



• *Tregoyd Farm, taken at NSA Welsh Sheep 2025*

A WARM WELCOME FROM PHIL

At NSA, we have a strong desire to support the development of the younger generation and encourage future leaders in our industry – people who can become real ambassadors for sheep farming.

The Next Generation programme is a fantastic opportunity for younger farmers to gain insights into the industry. We are able to offer access to industry leaders and government policy makers which would not ordinarily be available.

Our aim, through NSA Next Generation, is to give you opportunities to continue your journey as a sheep farmer, with confidence and knowledge, supported by NSA. To stay relevant and to do this effectively, NSA is planning some tweaks to the existing

programme to reflect changes and opportunities. Look out for more news later this year.

We want the Next Generation programme to help young people to become ambassadors for sheep farming. Hopefully, going on to help shape future government policy by speaking up for the needs, challenges and opportunities sheep farming provides, not only to farmers but its positive impact on wider communities, landscapes and biodiversity.

We want to make sure our industry has a network of strong, knowledgeable sheep farmers and industry leaders who recognise the challenges and expectations we face. NSA Next Generation will help provide the tools and contacts for you to progress in your career.

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Any requests or suggestions to be sent to Lydia@nationalsheep.org.uk

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EVENT REPORTS 2025

NSA members get discounted or free entry to all national and regional events, showcasing the latest information, technologies and innovations.

These are essential technical events, combining a great day out with the opportunity to learn, engage and refresh.

NSA WELSH SHEEP

A resounding success and much needed boost for morale summed up NSA Welsh Sheep Event, held on the outskirts of Hay on Wye Wednesday 21st May. Host farm, Tregoyd farm, is home to High Country Romneys and farmed by Penny Chantler with her sons, Sam and Will Sawday.

The event drew visitors from across the UK as well as several international visitors and provided inspiration for thousands of sheep farmers. They learned a little, did business, relished the latest innovations and couldn't fail to be impressed by the business model on display by High Country Romneys during the popular farm tour. It was also a much needed opportunity for farmers to get together in the early Summer sunshine, with the site refreshed after a night's rain.

NSA Cymru/Wales Chair Caryl Hughes paid tribute to the vision of landowner, Huw Evans-Bevan. She said he was determined to futureproof the Tregoyd Estate and make it ready to meet the demands of the 21st century. The 5,000 acre (2025ha) estate comprises woodland, moorland and farmland, with a mix of shooting, farming and conservation, as well as holiday accommodation.

Tregoyd Estate owner Huw Evans-Bevan welcomed visitors to the spectacular setting, with the backdrop of Hay Bluff an example of the stunning beauty of rural Wales, sculpted and preserved by the enduring resilience, innovation and excellence of Welsh farmers.

The host farmers were delighted with the 'superb' day. Will Sawday said they had loved having so many people at the farm, to celebrate the best of the sheep industry. The whole process had also helped to raise the profile of High Country Romneys and had been well worth the time and effort.

A final highlight of the event was the presentation of the NSA Cymru / Wales Next Generation Shepherd competition winners. Read about the winner shortly.

- *Farm tour at Welsh Sheep.*



NSA NORTH SHEEP

Despite the challenging weather, NSA North Sheep, held at Greystoke Castle Farm by kind permission of John and Liz Peile and their family, exceeded expectations with an impressive turnout from both local and national attendees. The event welcomed over 240 trade stands and attracted visitors from across the UK and overseas, underscoring its significance in the sheep farming calendar.

The Peile family's diverse and sustainable farming operation was a highlight, with farm tours offering insights into their management of dairy herds, beef cattle and flocks of hill and lowland sheep. Visitors praised the breath-taking views over the Eden Valley and the informative commentary provided during the tractor and trailer tours.

Educational initiatives were at the forefront, with 250 pupils from local schools participating in bespoke cookery and shearing demonstrations, as well as engaging in farm tours. Feedback from both students and teachers was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the event's role in inspiring the next generation of farmers.

