



SCOTLAND

WORKING FOR THE SCOTTISH SHEEP INDUSTRY

OCTOBER 2025 EDITION

www.nsascotland.org



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CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

by Peter Myles, NSA Scotland Chair

Different generations have more in common than you think

My local show will be celebrating its 200th anniversary next year, and from the archives, I saw a show catalogue from 1937 nearly 90 years ago, and what amazed me, was the organisers names are pretty much the same as the names in this year's catalogue. We must pay tribute to all the families around the country who have kept this continuity going. I have the privilege to be our show ring commentator; my dad did a bit of commentating in his time too. When announcing children's races, the kids just can't wait to get involved, run and fall over especially in the three-legged and sack race.

We had a new initiative this year, where we held a novelty kids tug of war competition, I felt like the 'Pied Piper' as the show field drained of children all eager to take part, we were going to need to get a longer rope! We divided them into age groups where they slid and tumbled and had the time of their lives.

Young handlers' competitions are keenly fought over now too and the sincerity and professionalism of these often, wee ones should be admired, as they take pride in the showing of their animals. To celebrate this newfound

enthusiasm, NSA Scotland will be giving rosettes to the best of them next year, to shows around the country.

I'd like to think that some of these young folk will take on the mantle of local shows in years to come, after all, kids will still need to let off steam, run, fall over, and animals will still need looking after and I very much hope the same names appear in another 90 years, as different generations have more in common than you think.



Our Events

For more information, please [click here](#).
Visit NSA Scotland at the following events:

29TH NOVEMBER 2025

NSA Scotland's Lamb for St Andrews
Day Annual Dinner

Leonardo Boutique Huntingtower Hotel, Crieff
Road, Perth, PH1 3JT, Scotland

10TH JUNE 2026

NSA Scotsheep 2026

Wedderlie Farm, Gordon, Berwickshire. TD3 6NW
by kind permission of the Tilson family.



NSA pays tribute to well known and much loved NSA stalwarts

It was with great sadness that NSA Scotland and the wider Scottish sheep industry said farewell to two well known and loved faces from the Scottish agricultural industry this summer.

NSA reported the sad sudden death of former NSA Scotland Event Organiser Euan Emslie in June, that was sadly followed just a month later with the death of former NSA Scotland Treasurer Maimie Paterson .

Euan was well known to many within the industry in Scotland and much further afield, and to all who have been involved with NSA over the years.

He, without doubt, helped to raise the profile of NSA in Scotland where he was well known for organising much enjoyed events, notably NSA Scotsheep and NSA Highland Sheep. In total Euan organised 16 events for NSA Scotland raising both profits and profile. For many years he coordinated NSA's presence at the Royal Highland show, various celebratory dinners and other activities but Euan's involvement and commitment to NSA went far wider and he was regularly seen helping out at other regional NSA events and at our national event at Malvern, Worcestershire.

NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker says: "Euan will be hugely missed by many people involved with NSA. It is difficult to express just how helpful and supportive he was to NSA and he was without doubt the face of Scotland's flagship NSA events. Our sympathies go out to his friends and family. Rest In Peace Euan."

NSA Corporate Manager Helen Roberts knew Euan well having worked with him during many NSA events. She wrote a short poem to share with members and his many friends and colleagues within NSA:

Euan, your laughter fills the air,
A melody beyond compare.
Your kindness shines, a guiding light,
Making the world a little bright.
You see the best in all you meet,
And make life's journey bittersweet.
A special soul, a treasured friend,
Your positive impact knows no end.



After such sad news it was then further shocking to hear of Maimie Paterson's death. Everyone at NSA, along with the wider sheep farming community was saddened to hear the upsetting news.

Phil Stocker continues says: "In Maimie, we lost someone whose passion and energy for sheep farming in Scotland will be almost impossible to replace. Maimie was a staunch supporter of NSA in Scotland for many years, holding several roles including Treasurer and Vice Chair of NSA Scotland committee. She was a driving force behind activities such as NSA Scotsheep, NSA Highlandsheep and NSA Scotland's involvement at the Royal Highland Show.

"If her passion for sheep was surpassed by any other interest it was for young people in the industry, and of course her family, and she contributed significantly to the NSA Next Generation activities in Scotland. Maimie would always call a spade a spade, never afraid to raise difficult questions or to criticise, and she was respected for that. Her passing is a big loss for the industry and for NSA, but there is a lot to celebrate and be thankful for all that she contributed. Our thoughts remain with her family and close friends."



