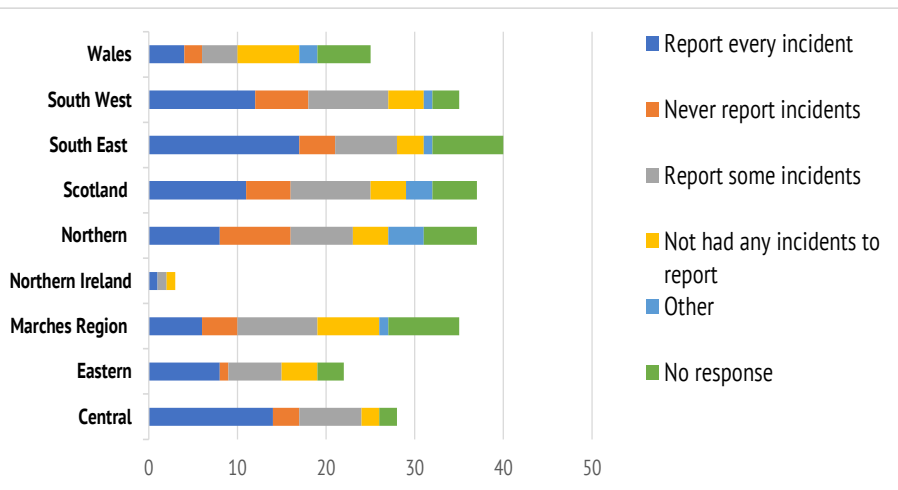
Who is responsible? One of the key take aways from this year's survey and consistently in the past is the need for dog owners to confess and to take clear responsibility for the actions of their dogs. Disappointingly but not surprisingly, zero Scottish survey respondents had been alerted to an incident by the dog owner whereas in comparison, less than 5% UK wide respondents said they received direct contact. Over three quarters of responses attributed a rise of cases over the past three years due to an increase in dog ownership during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst compensation was felt to be important, most respondents

did not pursue received no or very little compensation. To be clear, many felt that it was not about the money aspect of a loss more the accountability and responsibility onus being put back on the dog owner. By means of an insight, nearly two thirds of Scottish responses received a negative response when asking a dog owner/walker to put their dog on a lead with the most common being ignored completely and verbal abuse as a direct result.



Summary of personal reactions survey respondents in 2022 attributed to a sheep worrying by dog(s) incident.

Incident reporting Over the past 2 years, twice as many people are reporting positive responses from police forces dealing with sheep worrying incidents UK wide. However, only 62% of Scottish survey respondents said they now report some, most or all of the attacks they



Police Response		
	Rating	
Region	2021	2022
Central	3.68	3.91
Eastern	4.17	6.07
Marches	4.0	6.19
N. Ireland	2.0	N/A
Northern	3.35	3.33
Scotland	2.92	5.18
S. East	4.26	4.46
S. West	5.01	5.00
Wales	4.43	7.29

experience with 81% in comparison which includes UK wide responses. The following illustrates the reporting of sheep worrying by dog(s) incidents on a NSA Region basis (see graph above).

Police Response As a whole NSA encourages all farmers and crofters to report incidents of sheep worrying to the police to ensure this most serious offence is recorded in an official manner and that accurate numbers of occurrences are recorded to help encourage widespread recognition and support. The table on the right highlights police response rating following the reporting of a sheep worrying by dog(s) incident (0 = no response, 10 = very helpful) (see graph table).

Despite many avenues to educate access takers, it remains a collaborative effort needed to ensure this most serious offence can be tackled. Whilst Police Scotland have been granted more powers within the past year, we all have a part to play whether it be from a local council or authority, vet, dog club, farmer, land manager or member of the public aspect to ensure the nation's livestock and wildlife are safe. There are many

positive examples of work being done across the country to ensure sheep worrying incidents are reduced, but the more the better! NSA are committed to working with farmers to support them in dealing with sheep worrying incidents, as well as engaging with Governments and members of the public to encourage them to keep their dog on a lead. General information on the topic of sheep worrying by dogs can be found at www.sheepworrying.org.uk. In addition, NSA has produced a range of graphics for farmers and other supporters to display and share demonstrating support for the NSA campaign. To receive a copy of these graphics please email enquiries@nationalsheep.org.uk

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.