Competitions added excitement to the day. Over 40 dogs competed in the sheepdog trials, with Derek Scrimgeour and Braehead Dot taking top honours.

The exhilarating speed shear event, part of the Northern Speed Shear Circuit, saw Welsh shearer Llyr Jones, the 2024 Welsh Champion, claim victory amidst a packed audience.

Industry professionals led a series of insightful, thought-provoking seminars throughout the day, covering a wide range of key topics relevant to the sheep sector. A particularly well-attended seminar offered a detailed market outlook, providing farmers with clarity and guidance in a changing economic landscape. The newly introduced Animal Health Area and Cookery Theatre also proved extremely popular, with visitors praising the practical demonstrations, expert advice and engaging discussions that reflected the evolving needs of modern sheep farming.

NSA North Sheep not only celebrated the resilience and innovation within the sheep industry but also reinforced the importance of community, education and sustainable practices.

- *Farm tour at North Sheep.*



NSA HIGHLAND SHEEP

NSA Highland Sheep, held at Midfearn Farm, Ardgay, by kind permission of the Brooke family, proved a resounding success last week attracting visitors from across Scotland and beyond.

With the attraction of a beautiful Highland setting, a line up of engaging seminars and a farm tour showcasing quality livestock, record breaking crowds arrived to enjoy a packed programme celebrating the strength, innovation and community of Highland sheep farming.

The farm tour was a major highlight. Trailers transported visitors across several fields to experience the Brooke family's livestock enterprises, including a selection of their 650 breeding ewes and lambs and 110 breeding cows and calves. The tour also featured the Watson Seeds grassland plots, where visitors heard from the Watsons team about multispecies swards, soil health, and the role of grassland in improving livestock performance and farm profitability. Guests praised both the informative commentary and the breath-taking Highland scenery.

All sessions were well attended, offering

timely, practical insight into policy, consumer demand, and new approaches to business resilience.

Elsewhere, the event site hosted more than 120 trade stands, breed society displays, and machinery demonstrations. The butchery and cookery demonstrations were particularly popular, offering practical demonstrations, expert advice and culinary inspiration using Scotch lamb.

NSA Highland Sheep not only celebrated the progress of Scotland's sheep farmers, but also reinforced the importance of education, environmental stewardship and collaboration in shaping the future of the industry.

Taking place the day before the busy event was the NSA Next Generation Shepherd competition that saw six farmers demonstrate enthusiasm for the sector whilst taking part in a series of shepherding tasks such as shearing, sheepdog handling and lamb selection. Taking the top place in the contest was Keira Smith from Aberdeenshire. Kiera was also the top place under 21 year old in the competition. She now goes forward to represent Scotland at next year's national finals of the competition.

- *Highland Sheep location.*



WHAT IS ROSA?

The Register of Sheep Advisers (RoSA) is a network of well-rounded professional advisers working within the UK sheep industry.

The aim of the register is to provide UK sheep farmers with appropriate advice from recognised professionals who can support them to develop sustainable farming systems that meet the highest standards of animal welfare and environmental protection.

The RoSA vision is to see qualified and well-informed advisers supporting engaged sheep farmers to become more profitable and sustainable. This is achieved through the support of a continuous professional development programme for sheep advisers to ensure sheep farmers can access the best and most appropriate advice for their businesses so they are prepared for any upcoming opportunities and challenges.

RoSA has a range of members covering a number of subject areas including vets, financial planning consultants, EID software and hardware specialists, nutritionists, feed advisers and environmental scheme consultants.

Our membership therefore reflects the wide range of topics that sheep farmers and those involved in the sheep supply chain need to understand. However, all members are required to carry out continuous professional development (CPD) across all areas of sheep production, therefore ensuring all RoSA advisers have a well-rounded knowledge of the sheep industry and UK sheep farming.

