

# Activities report to NSA Board 12.08.2020

*This report refers to main activities since the last report (end of April). Activities are presented under a set of common headings.*

## NSA policy, technical and research work

**Brexit: Deal / no deal** - Negotiations with the EU were in full swing during Q2 and culminated at a summit at the end of June. By this stage it was agreed discussions could continue into Q3. The mood presented by Defra was sombre although still hopeful, but the tone from the EU was somewhat more negative. However, the June summit agreeing to continue into Q3 shows the appetite to continue striving for a deal remains. No deal plans are again ramping up, with NSA joining other industry bodies to apply pressure to Government to continue to work for a deal and prevent WTO tariffs. The NI protocol developed during Q2, with the joint committee on NI (who will be handling the details of the NI protocol) sitting for the first time in April. This committee represents the UK Govt, NI Govt, RoI Govt and EU. It was established that going forwards, in the case of a no deal, any goods entering the island of Ireland through the north that were at risk (yet to be defined) would be charged a tariff by default to prevent hold ups at the border. Ellie, Edward and Grace have had frequent discussions on NI to ensure those most likely to be impacted in NSA membership are kept abreast of developments.

**Brexit: Future farm support** – Scheme design seems to be making most progress in England on ELMS, then Pathway, and small capital grants. WG have responded to the responses received via their consultation and plan to discuss scheme design during the summer and autumn. No work appears to be underway in Scotland or NI and we are expecting that new scheme introductions will be at least a year behind England in all devolved nations. The most detailed work is being done on ELMS with a huge team of people working on test and trial projects ranging from the role of advice, to ways to measure outcomes, to land management plans. All these T&Ts will feed into ultimate design. The level of engagement with industry and environmental NGOs is high and we will have done 3 recent specific NSA workshops with the ELMS team. NSA submitted a detailed response to the Policy Discussion Document that closed at the end of July. The Sec of State is expected to make an announcement in September which should give initial scheme detail along with information on payment rates but we are expecting 3 tiers, a more basic tier 1 applicable to individual farms; tier 2 that will encourage a deeper and more collaborative/catchment based approach; and tier 3 which will be for significant land use change. There is no doubt that Covid has resulted in farming being seen as more important within all scheme thinking, although the principle of payment for public goods remains. We will see a call for expressions of interest for a limited number of farms to participate in ELMS pilots in early January 2021, with on the ground action as from Spring 2021. The national roll out of ELMS will happen in 2024 and until then farmers will have the choice of either ELMS pilot entry or simplified Countryside Stewardship.

The Defra Pathway programme is still in early stages of development. This will encourage enhanced health and welfare and NSA is closely involved in working groups looking at scheme design. We are likely to see the foundation of the Pathway announced in Spring 2021 for commencement in 2022 – this is likely to include a financial contribution towards a vet visit and the collection of key health benchmark data. In addition small capital grants schemes may start to become available in 2021 with larger item options in 2022.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> strand of potential support might be 'productivity incentives' but these are in early stages. Discussions are progressing on themes such as retirement incentives, collaboration, and skills and training. The BPS is expected to decline gradually from 2021 over a period of 7 years (when it is expected to be withdrawn completely). Even if the same funds are retained for farm support programmes, and even if individual farms end up getting similar amounts of financial reward, we can be sure that farmers won't have the freedom they currently have with BPS.

Relating to new farm schemes our thoughts regarding an 'Institute of Sheep Advisers and Facilitators' is making progress and an update will be given at the 12<sup>th</sup> August Board meeting with further discussion at the next UKP&T meeting. With advice forming part of many schemes our thoughts mean that there would be a register of advisors and facilitators, giving confidence to sheep farmers that people are well equipped and experienced.

**Sheep in upland areas (including sheep stratification)** – Nothing specific to report although it still feels like the pressure on sheep farming in the uplands is still present with 'alternative land use change' and trees seemingly attractive. We are still making the case wherever we can that the wider public benefits of grass are not adequately recognised because most grassland has been seen as part of production rather than environmentally intended.

Newton Rigg college, the only college specifically teaching upland sheep farming is set to close in 2021 although we are in touch with a number of groups and developers looking to salvage something from this decision made by Askham Bryan college

**Sheep in arable rotations** – Nicola recently produced an updated article for August September edition of SF promoting and updating our 'benefits of sheep in arable rotations' booklet. This article highlighted new information in this area, focused on the link to public goods and aimed to reemphasize the value of our booklet to members.

During Q2, Ellie opened dialogue with NIAB about setting up an arable list, similar to the lambing list but linking up sheep and arable farmers. NIAB was in agreement and the discussion was set to continue into Q3.

**Integrating trees into sheep farming systems** – Defra have released a consultation on the England Tree Strategy, as they plan to update their policy for trees, woodland and forestry. This 12-week consultation is seeking views on how to increase tree planting and tree woodland management. Nicola and Ellie are working on producing a draft response to this consultation that will be approved by Phil and the P&T team. We need to ensure increasing tree planting and woodland does not come at the cost of sheep farming, but farmers can utilise this strategy to increase public goods on farm and ensure sheep farming and the environment work in harmony.