A word from NSA Chair Dan Phipps

The value of sheep

Our flock here in East Anglia is following a very similar pattern to the one we've trodden over the previous ten years. This must be and is reviewed annually but, as it stands currently, we are being given license to carry on backed by one main principal, being to lamb the sheep we farm. It seems obvious I realise but many lambing flocks have disappeared in the Eastern Counties and now it seems many beyond. Agriculture is generally aware of the benefits of sheep and the value it will bring to the soils they graze on. Often used as an important mechanism to improve soils on arable farms, graze areas that can only ever be grass, or more realistically a mixture of both. There is now an awful lot of pressure on the remaining sheep as they are traded as ewe lambs often to be sold on again as breeding ewes and store lambs that have been brought to further finish. The margins in these sheep have stagnated over that ten-year period (bar the occasional blip) although the value hasn't. There is a market and value ultimately on the sheep produced by those prepared and able to lamb or feel they have no credible option but to lamb. It seems this is changing at a troubling rate if you farmed in more challenging areas, or put another way land that is unploughable, you were left with few options and so the wheels turned. Something I find very concerning here, in a world where food security has come back into strong focus, landowners are being incentivised to turn land over to trees and or rewilding, whilst simultaneously we negotiate free trade deals with countries the other side of the world. All this in the basic belief that this is our best national collective contribution to climate

change? It is critical that we continue to demonstrate to the nation that locally produced lamb is not only delicious but wholly sustainable.

People make the industry

Farming practices that have made and maintained the beauty of this land be it high or low are at risk. Undoubtedly, there are many people brought up in the countryside with academic leanings who can go on to illustrious careers in whatever industry appeals. The countryside has always and will always produce naturally talented stockmen/women with practical leanings. The concern is that the natural development areas for these skills are being challenged, skills passed on from generation to generation and each nurtured with a modern twist are in turn at risk of being lost. I feel it has never been so important that we are able to connect and encourage those who feel they would like a career in the Sheep industry to keep our industry alive and well. There is no better way than to showcase all that is good and wholesome within our industry whether you are involved or would like to be than the many NSA events - Scotsheep and the upcoming National Sheep Event to name but two. It's an opportunity for all in our industry to come together and meet people face to face, after what has been a very strange and unpredictable time that has just got a whole lot stranger!





A sheep industry to be proud of

NSA Chief Executive, Phil Stocker



Responding in times of crisis

Farmers have long shown they can be some of the most adaptable and innovative people on earth, prepared to respond to markets and policy signals. Farmers responded when the world needed wool; to the need to feed the nation in times of war; to the CAP to provide adequate supplies of accessible food, and, as policy direction changed towards environmental protection by responsible use of inputs and planting hedges, shelter belts and woodlands. Sheep farmers are no different, they have always innovated with sheep breeding, on farm inventions, diversifying incomes, and managing livestock. They have coped with change decade after decade. But the scale of change happening now is massive and our future lacks the clarity and direction needed. We live in a far more 'global world' where events on the other side of the planet can have a direct and sudden impact here at home. We are late accepting the impacts climate change and population growth will bring, and food supply in the developed world, and certainly in Britain, has been taken for granted. We are seeing conflicting policy direction that is not agile enough to cater for a changing and volatile world.

Agriculture IS the solution

We may now be on the verge of yet another change in policy and social direction where food regains its priority and importance. Food supply chains have been disrupted by Brexit, Covid, and now by the war in Ukraine, and even here we have been on the edge of shortages and are now seeing run away food inflation that will for some, result in food poverty with potential health implications. It will be worse in poorer nations. It's easy to imagine measures to address the importance of a level of national food security – just as we are seeing investment in energy production to do the same. But I'd suggest this is not the time to create divides between food security and environmental interests. We should not give up on the environmental gains we have made, calling for food to take priority over those other areas of public interest - climate change, the protection of natural resources, and nature recovery. This is the time for us to try to take ownership of all these interests together, as many farmers already are, and make the case that we can deliver the wider imperatives for society THROUGH farming and not instead of it. It doesn't have to be a case of one or the other, it must be a case of both. That way, rewilding and mass afforestation, and releasing trophy predators, will be viewed as indulgent, wasteful, and unnecessary.

Our everchanging world – at what cost?

But it is one thing knowing the world is changing and quite another knowing what its changing to. Does it make sense to wake up to the importance of food security at the same time as pushing to export our food around the world and take vast areas of our land out of production? Does it make sense to lose so many local abattoirs and then want to create shorter supply chains? And what are grassland farmers supposed to do about the out of reach cost of fertiliser – wait for it to come back down or prepare with a longer-term change of management? This clarity won't come from Government, they seem happy to see disruption and then put a few vague schemes in place that point in a sort of direction. So do we wait or simply get on and do what we believe is right and what works for our businesses.

