

Following the flock

We visit Angus, North Yorkshire and Lincolnshire to catch up with NSA officeholders

Peter Myles

NSA Scottish Region Chair, Angus



Some say a sheep's one ambition in life is to die – not if I can help it.

I'd like to think the country's sheep flock has been living through the healthiest era we've had, with some of the best vaccines and preventative medicines now available. Outbreaks of pulpy kidney, blackleg and pasteurellosis for example, are rare but can happen when there is a breakdown in protection with a vaccine supply issue.

Sheep scab has returned since the stop of compulsory dipping when it was virtually eradicated. I know there are issues with organophosphates but personally I'm a great fan of them.

Wormers too have moved on. Gone are the days when one would use a white drench one year then a clear drench the next. More care is being taken regarding worm and wormer resistance to prolong the efficiency of the drugs.

Now dedicated scientists at Moredun have developed a new vaccine for louping ill. NSA Scottish Region gives full support and request people give this initiative the backing it deserves.

And then I can say if a sheep's one ambition in life is to die – not if I can stop it! [Read more about the new vaccine on page 30.](#)

Peter is thankful for vaccines and preventative medicines.



Ted Ogden

NSA Northern Region Chair, North Yorkshire



As farmers and producers were busy in the grip of spring lambing and calving, it was a similar story in the livestock market at Skipton.

Prime sheep sales saw the peak season for prime hogg sales with large numbers coming from winter root crops. As most will know, trade hasn't hit the headlines of last year and with winter having generally been kinder the hogs have returned in fine fettle and generally at much larger weights.

Demand for handy weight hogs has been mostly good, yielding solid returns. But the surplus of heavy hogs has dragged the trade down more than expected. Strong cull ewe prices highlight the contrast in demand for lamb and mutton in UK meat markets, likely due to reduced catering demand for large lamb carcasses. The hogg trade may improve as spring lambs come through.

Looking forward to autumn, it is possible there will be a few more gimmer hogs held over this time for the breeding sales rather than having gone in the spring, offering more choice to producers looking to replace older ewes or increase flock numbers.

If you are attending NSA North Sheep or NSA Sheep South West, please do pop along for a chat and say hello where I will be at either the NSA or CCM Auctions trade stand. Best of luck for the 2025 trading season.



Ted has been busy in the livestock market at Skipton.

Ed Brant

NSA Central Region Chair, Lincolnshire

We've followed the cover crops of brassicas, oats and vetch by sewing spring barley, fodder beet and stubble turnips.

The barley was easiest to drill and looks the best. It will be interesting to see the results. The downside is we were trialling the cover crops to see if we could meet the requirements of the Sustainable Farming Incentive before entering, so have been affected by the early closure for applications.

While lambing the mature Lleyns, we had great weather with only a couple of days rain but the nights were quite cold. It has been on the good side of average with losses being lower than recent years. We have used shedding rams and recorded the progeny alongside the usual Lleyns, so it will be interesting to see the difference when I crunch the numbers.

The ewe lambs started lambing at the beginning of May as the weather caught me out a little bit last year and caused a few losses. I have trialled moving them round the subdivisions of the paddock over lambing. The idea was if we have bad weather I could move them to more sheltered parts of the larger arable field, rather than set stock like last year.

There was some drama and heartache in the Hampshires. We had 20 ewes abort and the results came back as campylobacter. It is good to know what has been causing the issues and now I can work on a plan to deal with it for next year.



Ed has seen less losses over lambing this year.