

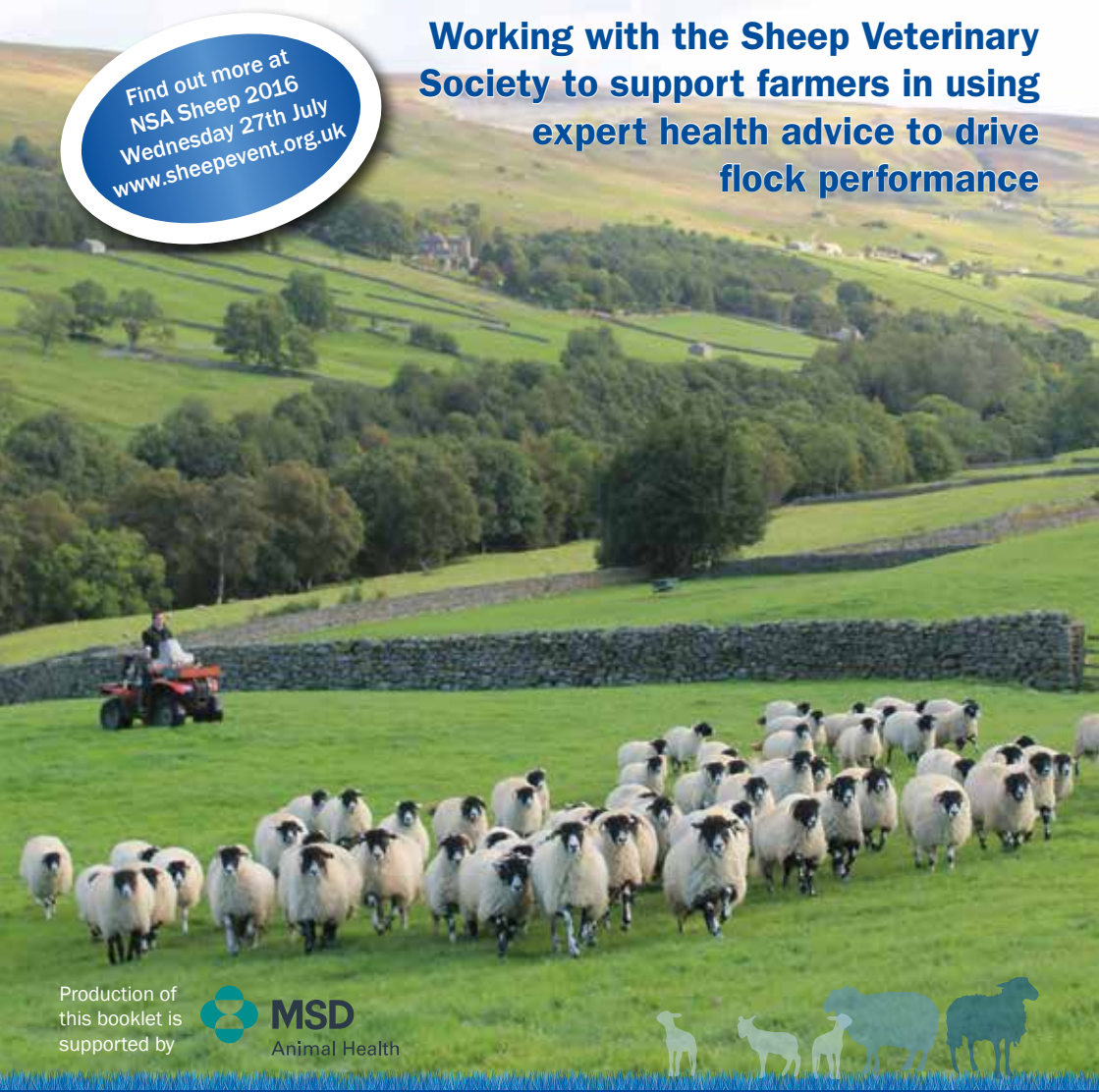


NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION

# HEALTHY FLOCKS

Find out more at  
NSA Sheep 2016  
Wednesday 27th July  
[www.sheepevent.org.uk](http://www.sheepevent.org.uk)

**Working with the Sheep Veterinary Society to support farmers in using expert health advice to drive flock performance**



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# Surround yourself with the right people in times of uncertainty

One of the main roles of NSA is to provide a voice for UK sheep farmers and to convince decision makers and influencers of the benefits a thriving and profitable sheep sector can offer. When you look at the countryside in which we work it is clear that sheep farming provides much more than just delicious food for our plates, and so it is a very positive message that NSA strives to share with politicians, lobbyists and the general public.

Future export markets, support payments and red tape will be front of everyone's minds in this post-Brexit era but answers to our many questions will be slow to come and, in this time of uncertainty and volatility, we must look at factors that are within our control.

It has never been more crucial for people working with sheep to be enthusiastic, knowledgeable and aspiring to best practice. NSA encourages that by sharing everything we can on health, genetics and nutrition. Be it an article in Sheep Farmer magazine reviewing husbandry skills, or a demonstration of new technology at one of our many sheep events, NSA members always have access to the best information.

## Forward-looking

I hope you will agree this booklet is a prime example of this, and that reading the case studies within will not only provide ideas for your own farm but also offer inspiration through the forward-looking attitudes showcased. The common themes that emerge from the farmers featured in these pages are around the cost-benefits of finding a vet who wants to work alongside a flock to help it become more profitable. Members often suggest to me that it is difficult to

### Sharing their experiences

1. Adam Hunter, Yorkshire (pages 3-5)
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# Link up with a good sheep vet for flock benefits

Through my ongoing work with sheep farmers and my involvement with the Sheep Veterinary Society, I am hugely encouraged by the increasing numbers of both enthusiastic and knowledgeable sheep vets.

That is why I have worked with NSA on this booklet, to showcase examples of good farmer-vet partnerships where vets are delivering the high-quality and cost-effective advice that is required on sheep farms.

The value of the UK sheep sector may be about one-fifth of the combined beef and dairy industries, but there are approximately 15 million breeding ewes in the UK compared to just 3.5 million breeding cows. The industry is comparable in value to the pork industry, but in contrast to the small number of specialist pig or poultry vets, the sheep industry is still firmly – although not always comfortably – placed within the hands of the general farm veterinary practitioner.

As custodians of animal welfare, vets are clearly concerned about individual sheep, but what is good for each individual depends on a measured whole-flock approach with both quality shepherding and preventative health planning. 'Good vet-spend' comprises the investment of evidence-based and timely preventative measures that boost flock performance and profitability. It limits the need for fire-fighting, chasing after the costs of both treatment and lost production. When the headline vet-and-med cost in farm accounts is 'good vet-spend', any attempt to reduce it could result in a drop in business profitability due to reduced performance



A collaborative approach has more of a cost benefit that 'firefighting' work.



Fiona Lovatt,  
specialist sheep vet.

and increased mortality, replacement rates, days to finish, feed and labour costs.

Endless salesmen will trek up farm drives to give anecdotal-based advice alongside the commission-based sale of what might be unnecessary and expensive supplements. In delightful contrast, a good farm vet is a fiercely independent professional offering evidence-based advice.

One barrier to good sheep farmer-vet relations is a feeling among some farmers that some vets lack sheep expertise – and it is true that not every farm animal vet loves sheep work. However, increasingly there are at least one or two sheep-keen vets within each practice and good practices will refer cases internally.