Standing the test of time

For well over 12 months our sheep markets have delivered strong returns, although input inflation is now eroding margins and confidence. Sheep farming is not immune from inflationary pressures but lower reliance on inputs and overseas labour means we are showing greater resilience than other sectors. We can strengthen that resilience if we find ways to reduce our costs, target inputs more wisely, and then optimise the value of our outputs. The decisions may be harder, but it can be more effective to reduce fixed costs such as land, labour, power and machinery, than it is to reduce variable costs such as feed and vet and med. We are very different nations to Australia and New Zealand but it is worth noting the main reason for their lower costs of production is vastly lower fixed costs. But variable costs can be reduced too, by investing in testing forage and feed, screening for parasites and disease, and targeting treatments where they are necessary. The newly formed working groups co-ordinated by Scottish Government on sheep scab and Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma (OPA), pulling on the knowledge and experience of sheep farmers, the world renowned and Scottish based Moredun Institute, and sheep vets, are demonstrating just two good examples of what could be done.



Showcasing the industry

Of course this is also where the NSA Scotsheep event comes in as Scotland's premier sector specific trade and knowledge transfer event, providing a fantastic opportunity for the country's sheep farmers to arm themselves with the knowledge that will help them make decisions for the good of their future businesses. All at NSA look forward to the return of this event after such a long (covid-enforced) wait and hope to see many new and familiar faces there where discussions on the above will no doubt take place. I would like to thank the event hosts and the organising committee for all their work in laying on what I'm sure will be a great day, perhaps we will see you there!





Full Steam Ahead

Husband and wife farming duo Robert and Hazel McNee from Over Finlurg, Tealing, Dundee, are in the midst of preparing to host one of Scotland's leading agricultural events - NSA Scots Sheep 2022. The couple, along with their young family of Kate and Alan, are well-known producers of top-quality cattle and sheep sold the length and breadth of the UK, commanding strong prices in the sale ring for pedigree bulls and breeding sheep.

After three enforced cancellations and several plans put on hold due to COVID-19, the family, along with NSA Scotland and the organising committee, are delighted to welcome visitors to the event sponsored by Virgin Money. Event chairman, Willy Millar, who farms at Huntingfaulds, Tealing, said: "Scots Sheep promises to be a fantastic, informative day out with a packed programme of events in place. Over Finlurg is in a great location and will be an interest to all involved in the agricultural sector. We look forward to welcoming you all to this major Scottish farming event."

Over Finlurg Facts

The farm is situated close to Dundee on the A90 Dundee to Forfar Road and has been home to the McNee family since 2011. Since purchasing the farm, Robert and Hazel have made several improvements to the 740-acre unit, whether it be new farm buildings, fencing, lime spreading or drainage work, whilst also building up a herd of 200 suckler cows and a flock of 1100 breeding sheep. Rising from 800ft above sea level, right up to 1200ft on the hill, half of the farm is ploughable but is mainly used for grazing, apart from producing 75 acres of cereals and 25 acres of turnips. The couple also rent a further 40 acres of grass from a neighbouring farmer, as well as a 400-acre heather hill. Visitors will be able to enjoy the spectacular views from the hill during the farm tour at Scots Sheep, while enjoying an Ogilvy award winning vodka from the nearby Ogilvy on-farm distillery.

Sheep Enterprises

Around 600 North Country Cheviot Lairg-type ewes run alongside 200 Blackfaces, 60 Texels and 40 traditional and crossing type Bluefaced Leicesters, with an additional 200 home-bred

Texel cross and Mule ewe hoggs tugged to the Beltex to sell as hoggs with lambs at foot. Whilst these units have topped at £230 when sold through United Auctions' Stirling Centre, it is the sale of 260 Cheviot Mule gimmers at Longtown and Forfar which the couple have really smashed the records with. They produced a new centre record in 2021 at Longtown, when they sold a pen for £232 per head.

All North Country Cheviot gimmers and 100 of the best NCC stock ewes are tugged to Auldallan tups, hired from Robert and Hazel's brother in-law Bob Adam, Newhouse of Glamis, to produce home-bred replacements, with Blackface gimmers also bred pure for easy lambing. The remaining Blackfaces go to the crossing type Bluefaced Leicester to produce Scotch Mules. Pure Texel and Bluefaced Leicester ewes produce tup lambs which the duo uses as tup lambs at home first, before selling them the following year as shearlings through Stirling, Huntly, Dingwall and Forfar. Texel shearlings regularly average £1,000 per head, with Bluefaced Leicester tups hitting a top of £1,700.

Lambs which don't make the cut for breeding, are finished and sold deadweight to Scotbeef, with the first lot away by the end of September and the last sold by mid-March. Robert and Hazel aim to get most of the lambs finished off grass but turnips are used for wintering.

Cattle Enterprises

The beef suckler cow herd includes pedigree Limousins, Luings, Simmentals and Charolais, with 60 Limousins run under the Westhall prefix and 120 pedigree Luings kept in the Finlurg herd. Around 25 bulls are sold for breeding each year, with Luings having sold to a top of 18,000gns for Finlurg Warrior at Castle Douglas in 2019, and Limousins to 11,500gns at Stirling.