RoSA membership is open to anybody working within the sheep sector with appropriate qualifications and experience. Once they have joined the register, all RoSA advisers are required to collect a specified number of CPD points through the year to demonstrate they are continuing to keep up-to-date and develop their knowledge. This continuing professional development also ensures all RoSA members have a well-rounded understanding of sheep production, as it must cover topics ranging from genetics and animal welfare through to forage management and livestock nutrition.

RoSA members are passionate about the sheep industry and want to make sure sheep farmers are profitable, sustainable and well-informed.

- *Thinking of becoming an adviser? Find out more.*





EVAN TURNER - WINNER AGED 17

Evan has shared his experience of the Next Generation Shepherd competition that he took part in at NSA Welsh Sheep this year.

"This is the first time I have entered the NSA competition. My college nominated and encouraged me to take part. I am currently studying for a level 3 diploma in agriculture." He tells NSA.

"I have grown up with livestock working with my dad on his beef and sheep enterprise. My father and older brother have an interest in pedigree sheep and this has continued as I have grown up with livestock. I have a keen interest in sheep, both commercial and pedigree and the college recognised this. They encouraged me and gave me the support to use my interest, putting it into practice within the competition." He continues.

"I had heard of the competition previously as my father is a member of NSA and my brother has previously taken part in the competition when we lived in Derbyshire. I said yes to entering the competition as I wanted to see if I could achieve more than my brother and test my knowledge."

When asked how he prepared for the competition, Evan answered, *"I have to admit, I didn't do much preparation! I spoke to my father about it, and discussed rams. On the farm we look at the conditioning of the sheep, and what produces a good commercial*

sheep, along with breeding in the pedigree sheep.

"I'd had minimal practice with an ATV which I could develop to improve my score at the next event.

"The most difficult aspect for me was the questionnaire, as everyone can have a different opinion, or use a different system, which influences your answer.

"The best part of the competition ultimately for me was winning. I never expected to win. I listened to see where I was placed, never expecting first, not only for under 21, but the whole thing. The result took some sinking in!" Evan admits.

"Since the competition, I have gained my blue seal in shearing and was very close to my red seal. Shearing was an area I had dropped. Now I feel I could rise to the challenge, practising at home shearing our sheep.

When asked about the competition and how he might describe it, Evan said *"There are multiple elements to the competition. It tests your knowledge in various ways. You don't have to be academic, it looks at practical skills and puts them together. The people at the event managing the competition are friendly, supportive and encouraging.*

"If you enjoy farming and especially sheep, give the competition a go, you never know how you will do!" He concludes.



- From left to right: Elin Kitty Hughes, Evan Turner and Mared Edwards.



POLICY WITH PRIESTLEY

Sheep farming in the UK is undergoing significant changes as individual governments formulate new strategies to address challenges such as climate change, biodiversity targets, renewable energy production, animal health, and food supply. The NSA plans to advocate for the sheep industry's role in achieving these aims following the UK's exit from the EU.

Financially, the agricultural sector faces constraints. While BPS (Basic Payment Scheme) subsidies continue in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, English farmers have experienced a significant reduction in BPS, though some have accessed funds through the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS), including the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI). However, the SFI scheme was terminated early, affecting many. Agri-environmental policies are still developing in Wales, with the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), and Scotland.

The industry also faces new perils, including species reintroductions like Sea Eagles. These birds, released on the Isle of Wight with planned future releases in south east Wales, have hunted flocks in

Scotland and can learn to prey on lambs, causing devastating impacts. NSA is engaged in conversations to minimize potential damage.

Pressure also mounts regarding antibiotic use, although sheep farming has lower usage than other livestock sectors. With a third of UK lamb exported to Europe, aligning with European standards for antibiotic recording is crucial.

Sheep farmers report feeling unappreciated, facing blame for issues like climate change despite the scientific support for lamb in a balanced diet. Animal welfare extremists, wildlife enthusiasts and climate change protestors are adding to pressure on the industry.

Furthermore, Defra's Land Use Framework proposes converting 19% of agricultural land to other purposes, such as housing or forestry. NSA is actively encouraging a reconsideration of these choices, defending farmers.

