

Activities report to NSA Board 21.01.2021

This report refers to main activities in quarter 1 of 2021. Activities are presented under a set of common headings.

NSA policy, technical and research work

Brexit: Deal / no deal

EU FTA reached 24th December 2020, meaning we have continued unrestricted and tariff free access to the EU. Despite securing a deal, areas of concern for the sheep sector include:

- The Northern Ireland protocols mean that NI is following EU rules and regulations. SPS regulations mean that live animal exports require additional checks and adherence to iceberg diseases checks (MV/OPA/CLA) including Scrapie controls. This will and is hindering trade in live breeding animals between GB mainland and NI. NI already has independent phytosanitary controls for MV but the unexpected addition of Scrapie controls means that many of the flocks involved in this trade will not be part of the Scrapie Monitoring Scheme. The scheme takes 3 years to get to any recognition. The alternative is genotyping, which is expensive (around £25 a test) and with a likelihood of only circa. 15% of individuals passing (especially in hill breeds) makes it a prohibitive approach. There are in the region of 9000 breeding females sold to farmers in NI annually, mainly of the Blackface and Swaledale breeds and it is common for these to be purchased at the autumn sales as ewe lambs. This season, there are ~4600 ewe lambs on tack grazing in Scotland and the north of England. These are owned by more than 30 farmers in NI and are not yet old enough for MV testing (being 12 months of age). It was not a requirement to be Scrapie free when they were purchased and now they are locked here on the mainland unable to get back to NI. The EU Commission has rejected a request for a time limited derogation. There are also many sheep farmers who rear pedigree sheep in NI and bring them to society sales on the mainland where they can achieve better prices and be open to a larger market. These breeders will now not have a realistic option of taking them home if unsold and it means this trade is likely to come to an end, having a significant negative impact on these farmers. Recent updates on ear tagging requirements for animals moving from GB to NI is also causing concerns and creating further barriers.
- The trade negotiations between the UK, and New Zealand and Australia pose a potential risk to our domestic sheep farming sector. Australia is keen to get some parity with NZ TRQs and both countries see the UK as a lucrative and stable market. Australia would be likely to want to make a 'market statement' if it were able to negotiate increased TRQ volumes, and in any future time of global disruption we could see increased volumes of sheepmeat coming to the UK sufficient to destabilise our markets. NSA is arguing that the sheep sector is sensitive and fighting not to allow equivalence in welfare standards, which would undermine our domestic production.
- Over and above ongoing work to maintain our domestic market (AHDB advertising, reputational work, support for butchers and farm shops) NSA has identified three key areas that need attention to further build stability and strength, reducing risk of disruption from export trade:
 - o Halal and non stun slaughter: desperately need Home Office approval for demonstrating recoverable stun to the Islamic community. Non stun slaughter presents a reputational risk to our sector and the maintenance of the Halal market is crucial for our industry. Demonstrating recoverable stun offers the chance to overcome this problem, protecting the market and improving animal welfare.
 - o Skin on Sheep: Britain has a hugely diverse ethnicity and it is right that we cater for the food requirements of all our ethnic communities. Our Jamaican and African communities consume sheepmeat with the skin still on the carcass (in the same way as pig meat is processed and presented to market). These products are not cooked or smoked at the point of sale (but

traditionally referred to as ‘Smokies’). The NSA has been leading an industry forum involving our English and Welsh levy bodies and the Food Standards Agency and collectively we have produced a protocol for the safe production of these products. We now need an opportunity to change the slaughter legislation to simply allow sheep carcasses to be inspected with the skin still on.

- NSA believes far more could be done to promote sheepmeat based on our heritage breeds and our iconic countryside. See **Trade and marketing** section for further detail.

- Border Control Points (BCP): Currently no BCP’s that accept live animals from 3rd country (either in UK or on the EU coast). Portsmouth were successful in getting UK government money to change infrastructure but are still short of funds. Discussions with Portsmouth, carrier (Brittany Ferries) and Cherbourg look possible that it may go ahead. However, they have concerns about taking too many loads so will probably start small, and this is all caught up with the Govt consultation on movement restrictions. P&O and Calais may now be considering BCP and would be the favoured route (as shorter). Currently there are no live animal movements across the channel that are possible.