Kate and Alan have already been enjoying five-figure sales with their own 15-cow Finlurg Simmental herd, having sold a bull at Stirling to 10,000gns. The small herd of Charolais is also getting going although Robert comments that they may be more of a hobby, rather than an enterprise likely to be expanded.

Bulls not suitable for breeding are sold entire and are fed and finished on a high energy diet based on home-grown barley and wheat. They

are sold to ABP Perth and the aim is 1kg of carcass weight per day which is already being achieved by the top performing bulls.

Calving takes place mainly in the spring months, with Luings calving down from the end of March onwards and Limousins calving throughout May/June and November/December. Stock bulls used at Over Finlurg have bred some of the top priced Luings and Limousins in recent years with many on show at the event. There are not many Simmentals at Over Finlurg with only a few hand-selected females being bought in recently to be bred to influential breeding lines such as Team Drambuie, purchased from Robert MacGregor.

Workforce

The business employs one full-time member of staff Alistair McCarthy, who hails from Caithness, as well as local girl Jody Jackson, who is working at Over Finlurg during the lambing period and on the run up to NSA Scots Sheep 2022. Brother in-law Bob Adam takes care of the sowing and harvesting, while Robert carries out only the ploughing and spraying himself, resulting in the farm's investment in machinery being kept minimal.



Seminars

10.45am-11.50am “Decision Making on Flock Health Treatments” - Chaired by Ian Duncan Millar MBE, a farmer and past chair of The Moredun Foundation. Mr Millar will be accompanied by four panellists: Dr Stewart Burgess (Moredun Research Institute), Kat Baxter-Smith (Sector Veterinary Adviser Sheep and Beef, MSD Animal Health), Rheinnallt (Reggie) Jones (University of Glasgow and Harbro Ltd), and Dr Philip Skuce (Principal Scientist in Parasitology, Moredun Research Institute).

12.30pm-12.50pm “The Scotch Lamb Label and delivering for climate conscious consumers” - Featuring Kate

Rowell, Chair of QMS, sheep farmer and vet, who will be joined by QMS new Chief Executive, Sarah Millar to showcase just some of the activities QMS have planned over the next 12 months. They will discuss how quality assurance can help farmers meet the challenges of net zero and demonstrate to consumers what farmers are doing to help reduce climate change.

1pm-2pm “Carbon - Understanding the journey to net zero – The journey for farmers to a Net Zero future and turning the challenge to opportunity” - Chaired by Brian Richardson, UK Head of Agriculture on behalf of event sponsor Virgin

Money. Including Simon Haley, Director and Founder of Carbon Metrics Limited, Helen Dent, Director of Carbon Metrics Limited and Event Host Farmer, Robert McNee.

2.05pm-3.05pm “Foot on the Farming Ladder” - With Ian Davidson, independent advisor to the Scottish Land Matching Service, chairing the topic and giving a view and summary of how the service can help. The three panellists will include Andrew Merchant, Clonhie Farm, Penpont, Dumfriesshire, Robert Rennie, Attonburn Farm, Yetholm, Kelso, and Stephen Buchan, Regional Head of Agriculture for Virgin Money.

Workshops

Each workshop is between 15 - 20 minutes long with some repeated in the morning and afternoon.

“Breeding sheep fit for purpose and building trust” - Dr Janet Roden, a Geneticist from Innovis and Dewi Jones, Chief Executive Officer for Innovis.

Dr Janet Roden will show how data is collected and explain how to select traits such as ewe efficiency, mothering ability, lamb survival and the important of easy lambing and growth rate in terminal sires. The important of selection pressure in a commercial farm environment will be explained and the relevance of estimated breeding values when buying rams.

Dewi Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Innovis, will explain the important of building trust and investing in long term relationships between ram breeders and customers.

“Make your mistakes work for you” - Eilidh Corr (QMS) and Tim Geraghty (SRUC Vet Services Aberdeen)

Looking at how we can capitalise on mistakes and avoid them in the future by taking a dynamic approach to health planning.

“Ovine pulmonary adenocarcinoma (OPA, Jaagsiekte) - Why should we scan our flocks?” - Dr Christina Cousens, Moredun Research Institute and Ryan Moore BVMS MRCVS, Kidd Veterinary Centre will have a short discussion covering what OPA is, its impact on UK flocks, how we can diagnose and work to eliminate it.

“The power of social media” - Cammy Wilson, The Sheep Game and sheep farmer based in Ayrshire, will discuss his own successes with social media.