The destocking and rewilding of moorland, coupled with dry springs, has contributed to an astounding number of wildfires, many occurring in areas where livestock numbers were reduced or removed. NSA argues that livestock grazing is essential to manage vegetation, preventing land from becoming fuel for fires.



- *The white-tailed eagle, known as the 'sea eagle', is a large bird of prey.*



- *NSA encourages use of signs to encourage leads on dogs.*

#LEAD ON SUMMER

NSA is conscious that with summer around the corner, dog walkers are likely to be out enjoying the countryside and may not consider using a lead on dogs in places where they believe it is safe.

Each year, the NSA conducts a survey to track the issue of sheep worrying and highlight it through a social media campaign.

The most recent survey drew focus to the experiences of farmers. The results fundamentally showed that sheep worrying by dogs remains a blight on the industry, with 87% of those that took part, reporting they had experienced a dog attack in the last 12 months.

The majority of cases involved one dog (73%), with 23% of cases involving two dogs. Farmers who took part generally said they believed the main cause of sheep worrying is dogs not being put on a lead, which has been a theme through previous surveys.

NSA continues to work with the police to address farmer's feelings of frustration and work on the improvements that must be made when an incident report is made.

The police have previously acknowledged and agreed that sheep worrying by dogs is the most common rural crime. NSA's 2024 survey of the police found that no force had never had a sheep worrying by dogs incident.

In the 2024 NSA survey of the police, proactive use of signage was considered the most successful tool to help prevent sheep worrying by dogs.

NSA offers free signage to members, and encourages farmers to use signs to avoid incidents and increase public awareness.

Moving forward, NSA has recently been involved with companies that have general public and dog owner audiences, such as The Kennel Club. NSA looks forward to working together to educate more regarding the ongoing issue, with the next survey to be aimed at dog owners.





BLUETONGUE

Bluetongue (BTV) is an insect-borne viral disease transmitted by biting midges. It affects all species of ruminants (sheep, cattle, goats and deer) and camelids (llama and alpaca) although sheep are most severely affected. It does not affect humans.

On 27th August 2024, NSA warned members to remain vigilant with the first confirmed case of BTV-3 in England. By the 2nd September, NSA put out a statement that it would continue to provide updates on the situation of the disease, though it was quickly changing.

At this time, all of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex was put into a restriction zone (RZ) to control the spread of the disease.

By 4th September 2024, NSA made a statement welcoming Defra approval for use of bluetongue vaccine.

Most recently, vaccine use is still encouraged but not mandatory.

It was announced that on 1st July 2025, the restricted zone will be extended to cover all of England.

The new restriction zone will mean you will be able to move animals within

England without a licence or test.

On June 13th, NSA expressed its disappointment that Welsh Government has dismissed recommendations to become part of the RZ with England to enable free movements across the border.

Currently, from 1st July any sheep moving from England into Wales will need to be pre-movement tested.

Wales confirmed it is happy for animals to be moved from Scotland to Wales through England as long as there are no stops made in England, except for emergencies.

NSA Cymru/Wales Region Development Officer, Helen Roberts says: *"It's disappointing the Welsh Government has not listened to our repeated calls to align with England and join the RZ on 1st July. We are fully aware keeping a disease out and ensuring high levels of biosecurity is a priority, but in this case the disease is spread by a midge that will not respect the border between England and Wales."*

NSA continues to encourage all sheep farmers that vaccination is important to help mitigate the spread of this disease. Talk to your vet about vaccination and protecting your flock.



BRITISH WOOL ENCOURAGING UPCOMING SHEPHERDS

Encouraging young farmers and the next generation of sheep farmers and shearers is at the heart of British Wool's activity.

Providing training for the next generation of competent shearers, British Wool supports more than 100 shearing courses across the UK, which in 2024 were attended by 850 people. Led by a team of registered and highly experienced instructors, the courses are generally delivered over two days during the season.