Another potential barrier preventing good sheep farmer-vet relationships is the perception among some vets that 'sheep farmers don't want to pay' and the fear among some farmers that 'vets cost too much'. However, as this booklet proves, there are successful models of sheep veterinary practice that are both appreciated by sheep farmer clients and profitable to the practice. Over the past 18 months, some practices in England have successfully piloted a scheme where a dozen sheep farmer participants pay a monthly subscription to partake in a Flock Health Club, an active veterinary-facilitated group that focuses on flock health planning and spreads the cost of the vet. Positive feedback from farmer participants has led to this scheme being rolled out by practices across the country.

There are plenty of enthusiastic, committed and knowledgeable sheep veterinarians out there – so make sure you have one of them actively involved with your flock.

# Positive farmer-vet relationship pays dividends for upland flock

**The cost of veterinary medicines is always going to be a considerable input on a sheep farm, so some producers want to add as little additional vet time to that bill as possible. But this is not the case for Adam Hunter of Gunnerside, North Yorkshire.**

He has developed a proactive and positive relationship with his vets over the past nine years and strongly believes investing in their professional time has allowed him to better target the interventions and drugs he uses, as well as improving how he uses his time and boosting production at Crow Trees Farm.

He is not concerned if it means his vet bill is higher than it would be if he was just buying product, saying this figure has to be taken in the context of labour saving, fewer 'disasters' and panicked 'firefighting', as well as more stock sold off the farm. Adam's growing confidence in what he does is also an added bonus in the changes implemented over the years.

"I like to know I'm doing a job for a reason," he says. "I don't mind buying the drugs and getting the sheep in if I've identified the problem and know I'm targeting it in the right way. With the price of the medicines, you need to do it right. Also, I don't have any labour here and, when you're on your own, time is your most valuable thing."

Adam works with nearby Bainbridge Vets, run by Michael Woodhouse and Davinia Hinde. The husband-and-wife team started working in the area nearly 10 years ago, coinciding with when Adam, then 18, started running the farm in

partnership with his mum, Ruth. She is still an active part of the business, although Adam took on the farm in his own right in April 2015.

The traditional hill farm in the Yorkshire Dales National Park has 300ha (750 acres) of in-bye land plus grazing rights on two nearby commons. This supports 650 breeding ewes and 30 suckler cows.

There are 450 Swaledale ewes, most of which are bred pure to produce gimmer lambs and draft ewes for breeding sales. With a hard farm and knowing there is good demand for quality draft ewes, Adam keeps a young flock and tends to sell the Swaledales after three crops of lambs. Around 30 older Swales are put to the Texel each year, and a Texel is also used as a chaser at the end of mating, producing replacements for Adam's 200-head commercial flock of Texel cross Swaledales. These are put back to the Texel to produce prime lambs, with some of the older females also sold each year with lambs-at-foot.

Adam explains that the farm was producing Mules until 2010 but is now running more commercial ewes instead: "I like the Texel-Swaledale cross and keeping 200 young Texel crosses is easier than older Swaledale ewes on our type of rough-going land. I also don't have the days doing the Mule gimmers up for sale, as the three-quarter Texel lambs can just go to market as fat or stores."

## Pedigree and commercial

Depending on the year and the trade, around 70% are sold finished and 30% store. Adam sells breeding stock through Hawes Market and uses Leyburn for prime lambs, store lambs and 12-month-old store cattle.

Both the sheep and cattle enterprises have seen a boost from working with Bainbridge Vets. Adam says: "I have an excellent relationship with them. They're young and enthusiastic and we discuss a lot of things. One thing I like is that I can text any of them for advice and with questions, which is very handy for me. If we're scanning cows or something I'm there quizzing them for the hour that they're here. They are very honest about things and into new ideas and I like that they're proactive.

"We've done a lot of work over the last few years discussing potential problems before they happen. I'm a firm believer in prevention not cure and would rather discuss how to stop something happening than having to ring up with a major problem. I don't want to only see them when things are going wrong."

## Farm facts

- 300ha (750 acres) of in-bye land plus grazing rights on two commons.
- 450 pure Swaledale ewes and 200 Texel cross Swaledales.
- 30 Limousin-based commercial suckler cows.
- No common grazing from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> April, so hogs and some ewes away-wintered on dairy farms and twin-bearing ewes housed from January.
- Texel crosses lambed from mid-March, all inside; Swaledales from early April with twins indoors and singles outside.

As an example of how new challenges are addressed straight away, rather than 'waiting for it to become a disaster', Adam describes the value of a post-mortem on two dead gimmers revealing pneumonia as the cause.

"I took them for post-mortem that day and by 2pm I was back home and injecting the others," he says. "We didn't lose any more and, for me, that was a productive day. I've got out of the habit of just saying something is dead. I like to put a reason on everything we lose."

The farm has flock and herd health plans, both focused very much on prevention and including several vaccination programmes. Sheep are vaccinated against toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion ahead of breeding, as well as footrot when they are housed for lambing. Week-old lambs now get scratched for orf at the same time as being

tailed, castrated and tagged, and when the passive immunity for clostridial diseases passed from their vaccinated mothers starts to wane later in life, they are jabbed twice to offer longer-term protection. The cattle are vaccinated against BVD, scour and pneumonia, with Adam describing this as 'cheap insurance' against problems seen in the past.

Adam says he's not looked back since taking on board Davinia's advice not to trim sheep's feet: "She's got me convinced now. It took her a year or two but I started doing less and less and now routinely footbath instead, as well as injecting any lame ewes and culling persistent problems. It's one of our big successes.

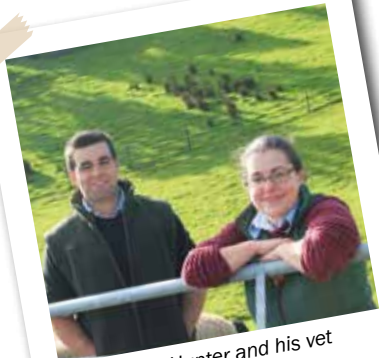
"When you house a lot of ewes feet can be a problem, and it affects colostrum production and lamb rearing too. You could view the vaccine as expensive, but it's saved us hours and hours of time, never mind the impact on productivity."

## Health plan

As well as vaccination, the health plans include routine blood testing. This has revealed a copper deficiency on the farm, with cattle and sheep boluses now used to ensure this does not affect productivity. Adam couples body condition scoring with blood testing of the ewes, but describing a 'realistic rather than text-book approach', says he does this just once a year in September.

"It's too late when you're going to tup the sheep and they're not in the right condition," he says. "The sheep were in good condition last September but

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Adam Hunter and his vet Davinia Hinde.



Draft Swaledale ewes pictured just before being sold.

▶ we did the blood test anyway. I found it really satisfying to get a good result. Normally you only test when there's a problem, so it's good to do it as a matter of routine and find we're doing the job right."

Adams says this type of reassurance is one of the main things about working closely with the vets, but that the relationship also brings added bonuses, such as Davinia asking if she could do some trial work on the farm testing an artificial ewe colostrum product.

"It was a little bit of extra work, but it was great to have a vet on the farm every couple of days during lambing," he says. "Although Davinia was checking the antibodies provided by the artificial colostrum, it meant I got to find out what my ewes were naturally giving the lambs too. It was nice to know I'd got my supplement feeding in the shed right ahead of lambing. Colostrum is half the battle at lambing time – good colostrum and a bit of grass to go out to and the job works well."

## Worm control

Adam has also replaced a routine worming programme with regular worm egg counts, saying this has resulted in less frequent treatments, halving his work load of dosing sheep and reducing how much he spends on wormers. He now knows his resistance status (none found so far) and can preserve this situation for as long possible by using the right wormer groups at the right time for the lambs, and rarely dosing the ewes.



On top of Swaledale gimmers kept as replacements, around 90 are sold each year.