“Making more from grass is the way forward for cost-effective farm businesses” - Poppy Frater, SAC, will discuss the principles of grassland management to demonstrate how to maximise the grazing potential on your farm.

“Important of understanding forage mineral and trace element levels on your farm” - James Ireland, North UK Sales Manager at Agri Lloyd

“Farming in a reduced antibiotic world” - James Ireland, North UK Sales Manager at Agri Lloyd

“Sheep scab- updates and best practice treatment” - Join Neil Fell, mobile sheep dipper and Rachel Mallet of Bimeda, will give an update on sheep scab disease and a review of best practice treatment approaches followed by Q&A.

“Improved insights, better results, more profit.” - Emma Buckby, Head of Marketing, AgriWebb UK (based on a hill farm in the Cheviots) looks at a case study of how implementing easy-to-collect farm data can transform decision-making to uncover powerful insights and improved yields, whilst making compliance easier.

“Johne’s disease - A vet’s perspective” - Ryan Moore BVMS MRCVS, Kidd Veterinary Centre will be discussing what Johne’s is, its impact within UK flocks, how do you know if it is in your flock and what can you do about it?

Other Features & Activities

Trade Stands - Over two hundred commercial, educational, sheep breed societies and individual sheep breeders’ exhibitors will be promoting their products, services and sheep at the event.

Show & sale of ewe hogs - Top-quality ewe hogs from well-known breeders across the country will be forward for the multi-breed show and sale of ewe hogs conducted by United Auctions. Nine classes will be on offer for Bluefaced Leicester, Mules, North Country Cheviot, Blackface, Suffolk, Texel, any other native and continental breed and any other cross breed, with both MV accredited and non-accredited sheep eligible for sale. The overall championship is sponsored by Algo, with Harrison & Hetherington, Kidd Veterinary Centre, Parkside Veterinary Group, Savills and Thorntons Law confirmed as class sponsors.

Tasked with judging the pre-sale show at 9am is United Auctions’ retired sheep auctioneer, Matt Stevenson from Gargunnoch, Stirling, followed by the sale 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.

Fencing competition - Fencing contractors will put their skills to the test, when they compete in a competition sponsored by Tornado Wire and James Jones and Sons. Up to eight two-man teams will erecting a section of high tensile stock netting (60-70 metres in length), with two end straining posts and a slight turn towards one end within the three hours allocated. The competition is from 10.30am - 1.30pm, the prize giving will be at 3.30pm on the main stage in the seminar building.

Next Generation Shepherd of the Year competition - Scottish sheep enthusiasts under the age of 26 will compete in this year’s NSA Next Generation Shepherd of the Year competition, which offers a total prize fund of £1,015. The competition, sponsored by the British Texel Sheep Society, will take place on Tuesday, May 31 at Huntingfaulds Farm, nearby to NSA Scotsheep 2022 host farm, Over Finlarg.

Participants will be required to carry out five of six tasks to include prime lamb selection, shearing two sheep, ATV handling, sheepdog handling, demonstrate knowledge of foot care techniques (compulsory) and answer questions on flock management and health (compulsory). The competition will commence at 1pm and presentation of prizes will take place at 3.30pm the following day.

Invitational Sheep Dog Trial - Thirty-two top handlers will be competing in an invitation sheepdog trial which will be one of the highlights of the event. The competitors from Angus, Perthshire and South Aberdeenshire will compete individually for the NSA Scotland Shield and prizemoney sponsored by McCaskie Agriculture. The trial will be judged by International Sheep Dog Society chairman, Ian Fleming from Douglas, South Lanarkshire.

Demonstrations - Throughout the day various demonstration will take place, including sheep shearing, all things woolie, sheepdogs crook making, sheep dressing and butchery.



Sponsors

NSA Scotland would like to thank the following for their generous sponsorship and support of NSA Scots Sheep 2022.