British Wool's training programme is designed to support candidates of all abilities in learning and developing this skill, which is vital to the country's sheep sector.

Gareth Jones, British Wool's head of member engagement, says: "Courses are designed to enable participants to shear more efficiently and effectively, building career opportunities and supporting entry at global competitions of the highest standards. Young Farmers Club members can also take advantage of a 50% discount that was

to be applied for earlier in the year and was available in all areas of the UK."

In addition, courses are also available in wool handling, crutching, gear, sharpening and grinding and blade shearing, with certificates awarded on successful completion of all courses.

Gareth continues, "New in 2025 were British Wool's Masterclass courses, led by Matt Smith. Advanced shearers enjoyed training with the World Record holder and British Wool Ambassador to push their abilities further."

"Having carried out private shed shearing training with shearers who have goals and having hosted seven world records on-farm, Matt is well placed to train participants."

When it comes to support, in 2024 British Wool launched an ambassador programme to promote British Wool at grassroots levels - several of whom are young shearers and farmers.

The ambassadors are well placed to encourage farmers to make use of the services British Wool provides and to market their wool via the organisation.

Building on this, British Wool encourages any groups interested in finding out more about wool grading and marketing by visiting the organisation's head office or network of UK depots to get in touch.

Gareth concludes: "British Wool is always happy to accommodate any groups that would like to visit one of our depots or our head office in Bradford. We have done many of these over the years, including the NSA Ambassador Group, the NSA Wool Symposium, and with young farmer groups. A visit typically includes a tour of the depot, including insight into grading wool and scouring, while learning about British Wool's role as a farmer organisation."



UPDATED SHEARING GUIDANCE

Minimising disease risks posed to your sheep and by your sheep at shearing is critical in maintaining flock health on farm and across the wider industry.

Sheep farmers are being urged to understand that biosecurity at shearing time hinges on effective communication between different parties.

“There is a joint responsibility between farmers and shearers” says Nerys Wright, independent sheep consultant and technical adviser to SCOPS. *“If your shearer doesn’t know that your flock has been affected by a contagious disease, such as scab, they may unknowingly spread it”.*

Other sheep, shearing equipment, clothing, shearing trailers, and shearers themselves can all present a disease risk unless steps are taken by farmers and shearing contractors to reduce risks and ensure cleanliness.

Farmers are also reminded that applying pour-on products too close to shearing can reduce effectiveness and absorption and pose health risks to shearers and wool handlers.

Below are some key guidelines during shearing:

- Establish the flock health status before shearing and agree what steps will be taken to safeguard health status and prevent disease spread.
- Disinfect - Shearers should clean and disinfect combs and cutters, shearing trailers, and change clothes (including moccasins) after finishing with each flock.
- Reduce exposure - Shear younger, fitter sheep first, followed by older and less healthy sheep to reduce the risk of cross-infection.
- Personal hygiene – those handling sheep should wash hands frequently and clean and disinfect boots.
- Clean and disinfect as you go - Sheep with obvious issues that could infect the handpiece, should prompt the shearer to stop, change/disinfect their comb and cutter and other items that may have been in contact. Wash hands where necessary.

By following these guidelines, the risk of disease spread can be reduced, ensuring a healthier flock during shearing season.

More detailed guidance on how farmers and shearers can share responsibility can be found through the NSA news page.

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UPCOMING SHEPHERD COMPETITIONS

Two organisers of the next upcoming NSA Next Generation Shepherd Competitions shared their expectations for the day and invite any one interested to come along.

NSA Marches Region competition and training day will take place at Middle Farm, Grafton, Tewkesbury on Sunday 29th June, by kind permission of NSA Next Generation Ambassador, George Ellis.