Most three-quarter Texel lambs are sold finished, and less than a third as stores.

## View from the vet

Davinia Hinde of Bainbridge Vets says: "It's great working with Adam, but this isn't something that happened overnight. We've built up a relationship over nine years and, the more we do, the more confidence he's got in what we can offer. It's all about the relationship and the confidence, and I think that's sometimes where vet-farmer relationships go wrong.

"Proactive flock health planning and building workable health plans is much better than firefighting all the time. Routine post-mortems, blood sampling and worm egg counts – they all allow us to do that. It might cost more initially but the long-term savings speak for themselves."

Testing is every 10 days during the peak nematodirus and coccidiosis risk period in spring, and then once in four or six weeks later in the season. Adam makes this work for him by dropping a dung sample off at the vet practice when he or Ruth are passing anyway. The test is either done there and then, or the results texted through later that day.

When asked what the result of all this is, Adam says the performance of his ewes is the clearest indicator. "I've seen a 20% increase in my scanning rate over the last three years. That's from working with the vets and having the sheep healthier."

# Collaborative health plan works with farmer-vet 'team approach'

**For Martin and Pauha Whitaker, getting involved in flock health planning has been an evolving process, building up over the years as their confidence has grown and the results have shown themselves within the flock at Cranham in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds.**

It started as an interest when the South West Healthy Livestock Initiative was created just over 10 years ago, but the real turning point was Phillipa Page joining the Wood Veterinary Group in Gloucester in 2009 and bringing a sheep focus to the area.

Pauha explains: "We built up a relationship with Phillipa as she built up sheep within the practice. She established a focus group and we started having meetings, which created a culture of sheep farmers in the area talking to each other. There's a lot of sheep on the Cotswolds but there isn't that culture like there is in Wales or in the north."

The meetings led to the Whitakers becoming one of 19 animal health focus farms in England, funded by Defra and organised by AHDB Beef & Lamb (then Eblex). When the funding ended the local group around the focus farm 'morphed' into a flock health scheme ran by the Wood Veterinary Group and offering bespoke pay-per-month health packages. Martin and Pauha have jumped at this, seeing the £50/month basic package as an excellent way to spread the cost of much of the veterinary input they were investing in anyway.

## Payment plan

"We created a flock health plan when we went into organic conversion in 1999 but a more proactive approach just happened over time – suddenly, before we knew it, we were doing it," says Pauha. "It makes sense, and all the work we've done so far has paid for itself."

Martin's family have been tenants at Overtown Farm for many years, but with the flock now at 380 ewes, it has never been as big a part of the sheep, cattle and arable mix as it is now. Historically the flock was based on the Scotch Halfbred put to the Texel, but the practice of purchasing annual replacements was reassessed when it was impossible to buy-in during foot-and-mouth in 2001.

The farm was in organic conversion and, with a closed flock considered best practice within that, the Lleyn was identified as a crossing sire to replace replacements. Now there are no original Scotch Halfbreds left to cross, a Bluefaced Leicester is used



Martin and Pauha Whitaker.

over the Lleyn crosses to breed a 'bespoke Mule'. These are put to a Texel, Texel cross Lleyn, or Vendeen tup, with all males quarantined when they come to farm to reduce disease risk. Introduction of scab was narrowly averted last year due to this policy.

The pool of Lleyn crosses to put to the Leicester will likely last another two years before the Whitakers will have to decide what to cross with next or whether to return to buying in replacements. Martin does not feel a closed, immuno-naïve flock is guaranteed to be healthier than carefully selecting bought in stock and having top notch biosecurity. The eye opener for him was blood testing barren ewes in recent years and finding they had retained none of their natural immunity from when the flock experienced an enzootic abortion storm several years ago. The flock is now vaccinated for toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion.

Getting on top of barren and aborting ewes, alongside the change in breeding and reducing losses in the lambing shed, has seen the flock grow from 350 to 380 ewes and scanning rates lift from 161% to 183%. Mortality rates have fallen, in an average/good year, to as low as 4.9% from scanning to sale.

Poor weather meant it took lambs longer than usual to finish last year, but work with Phillipa also revealed a selenium deficiency. At a similar time, parasite study work with Bristol University revealed an unexpected problem with haemonchus (the barber's

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▶ pole worm). In line with SCOPS principles, only thin ewes at lambing or gimmers rearing twins would see a drench gun through the year, but they were all given levamisole (2-LV yellow) to hit the haemonchus and stop it establishing on the farm. Lambs also got an autumn dose of the newer monepantel (4-AD orange) active to clear the worm population out.

Ongoing work with Bristol will monitor the situation and, although FECs have shown lambs needed very little intervention in previous years, over and above a six-week nematodirus dose (a 1-BZ white drench), Pauhla wants to keep a close eye on the situation. With a HLS agreement reducing the amount of clean grazing available, she and Martin are also under-sowing arable crops in order to benefit from new grass leys with zero worm burdens.

Although she has her own kit and an interest in doing FECs, Pauhla says no one should find collecting dung samples prohibitive to regularly checking for worms. "All you need to do is think ahead when you're getting lambs in and get the sample then. I never go out to the field to pick up dung," she says. "It only costs £10-£12 to get it tested and that's money well spent if it saves you having to buy any drench."

FECs are usually included in the Wood Veterinary Group's pay-monthly package but, as Pauhla does it herself, they have a bespoke agreement to do some fluke checks later in the season instead. The package also includes ram MOTs, a pre-lambing visit and an annual review of the flock health plan. Pauhla says the health plan has become more and more useful and collaborative as she and Martin continue to work with Phillipa.

Pauhla says: "Farm health planning is a requirement of so many schemes now I just don't



Lambs receiving a late-season worm drench as part of a regularly reviewed parasite control plan.

see the point in resisting it – but it only works if that health plan is relevant on your farm. Writing and reviewing it is a really positive process and money well spent, in my opinion."

A big part of this for the Whitakers, and of being a focus farm, has been tackling problems with watery mouth. As well as working on ewe nutrition to ensure colostrum quality, they prioritise hygiene, mothering up and checking lambs have sucked, and have written protocols for staff and lambing students. Their one-day-a-week workman helps most days during lambing, as well as two vet students and a young neighbour who wants to go to vet school.

Lambing starts on 10<sup>th</sup> April, as the cattle have been turned out to vacate the sheds by then. With this often very tight turnaround, care has to be taken not to add to the disease pressure of an indoor lambing system.

"Lime has been a revelation," says Martin, commenting on bedding down after the cattle and cleaning out individual lambing pens. "It's made a real difference and is such a cheap solution – but make sure you buy the agricultural stuff, because we've learnt the hard way that builders' lime is very powdery!"

### Lambing protocols

Pauhla says their 'best investment' is a sink and hot water boiler in the lambing shed. She encourages wearing of gloves and regular hand washing and, having learnt that the antibodies in colostrum can easily be neutralised by germs, is vigilant about washing jugs and tubes.

All lambs are checked to see if they've sucked and

gotten colostrum, and then checked again to ensure they are still sucking. Ewes are in individual lambing pens for 24 hours and then batched in a hardening off shed for another 24 hours. They have one field for grouping 'problems' (a ewe with a lamb that was tubed, for example) to keep an extra eye on.

Pauhla says: "We have protocols in place so when you're tired someone else is looking too. We know there is a base level of disease and a quick turnover in the shed, and we can't control the weather, so we have to keep on top of things. We don't lose many lambs now because everyone is vigilant and everyone knows what they are doing.

"It's a huge temptation to use Spectam on everything as its born, but we know we have a responsibility when it comes to antibiotic resistance so have a firm protocol to only use it curatively or for lambs that are high risk. We've really tried hard not to use it as the easy option."