Hosts Robert & Hazel McNee

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| <p>National</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABP UK AgriWebb UK Algo Blackface Sheep Breeders Association British Limousin Cattle Society Cotter Agritech Davidson Animal Feeds Farmers Guardian Galbraith Harbro Ltd Home n' Dry The Sheep Game <hr/> <p>Local</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT Scotland Agricar Ltd Almins Ltd Beltex Scotland Carrs Billington Ceva Animal Health Datamars Agri UK/Kiwikit/Roxan ED & F Man Liquid Products EQ Chartered Accountants Farming & Water Scotland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glasson Fertilisers Kidd Veterinary Centre Lawrie & Symington Scotch Mule Association Towergate Insurance Brokers Woodhead Brothers / Morrisons <hr/> <p>Ewe Hogg Show & Sale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algo Harrison & Hetherington Ltd Kidd Veterinary Centre Parkside Veterinary Group Savills Thorntons Law LLP United Auctions <hr/> <p>Sheepdog Trial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> McCaskie Agriculture <hr/> <p>Sheep Shearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackface Sheep Breeders Association British Wool Scottish Woodlands Ltd | <p>Stockjudging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galloway & MacLeod Ltd <hr/> <p>Fencing Competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> James Jones & Sons Ltd Tornado Wire Ltd <hr/> <p>NSA Next Generation Shepherd of Year Competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Texel Sheep Society International Sheep Dog Society <hr/> <p>Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovis Limited <hr/> <p>Farm Tour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricar Ltd CS Tractors Netherton Tractors Ltd Ogilvy Spirits Ltd | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scot Agri Sellars Agriculture <hr/> <p>School Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal Highland Educational Trust Seagreen Wind Energy Ltd <hr/> <p>Suppliers of Sheep Hurdles for Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ritchie <hr/> <p>Others - GP Smart & Son, Lambert & Dyson, Power Washer Services, Niall Bowser - Livestock Equipment, Scot Agri, United Auctions, Judges, Seminar & Workshop speakers, Demonstrators, Angus & Mearns Rotary Clubs, Tractor drivers, YFC Members, Stewards, others too numerous to mention and finally the NSA Scots Sheep 2022 Organising Committee for all their hard work.</p> |
|--|---|---|--|

NSA Scotsheep 2022 What Next for Sheep Farmers?

Brian Richardson, Head of Agriculture for Virgin Money



As we move towards the 1st of June, and look forward to gathering at Over Finlarg for the much-delayed NSA Scotsheep event, it provides a good opportunity to consider where the industry is just now, and its prospects for the future.

Building Foundations

The last two years have provided some stability to the sector, with reasonable prices for lambs and ewes, and it has allowed for some modest investment in the sector. This, however, has been against a further gradual decline in the UK flock, and the continued decline in the consumption of lamb. Innovation is a word often used within agriculture but given the vast difference in habitat and breeding programmes established over many years, sheep farmers are not able to come up with some of the bigger leaps in productivity and efficiency available to other livestock sectors.

Lamb, is of course, a fantastic product, and no one can argue with its credentials in supporting the environment and underpinning many farming businesses. Despite Brexit having brought some challenges, as the UK looks to open export markets we may see new opportunities, although the deals with New Zealand and Australia are unlikely to help this. After this period of relative stability, we now have significant inflation, particularly around energy, fertiliser and feed, partly caused by the tragic events in the Ukraine. These issues are going to be around for a while and will put pressure on all parts of the farming economy.

Being mindful of margins

Like all other farming sectors, the sheep industry is looking for prices to be increased to offset these higher inputs. The challenge for meat producers is that consumers are also being hit hard by rapidly rising costs. Inevitably they will be selective in their spending, not only shopping around for a good deal, but also choosing cheaper alternatives. We saw this after the financial crisis in 2008, with both a boom in discounters and changes in shopping habits.

Can the sector cope, is there a ceiling for lamb prices which will compensate and what does the future look like?

Farmers, particularly sheep farmers, are resilient, and whilst some may face real difficulties with the challenges ahead, I believe the majority will adapt and work their way through them. Let us hope that the markets will come to recognise the real cost of producing high quality lamb.

Achieving ambitious Government targets

Looking longer term, the future for sheep farming and the red meat sector generally, could not be more testing. We have the Net Zero agenda and a clear focus by governments of all colours to make it happen. How the sector can adjust to this will be key and whilst there is a long lead time, the UK Government requires significant reductions in carbon emissions by 2030 partly from a continuing reduction in meat production. This is flagged in a lot of Government papers, as well as the

National Food Strategy Plan produced by Henry Dimbleby.

At the same time, alternative uses of land often suited to sheep, such as forestry and rewilding, are being put forward and financially incentivised to offset carbon. This will put pressure on land available, but on the upside, potentially creates opportunities for sheep farms to look at alternative income streams.

Future proofing

With many uncertainties ahead, it is essential for all farm businesses to take a long hard look at their enterprise and to plan for the future. This will help to identify where improvements to productivity and efficiencies can be made and where best to invest time and money. In addition less viable assets and resources should be re-evaluated for alternative uses.

Part of this planning should include a Carbon Audit. They are increasingly essential, and many customers will demand that you have one. When completed in conjunction with a good consultant, farmers will better understand their carbon emissions, and gain an overview of the farm's environmental and economic position, and how they interact. Grant money is available to undertake Carbon Audits and to take professional advice.

The Scottish Government's approach to support payments provides some certainty, at least in the short term, so it is certainly a good time to review your business and understand better what the future might look like. I remain positive about the longer-term prospects for farming and believe it can balance the new environmental demands with good farming practice. It will continue contributing to the wealth of our nation - but it is going to be different and there will be challenges ahead.



