



A WARM WELCOME FROM ANNA

Anna Wilson delivers the NSA Next Generation programme, organising the activity and events that happen throughout the year.

Anna says: "I'm delighted to share updates with you as we continue to grow and support the sheep farming community."

"This year has already seen some fantastic successes, both as part of Next Generation and in the NSA regions. It's been great to see people connect, exchange ideas and take away valuable knowledge. The energy and commitment everyone brings every time shows just how strong the NSA Next Generation and sheep farmer community is becoming."

"Looking ahead, we have a series of workshops planned that will provide practical insights and fresh perspectives on topics like parasites, with SCOPS, and shearing, with British Wool. These workshops are a great opportunity not only to build your skills and

knowledge but to expand your network and be inspired by others on a similar path. Keep an eye on NSA social media for details of what's going on.

"This year has already been so successful, but I have to say, I am really looking forward to next year when we'll be selecting the next group of NSA Next Generation Ambassadors. It's a unique opportunity to develop technical and personal skills within a small group of likeminded people. Do look out for applications opening this November."

"For now, I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming workshops and celebrating more of your successes."



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NSA NEXT GENERATION WORKSHOPS

NSA Next Generation runs workshops around the UK for young people keen to build their sheep farming skills.

These vary from practical sessions on working a sheepdog or preparing sheep for the showring, right through to highly technical days on increasing flock sustainability or improving soil health. All sessions are interactive and aimed at under 35 year olds, be they new entrants or from a family farm.

The NSA Next Generation workshops were kicked-off with a session led by well-known leading sheep consultant and Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep (SCOPS) Technical Adviser Nerys Wright.

Next Generation ready: Sustainable parasite management in a changing climate took place on Thursday 11th September by kind permission of Will Roobottom, Cowley Hill Farm, Stafford.

Will is an NSA Next Generation Ambassador and can often be seen on his popular Youtube and other social channels @CowleyHillFarm sharing the ups and downs of farming life.

Will says: *“I think it’s important to share my experiences, even when things go wrong. It is the only way we can learn how to improve and prevent things going wrong again”.*

Independent sheep consultant, Nerys adds: *“Parasites are evolving alongside our changing weather patterns - warmer winters and, as we’ve seen this year, prolonged dry spells are shifting the way parasites behave on farms. It’s more important than ever that we understand these changes and adapt our management strategies. We can no longer rely on routine, blanket treatments.”*

The session was designed to be highly interactive, with a focus on the real-world challenges participants were experiencing on their farms.

Organiser of the NSA Next Generation event, Anna Wilson says *“These small group workshops enable attendees to receive tailored advice. Parasite control is a minefield of confusing information. Advice is often ‘it depends’, but that’s not helpful when you have a problem on farm. In this workshop, Nerys was able to give individual advice to everyone, enabling each person to take away something useful.”*

This autumn, NSA will team up with British Wool to introduce fundamentals of shearing, with live demonstrations and discussions on all areas of wool and shearing.

You can register now online.



Registrations now open

Two shearing workshops with British Wool

Variety of discussions on wool and a chance to have a go at shearing, no matter your experience level



Northern and Southern locations



By Nerys Wright

LIVING THE SHEEP GEEK DREAM: NO TWO DAYS THE SAME

If you'd told me when I graduated that my daily vocabulary would include "faeces" and "worms," I might have raised an eyebrow. But here I am – working in the sheep industry and doing just that!

By day (and sometimes by night), I run my own sheep consultancy business, offering advice, support and the occasional pep talk to farmers across the country. I also sit on the SCOPS technical committee, where we tackle the ever-evolving world of parasite management. And if that wasn't enough to keep me busy, I'm also the NSA Eastern Region Manager – wrangling events, agendas and spreadsheets.

My dad jokes that I "tell farmers what to do," but the reality is far less bossy and much more collaborative. Most of the time, I'm the sheep fanatic on the other end of the phone – someone to bounce ideas off, troubleshoot problems with, or just chat about the latest faecal egg count results.

No two days are the same, although you can almost guarantee that at some point, I'll be talking about worms.