NSA Scotland Activities

NSA Scotland is delighted to announce that NSA Scot Sheep 2026 will take place on Wednesday 10th June 2026 at Wedderlie Farm, in the Scottish Borders, by kind permission of the Tilson family.

NSA Scot Sheep is one of the most prominent and widely anticipated events in the Scottish agricultural calendar, drawing visitors from all parts of the UK and beyond. The one-day event showcases the best of the sheep industry with a full programme of trade stands, breed displays, seminars, working demonstrations, competitions, and educational activities, all hosted at one of Scotland's most historic and progressive livestock farms.

John and Marion Tilson, along with their daughter Wanda Tilson, who manage the prestigious Wedderlie Aberdeen-Angus herd alongside a productive sheep enterprise, say: "We're honoured to welcome NSA Scot Sheep 2026 to Wedderlie. This is a unique opportunity to highlight not only our livestock and farming systems but also the wider innovation and resilience of the Scottish sheep sector. We're looking forward to sharing our farm's story with visitors from near and far."

Wedderlie has proudly bred Aberdeen Angus cattle since 1914, focusing on the breed's hallmark traits—structural integrity, fertility, and commercial value—rather than short-term trends. In addition to the cattle, the farm runs a flock of 1,800 breeding ewes, with Cheviot sheep grazing the hills, Cheviot Mule ewes on the low ground, and Texel tups used for crossing to produce high-quality prime lambs. This carefully considered breeding programme supports a practical and sustainable approach to upland sheep farming, ensuring a steady supply of finished lambs.

Set in the rolling hills of the Borders, Wedderlie Farm comprises around 2,500 acres, combining pedigree livestock breeding with forward-thinking land use, hill reclamation work, and a long-standing commitment to sustainable farming.

The event will be led by a local organising committee under the Chairmanship of Alec Telfer, who brings a wealth of industry experience and enthusiasm to the role.

Mr Telfer says: "It's a real privilege to be involved in bringing NSA Scot Sheep 2026 to the Borders. With Wedderlie as our host, we have the perfect platform to create a memorable and meaningful event that reflects the energy and excellence of sheep farming in Scotland."

Planning is already underway, with further details on the programme, ticketing, competitions, and speaker line-up to be released in the coming months.

Exhibitor Booking for Stand Space is now available online at

www.scotssheep.org.uk

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National Sheep Association

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NSA Lambing List
Match-making service helping NSA members find help at lambing time.

NSA scotssheep
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 **WEDDERLIE FARM, GORDON, BERWICKSHIRE, TD3 6NW**

 **WEDNESDAY 10TH JUNE 2026**

**JOIN US FOR A DAY
PACKED FULL OF FUN**



**GET THE DATE IN YOUR CALENDARS
NOW - DON'T MISS OUT!**

NSA Scottish Region Lamb for St Andrew's Day dinner



The Scottish sheep industry is invited to an evening of delicious food and celebration as NSA Scotland holds its annual Lamb for St Andrew's Day Dinner.

This year's dinner will take place on Saturday 29th November, at the Leonardo Boutique Huntingtower Hotel, Crieff Road, Perth, PH1 3JT.

Following the success of previous dinners, the evening promises a fantastic celebration of Scotland's finest lamb, bringing together sheep farmers and sector representatives for a memorable night of networking, entertainment and excellent food.

Bookings are now open but spaces are limited, so be sure to reserve your place early.

The dress code for the evening will be smart casual but don't forget to wear your best tartan!

Date: 29th November 2025

Time: 7pm

Location: Leonardo Boutique
Huntingtower Hotel, Crieff Road,
Perth, PH1 3JT, Scotland

For further information or to reserve a hotel room, please contact NSA Scotland Activities Officer Julia Bell at

scotland@nationalsheep.org.uk



National Sheep Association
Scottish Region

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE LAMB FOR ST ANDREW'S DAY

NSA Scotland invites you to attend our annual dinner on Saturday 29th November at 7pm

Huntingtower Hotel, Crieff Road, Huntingtower, Perth PH1 3JT

Contact NSA Scottish Region Activities Officer
Julia Bell for more details
scotland@nationalsheep.org.uk

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New team members welcomed to strengthen NSA activity in Scotland

Activity organised and delivered by NSA Scotland has been aided by the recent appointment of two new members of staff.

Joining the NSA team are new NSA Scottish Region Policy Officer Faye Bryce, and new NSA Scottish Region Activities Officer Julia Bell. The new positions will strengthen the NSA team and help to make a positive contribution to the Scottish Sheep Industry.