Although they are finding it challenged to move from paper records to electronic, the Whitakers are using EID to individually record ewes. By recording reasons for losses, for example, it helps their selection and culling policy. Martin explains: "Where the individual recording is particularly useful is that we're not keeping ewes round and round every year that keep having the same problem."

There is strong longevity in the flock and ewes with a good data record alongside sound 'teeth, feet and bag' will continue to be bred from. A handful of ewes go for 10



At lambing time, problem ewes and lambs are all sent to the same field.



April-born lambs pictured the following autumn.

### View from the vet

Phillipa Page of Wood Veterinary Group says this openness to a joint approach to flock health is why her relationship with the Whitakers works so well.

"They're really proactive and responsive, and see the value of vet time spent on developing protocols and preventative actions," she says. "They are an excellent example of an organic farm, as they are on the ball about health and, while not relying on drugs, won't hesitate to use them when welfare requires it. It's been great to involve a nutritionist on the watery mouth issue too, as nutrition is often forgotten in the rush to go for the next drug or blame the current drug. It's about the whole picture."



years, while cull ewes sold to a lower, less exposed local farm will breed for another two years or more.

Record keeping is one part of the Whitaker's lameness policy too, alongside quick intervention for affected ewes.

"When people say you'll always get some lame sheep that's because they're willing to keep some lame sheep. I'm a zero tolerance fascist when it comes to lameness," Pauhla says, explaining she'll inspect the affected foot immediately, jab the ewe, record it and spray a red L on their bum and a yellow mark on

the bad leg. She has not found the need to vaccinate and, having worked on her lameness plan with Phillipa, is now convinced it's right not to trim feet.

### Foot health

"If they are sound and evenly weight bearing they will self-trim. You have to be brave and hold the line. We've saved hours and hours not trimming."

Martin and Pauhla clearly value this collaboration with Phillipa, as Pauhla explains: "You can feel cut adrift if you have no confidence or support from your vet. It might sound cheesy, but it really is a team effort here now."

### Farm facts

- 225ha (550-acre) tenanted farm, mostly permanent pasture and arable reversion, with 65ha (160 acres) of arable rotation. Half the crops (barley, oats, triticale, arable silage) kept for home use and half sold.
- An exposed farm sat at 280m (920 feet) above sea level.
- 380 ewes and 70 suckler cows plus followers.
- All lambs and Hereford cross calves finished and mostly sold to the Organic Livestock Marketing Co-operative. Around three beasts and 30 lambs sold directly to regular customers.

# Healthier flock built on the back of concerted lameness control

**With a firm focus on buying replacements with a high health status, Roddy Marshall has managed to build up sheep numbers within his Aberdeenshire-based flock over many years without some of the problems that buying in stock can cause.**

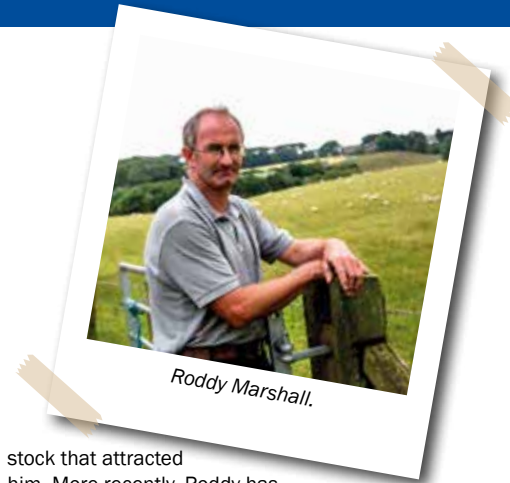
He has slowly replaced his father's traditional Scotch Halfbred flock at Meikle Haddo, Newburgh, Ellon, with Shetland cross Cheviots sourced directly from Shetland, which is renowned for its zero tolerance on disease. Roddy has a personal preference for this type of ewe, but also a lot of respect for how the Shetland breeders pay attention to health.

He says: "The sheep come to me in September as gimmers, so are 16-17 months old when they go to the tup for the first time. We lamb in late April and early May, so there's enough grass about, and the Shetland Cheviots are quite small, milky ewes that suit this."

## High health

"On the Shetland Islands they are very particular and anything that arrives on the boat with CLA, for example, gets turned straight back again. That's great for people like me buying replacements. There's no scab or enzootic abortion to worry about."

The Shetland Cheviots are crossed to a Charollais, and for many years Roddy has made the most of the Ingram family's Logie Durno breeding work to purchase tups. Like the Shetland sellers, it is their approach of provide buyers with healthy-assured



Roddy Marshall.

stock that attracted him. More recently, Roddy has also bought Logie Durno hybrid breeding ewes, with the intention of increasing ewe prolificacy and lamb carcase size. "The flock is still four-fifths Shetland Cheviots but I can see the health benefits of breeding my own replacements and having a completely closed flock," he says. "But I don't want to lose the hybrid vigour of the Shetland Cheviot so I think we'll end up with half and half."

The flock is bigger at the current time than it's ever been, as Roddy took on a fulltime member of staff two years ago and increased sheep numbers above his usual 1,500. However, he readily admits expansion has gone too far, with increased input costs not being matched by increased output. He has



The farm is all pasture, and the first steps have been taken this year to improve the grass and its utilisation.

decided 1,500-1,800 ewes is right for the farm and will lamb some older ewes earlier next year, to sell with lambs at foot. The plan instead is to intensify production, by giving ewes opportunity to conceive more, reducing neonatal mortality by lambing inside, and boosting growth by using grass better.

Previously only gimmers and ewe lambs were lambed inside, but a new building is going up to house the whole flock. Roddy says: "It can be really disheartening to go outside in a morning and find lambs dead that you could have saved. An extensive system can work well but we're less than a mile from the coast and exposed to strong winds off the North Sea. The shed will allow us to move to a more intensive system, but with ewes still going out during the day to get a bite of grass."

## Grassland improvement

"We'd let some of the grass get a bit old and a couple of wettish back ends had meant it got poached and tramped in areas," says Roddy, who wants to maximise his own pasture in lieu of any extra grazing being available locally. "We ploughed and re-sowed 40 acres in the spring but it can get dry here in May, which would limit germination, so I also decided to do 40 acres in early July, stitching in a grass mix. We will

## Farm facts

- Main farm of 115ha (280 acres) with a second block of 60ha (140 acres) 11 miles away.
- Business managed by Roddy, with the support of wife Fiona. Employee Pam Sutherland did 12 lambing seasons on the farm before starting fulltime two years ago.
- Flock increased from 1,500 ewes in the last two years, but returning to 1,500-1,800.
- Mainly Shetland cross Cheviot females, put to the Charollais, but with an increasing number of Lleyn-derived hybrid females being introduced.
- Also 60 Angus cows, which may increase in the future with a new shed and fewer ewes.

continue to set stock the farm but keep more ewes to the acre and make better use of the grass we have."

Knowing hygiene and management will be crucial in the move from indoor to outdoor lambing, Roddy also wants to stay on the ball with general health around the year. He will continue to use Glenythan Vet Group at Ellon, working with them on his flock health plan to meet farm assurance standards, and ensuring they are part of the wider team of advisors

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he uses. He particularly mentions Sandy Carnie, the Suitable Qualified Person at Towns and Carnie agricultural merchants, who helps him with other health inputs for the flock.

"I'm not a proud person," Roddy says. "If I need advice then I'll ring and ask."

He is very happy with how the flock is now, and proud to have successfully tackled a rumbling lameness problem three years ago.