Another part of the job I love? Podcasts. Whether I'm recording an episode of the SCOPS podcast or The Sheep Geeks with my co-host Liz Genever, I'm a big believer in the power of audio to bring the industry

together. There's something brilliant about hearing real voices share real experiences and we can often go into more depth in a conversation than we can in an article.

One of the most rewarding parts of my job is helping farmers achieve their goals – whether that's improving flock health, making more informed decisions, or simply having the confidence to try something new. Being part of that journey, in any way, is a real privilege and a reminder of why I love what I do.

The work is varied, hands-on, often technical and always fulfilling. I get to help sheep farmers build confidence, make informed decisions and embrace sustainable practices. And yes, sometimes that means explaining why blanket treatments are out and targeted strategies are in.

I guess my career came from partly being in the right place at the right time. But more than that, it's been about knowing what I wanted to do then taking the steps to make it happen.

I started by getting my undergraduate degree, which gave me a solid foundation. From there, I worked in industry to gain experience and build contacts. I qualified as an SQP in 2012, which opened up new opportunities and in 2021, I completed a part-time PhD focusing on the impact of ewe body condition score, a topic that continues to shape how I approach animal health and productivity.

Along the way, I've been incredibly fortunate to have some brilliant mentors. Their guidance, encouragement, and willingness to share their own experiences have made a huge difference in my journey.

So whether I'm in a field, on a video call, or behind a microphone, I'm proud to be part of an industry that's constantly evolving.



THE SHWAP CONFERENCE

By Yann Le Du

The NSA Sheep Health, Wealth and Production (SHWAP) Conference takes place every other year and is an opportunity to learn from industry leading names on how to enhance your sheep farming enterprise to be healthy, productive and profitable.

What began as a spark of an idea at the 2014 regional meeting has grown into one of the most forward-thinking events in the sheep industry: SHWAP.

Back in 2016, the newly opened School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Surrey hosted the “*Sheep Health Conference*.” By 2017, this had evolved into the Sheep Health, Welfare and Production Conference (SHWAP), with a mission that stretched far beyond health alone. From reducing anthelmintic resistance to boosting lamb consumption, and exploring trade opportunities to helping farmers make smarter flock decisions, SHWAP quickly became the place where big ideas met real-world practice. Momentum grew.

In 2019, SHWAP returned to Guildford, diving into sheep scab, vaccines and the role of flock records in disease surveillance. Plans were set for SHWAP

2021 to meet in person again - but when the pandemic struck, we were forced to move the event online. What could have been a setback instead became a breakthrough. SHWAP didn't just survive, it thrived. It reached international audiences and welcomed expert contributors from across the globe.

By 2023, the decision was clear. SHWAP would remain free, accessible and online, breaking down barriers for farmers, vets and industry professionals everywhere.

This year, the story continues. In October, SHWAP returns, bringing together an incredible line-up of speakers from organisations including AHDB, Innovis and Elanco. Topics will range from neonatal lamb management and ewe efficiency to worm and parasite control.

SHWAP isn't just a conference, it's a knowledge hub and a driving force for the future of sheep farming. Don't miss the chance to be part of it.

Recordings of previous sessions remain available on the NSA website, ensuring the knowledge continues to spread.



SHWAP
SHEEP, HEALTH, WEALTH AND PRODUCTION CONFERENCE
NSA South East Region

Registrations are open

Hundreds already registered

Don't miss out!

14th - 16th October

FREE to join
Held as an online webinar



NSA & ROSA MENTORING COMPETITION

Young sheep farmers across the UK are being given the chance to access tailored, professional advice free of charge this autumn, thanks to a competition launched today by the National Sheep Association (NSA) Next Generation programme in partnership with the Register of Sheep Advisers (RoSA).

NSA Next Generation exists to inspire, encourage and support the sheep sector's future farmers and service providers. By teaming up with RoSA – a network of trusted and accredited sheep advisers – the programme is offering an exciting opportunity for young shepherds to gain expert guidance to help them achieve their business goals.