- EU Zootechnics challenge seems to have gone quiet, in terms of breed societies contacting NSA for advice. NSA considering contacting affiliated breed societies to see what route they have chosen (e.g. remained in EU Zootech or removed certification) and any downstream effects.

UK-Japan trade deal confirmed 23rd October. No updates since last report.

Other consultations submitted under this heading include:

- 20th November 2020 - NSA response to International Trade Select Committee briefing call to submit your views on UK trade negotiations

‘Brexit, trade and Covid-19’ working group in process of finalising a report. NSA provided feedback on the draft report. Waiting on Welsh Government review before public distribution.

LCAG: Still in fortnightly discussions.

TDUG: LILtd planning to take over and run ARAMS within next month. They are planning a pilot with paperless moves and NSA has a number of farmers lined up to take part in this. The TDUG data sub group chaired by Phil has concluded its first round of meetings and will be producing a report of recommendations by mid Feb.

Brexit: Future farm support

Ag Transition: Defra launched the Ag Transition Plan on 30th November 2020. Details can be found here [Agricultural transition plan 2021 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/agricultural-transition-plan-2021-to-2024) Key to this plan are details of the reductions in Basic Farm Payments – down by 5% in 2021, a further 15% 2022 and 2023 and 2024, meaning by the end of 2024 rates will be 50% of current. By 2027 the plan is to phase out completely. The ATP lists intentions for 3 tiers of ELMS, and productivity incentives, along with exit mechanisms and new entrant incentives. There is currently no confirmed detail available for the new schemes.

ELMS: Defra are now planning to call for expressions of interest this Spring for up to 5500 farmers to take part in a pilot Sustainable Farming Incentive (formerly Tier 1). There look likely to be 8 ‘standards’, 2 for grassland, and for soils, and hedgerows and woodlands. A number of NSA office holders are involved in detailed meetings and trials with the aim of ensuring the pilot scheme is practical and attractive. At the moment it seems that the pilot will only be available to farmers not within CSS schemes.

The pilot, and indeed scheme operation up until 2024 at least, will be a pilot and not the finished article. There will be things that don’t work but the intention is to learn, adapt, and make them work. Commons schemes, and tier 2 (Local nature recovery) and 3 (Landscape recovery) will be introduced in years following 2021. From 2022 certain elements of the SFI will be available to all farmers.

Pathway: Looks to be available from 2022 and will be supporting vet advisory visits, submission of antibiotic use, anthelmintic testing, and lameness assessments. No indication of payment rates as yet.

Productivity incentives: Will come in the form of capital grants, business loans, training incentives, and R&D. A lot of noise is being made about farmer led research – on farm practical research projects supported by researchers. These may be phased in from 2021.

There is a commitment to budgets being maintained until the end of this Parliament although we are now in the arena of annual budgets. The commitment extends to all BPS claw back money being reinvested into new schemes.

Wales launched its Agriculture Bill consultation in December and looks to be protecting BPS until 2024, possibly piloting new schemes between now and then.

Scotland plan to release new plans in the Spring and are defending the BPS as a longer term approach.

NI appear to be in principle stages and are talking a lot about climate friendly farming meeting climate change targets.

Sheep in upland areas (including sheep stratification)

NSA is in close contact with the Federation of Cumbria Commoners, and the Dartmoor commoners re stewardship renewals and stock rates. We are also discussing this with Natural England. In addition we are discussing with a number of grassland/land management researchers the creation of a science panel to support / assist our work in challenging Natural England's land management research and advice. Our work with the Welsh Commons Forum continues but nothing to report. One of the big unknowns in the future is the sharing of payments between landowners and graziers on common land as payments shift towards public goods and non forage related outcomes. Our work in the BMLUP on payment for ecosystems services shows how a portfolio could be created.

Sheep in arable rotations

Approached by NIAB for involvement in 'Under used and novel/potential forage crops'. See '**Any other livestock research**' for more information.

Integrating trees into sheep farming systems

Request for NSA involvement in UPLANDS: Negotiating Transitions in Upland Landscapes project. See '**Any other livestock research**' for more information.