"We were using bottles of penicillin like it was going out of fashion and I used to take antibiotic spray with me where I went," Roddy says, blaming footrot and contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) as the causes. "Whenever we brought stock in for weaning or worming I always had to inject and trim. We only had a bit of seasonal help at lambing time back then, so it was far too time consuming and a massive chore."

## Lameness

The industry-approved five-point plan for lameness control is: culling badly or repeatedly infected animals; quarantining incoming animals; promptly treating clinical cases; preventing spread of infection, particularly when handling and gathering; and vaccinating where appropriate. The advice on prompt treatment is not to trim feet, as this cause more serious lameness and slows down the natural healing process.



Roddy Marshall's flock is thriving due to sourcing of high health replacements and tackling the reservoir of lameness infection.

Roddy says vaccination has been vital at Meikle Haddo, but only as part of the solution, not a 'golden bullet'. He says: "We always segregated any really bad cases of CODD and, if they were old ewes, we'd cull them straight away. If they were younger we'd give them two chances, as we would with footrot. We still go through the ewes at weaning time and cull for

bad udders, for example, but we don't see the lame ones we used to.

"We'll have to keep on top of hygiene once we have the new shed, but for the ones we already lamb inside we don't get any lameness as there is no host for it now. It's the same outside when the lambs get older. When grass gets long we used to get scald, but not now because they can't get it from their mothers."

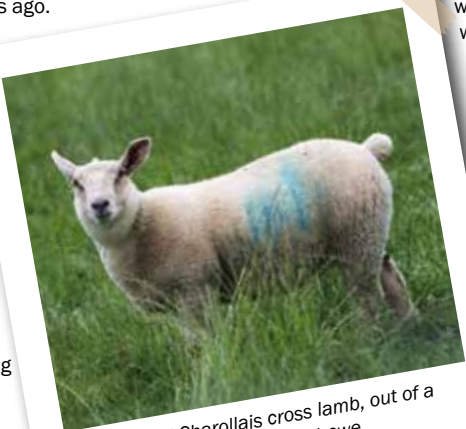
Stock is vaccinated for footrot before tupping, with one dose for ewes and two

for rams. Ewes are also given a multi-vit drench, wormed and fluked and go onto bare pasture before being flushed for the tup. Silage is fed through the winter, alongside turnips if needed, and extra energy provided before lambing with a liquid feed and ewe rolls. The move to indoor lambing will change things, but previously feed was withdrawn just before lambing to avoid disturbing the ewes, which were spread out over a large acreage and given time and space to settle down to lamb.

## Boosting lambs

A few weeks later, lambs were gathered for tail docking, dosed for worms and coccidiosis and vaccinated for pasteurella and clostridial diseases. For the last two years all lambs were sold at stores in the following September and October. Even with numbers being cut back, Roddy says he will stick with this approach in order to give the grass a rest and the ewes the best chance of conceiving and rearing lambs the next season.

"Sheep seem to thrive on this land but I need to get the scanning rate up a bit," says Roddy, explaining it has dropped to 160% from a high of 180%, due to the flock size increasing over the last couple of years. "We've been vastly overstocked and the ewes are not really achieving what I think they should. There is a happy medium and I think we can maintain the health status and produce more, bigger lambs with the changes we're making."



A typical Charollais cross lamb, out of a Shetland Cheviot ewe.



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# Partnership vet approach supports work on flock and herd expansion

**They may be situated in the popular holiday destination area around Poole Harbour, Dorset, but farming for Andrew and Claire Head isn't all about enjoying more sunshine and less rain than other parts of the UK.**

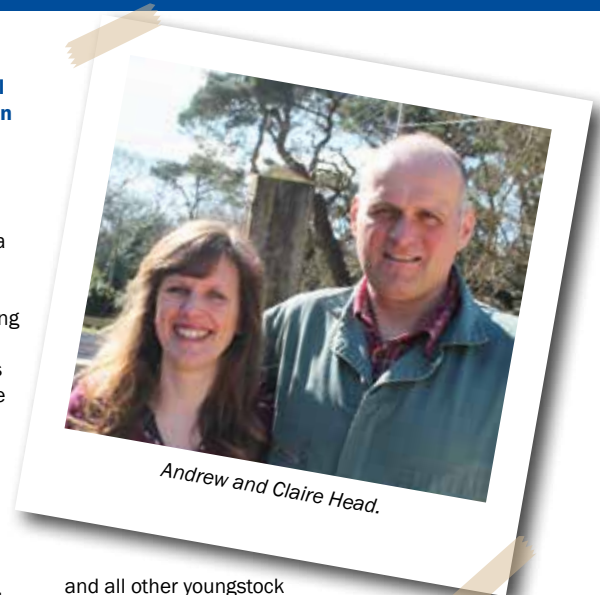
Limited by the productivity of the land at Rempstone Farm, a tenanted unit on the Isle of Purbeck, they want to maximise output from the livestock they can run. They see animal health as a key part of this.

Despite being a reasonable size – 215ha (530 acres) – the inclusion of downland chalk, hill grazing and heathland means stocking rates are limited. There is also a very wet 'no go' area for six months of the year, plus patches of woodland, inaccessible hill and gorse. Having taken on the tenancy nearly nine years ago, embarking on organic conversion straight away and entering into a HLS agreement, Andrew and Claire say they are now at the stage where they know what the farm can manage and what it needs from them.

"It sounds like a massive area and not much stock but, for the amount of forage we can get and with taking finishing cattle all the way through to 36 months, it's about right for us," Andrew says. "Our limiting factor is the winter. It's a dry farm and we get good weather, but we don't get the grass very early in the spring. The maximum we could run would be 300 ewes, lambing inside, plus 40 outdoor calving cows



The scanning rate in the ewe lambs was higher this year, with more carrying twins.



Andrew and Claire Head.

and all other youngstock indoors."



Numbers are already heading in this direction and the end of March this year saw 260 purebred Lleyns start to lamb and 23 North Devon Ruby Red cattle calve. There are plenty of homebred heifers coming through and around 70 suitable ewe lambs each year. In 2016 only 13 ewe lambs had to be sold for not holding to the tup. The group scanned at 1.67, compared to 1.79 for the main flock.

Expansion using homebred replacements has become a priority for the couple, after struggling to build up cattle numbers as a result of buying in Johnes and campylobacter-linked abortion. They have overcome those problems and now have a mostly closed herd with only high-health status bulls bought in when needed. Maintaining five separate family groups allows the use of homebred rams and means the Lleyn flock is entirely closed.

## Mixed enterprise

More than 50 finished lambs a year and around half the cattle are sold through Andrew and Claire's thriving direct sales business, Cedar Organics, supply local customers, restaurants and a school. They also produce 100 table chickens a month for this route, while eggs from 500 layers are sold to local shops,

continued on page 15

	
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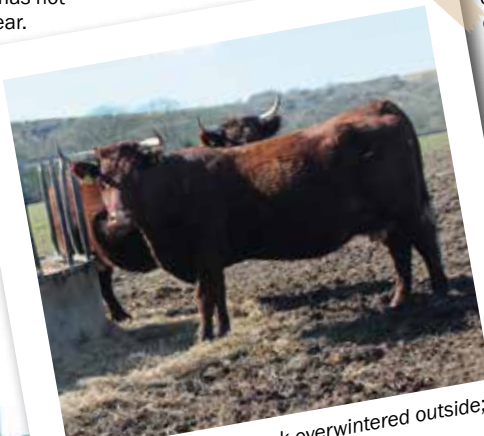
and pigs have recently been added to supply a local charcuterie. The remainder of the cattle and lamb are sold finished, mostly deadweight but some liveweight, and Andrew aims to have nearly all lambs away by the end of the year. In 2015 some were ready as early as June and around 20% before weaning in August; all bar 40 (mostly out of ewe lambs) had gone before Christmas.