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Meet our Scottish NSA Next Generation Ambassadors for 2022!



Perry Parkinson (27) Dumfries and Galloway

Where it all began - I got introduced to sheep farming at the age of 12 when I became friends with farmers sons upon moving to Northumberland. I quickly fell in love with it and carried on educationally right through to completing my degree in Agriculture at SRUC Ayr. After a few years out of sheep and going into dairy in Somerset, Ayrshire and New Zealand, I quickly came back to what I loved most! 4 years in Stranraer saw me running 700 Romney ewes on a very extensive system where I then came down to SRUC Barony campus in Dumfries to shepherd back in 2021.

Work life - Working in a college environment certainly has its challenges when compared with a normal farm. Don't get me wrong though, I like to be challenged and working here at the Barony gives me lots of scope to try new things and do what I think best for the farm/students which has led to a lot of changes since I've started. As of yet I'm just concentrating on this job as there's a lot going on with 5 months of lambing throughout the year. However the aim is to get my own ewes on the side and get into the pure-bred side of things.

Challenges - To be a young farmer in this day and age, especially now an NSA Next Generation

Ambassador means a great deal. I almost feel like were in the minority! Agriculture is screaming out for new entrants/young farmers more so now than ever and being in an educational role at the Barony helps give me a way of trying to encourage and entice students/young farmers into the sheep world, alongside the NSA Next Generation Ambassador programme which is giving me a nice sense of purpose which I feel I haven't had before now.

Looking towards the future - Within the next 10 years I see a lot of small farms closing, with larger more innovative farms thriving. With subsidies getting totally wiped out by 2028, farmers who are stuck in their old traditional ways may not survive. I feel like unless you're diversifying or using innovation, there can't be much money to be made, especially rising feed and fertiliser costs thrown into the mix! I think a lot of farmers are really starting to change their ways though and accept the fact that we have to change with the times which is a shame yet also quite nice to see.

Getting involved with NSA - I wanted to be part of the NSA Next Generation Ambassadors and NSA Scotland Committees because I wanted to be more involved in the UK sheep industry and be at the forefront of changes/decisions that we'll



Current Stats:

Age: 27

Occupation: Shepherd

Location: SRUC Barony College

Flock: 500 North of England Mules/200 Highlanders/150 Dorsets

make as a country. Not only this, but I wanted to challenge myself and see if I was in a way on the right track as a young and enthusiastic shepherd which thankfully seems to have paid off. I can quite happily say that the NSA Next Generation Ambassador programme has really opened my eyes and been one of the best things I've done. Not only learning loads of new things from leading professionals in the industry but meeting a great bunch of likeminded people who all really get along!

Karyn McArthur (28) Aberdeenshire

How I got to where I am and why it works for me - I was a registered Veterinary Nurse for 10 years but my passion for farming has always been there. After travelling to New Zealand and working on a beef and sheep farm in South Island I found it difficult to settle back into my Veterinary role. After 6 just months back home and with travelling debt paid off, I went self employed as a shepherd before taking on a position with Innovis. I never regret my Veterinary years as it taught me plenty of skills that I can use day to day on the farm! Innovis works brilliantly for me as I learn a lot more different and in-depth knowledge about the sheep sector. In particular, I have learned a lot more about recording, EBV's and flock health! It also has let me meet a lot of other farmers and see different systems, so every day is a school day. It is a very flexible job allowing me to assist both my partner and family at their busiest times (particularly lambing time which with all these breeds tends to stretch out over a few months!).

What it means to be a young person in farming today - With the average age of farmers being relatively high, the younger generation are crucial to the future of farming! I think it can be very challenging to be a young person in farming today. There are a lot of obstacles to overcome, it takes a lot of revenue, hard work and dedication to get somewhere, particularly if you aren't lucky

enough to be in the position of taking on a family farm! Financially there is a lot of risk but you also have the added pressure of the public eye being constantly on animal agriculture these days! But if you can get it right there is a lot of reward from loving what you do, after all it's not really a career as such but a way of life and this can inspire others.

How farming may look in 10 years - It is hard to predict exactly what agriculture will look like in the years to come, but with the ever-growing population around the world I'd like to think that there will always be demand for British and Scottish produce. It's a difficult time for British farmers with the reduction of subsidies which makes me reflect on my time in New Zealand where they are farming without financial support, which makes me think that farmers will have to look at lower input systems. You also have more people paying head to animal welfare and climate change which may also affect how farms are run.