Rewilding

Reintroductions:

- *Lynx*: Lynx trust still gearing up for another application to release Eurasian Lynx into the Kielder Forest in Northumberland. NSA not concerned at this time as explained in previous board report.
- *Sea Eagles*: A further 6 birds released on the isle of Wight have joined the 4 remaining birds from the 1st release. The Roy Dennis Foundation and the FC are being very engaging and communicative through this process. They clearly don't want conflict or problems to be created and are working hard to avoid this. Dan Phipps and Phil S attended a meeting with an estate owner and staff in North Norfolk in January to discuss their plans to release WT Sea eagles on the Norfolk coast. Next steps here are a meeting between them and the Eastern region committee. They are working with the Roy Dennis Foundation and appear to be accepting that an 'exit plan/ a mitigation plan' to be executed if problems occur.

Sheep health and welfare (including NSA involvement in SHAWG, RUMA, SAAG and SCOPS)

RHWG: The RHWG was officially launched at the SHAWG conference in November. We have supported the survey that the new group has run.

RUMA: Oxtale communications has resigned their communications contract with RUMA and the group is inviting tenders to deliver this work.

SAAG: Nothing to report at this stage

SCOPS: Moredun have led a successful bid to deliver a sheep scab initiative in England. This has been done with the full involvement of SCOPS and a team of on the ground deliverers – NSA is one of the delivery partners, taking this work on in the SW England, and area around Dartmoor and Exmoor. Project planning meetings are planned over the coming weeks and this will require, and cover the costs of significant NSA P&T officer time.

Consultations under this heading include:

- DEFRA consultation on Improvements to animal welfare in transport (including banning of live exports) due 28th January 2021. NSA in discussion with industry bodies to compose an industry wide letter, requesting an extension on this deadline to allow essential impact assessments to be carried out by industry before any legislative changes are made. We are hoping this will allow time to fully explore the 'missing evidence' crucial for accurate response.

Sheep identification and movement recording and reporting

No updates since last board report (though see TDUG report above)

Supply chain concerns (including price reporting, classification and NSA involvement in Hallmark scrutiny committee)

No updates except we expect the price reporting and carcass classification consultation to resume the first half of this year.

Farm assurance

Red Tractor Consultation released 5th Jan 2021 (closes 5th March 2021). Extra Ordinary Meeting planned for 22nd of January to discuss consultation in more detail. Aim to highlight the key messages and consolidate a robust response. Key points can be utilised for e-news, press releases and social media to provide guidance and encourage members (and non-members) to complete a response.

Engagement with AHDB

Extra Ordinary Meeting held 11th of December 2020 with NSA English Committee and AHDB. Session was led by Rebecca Miah (Strategy Director Beef and Lamb) with updates from Christine Watts (Chief Communications and Market Development Officer) and Tom Forshaw (Senior Analyst Policy). Updates included details of the overarching communications and marketing campaign (AIREd 4th Jan 2021), update on Horizon report regarding opportunities and challenges with a specific focus on the US trade deal and finally a short overview of the recently released strategic priority and active consultation.

Additional Extra Ordinary Meeting planned for 22nd of January for further update from same AHDB staff on current market situation now transition period has ended.

Consultations under this heading include:

- AHDB consultation response on proposed strategy 2021-2026 due 31st January 2021. NSA in discussion with English Committee for consolidated response.

Rural crime (including sheep worrying by dogs)

Worryingly, NSA is experiencing an increased number of calls about sheep worrying / attacks by dogs. This may be linked to the Covid-19 pandemic with local and national lockdowns increasing footfall in areas occupied by livestock. NSA is working hard through social media, e-news and press releases to promote

responsible dog ownership and raise public awareness of the issues created by dogs off lead around livestock.

Phil/Nicola sit on Livestock Worrying Round Table. Currently in discussion about changing legislation to increase police powers, give greater protection of livestock and include more livestock species under the bill. Direct discussions with DEFRA proposing changes. Conclusions are with ministers for further discussion late January. If changes are implemented, the round table are also aiming to form a livestock education group with bodies such as National Trust, NFU, Kennel Club, DEFRA and Welsh Government on having 'one message', targeting larger numbers of audiences with a combined social media presence to increase the educational message and highlight the changes to the law.

Stakeholder on Sheep worrying project – 'Protecting Farm Stock Against Theft and Attack from Dogs and Predators'. No updates since last report.