Katie James, NSA Marches Region Manager looks forward to the event, saying, *“NSA Marches Region Next Generation Shepherd competition is always a great day. We are keen to ensure everyone enjoys their day and so the competition is relaxed and friendly. We also encourage younger sheep farmers of the future to come along to learn from our experienced committee who are happy to demonstrate tasks and allow everyone to get involved if they wish.”*

“The competition this year is hosted by a previous NSA Next Generation Ambassador, George Ellis, who is looking forward to welcoming competitors and others to his farm to enjoy an afternoon farm tour as part of the event. His enterprise of 400 Romney breeding ewes and 60 dairy beef cattle will showcase

modern handling facilities and rotational grazing practices including herbal leys.”

As usual, the two winners will go to the national finals at NSA Sheep Event 2026, at Three Counties Showground, Worcestershire.

Competitors will be asked to complete a series of common shepherding tasks from lamb selection to ATV handling. Competitors holding a British Wool Blue Seal certificate will also compete in the shearing element.

Similarly, Northern Ireland competitors will have the opportunity to represent NI, with first and second place having expenses paid to compete in 2026 for substantial prize money.

Ellen Moorehead, NSA Northern Ireland Regional Coordinator says *“The competition will take place at this year’s Sheep NI Event, hosted at McFarlane’s Farm, Dungiven, on Tuesday 1st July - and we are encouraging as many young people as possible to get involved!”*

“Whether you are working with sheep or just starting out, this competition is a brilliant opportunity to develop your skills, learn from others and meet like-minded people from across Northern Ireland. The competition focuses on practical and husbandry tasks, and is set in a relaxed, friendly environment designed to build confidence and support learning.”





CHEWING THE CUD WITH PERRY

Meet NSA Next Generation Ambassador, Perry Parkinson. Perry joined the NSA programme in 2022 and has since been the recipient of the NSA Samuel Wharry Travel Bursary. This year Perry will be providing readers with an update on his farming life in Scotland.

I feel like I say this with every article, however the last few months have been a total blur. From a work standpoint, we've been at every NSA event so far, meaning a lot of miles up and down the road, leaving little time for much else. I can't complain though. They seem to get better every year and are always a good excuse to catch up with both friends and clients.

Another thing keeping me busy seems to be the amount of possible haemonchus* cases which seem to be striking fear into the hearts of most farmers this year. It's fair to say we've seen a lot more cases this year already, although with the way our climate has been this year, can you blame it? My biggest piece of advise is 'Don't Panic'. Regular FEC tests and a good conversation with your Vet or SQP, and you'll be in safe hands. It's really brought home the need to effectively quarantine animals coming onto farm which still seems to be far out of most farmers minds.

From a personal/home side of things, we've

shorn the ewes and fly treated everything with a long acting product, with lambs being weaned yesterday. We've had a great few local shows picking up some champion, reserve and first rosettes, with a focus now on drafting finished lambs for the mart. It's year one of running Lleyn ewes with a Blue Texel and it's fair to say I'll not be changing. From conception rates and lambing, to milkiness and vigour, they seem to have it all. With regular FEC* monitoring as well as good grass management, the lambs seem to be thriving which is always great to see.

Finally, NSA Highland sheep allowed me to catch up with an old friend who works for Farm Strong Scotland. It was amazing to find that even a five minute catch up soon turned into a bit of a mental release when talking about the year and the pressure a lot of us are under, whether it be on farm or at home. It really reiterated the importance of not only talking to people, but the importance of having businesses and charities out there to make it that little bit easier too.

I guess my take home message is, even though this may seem all positive, not everything is all sunshine and rainbows and I'm sure this will resonate with most people out there. Whether you believe it or not, there is always someone out there who's willing to listen to you and try to help wherever needed.

Have a great summer, it'll be tuppung time before you know it!

*Key terms

- Haemonchus - a blood sucking roundworm that lives in stomachs.
- FEC - Faecal Egg Counting. A test that measures the number of worm eggs in a dung sample to monitor worm burdens and aid treatment decisions.