Faye joins NSA from a background in public-facing roles, including the NHS and secondary education. In this new, exciting role, Faye will support NSA's representation and engagement across Scotland on a wide range of policy issues. Faye is now responsible for responding to consultations, representing NSA at meetings with stakeholders, and communicating technical and policy messages across NSA platforms and events.

Faye says: "I'm excited to start working with NSA. I look forward to supporting its fantastic work and contributing to a strong representative voice for sheep farmers in Scotland."

Julia has already built valuable links with NSA having supported the organisation of the successful NSA Highland Sheep held in June at Midfean Farm, Ardgay.

She says: "I have always been passionate about supporting our sheep sector and rural communities. With experience organising agricultural

events and a love for rural life, I'm excited to help bring NSA members together, welcome new ones, and keep everyone connected and informed. I can't wait to get started!"

As Scottish Region Activities Officer Julia will be planning and delivering communications and events across the Scotland, including the NSA Scot Sheep and NSA Highland Sheep events, the NSA presence at the Royal Highland Show and NSA's support for the Lamb for St Andrew's Day campaign amongst many other activities. Julia will also support wider engagement with members and industry stakeholders in Scotland, working closely with the NSA Communications Team and NSA regional committees.

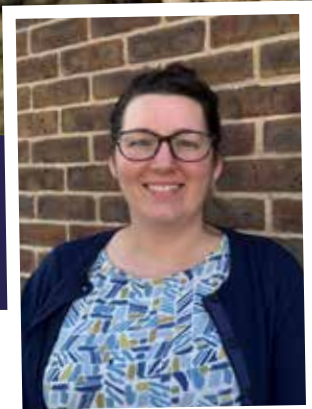
NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker comments: "All at NSA are delighted to welcome Faye and Julia into the team. They have already spent time with many staff members at NSA HQ and also with several NSA Scottish Region committee members, so are starting to build valuable working relationships here so we can work together to strengthen activity delivered for Scottish sheep farmers."





Coordinator's Comment

NSA Scottish Region Policy Officer



Navigating change

As the leaves begin to turn and the air grows sharper, Scotland's sheep sector finds itself at a crossroads where policy, biosecurity, and wellbeing intersect. Autumn is often a time of reflection and preparation, and this year is no exception.

From planning to profitability – Aligning policy with farm viability

As Scotland's agricultural sector moves toward Whole Farm Plan compliance, the recent Farming Profitability Review offers a timely reminder that sustainability must be matched by economic viability. While Tier 2 guidance promises to reward enhanced environmental outcomes, greater clarity is needed on how these incentives will translate into tangible financial support. The Review's call for fairer market conditions and reduced input dependency should inform the next phase of policy development, ensuring sheep farmers are not left balancing compliance with cost without adequate reward. Policymakers must now act decisively to align environmental ambition with economic reality by fast-tracking Tier 2 clarity, embedding profitability into support schemes, and listening directly to farmers on the ground.

Lynx reintroduction: Consultation raises more questions than it answers

The Missing Lynx Project's interim consultation report offers a snapshot of public engagement around the proposed reintroduction of lynx to north-west Northumberland, with potential migration into southern Scotland. While the headline figure of 72% support may appear compelling, a closer look reveals limitations in methodology and scope.

Despite nearly 10,000 visitors attending the touring exhibition, only 1,700 individuals completed questionnaires – just 0.15% of the estimated 1.1 million population across Northumberland, Cumbria, Dumfries and the Scottish Borders. Of these, only 1,075 lived within

the project region. The consultation acknowledges that rural and land-based stakeholders were 'overrepresented', yet offers little detail on how bias was mitigated or dissenting voices captured.

The report also confirms that lynx are likely to cross into Scotland if released in Northumberland, yet there is no indication of cross-border policy alignment on compensation for livestock losses. Questions remain around who would fund post-project involvement and how long-term monitoring would be managed.

Further concerns include:

- Lack of clarity on how farms were selected for visits.
- No published results from key questions on public sentiment.
- Overreliance on 'active voices' recruited via social media and exhibitions.
- Only 38% engagement from the Lynx Community Group.
- No commitment to collaring all lynx, raising questions about monitoring.

NSA Scotland continues to urge caution and calls for a robust, transparent, and inclusive consultation process that fully considers the impact on sheep farming communities. With a staggered release proposed over five years and a 10–13 year project timeline, now is the time for meaningful dialogue – not just immersive exhibitions.