Farm Safety

NSA completed a week's take over of the Farm Safety Partnership Twitter account in December. The twitter take overs were designed for partners of the FSP to highlight particular areas of concern regarding farm safety for their industry. NSA's tweets included coverage on the importance of wearing a helmet on ATVs, safe handling of chemicals such as sheep dip and medicines and child safety whilst on farm. The take over was well received with good coverage for both the key messages of the FSP and NSA.

Policy work in the devolved nations – see section on regional activities

Also see above in Brexit and Future Farm Support

Any other livestock research with NSA involvement not already covered

General research: We have been approached by a number of organisations to help facilitate farmer responses through our social media and WEU channels. All these distributions generate revenue.

Letters of support provided for the following projects:

- Funding for SRUC to purchase PAC chambers from NZ to measure methane emissions from sheep, which will lead to further research opportunities on climate change, alternative feeds etc. SRUC keen to collaborate with NSA, should funding be successful.
- Lamb Mortality surveillance proposal with University of Surrey Vet School.
- Under used and novel/potential forage crops with NIAB. Looking into undertaking a review of the wide range of currently under used and novel/potential forage crops and their potential for development. Tendering for funding for a scoping study with Defra. NSA will be involved, should this be successful.

Joint applications submitted:

- UPLANDS: Negotiating Transitions in Upland Landscapes: Edinburgh and Newcastle University. Funding available for staff time and expenses. Planning work in North Wales, Scotland, and the Peak District. Similar work to BMLUP but more in-depth investigation.
- SHEEPUK: Still waiting decisions on funding
- Seaweed & Sheep (Nottingham University): Resubmission in progress. Second round application due Jan 2021

Successful funding applications:

- Sheep Scab RDPE: Funding granted 5th January 2021. NSA will be leading on the South West 'lot' in this fully funded project. Internal meeting to be held to discuss project management, staff responsibilities etc. Press release due once contracts have been finalised.
- ERASMUS: See previous report

More general topics (updated if and when activity occurs)

- **Trade and marketing (including NSA projects around mutton, heritage breeds etc, and NSA involvement in work addressing red meat consumption concerns e.g. Veganuary etc)**

British Heritage Sheep: NSA have set up a company called British Heritage Sheep. Aim to create interest based on Age of animal (lamb, hogget, mutton), its Breed, and the Countryside it is produced in – an ABC guide to sheep meat. Extensive taste trials have shown that there is differential and consistency in such an approach and we feel there is the potential to stimulate demand based on food experience in the same way as has been done with wines, beers, cheeses etc. NSA has approached government for official support and potential funding streams as it aligns with agricultural policy.

- **Wool**

Feasibility Study on ‘Sustainable Uses of Bracken & Wool in the Black Mountains Area’ completed October 2020. Final report issued 9th November 2020.

Meeting held with Andrew Hogley and Gareth Jones (British Wool) 6th January 2021. NSA agreed to assist with encouraging farmers to send any held wool to British Wool before March. Phil has suggested increased press activities challenging developers/hotels chains/any smaller businesses doing staycations, to use British Wool in any refurb, carpets, textiles etc. To be implemented early 2021.

Other consultations submitted under this heading include:

- 19th December 2020 - Parliamentary Environmental Audit Select Committee on the use of wool for insulation in buildings.

NSA communications and knowledge exchange work

Press work

Predictably press work was dominated by the UK’s approaching departure from the EU as we neared the end of the fourth quarter of 2020.

A wide variety of topics were also covered by NSA press releases and subsequent media work during the quarter. Promotion and coverage of the success of the second series of webinars held in October was well received resulting in a successful two days of webinars in the middle of the month.

The reach of NSA’s press releases continues to be good with much pick up of press stories issued across agricultural, regional, national and even international press. Following this NSA staff and officeholders have been busy during the quarter with frequent requests made for television and radio interviews including several high profile shows.

The table below shows the press releases put out in the past quarter per week and their different focuses as well as the social media reach for posts that have been placed on social media relating to the press releases.

Sheep Farmer magazine – see recent editions

Weekly Email Update

The NSA members’ Weekly Email Update has been sent to approximately 4000 people each Friday during the last quarter, this includes mailings to members (for whom we have email addresses), breed society representatives and a complimentary list, which includes Defra and devolved Government representatives. The number of emails has slightly increased, this is likely due to work from the membership team to acquire more members email addresses than before.