"Those 40 lambs were the only ones we wormed last year, plus the ewe lambs that went to the tup," says Andrew. "They had one dose each. Nothing else had anything. Hopefully we can build on that with our pattern of clean grazing."

"We have two areas of the farm for turning out ewes and lambs, and are very, very strict that each year they go to ground that has not carried sheep for a whole year.

The ground gets an absolute, 100% break. Mostly the land not being used by sheep is cut for hay with cattle grazing the aftermaths. We target our manure on the land we cut for hay, and having more cattle will help with that."

Andrew explains how working with his vet, Emily Gascoigne of Synergy Farm Health, has made all the



Cows are the only stock overwintered outside; they calve from late March.

difference on this worm management system.

He says: "I've been working in organic systems for 20 plus years, but it was Emily's way of explaining high risk grazing with a traffic light system that really meant I got it. It's a best practice principle, not an organic one."

## Routine treatment

Emily was also instrumental in reacting to a white muscle disease problem in lambs two years ago. She analysed forage to ascertain a selenium deficiency, allowing Andrew to apply for an organic derogation to use boluses each year. Any other issues, such as a handful of abortions in ewe lambs last year,

are looked into promptly. No other routine treatments or vaccinations have been found to be needed, apart from obtaining a derogation to fluke sheep once a year and cattle twice. The farm carries a surprisingly high fluke burden and faecal egg counts and blood tests have been used to investigate this, over and above the six-weekly faecal egg counts to check for worms through the summer.

Andrew has just



A group of ewe lambs carrying singles, in front of a pen of North Devon youngstock.

completed training to do his own egg counts, so a microscope is top of his shopping list. He would also like to invest in better weighing facilities, to link with the EID data he is already capturing on breeding, family groups, lambing performance and growth rates. Other training completed recently was a basic post mortem method for lambs. This was part of a trial Emily conducted with several farms this lambing time, using AHDB Beef & Lamb funding. Farmers investigated and recorded lamb losses with increased detail by checking if the lamb was born alive and, if so, whether colostrum was received.

This is linked to work Emily does with Andrew's flock ahead of each lambing time, blood testing in-lamb ewes to check the forage is providing enough energy. Andrew winter shears and houses ewes eight weeks before lambing, feeding homemade hay. A small amount of organic pellets are introduced a fortnight later, stepping up for twins and triplets two weeks later again.

## Winter shearing

"I like the winter shearing system," he says. "It suits us well because we're at risk of very early fly strike here, as it's warmer and surrounded by the forests where the flies breed and over-winter. It also suits the organic system because I don't think a ewe is as hungry with wool on. If we shear at housing we can get them to eat more forage, which helps feed the lamb and contribute towards our ultimate aim of reducing losses throughout the whole system."

## View from the vet

Emily Gascoigne from Synergy Farm Health comments on how she enjoys working with Andrew and their shared interest in an evidence-based approach to flock health planning. She says this has its roots in the farm being organic, but is something she is increasingly seeing across the conventional flocks she works with as well.



"What I can offer as a sheep vet is an evidence-based strategy, which clients like Andrew are demanding and are willing to spend money on through testing and analysis," Emily says. "I recognise I'm not the only person who advises the flocks I work with, and am probably the most expensive one, but I see collaboration with SQPs, nutritionists, scanners and others as a vital part of what I do."

## Partnership

"The time has gone where we all work in isolation. And with things accelerating forward with new, evidence-based advice on things like lameness, anthelmintic use and fluke diagnostics, the vet can interpret that, put it into context and provide the strategy for everyone working with the flock." Commenting on the success Andrew has had with 'traffic light' pasture risk assessment, Emily says that although it suits his extensively-ran sheep-and-cattle system, it is something more producers could look at.

"As sheep farmers we need to use drenches, but we need to not rely on them," she says. "The productivity impact of parasites is not limited to organic farms so avoidance strategies and grassland management are advantageous on conventional farms too, and I work with both types of flocks who use them in their health plans."

"Andrew has got down to a very low level of drench dependency, but we're not just putting sheep on low risk pasture and forgetting about them. You have to monitor them, which Andrew is doing with regular faecal egg counts and by recording liveweight gains through his EID system."

For more on risk based grazing go to the "Better Returns" area at [www.beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk](http://www.beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk) and look for 'Manual 8: Targeting worm control for better returns'.



The Lleyens are winter shorn and housed eight weeks ahead of lambing.

# Maximising output from grass with joined up thinking on health

**Working closely with the Sheep Veterinary Society, NSA is a firm believer in members using a dedicated sheep vet to drive flock performance. But that does not mean health should take a backseat if you do not have that expertise locally, as it is not right to make the assumption that all mixed practice vets are disinterested in sheep.**

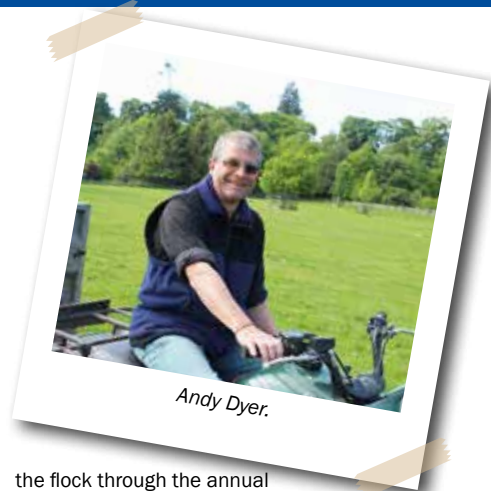
Farm manager Andy Dyer says he has engaged with Coomara Vets, a mixed vet practice near Carlisle, and optimised production in his commercial Mule flock, particularly through an annually reviewed health plan.

"It doesn't cost that much to do the plan and you save the money anyway by being more targeted with medicines," he says, giving the example within the flock he runs of faecal egg counts (FECs) resulting in less drenching of lambs.

## Cost benefit

"When it goes wrong with sheep it is expensive and it's hard to see any return from the vet work. With a caesarean on a cow, even if you lose the calf, the vet's still paid for themselves by saving the cow; spending £120 on a sheep caesarean is rarely going to pay for itself. I find you definitely get a cost benefit from using a vet for preventative work. When I do my costings I don't look at vet-and-meds and think 'I could save money by not spending that', as our vets have an appetite to help us manage the sheep profitably."

With one of the best known North of England Mule Sheep Association sales on his doorstep, Andy takes confidence from the high health status of stock offered at Lazonby. However, he also knows growing



Andy Dyer.

the flock through the annual purchase of ewe lambs increases his risk of introducing health challenges.

There was no flock at all when he came to Garthfolds Farm on the Lazonby Estate, Penrith, four years ago. The owners rented out the land on short-term lets from the 2001 foot-and-mouth outbreak until employing Andy as Farm and Estate Manager. From 100 Mule ewe lambs purchased in 2012, the flock now stands at 400 females. These are put to the Texel and lambed outside from mid-April. There are also a small number of pedigree Texels belonging to his employer's son, plus 11 Highland cattle to manage ground in a HLS agreement.

## Extra stock

Grazing for around 120-130 store cattle and dairy animals is provided from late spring, to aid cash flow and facilitate Andy's mixed-stocking rotation-grazing system over the summer. Once winter comes 800 Blackface, Swaledale and Herdwick sheep are taken in on tack – but these are away by early March, at the same time as the home flock is housed.