Bluetongue movement relaxations: What you need to know

From 21st September 2025, Scotland has introduced seasonally adjusted movement rules for animals coming from Bluetongue Restricted Zones in England. These changes reflect the reduced risk of transmission due to lower temperatures and declining midge activity.

While disease control remains a priority, the Scottish Government has introduced general licences to simplify movements under specific conditions. While NSA remains opposed to any reintroduction of lynx, we are committed to ongoing engagement with the project to ensure that the concerns and perspectives of farmers are fully represented. These licenses reduce the administrative burden for farmers and transporters, while maintaining safeguards for animal health.



Quick-glance summary table: Movement rules from Restricted Zone to Scotland from 21st September

Animal type / movement	Requirement	Notes
Store/fattening animals & non-pregnant females of any species	No testing required	
Slaughter animals / Abattoirs	No testing required; abattoirs no longer need designation	Must move directly to slaughter
Breeding tup (male sheep)	Testing required (within 7 days prior to movement or post-movement with a negative result)	Pre- or post-movement PCR test; must be negative before breeding
Breeding bulls (male cattle)	Testing (within 7 days prior to movement) or Bultavo-3 vaccination	Primary course of vaccine must be completed. Recommended to test animals before breeding to confirm disease status
Pregnant ewes/goats	No testing required	
Pregnant cows/heifers	Testing (within 7 days prior to movement) or Bultavo-3 vaccination	Primary course of vaccine must be completed
Male & pregnant deer/camelids	Testing required	

Mental health and wellbeing: Supporting each other through the seasons

As we descend into the darker months, the pressures of farming can intensify. Shorter days, unpredictable weather, and financial uncertainty can weigh heavily. NSA Scotland encourages all members to prioritise their wellbeing and reach out when needed.

Whether it's a chat with a neighbour, a call to RSABI, or attending a local Farmstrong event, support is available. The farming community thrives on connection, and no one should feel alone. Let's continue to champion not only the health of our flocks but also the wellbeing of our farmers.



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For further information please contact
Grace Reid - Scottish Region Coordinator
Tel: 07787 142858 Email: grace@nationalsheep.org.uk

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NSA SCOTLAND NEWSLETTER

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Agricultural policy update

by Michael Priestley

Record needs setting straight, not breaking

Scotland's sheep sector is setting records – some good and worth singing about, and others less so.

It's been a record year for national flock size, wildfires, dry weather (in some areas), and sheep prices. The summer has been a reminder of how balance is key in keeping things on an even keel, be it markets, upland habitats, or forage supplies.

Supply and demand economics dictate that demand must be strong and supply tight for lambs to be valuable. It should be no surprise then that in a year of record low sheep numbers, Kelso tup sales posts a record high average of £1,472.

Economists will often be heard saying “high prices cure high prices”. This means that if something is expensive, it becomes attractive to sell, attractive to produce, and therefore, quickly no longer in short supply, and more affordable. In pig farming this is called the hog cycle, as pig farmers retain and offload gilts and buy and sell grain according to the “up corn down horn” flux of the marketplace.

Compared to pig farming, Scotland's sheep sector is extensive. Generation intervals in the breeding of the stock are longer, and the weather plays havoc with plans. The sector is not as fleet of foot as the pig sector, or other factory-based, batch production industries.

A very real concern is that high prices will continue but the sheep sector will not grow. This could be because gimmers are too good a price to keep as yearlings, or due to asset management, rewilding, carbon offsetting conspiring to make other uses of hill country more lucrative than a hill farmer's rent. Sheep numbers are tight in Europe, the southern hemisphere, and the UK, but because of land use policies increasing non-farming land uses vying for space in the Scottish countryside, high prices may not cure high prices. Despite the economic signals, the industry cannot grow if it's factory (i.e. the grassland) is diminishing.

This prophecy, if it comes to fruition, is not good for marts, vets, fire crews battling wildfires, or farming membership organisations like NSA Scotland. It is also not good for the abattoir sector. Remember, close to 60% of the lambs and more than 90% of Scottish ewes are slaughtered south of the border as it is.

How has the sheep sector contracted?

Scotland's breeding ewe flock is historically very small. Data goes back to 1866, and the flock is certainly the smallest for more than 120 years.

Nationally, the UK flock was about 20 million head under the headage payments of the 1990s, but foot and mouth, 2003 CAP reform, and various societal changes and land use pressure have whittled that figure down to less than 14 million.