Following an increase of the average open rate of the email in the third quarter of 2020 the open rate remains at an above average figure for the industry. The open rate is on average around 32%. This is especially encouraging as it indicated that recipients of the email are hopefully valuing the information it is delivering further. Although there is a lot of room to increase the open rate further it is still a positive number when compared to the industry average open rate for emails of 19%.

Website:

Visits to the NSA website increased over the last quarter, from an average of 16,729 visits per month to 20,696 visits per month. People most frequently used the website to view work experience and placement opportunities on the Lambing Work Experience page in this period. Other frequently visited pages were Sheep Breeds in the UK and Next Generation 'Starting your own flock'.

Additionally, the Virtual Event website had 2,318 visits in total over the last quarter. Activity was concentrated in the month of October due to the 'Virtual celebration of sheep farming' taking place. October saw 2,096 of these visits from 1,243 users, generating 7,298 page views. Of these users 58.1% came to the site from direct search, 25.3% from social media, and 12.9% from a referral. Social media promotion of the webinars made a positive impact on the number of visits to the site.

Social Media:

The past three months have seen the growth of NSA's social media pages.

At the end of the fourth quarter of 2020 the NSA Facebook page following had increased by 1,791 to 16,655 people, and Twitter had increased by 191 followers to 12,581. The increase in this growth can be attributed in part to increased social media activity surrounding the October webinars, political events across the quarter, and a high number of press releases by NSA.

Posts performed well across a range of topics. Those relating to news or policy announcements attracted a lot of attention as did posts concerning an increase in reports of dog worrying. More light-hearted posts encouraging responses from users were popular and posts advertising the virtual events were also received by a large audience.

The top three performing Facebook posts for the quarter were:

1. Dog worrying with 21,555 people reached and 1,622 interactions with the post



- Which sheep are you today? 18,525 people reached and 3,171 interactions with the post.



- Comments from George Eustice with 18,428 people reached and 2,011 interactions with the post.



The top three performing Twitter posts were:

- “Have you considered how trees benefit your flock? Now is your chance. A webinar sponsored by Woodland Trust is starting at 11am”. 12,092 people reached and 73 interactions with the tweet.
- “NSA is extremely concerned by comments from George Eustice on the Andrew Marr show yesterday. Comments showed a lack of understanding of the UK’s sheep industry which urgently needs to be addressed. What did you think of the interview?” 11,112 people reached and 488 interactions with the tweet.

3. “University of Liverpool and Mologic Ltd. have launched a short survey, seeking views from all sides of the farming sector on what a pen-side diagnostic test for liver fluke should look like. The survey takes approx 10-15 minutes.” 6,879 people reached and 108 interactions with the tweet.

Other Activity:

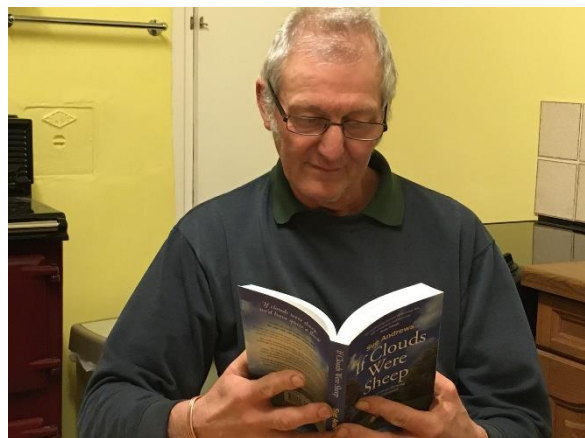
From November to December 2020, NSA ran a competition for six people to win books by Sue Andrews and Mary Griese. To enter the competition, people told NSA what they value about the UK sheep industry. The competition had 38 entries, all with great answers and singing the praise of NSA’s work for the sheep industry. Winners were therefore chosen at random. Becky received positive responses from the winners including Margaret Dalton, who was very pleased to have won, and Tony Webb who reported it was an excellent book to accompany his final lambing before retirement – both pictured below. If any board members would like to read more of the responses to the competition, please contact Becky.