NSA's connection with RoSA enables the linking of sheep farmers with highly experienced advisers who provide practical, evidence-based support on building resilient and sustainable systems. Following the success of a similar competition run four years ago, advisers on the register have once again agreed to give their time, with up to six

winners each receiving three hours of personalised advice.

The competition is open to anyone under 35 who keeps sheep in their own right, works on a family farm, is employed as a shepherd, or is in a share-farming agreement. Winners will be carefully matched with a RoSA adviser best suited to their circumstances and aspirations.

This opportunity comes at a crucial time, with many producers facing big decisions around rising costs and changes to support schemes. Independent adviser and RoSA Board member Liz Genever explains: *"Sheep advisers play a vital role in helping farmers adapt and plan for the future. This competition will give up to six young farmers direct access to some of the UK's best advisers, helping them to move their businesses forward with confidence."*

The deadline for applications is midday Monday 20th October 2025.

Entries are open via the NSA Next Generation webpage.



RECENT INDUSTRY NEWS

THE KING'S FOUNDATION LAUNCHES NEW FARMING AND RURAL SKILLS COURSE TO TRAIN THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS AND COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDS

A new seven-week training course in farming and rural skills will run this autumn at Dumfries House in Ayrshire.

The programme, organised by The King's Foundation, begins on 13th October and runs until 28th November 2025 at the MacRobert Farming and Rural Skills Centre. Open to adults aged 18 and over, the course is free of charge.

Participants on the course will first take part in four weeks of training on site delivered by experienced practitioners, covering a wide range of practical rural skills from sheep and cattle care, feeding, housing and handling of cattle, as well as fencing and dry-stone walling. This will be followed by a two-week farming placement designed to offer hands-on experience of the role. The final week of the programme will focus on employability, and will support participants in identifying next steps into work or further training.

They are offering free transport to and from Dumfries House from both Cumnock bus station and Auchinleck train station, as part of the course to ensure accessibility for participants across the region. All equipment required for the course will also be provided.

This course is aimed at those at college leavers interested in getting into the agriculture and rural skills industry, those at any stage in their career, looking for a career change, of DWP clients looking for employment in the agricultural industry.

Applications are open now and will close on Monday 22nd September 2025. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview during the week commencing 29th September, with a taster and information day scheduled for Tuesday 7th October.

The course will begin on Monday 13th October 2025 and run until Friday 28th November.

You can apply through a short application form on The King's Foundation website.

Find out more at www.kings-foundation.org/

- *Working with sheep, The King's Foundation*



UPCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY
SEPT
19

NSA EASTERN REGION RAM SALE
Melton Mowbray Market, Leicestershire
(inc. into the Melton Midlands Sheep Fair)

MONDAY
SEPT
22

NSA WALES & BORDER MAIN RAM SALE
Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells,
LD2 3SY

TUESDAY
SEPT
23

SHEARING WORKSHOP, NORTHERN
Home Farm, Richmond, North Yorkshire
NSA Next Generation workshop with British Wool

THURSDAY
OCT
2

SHEARING WORKSHOP, SOUTH EAST
The Grey Sheep Company, Hook, Hampshire
NSA Next Generation workshop with British Wool

UPCOMING EVENTS

MONDAY
OCT
6

UNDERSTANDING CARBON FOR YOUR FARM AND YOUR BUSINESS
NSA South West Region
Devon, EX19 8BR

MONDAY
OCT
13

SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION
NSA Northern Region
Morpeth, NE61 4PG

OCT
14-16

SHMAP CONFERENCE
Online webinar
Registrations now open via the NSA website

WEDNESDAY
OCT
22

NSA CENTRAL REGION FIELD DAY AT REASEHEATH COLLEGE
Cheshire, CW5 6DF

Save the date

NSA Sheep Farmers Conference 2025

Tuesday 18th November

Great Yorkshire Showground, HG2 8NZ

With the theme of 'Strive and Thrive: Building profit and resilience in sheep farming'.

Gain expert guidance on obtaining a more profitable and sustainable future for your sheep farming business. The conference will be a packed day delivering advice on how to future proof your business, with expert-led discussions and plenty of networking opportunities, alongside interactive workshops.

Schedule now online.

Find all upcoming events online on the NSA website