Scotland topped at 4 million sheep then and now has 2.45 million breeding ewes. There are something like 500,000 fewer sheep than in 1900, but more than 1 million more inhabitants, which roughly equates to a Glasgow, an Aberdeen and a Dundee.

Past evolution

Of course, the Scottish sheep sector has evolved and responded to past changes. Breeders turned to Cheviot during the times of the Napoleonic war (1803-1815) when fine wool imports were disrupted. The Cheviot breed suited the wether and mutton system for many years, before the Blackface started regaining ground after several hard winters revealed the limitations of Cheviots in some higher, rougher hills (notably 1878-9).

Then breeders embraced the prolificacy of the Leicester from the 1870s onwards, producing greyface and halfbred breeding females from Blackface and Cheviot ewes respectively in the early days of stratification. Merino wool imports, Australian mutton imports, and then the change in London tastes for smaller joints and lamb rather than mutton were other drivers that influenced farming systems and breeding programmes into the 20th century.

Future vision

Scottish sheep farming can evolve again as it adjusts to cost inflation, life outside the EU, and a changing support framework. It can rise to meet the challenges of biodiversity, carbon, and water targets, while providing us with nutrient dense protein and fibre. To do this, NSA wants to see a land use policy with a sense of balance, not the extremes of rewilding, flock removal, and sitka plantations. Graziers can create a varied mosaic of habitats and deliver all the ecosystems services we need. More integration of livestock into arable systems could also yield benefits to soil health, system resilience, and production.

NSA Scotland is advocating for farmers to be rewarded for providing public goods, such as biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and clean water, while given reliable support frameworks to advance and become more efficient through the adoption of technology. The third element is a payment on results environmental scheme that delivers for public, while getting farms to balance biodiversity and production.

If this can be done, the critical mass needed to support the rest of the industry and its slaughterhouses and allied industries will be achieved. The holy grail is a farming system and economy that produces sustainable lamb to world-leading standards that is affordable to buy and profitable to produce.

More important than setting record highs is merely setting the record straight; that sheep are a highly versatile animal we have been milking, eating, and wearing for more than 10,000 years and to lose sight of their value would be folly indeed.

Veterinary Corner

Ed Hill – Thrums Vet Group

After a very quiet August where everyone in this part of the country seemed to be driving a combine or towing a grain cart, September has been thankfully very busy with sheep work. Tup fertility testing has been the primary job, which is now the norm on many of our farms, as well as OPA flock scanning and quarantine screening new breeding stock.



Breeding sale season is always an exciting time but as the vet with a knowledge of how many awful infectious diseases there are out there, it can be a scary time too! A robust, risk based quarantine protocol tailored to your farm really is essential to avoid significant heartache and production loss further down the line.

The next couple of months will see us starting to think about fluke treatments. The very dry summer will hopefully have reduced the risk somewhat, but as with all parasitic things and changing seasonal patterns, this is becoming more challenging to predict accurately. Getting the timing right for treatment for fluke is really important – too early or too late and we suffer production losses and deaths. Or it may be that treatments are not needed at all and unnecessary medicine usage will have negative environmental impacts, damaging our soils and grazing potential. Fortunately, we now have a new tool in our armoury to help us get the timing of treatment spot on. Blood testing for fluke gives us the earliest opportunity to pick up a fluke infestation (much faster than copro-antigen or egg tests), and can detect new infections in first season grazers 2-3 weeks post infestation. Blood testing is not new, but what is new is the availability of a rapid, pen-side test that can be used by farmers and allows us to make a diagnosis instantly. By monthly sampling a group of first season grazers using the pen-side test, we can pin-point the exact time stock need treated (if at all!), making the most

of our medicines, avoiding unnecessary use and protecting health of stock. Speak to your vet to find out more about the new pen-side tests.

It's usually about this time of year we see a spike of pasteurellosis/pneumonia in lambs. This usually occurs due to a combination of factors. Firstly, protection against specific bacteria from vaccines given in early summer may now be waning. Environmental factors now come into play also with more rainfall and frosty nights raising the risk, some systems may also see lambs housed from late autumn onwards. A change in diet is also a risk factor, as is stress of transportation, so as we see lambs moving onto winter forage crops or transported for winter grazing, this will result in more issues. And finally, an underlying worm burden can suppress immunity and result in being more susceptible to pneumonia. The easy thing to do is consider a pasteurella booster prior to any of these stress events or management changes, but it is also worth considering how these stresses and challenges can be minimised in the first place for a more sustainable approach.



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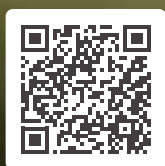
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