Email Campaigns:

Throughout the fourth quarter, Becky and Chris began creating targeted email campaigns to non-members



who
have



previously expressed interest in NSA activity or membership, and to members. There were three campaigns this quarter:

1. ‘Get an NSA 100% wool tie’ sent to NSA members once on 30th November 2020, and again on 17th December to those who did not open the initial email. The email had 3,692 recipients and directed 298 people to the NSA website. Five ties were subsequently sold between 1st December 2020 and 18th December 2020. View the campaign here: <https://mailchi.mp/15d6d6781f95/nsa-100-british-wool-ties-available-now>
2. ‘NSA needs you!’ sent to potential members on 1st December 2020 outlining the current situation of the UK sheep industry, what NSA is doing to support farmers, and reminding people why they should become members. The email had 701 recipients and redirected 25 people to the membership page on the NSA website. View the campaign here: <https://mailchi.mp/0fa7dbbe36ed/nsa-needs-you>
3. ‘Festive Membership Reminder’ sent to potential members who attended the October webinars on 17th December 2020 outlined the NSA membership benefits in a festive infographic. The email had 82 recipients and redirected five people to the NSA website. View the campaign here: <https://mailchi.mp/5bfe4f246714/a-festive-reminder>

Public-facing activities

Work intensified during the fourth quarter for the launch of AHDB's 1.5million 'eat Balanced' campaign launched in January 2021. The campaign was a result of several industry bodies including NSA working together in the group named 'Reputation First'. The group aims to highlight the positive qualities of red meat and dairy consumption as well as its methods of production, establishing a solid network of resources to counteract negative coverage directed at UK agriculture as seen in recent years.

The 'Eat Balanced' campaign will feature press advertisements in national and regional newspapers, TV advertising, a new social media profile and digital downloadable material available for farmers and supporters to access. More information can be found at <https://ahdb.org.uk/WeEatBalanced>

Farmer-facing meetings and activities organised / attended

With the ongoing current COVID situation no farmer-facing meetings have been taking place but lots of virtual meetings/activities have been happening. The second 'Virtual Sheep Event' provided members and non-members with the opportunity of joining in a wide range of webinars. Data from all these webinars and the event has now been collated and the non-members targeted via email and (for those who attended more than five webinars over the two days) by phone.

Other areas of NSA activity

NSA Next Generation

As the fourth quarter came to an end hopes remained for the successful delivery of the Next Generation programme in 2021. With funds carried over into the year due to reduced spending because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 a provisional plan has been made to hold three face to face sessions for the 2020 group of Next Generation Ambassadors, two auction Mart winter conferences and a relaunch of the Next Generation website including an online newsletter and further webinars.

The 2020 cohort of Ambassadors are due to have a two-day online delivery session at the end of January 2021.

Engagement with NSA-affiliated breed societies

Chris Adamson and Becky Harrison have been working on an email that will be sent quarterly to all breed societies. Each quarter the email will include a brief update from Chris, an article that can be copied and pasted into breed society newsletters, promotion of what some breeds have been doing with NSA "membership-wise" (to tempt others to get involved), updates on industry relevant issues like zootechnical certificates, and upcoming events.

George Hedley Memorial Award

Voting is closed and the winner will be announced at the meeting.

British Heritage Sheep

Work is continuing to find funding. The process to open a bank account has been started.

NSA/RBST Ovine Semen Archive

Following a meeting of the Directors and other representatives in November, the decision was made to take affirmative action to rationalise what is in store, working with breed societies where they want to but

otherwise forging ahead without them. Information was sent to breed societies and a deadline of 8th January set for responses. If any societies do not reply it will be assumed that their permission is given to proceed with work on rationalising the volume in store. The working group will meet regularly to progress the work

NSA internal work / operations

Management and staff (Head Office and regions)

- While a small number of NSA HQ staff had started coming into the office, with clear social distancing rules in place, that has stopped again. Only one staff member is there at a time and this will be reviewed again as the coronavirus situation changes.
- Regional managers etc are meeting regularly via Zoom (led by Dave Gregory) and those involved in event organisation even more so. This is providing something of a support network to those individuals and also ensuring regular communication.
- As confirmed within the budget discussions at the end of 2020, Dave will be continuing to work one day a week for NSA, specifically on events/regions/ram sales.