Andy explains: "I want to maximise forage-only lamb production as much as possible and am a firm believer in giving the grass a break in February and March. This year we housed our own sheep even earlier, in the aftermath of Storm Desmond around Christmas.

"Our neighbours thought we were mad when we were out fertiliser spreading as usual in early March, but it meant the grass was actively growing by April. The idea is that ewes go onto protein-rich grass two

weeks before lambing. We also keep haylage fields shut up from February so we can make a high protein, high ME, good dry matter crop.

"It's light land here that can drought out in summertime. By the time lambs are needing a lot to eat it's dry and we're running out of grass. We sell 50-80 stores a fortnight from the third week in July."

Further flock expansion is limited by housing availability and so, instead of buying 90-100 Mule ewe lambs each autumn, Andy now plans to buy shearling replacements. He anticipates this will bring the scanning rate closer to 180%, as running a young flock so far has kept it at 160-165%. This change will not affect the farm's strict quarantine procedures, with these sheep kept completely separate from the rest of the flock until tupping.

## Buyer beware

Stock from NEMSA members at the Lazonby sale comes dipped or injected for scab, but Andy gives everything a further injection on arrival, to be absolutely sure. The 3-ML (clear) product used for this also kills worms. NEMSA members are encouraged to vaccinate for clostridial diseases but, to ensure they are protected with the same vaccine as the one used at Garthfolds, Andy again adopts the 'buyer beware' stance and stands the extra cost of starting everything into the farm vaccination programme with two doses. Previous blood testing work has revealed a cobalt deficiency on the farm, and a bit of a selenium shortage, so incoming stock is given a bolus on arrival and free access to mineral blocks. Tups go through exactly the same process, having been bought privately from farms with a known health status.

Routine health treatments for the whole flock include the clostridial booster and a combined wormer/flukicide before tupping, plus another worm/fluke dose before lambing. Cobalt supplementation has increased to twice a year. Lameness is dealt with in individual ewes when needed. Later lambing and, therefore, later shearing means Andy 'cannot relax' on flystrike. Ewes are tailed in early June and treated when needed before shearing in July. Lambs are protected with a short-withdrawal product initially and something stronger later in the season if needed.

At lambing time itself, Andy identifies the biggest risks as inclement weather and big singles. The first is addressed by putting plastic jackets on lambs as soon as possible in bad weather, and the second is down to good grassland management. Andy says:



Parts of the farm flood in a bad winter, although the farm is drought-prone in the summer.

## View from the vet

**Eva De Vries of Coomara Vets is Andy's vet while Practice Director Charlotte Denston is on maternity leave. Eva is already enjoying a partnership approach with Andy and says his flock health plan is 'one of the best' she's worked with.**



For this year's annual review of the health plan, Eva and Andy looked at the vaccination programme and parasite control. They also focused on measures of production and compared figures collected by Andy at lambing time to what they'd been previously and where they should sit.

Eva says: "The visit was right at the tail end

of lambing so it was useful to see his lambing set-up and discuss it. That was good, as vets don't get to do that very much. We also went back over what he does when he buys in replacements, as that is a risk period for his flock."

All the vets at the Coomara practice do both large and small animals, and for other farmers using a mixed practice, Eva says this does not mean they should not try to engage and utilise their expertise.

"There is a lot of knowledge with the vets, even the ones that are not specialists in sheep," she

says. "If you never see your vet then you cannot say your flock is healthy, because you cannot see every problem, or don't see them, or won't see them. Vets can bring a fresh view to the farm."

"With the forage-based system and them going out to good grassland just before lambing I have to be careful with big lambs in the singles. They need a relatively level plane of nutrition to get colostrum and healthy lambs, but we don't want them too big. "The flock is split over four fields for lambing, with ewes moved on as they lamb. That means they have plenty of grass in front of them before lambing and then move into better grass to get the lambs growing

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quickly. We took more note of lamb deaths this year, of when and why we lost them. When we review the flock health plan before lambing next year we will be able to pick up some pointers from that.”

Most of the lambs lost this year were born dead, but Andy knows his abortion status is ‘non-detectable’ due to monitoring of empty rates and annual blood testing of geld ewes. By continuing to take care when sourcing stock, he hopes to stay clear of enzootic abortion in particular, to avoid the cost of vaccinating if possible.

Although expansion has been the priority, Andy says he’s still been ‘quite fussy’ and culled persistent foot problems and non-breeders. As the flock ages, his selection process will also now focus on lamb numbers. He says: “We’re going to start keeping track of ewes that always produce a single, as these are often big, fat things that look after themselves well but aren’t producing much. We will use EID to see if they all come from the same flocks and it’s a genetic thing, or if it’s management or something in the background that needs dealing with.

“Because we’re already measuring lamb mortality we can see if a ewe gave birth to two lambs and

then lost one, which is more likely to be a management fault on our part. By working with the vet we can monitor and work on that.”



Ewes are set stocked for lambing and then rotationally grazed through the summer.



The flock is predominantly put to the Texel, with the Suffolk used on ewe lambs.

When asked if his approach to flock health is different because he’s ‘started from scratch’, Andy says the principles apply regardless of the situation.

He says: “It’s down to getting the best handle on costs in any system. It’s about working out where things are going right and where they’re going wrong. Can we fix what’s going wrong? Can we live with it or do we need to change it? If it’s going right, what other tweaks can we make?” The flock health plan is an aid to that, as it means we take the time to monitor things. It concentrates the mind. If a quarter of the flock isn’t producing anything, it doesn’t matter if the rest of the flock is flying.”



All ewes are quarantined after purchase, only mixing with the established flock at tugging.

# Limited time availability reveals true value of vet’s contribution

**With a mixed farm, busy contract spraying business, new cattle rearing enterprise, occasional lorry driving shifts and a family-run caravan park, not to mention a young family, time is not a luxury Chris Jones has.**

He has therefore fully embraced working with his vet, Hilary Jones from Usk Vets, Monmouthshire, to try and ease some of the high-risk areas of the sheep enterprise and save time by preventing problems before they happen at Pont Kemys Farm, located a short distance out of Usk.

Some real gains have been made in the flock, reducing abortion and mastitis, solving a problem with white muscle disease in lambs, dealing with foot problems and creating a system to keep on top of the fluke risk.

## Confidence boost

After five years of working together, Chris says: “I feel that I understand more than I did and have more confidence. The aim is to save ewes with the preventative stuff, but now we also know what drugs do what, so if we get mastitis, for example, we know how to stop it and save ewes that way too.

“Being educated makes all the difference. It’s like the lambing courses Hilary does. I’ve been lambing sheep for years and could easily say ‘I know it all’, but it jogs your memory and you only have to pick up on one thing to make it worthwhile.”

Hilary says: “What was really refreshing about doing a farm health plan with Chris was that he came to me and said ‘these are my issues, how can we address them?’ We worked through the list and also looked at lamb growth rates and neonatal deaths.

“Since then it’s been very much an ongoing conversation, which is the great thing about working closely together. A good vet-farmer relationship

## Farm facts

- 100ha (250 acres) of owned and rented land, split 60:40 between grassland and arable.
- 320 ewes on the farm, plus calf rearing and grain production.
- Close working partnership with Hilary Jones, Usk Vets, who has been working for the practice for 20 years.
- Small contract spraying round taken on in 2004 and since increased from a circuit of 800ha to 6,000ha (2,000 to 15,000 acres).



Chris and his vet Hilary Jones.

comes into its own when you can just call or email your vet and feel confident to do that.”

Chris works alongside his parents Bryan and Rosie, but has increasingly taken on responsibility for the farm while his parents Bryan and Rosie focus on the family-run caravan park and Bryan’s role on the local county council.