NSA RESPONDS TO CHANCELLORS SPENDING REVIEW: NO SURPRISES BUT OPPORTUNITIES STILL UNCLEAR

Future Government department spending commitments outlined in the Chancellors spending review are not as bad for Defra as feared, but still suggest an absence of recognition for the importance of domestic food production, and a similar lack of ambition for the environment, says NSA, as overall department funds for Defra look set to drop by 2.7% between 2024 and 2029.

NSA maintains that just to have kept pace with inflation from the pre-Brexit era, the total offering to farmers and land managers would need to be more than £3 billion a year rather than the 2.7 billion on the table.

However, within this, support for Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMS) looks set to increase substantially towards 2028/29, which at this stage looks encouraging.

“The details of all this are still not clear,

and the outcomes will be more affected by internal budget adjustments. It certainly looks as though the department will be faced with resource cuts and cost efficiencies.” says NSA Chief Executive, Phil Stocker.

“What really grieves me is that this shows our nation still isn’t properly valuing home-produced healthy foods, resilient supply chains and the overall offering of farming to the health and well-being of people and the security of our nation. It also isn’t yet putting a proper value on natural resources, nature, and all the other public goods that come from farming.” Phil concludes.

NSA RESPONDS TO THE GUARDIAN’S ARTICLE CRITICISING SHEEP FARMING

On 7th June, The Guardian published an article titled *Conservationists call for Lake District to lose Unesco world heritage status*.

NSA responded via a letter, which was later published, it begins:

Your piece [...] quotes campaigners who criticise sheep farming in this most revered area of Britain. The Lake District is a national park, with protected and designated sites of special scientific interest.

The fact that sheep farming and hefted livestock grazing has been core to its management for over 3,000 years suggests it has created something of value. How ironic that rather than celebrate (and further fine-tune) its armers and graziers, and the surrounding

rural infrastructure that depends on this primary activity, ecologists want to see sheep farming's demise.

Given the right policy framework and the public being prepared to support local food producers, the Lake District's farmers will be able to continue to adapt and deliver what it wants – the enhancement of natural resources, a nature-rich countryside, and a vibrant society with cultural heritage and a contribution to food security. That surely is what conservation should be about – a recognition of the whole, and not just singular outcomes.

Finally, while sheep farming enterprises in these harsh regions may be financially marginal, if they are considered within an economy where money is recirculated locally, creating jobs and enterprise and supporting a rural community, then they're not such poor performers.

Public support helps farmers to do more for nature and protect water and other resources. Farmers want to continue looking after the land they have farmed for centuries, ensuring public access, balancing farming with nature, and managing the landscape in a viable way for future generations.

Phil Stocker

Chief Executive, National Sheep Association

This is a condensed version of the letter, the full response to the article is available on the NSA website.

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LOTS TO SEE, LEARN AND DO AT NSA SHEEP SOUTH WEST!

NSA Sheep South West event is now just around the corner, set to provide a packed day of networking and entertainment for sheep producers from across South West England and beyond.

Taking place on Wednesday 25th June, the event is kindly hosted by the Stanbury family at their home, Weston Farm, East Knowstone, Devon. It will once again provide sheep farming visitors with an informative and enjoyable day out with a packed event schedule of competitions, demonstrations, workshops and more.

The event has a list of seven varied seminars happening throughout the day.

Along with competitions, farm tours, breed societies, demonstrations and trade stands, there is plenty to see and do during this great event.

All NSA news and updates can be found on the NSA website news tab, weekly email update, or through social media.

NSA NORTHERN IRELAND VOICES FRUSTRATION AT DAERA'S CONTINUED INACTION ON SHEEP SECTOR SUPPORT

Frustration continues to intensify among Northern Ireland's sheep farming community, as the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) fails to deliver tangible progress on essential support measures for the sector.

The Sheep Taskforce—which includes representation from NSA Northern Ireland (NI) Region, the Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU), and other key industry stakeholders—met earlier this week in a hybrid format to coordinate ahead of a long-anticipated engagement with DAERA policy officials. This meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 1st July 2025 at NSA Sheep NI, hosted at McFarlane's Farm, Dungiven.