Why I think it is important to be part of the NSA Ambassador Programme and NSA Scotland - After hearing fantastic things about the NSA ambassador programme I felt like it was too good an opportunity to miss out on! I wanted to learn from other likeminded individuals and dive deeper into the wider sheep industry! I absolutely loved my first ambassador session and left the



Current Stats:

Age: 29 **Location:** Glasgow/Aberdeenshire

Background: Very mixed background in the sheep industry, from working full time for a sheep breeding company breeding hybrid rams, my family's farm of blackface and scotch mule ewes and a small flock of pedigree Blueface Leicester's to assisting my partner in his shepherd's position on a sheep farm with multiple pedigree breeds.

trip with a great new outlook and I am excited for the future! The NSA Scotland Committees are also a great opportunity to both learn from others but also to have your voice heard as a young person within the industry, after all we are all the future of Scottish sheep farming and this is why it is important for all young people to get involved within their regional Committees, Breed Societies etc. If we all sit back and do nothing, who's going to take over the reins in the years to come!

Keep an eye out on the NSA Next Generation website for updates on exciting opportunities for young people in the industry! [Click here](#). 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



Lambing Safeguards

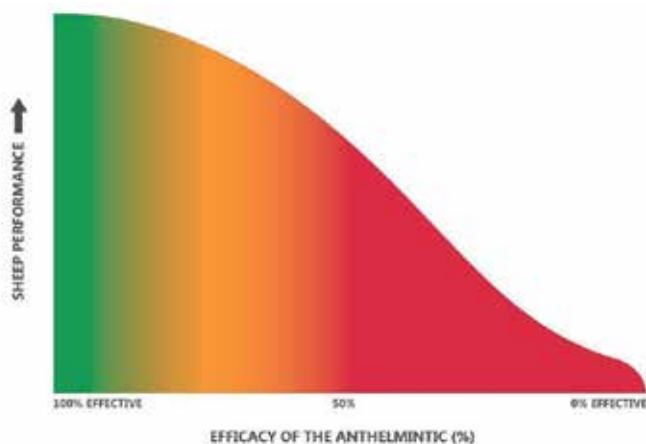
At the time of writing we are now in the thick of lambing for most of our sheep farms. One of the more depressing issues we have to deal with each year is abortion. This year, as ever, we have diagnosed a mixture of enzootic and toxoplasma as the main culprits. Both of these diseases have highly effective vaccinations against them and often issues could have been prevented. In particular, we see that whilst buying in ewes remains the biggest risk factor for bringing in enzootic abortion, disease can spread from farm to farm via carrion and predators moving carcasses and cleansings. So, to my mind at least, no farm could be considered totally safe from an enzootic abortion outbreak unless vaccinating. If not currently vaccinating for either disease I'd suggest you speak to your vet about it. They will likely also be able to offer blood sampling with free lab fees for a number of sheep that aborted or failed to lamb which may well be of interest.

Pesky Parasites

Hopefully by the time you're reading this, it's a little warmer and there is a bit more grass about than there is now in the middle of April! With the summer months however also comes the risk of parasites. Keep an eye on the SCOPS Nematodirus forecast to optimise the timing of treatment for this worm – it tends to hatch in a synchronised fashion and the timing of this hatch can vary significantly. Far better to treat at the right time than too early or too late.

Worm Risk and Resistance

After the nematodirus risk we move into the risk period for the "normal" stomach worms, typically Teladorsagia species. Ideally the decision to treat should be based on worm egg counts, growth rates or a combination of both - not "just in case" or because you happen to be handling the lambs for another procedure. We know that resistance to wormers is one of the great challenges the sheep industry will face over the coming years, and that resistance is already widespread to the classic wormers; and starting to happen to our newer ones too. Yet, I find that many farmers I speak to don't know the resistance profile of their own farm. Loss of efficacy occurs long before the effects of it are visible to the naked eye, but may be having an unseen impact in the form of reduced growth rates - see the attached graph for an illustration of this. Testing for resistance need not be complicated, and whilst a simple post treatment worm egg count might not give conclusive results, it gives a good indication of a problem that can then be further investigated if required. A post treatment worm egg count should be taken 14 days post treatment for white wormers and 7 days for yellow wormers.



SCOPS (www.scops.org.uk/about/what-is-anthelmintic-resistance/)

Importance of health planning

After the rush of lambing, the quieter summer months provide a good opportunity for reflection, planning and a chance for a catch up with your sheep vet. Health planning need not be an arduous, box-ticking exercise, more a chance to ponder and discuss a few of the key issues that may have held the flock back from performing to its best. Focusing on a few important things at a time is far more likely to be successful than tackling everything at once! I hope everyone enjoys getting back to a few shows this summer, and if you're heading to NSA Scotsheep 2022, please do say Hi - I'll be there on behalf of both Thrums Vets and Sheep Vet Society.



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