Regional activities (to include NSA ram sales)

NSA N.I. 4th Quarter Activities Report

October was a quiet month

An Animal Health & Welfare Group Meeting

Jim Blee DAERA updated on the MV situation with Belgium & Netherlands saying both countries had been contacted and asked to explain the rationale behind their refusal to recognise N.I. as an MV Accredited Region. As yet no reply.

There was a meeting to discuss Zootechnical Regulations and the effect it would have on UK Breed Societies and ROI members. Most Societies thought that no action was required.

November

Agrisearch Office Holders had a meeting with officials from Dowth Estate in Co Meath ROI to discuss the thinking and progress towards carbon neutral farming.

Scab Control Group held a meeting to review actions against scab and the results during 2020. Covid had curtailed activities but PR had been successful in reducing cases of scab mainly due to more farmers returning to plunge dipping. No funding available from government at present to help progress the work and committee to keep the KT going through the media and press.

Zoom Meeting on 23rd November with several DEFRA officials in attendance speaking on aspects of Brexit and it's implications. First official recognition that EHC's would be required for GB/NI live animal movements.

NSA NI held a Zoom Meeting on 25th November mainly for N.I. Breed Society Representatives to get an update on Brexit but several UK Breed Societies asked to attend. It transpired that most of the sheep industry were unaware of the implications of Brexit.

I had a meeting with UFU and Ulster Wools regarding a request we put to our Minister of Agriculture for funding to help compensate for the dramatic drop in wool prices due to Covid-19. Unfortunately our request was rejected although other sectors with no better argument did get funding.

December

The implications on GB/NI trade that Brexit will have has finally got to the industry and most are concerned.

I have had numerous Zoom meetings with DAERA & UFU and I am in constant contact with both.

I have had interviews with press, radio and TV as has our Chairman.

I am still getting regular phone calls from concerned sheep farmers who see these regulations as the end of their livelihoods & businesses built up on the strength of selling elite breeding animals on mainland GB.

NSA Cymru/Wales.

A zoom meeting took place in November when we agreed our speakers for our ARMM on the 24th Feb at 2.30pm. Mr Steve Hughson Royal Welsh, James Owen WG, Jamie Heinrich from Australia talking about young people into sheep farming and Phil to give an NSA update.

The run up to Christmas was extremely busy with various WG meetings regarding Brexit and if a deal would be secured or not. Obviously, the deal has been welcome but there are still many issues to iron out. Helen Roberts sat on a House of Lords group in December and given evidence about Brexit issues, touching on the problems with Northern Ireland, shortage of labour etc.

NSA Welsh Sheep will be discussed at our annual meeting and a decision made if we could go ahead or not. A planned phone call with the LA in Jan has been postponed until mid Feb.

There are other on-going consultations that we will be responding to in due course.

NSA Scotland Activity Report for NSA Board meeting – Thursday 21st January 2021

Wednesday 18 November – NSA Board meeting attended by Aileen MacFadzean and Peter Myles

Thursday 19 November – NSA Scotland Committee meeting attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson, Sybil MacPherson, Peter Myles, Aileen MacFadzean, Grace Reid, Euan Emslie, Mary Dunlop, John Fyall

Monday 23 November - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

Tuesday 24 November – SHAWG Conference attended by Grace Reid

Monday 30 November - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

Thursday 03 December - ARD Stakeholders meeting attended by Grace Reid

Monday 07 December - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

Wednesday 09 December – UK Policy and Technical committee meeting attended by John Fyall and Grace Reid

Monday 14 December - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

Animal Health and Welfare General Stakeholders meeting attended by Grace Reid

Tuesday 22 December - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

Wednesday 30 December – Animal Health and Welfare General Stakeholders Group Meeting

Monday 4 January - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

Monday 11 January - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

Wednesday 13 January 2021 – NSA Scotland ARMM, QMS Red Meat Resilience Group Meeting attended by Jen Craig.

Thursday 14 January 2021 – Douglas Ross MP Farming Roundtable attended by Grace Reid, Hill, Upland and Crofting Group (HUCG) meeting attended by Jen Craig, QMS Catch up meeting attended by Jen Craig and Grace Reid.