## Time management

The summer is a particularly busy time, with the caravans at full capacity and Chris busy off the farm spraying crops. “Some weeks in the summer I’m not here at all and have to rely on dad to check the stock,” he says. “Jobs like drawing lambs have to be done on wet days.”

The cattle joined the business towards the end of 2014 as a way to utilise some former dairy housing that comes with a block of rented land. Buying three-week-old Angus cross calves from Meadow Quality in the autumn worked well with the spraying and was repeated in 2015 as a likely-permanent addition to the business. The spraying is predominantly March to October, so Chris utilises his HGV licence during his ‘quieter’ months with the odd lorry shift where it fits in.

The complexity of this busy timetable means ewes have traditionally been sponged to lamb early and tightly together, but emergency heart surgery for Bryan last summer stopped the usual cycle of work. Chris started lambing slightly later in January this

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year than usual and is thinking the slower pace and cost savings might mean he reconsiders things.

The flock has evolved from the three-quarter Texel ewe preferred by Bryan when he controlled the sheep enterprise. The opportunity to rent 30ha (80 acres) and buildings nearby, taking the farm to a total of 100ha (250 acres), led Chris to decide to more than double the 150 ewes his dad ran and to do so using slightly different genetics.

## Breeding

Chris says: "Dad didn't have a bad system running, and the lambs made good money, but I found the ewes had small pelvises and were hard to lamb and the lambing percentage wasn't great. The advantage was that we weren't buying any problems in, which we are at risk of now and need to be aware of."

Some Texel Mules were bought from Bicester Sheep Fair in 2010 and 2011, followed by 100 North of England Mule ewe lambs from Lancaster in 2012. Half of these were lambed as ewe lambs and all 100 have gone on to produce Texel Mule replacements for the flock. The Texel is used across these again to produce three-quarter Texel lambs for finishing.

Chris began working more closely with Hilary

when he first started buying in sheep, straight away identifying vaccination against enzootic abortion as a sensible step to protect the flock. The next year vaccination for toxoplasmosis was added, which was a turning point for Chris in terms of looking at the cost benefit of interventions.

He says: "I wouldn't go back from vaccinating for toxo, whatever the cost. The risk is so high, especially when you feed mill and mix, because you'll never keep the cats out of the shed. You only have to lose a few less lambs and it pays for itself."

"I'm also think vaccinating for footrot is money well spent. We have CODD in the flock now, which we must have bought in. It's a real nuisance, particularly at lambing time, so we vaccinate for footrot at scanning time, when we also bolus and, this year, fluked the ewes. We have found that when we get less footrot we get less CODD too."

Since getting involved on the farm, Hilary has been pushing Chris to include more protein in the diet for in-lamb and recently lambed ewes. Having gained farm assurance status for the wheat sold off the farm this summer, Chris decided to sell some barley



Ewe on silage ahead of lambing, which is complemented by high protein ewe rolls.



The first lambs born in 2016 at Pont Kemys Farm.



Some 2012-bought Mules pictured ahead of lambing in 2016, alongside a homebred Texel Mule.

as well and buy in rolls for the ewes instead. Hilary is delighted but says that, while the labour saving of rolls attracted Chris, he could have achieved the same by including more protein and minerals in his previous mill and mix.

"If the ewes are better fed and more satisfied they'll produce more milk and there'll be less teat problems in general," she says, adding that Chris's lambing shed routine of regularly disinfecting pens and using lots of straw bedding helps too, by reducing the infection pressure.

Bolusing ewes for selenium has also helped with mastitis, although the deficiency was a problem that revealed itself in the lambs first, due to losses from white muscle disease. Chris looks back: "We had some lambs born weak but also lost some big, strong lambs. Apparently they go because they're growing faster and the pressure on their hearts is more. Post mortem found they had spongy hearts from the disease, but we wouldn't have known it was that otherwise, as the visible symptom of stiff joints is easy to confuse with lameness."

## Bolusing

"We just bolus the ewes now and think 'that's it sorted for six months'," says Chris. "If you're gentle with the gun you're fine doing it, but it's not a job that you want to do in a rush." He uses a selenium, cobalt and iodine product, as Hilary's local knowledge confirms cobalt is a problem in the area.

Hilary's close links with other sheep farms in the area and APHA Carmarthen means she also alerts her clients to any sudden deaths in lambs from

nematodirus, signalling a mass hatch of worms in the locality. For worms later in the season, Chris does do occasional faecal egg counts to stay on track, and due to problems in the past with fluke the duo remain in regular contact on a farm and season-specific plan for this. Coccidiosis, on the other hand, is not yet an area of agreement between Chris and Hilary. They agree the flock is high risk but Chris favours buckets containing decoquinate as a preventative measure (for ease of use) and Hilary would prefer it be included in the creep feed (so larger lambs don't get it all).

Creep feeding is continued until early summer, when Chris gets too busy to be regularly drawing finished lambs and, as the trade drops off, holds lambs through to autumn to finish on a turnip and forage rape mix. This root crop is also used for early lambing ewes and their lambs, before the grass comes through.

Linked to the discussion about nutrition with Hilary, ewes are supplemented for six or eight weeks after lambing, depending on grass growth. The first lambs

were sold at the end of April last year, but were later this year due to a later start.

Now Chris has found his way with the sheep, and increased his commitments elsewhere, he feels more comfortable that he knows what size flock suits him and the farm. This spring he sold some older ewes with lambs at foot and reduced to around 200-head.

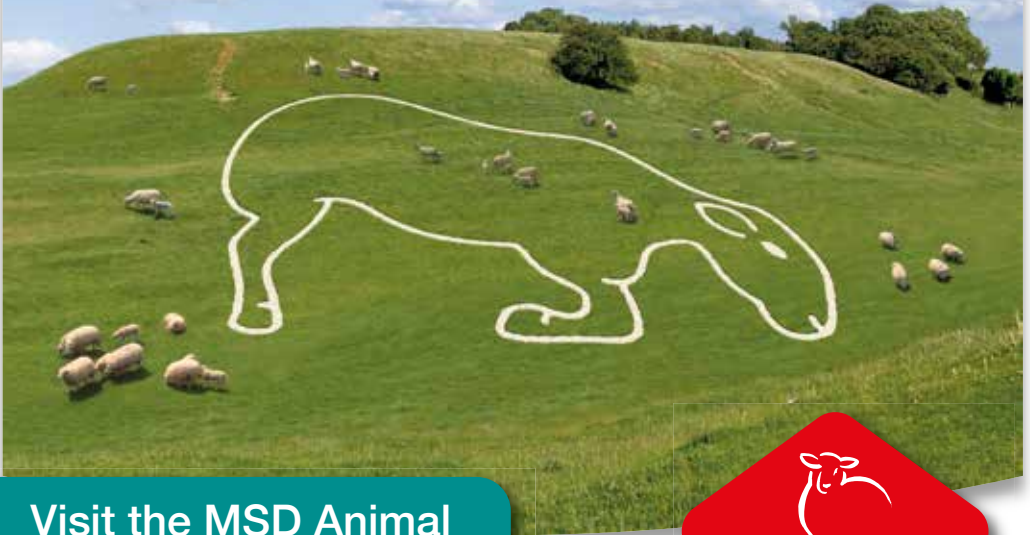
With the breeding and health much closer to where he wants to be, doing a good job with slightly fewer ewes looks like a sensible and more efficient option for this incredibly busy operator.



Lambs are stored through the winter and finished on turnips and forage rape in the spring.

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References: 1. R.H.Clements, S.C.Stoys. (2014) The Five Point Plan: a successful tool for reducing lameness in sheep. Veterinary Record.

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