



National Sheep Association

NSA policy position on sheep meat supply chain partnerships

There are two mainstream trading options for sheep farmers – to sell in a competitive live markets situation where prices reflect competition and demand, or to sell in a more vertically integrated manner where direct relationships are formed through the supply chain and individual contracts may be an option. In either model, the economic success of sheep farming can arguably be improved on by greater collaboration throughout the supply chain and these are the areas NSA believes would improve the efficiency and viability of the sheep supply chain.

Farmer

- To develop a better understanding of different markets and their specifications and any assurance requirements, and to identify the systems that best suit their farm and location.
- To meet the specifications and any assurance status required by the target market.
- To supply clean and healthy animals, abiding by all food chain information (FCI) requirements.
- To avoid risks that might cause bruising or damage product quality, ensuring appropriate handling, use of appropriate injection sites and best practice injection techniques.
- To use a suitably qualified or registered haulier if not delivering animals personally.

Farmer/Haulier

- Transport of livestock in a legally compliant or assured vehicle, ensuring the safety and welfare of the animal and protection and care of the environment.
- Stocking of animals according to their size and weight, without over-crowding or stocking too loosely, with extra consideration in hot weather, ensuring animals can stand in their natural standing position, have suitable and sufficient bedding and have sufficient headroom to provide natural ventilation.
- Planned journey times to ensure prompt loading and unloading where possible.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of vehicles in a designated washing area, to minimise cross-contamination.

Market

- To provide sufficient site facilities to minimise risk or damage to livestock.
- To ensure traceability.
- To present lambs in level lots
- To weigh and report weights and prices in a manner that is accurate, transparent and clear, as this is a mandatory requirement throughout the UK.
- To support the sharing of Food Chain Information (FCI) and Collection and Communication of Inspection Results (CCIR) between buyers and sellers.
- To offer clear payment terms and security of payment.

Abattoir/Processor

- To provide adequate lairage and food and water where appropriate.
- To ensure traceability.
- To provide Food Chain Information (FCI) and Collection and Communication of Inspection Results (CCIR) back to the farmer.
- Until it is mandatory to do so, to be clear and transparent about dressing specifications, hot and cold rebates, rounding down of weights, and payment/deduction grids. NSA supports the move to require abattoirs in the UK to price report to a consistent dressing specification.
- To offer clear payment terms and security of payment.

Retailers, restaurants and food service

- To support the long-term sustainability of the UK sheep sector by consistently offering local and/or UK product at key times of the year, if not all year round, and pay a fair price for it.
- To support ways to extend the UK season, to reflect the range of sheep breeds and production systems in the UK.
- To clearly label and present UK products to aid differentiation from imported sheep meat. NSA is opposed to co-mixing of domestically produced and imported products in supermarkets, and also to price promotions on imported products only.
- To support growth in sheepmeat consumption through adequate shelf space in supermarkets and menu options in restaurants/food service, and product development and choice.

November 2017
Updated January 2019 and May 2019