Upcoming Meetings:

Monday 18 January - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector to be attended by Grace Reid

NSA Regional Manager and Secretaries meeting to be attended by Euan Emslie and Grace Reid

Tuesday 19 January - ARD Stakeholders meeting to be attended by Grace Reid

Monday 25 January - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector to be attended by Grace Reid

Thursday 28 January – Animal Health and Welfare General Stakeholders Group Meeting to be attended by Grace Reid

Monday 1 February - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector to be attended by Grace Reid

Tuesday 9 February – QMS Cattle and Sheep Standards Setting Interim Review Meeting to be attended by Grace Reid

Other significant external meetings – attended by Phil unless otherwise stated

Nov 16th 2020 TDUG meeting
Ovine Semen Archive Board meeting

Nov 17th NSA Zootech webinar
Global Sheep Alliance conference on line

Nov 18th Global Sheep Alliance conference on line

Nov 19th Trade Advisory Group meeting
NSA Cymru committee meeting

Nov 20th TDUG data group meeting
Call with Nicholas Saphir AHDB
Defra sheep catch up

Nov 23rd Trade and Ag Committee consultation meeting
TDUG meeting
Speak at Save British Farming webinar

Nov 24th SHAWG conference
Ireland Iceberg webinar with Moredun

Nov 25th Isle of Wight Sera eagle Steering Group
Pathway group meeting

Nov 26th AHDB – developing performance indicators meet
British Heritage Sheep Board meeting

Nov 27th LCAG meeting
Meeting with Janet Hughes Defra Director
Meeting with Lord Inglewood

Nov 30th Agric transition briefing with Sec of State
Meeting with British Grassland Society

Dec 1st BBC radio interview
Dipper accreditation meeting
H&H webinar presentation

Dec 2nd WG PES presentation
RUMA comms working group
Marches region ARMM

Dec 3rd RUMA Board meeting

Dec 4 th	TDUG data meeting TDUG KBT meeting
Dec 7 th	Meeting with Catherine Hughes and Gwyn Jones re PES for commons WCF meeting
Dec 8 th	BBC World Service interview
Dec 9 th	DIT Australia briefing UK P&T BMLUP partnership meeting
Dec 10 th	ELMS standards meeting
Dec 11 th	LCAG meeting English committee meeting with AHDB SW region meeting with Neil Parish MP
Dec 14 th	TDUG Dipper accreditation Journey times consultation industry meeting
Dec 15 th	Moreun pod cast Old Mill meeting re VAT EU exit Defra meeting
Dec 16 th	Defra welfare payments meeting ELMS meeting Defra meeting on mental well being through change
Dec 17 th	Trade advisory group meet Meeting with Victoria Prentius and David Davies
Dec 18 th	LCAG TDUG data sub group
Dec 23 rd	LCAG re Brexit
Dec 30 th	LCAG re Brexit
Jan 5 th 2020	Defra welfare consultation meeting Meeting with Dominic Buscall Wild Ken Hill estate
Jan 6 th	Meeting with British Wool Andrew Hogley
Jan 7 th	Oxford farming conference
Jan 8 th	LCAG

Appendix – Press releases issued and their social media reach

Week commencing	Press releases issued	Social media reach on press release links - Facebook
5 th Oct	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of October webinars UK's potential for carbon neutral sheep farming 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.8k 3.3k
12 th Oct	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> NSA welcomes launch of sheep disease monitoring schemes NSA responds to MP's rejection of UK food standards protection. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 998 1.7k
19 th Oct	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Looking forward to NSA 2021 events SCOPS take the plunge Fleece competition winner announced October webinar success 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1k 5.7k 7.5k 1.5k
26 th October		
2 nd November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2021 events bookings open Lambing list launches for new season 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2k 2.7k
9 th November		
16 th November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> NSA responds to George Eustice comments 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18.5k
23 rd November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> NSA highlights increasing sheep worrying by dogs NSA Cymru calls for Government reassurance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21.7k ?
30 th November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> NSA welcomes transition plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3k
7 th December		
14 th December	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> NSA launches Morning Breakfast club Choose lamb this Christmas NSA outrage at threat to NI sheep sector Winner of Rumenco feed blocks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.8k 1.3k 1.8k 4.4k