Despite direct invitations, the Minister for Agriculture, Andrew Muir, has confirmed he will not attend due to other commitments. Officials from DAERA will participate in his stead.

NSA NI Chair Edward Adamson voiced his concern over what he described as 'a persistent failure to respond to the sheep sector with the urgency and seriousness it warrants'.

Edward says: "Nearly a year ago, DAERA committed to establishing a dedicated sheep-focused co-design group. To date, we have seen no progress whatsoever, despite our repeated engagement and follow-up. The lack of consultation and delivery is not only disappointing but also verging on negligent."

[Read more on the NSA news page.](#)



RECIPE FOR LAMB BURGERS

Everyone knows lamb and mint go together like a dream. Grab a barbeque or use a pan to create these tasty burgers.

Easy | Serves 4 (approx.) | 10 minutes prep | Around 15 minutes cooking time

- 400g lamb, mince
- 1 small red onion, ½ grated, ½ thinly sliced
- Handful parsley, roughly chopped
- Handful mint, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp olive oil (for cooking)

Mix the ingredients then divide the mix into 4 and shape into burgers.

Heat a pan or barbeque until hot, rub the burgers with a bit of the oil and then cook for 5-6 mins on each side until cooked through.

Grab some burger buns, salad and sauce. Put it all together and enjoy!

25 JUNE WEDNESDAY Sheep South West Weston Farm, East Knowstone, Devon By kind permission of the Stanbury family	1 JULY TUESDAY Sheep Northern Ireland Dungiven, County Londonderry By kind permission of the McFarlane family
2-3 JULY Groundswell Groundswell Lannock Farm, North Hertfordshire, SG4 7EE	21-24 JULY  Royal Welsh Show Royal Welsh Showground, Powys, LD2 3SY

UPCOMING

NSA NEXT GENERATION SHEPHERD COMPETITIONS 

- 
JUNE 25
NSA Sheep South West
 Wednesday 25th June
 Weston Farm, Devon.
- 
JUNE 29
Marches Region
 Sunday 29th June
 Middle Farm, Gloucestershire.
- 
JULY 1
NSA Sheep Northern Ireland
 Tuesday 1st July
 McFarlane Farm, Dungiven.
- 
SEPT 6
Eastern Region
 Saturday 6th September
 Writtle Campus, Anglia Ruskin Uni.

SEE NSA OUT AND ABOUT

NSA has a packed schedule of events, especially at this time of year!

Take advantage of the number of NSA events by signing up for a membership, guaranteeing yourself free or discounted entry to any NSA event!

For those of you that are under 27, NSA offers a full membership for half the price, making it just £35.

Plus get 20% off any membership cost when you pay by direct debit.

NSA NEXT GENERATION SHEPHERD COMPETITIONS

The NSA Next Generation Shepherd competition is a chance for anyone 26 and under to show off their skills.

Each NSA region runs one competition over two years. The top two contestants from each region qualify for the national final at NSA Sheep Event at Three Counties Showground.

More dates, to be announced, keep a look out on social media and the events page.

NSA 2025 Events Schedule

04 AUG MONDAY NSA Wales & Border Early Ram Sale	20 AUG WEDNESDAY NSA South West Region Ram Sale	29 AUG FRIDAY NSA Eastern Region Rugby Ram Show and Sale
05 SEPT FRIDAY Thame Farmers Market Breeding Ewe Sale inc. NSA South East Region Ram Sale	19 SEPT FRIDAY Melton Mowbray Sheep Fair inc. NSA Eastern Region Ram Sale	22 SEPT MONDAY NSA Wales & Border Main Ram Sale



Great Yorkshire Show and NSA Northern Region Shepherd of the Future competition

For those aged 15 - 18 years.
Three stages: a questionnaire, prime stock judging, and handling.

Win up to £150 

 National Sheep Association Northern Region

Plans are being made for NSA Next Generation workshops and events ready for this autumn, keep an eye on NSA socials and the website to see any announcements.