**Rewilding** - There was little to update in Q2, although NSA did pick up on discussions about climate change being blamed on farming when the pandemic lockdown saw emissions drop with travel stopped. NSA did caveat this with the different gasses as carbon and methane should not be confused, however took full advantage of pushing British product and food security from domestic production, pointing out the ability to feed the nation wouldn't be possible without our diverse farming systems. Regarding the sea eagles in the loW, the eagles had been moving with one of the four remaining having made a base as high up as Yorkshire where it was felt it might settle. As NSA was aware of, new birds will now be released in 2020. (Map displays one bird's travels in the first half of 2020).



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

SHAWG and SCOPS and RUMA continue with their core activities with NSA engaging fully with all 3. SAGG (antibiotics working group) has agreed sheep targets to feed into the RUMSA targets task force. The key objective is to start to collect base data on antibiotic usage to give the sheep industry a baseline figure. AHDB has developed an e medicine hub to receive data and the challenge is to simplify what has been developed, as far as possible getting the data input by prescribing vets. This is likely to be part of the Pathway programme.

Key developments over the period include the new Chair of the UK Ruminant Health and Welfare Group (Nigel Millar) being appointed, with Gwyn Jones being offered a role as Deputy Chair. NSA, along with UK and Scotland CVOs made up the interview panel for this role, and then following this also the General Secretary interview process. The RHWG is planned to take over from SHAWG and CHAWG at the end of the November conference.

In mid-August the RPA is to launch an EoI for the overseeing of 3 regional sheep scab initiatives. These are to be targeted at hotspot areas and the regions include Devon and Cornwall; Shropshire; and the North east of England.

NSA ran 3 Iceberg disease webinars in partnership with Moredun and the PSGHS. These were all successful with a very positive feedback and attendance. Following this we ran a webinar on CODD – extremely positive and well attended and are in the process of delivering 2 webinars in partnership with Elanco and Moredun on internal parasites (roundworms and fluke). On the subject of webinars but outside the subject of sheep health we have also participated in a grassland webinar with CIEL, and a general sheep event organised by Agri Web.

**Sheep identification and movement recording and reporting** the role of Chair for TDUG (Traceability Design Users Group) has been taken on by ex AHDB sheep and beef Director Laura Ryan. TDUG is meeting every 2 – 3 weeks by Zoom. Covid has slowed progress of the LIP, however it has full Govt and Defra support confirmed. Delays have been seen with bovine EID which means sheep movements will be the first to be transferred to LIP from ARAMS. It seems ARAMS will continue as the foundation service even though via LIP with ARAMS gradually being transferred to the database purchased by Defra earlier this year. It is planned that paperless moves will be trialled as part of the transfer of ARAMS to LILtd. Work is going on now exploring ‘added value’ that could be gained via the LIP, and discussions are due to start again on potential policy changes to traceability (6-day standstill etc). The Pathway programme and LIP are seen as being key components of gaining export trade deals in future.

**TSE controls.** Work to move to a cut-off date of end of June rather than tooth emergence ref sheep ageing for splitting ran into a problem during the Spring. FSA were unhelpful in this process and while Defra tried to facilitate they were no match for FSA. Covid then resulted in the entire Defra team being transferred to deal with Covid and everything ground to a halt. No further progress has been made and any changes now look unlikely for some time to come.

**Supply chain concerns (including price reporting, classification and NSA involvement in Hallmark scrutiny committee).** Mandatory sheep carcass classification and price reporting had made significant progress but all has been put on hold while more fundamental legislation (the Ag Bill) is focussed on. We are informed this will be picked up again as soon as the Ag Bill has Royal consent (prior to end of 2020).

The Carcass Classification Scrutiny Committee continues and appears to be effective, improving the communication and relationship between industry and graders. The committee only oversees Hallmark Vet Services currently and they work proactively with industry. The KPIs of the graders are good with complaint levels very low. Hallmarks main challenge is staff recruitment and retention, and more recently Covid.

However, we are informed that grading services have continued uninterrupted throughout and new training and career development measures have been introduced.

**Farm assurance.** NSA is in contact with the key assurance bodies in Wales, Scotland, and England, and we have done our own base assessment of standards between the bodies. The assurance bodies have done this themselves and appear to have agreed that differences are insignificant. Red Tractor undoubtedly lead a push to raise scheme standards and are currently going through a review of standards that will be consulted on this autumn/winter with introduction autumn 2021. All standards are being reviewed but the major proposed change is the addition of a range of new environmental and soil management standards. NSA is heavily engaged in this process, as well as giving views on the role of Red Tractor in the future ELMS scheme (this relates to the planned introduction of environmental standards). This subject will be discussed in detail with English Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> August.

**Engagement with AHDB.** During Q2 the AHDB consultation response (from the 2018 consultation) was released and Nick Saphir was installed and the new Chair. NSA welcomed this, and NSA English Committee met with Will Jackson via Zoom in May to discuss the outcome of the consultation among other topics such as levy repatriation and the money from the sale of MLCSL. Minutes from this meeting are available.

**Rural crime –** We have had several rural crime-based enquiries this month, some sheep attacks by dogs, others to do with sheep trespassing. Nicola has responded to these accordingly, encouraging all sheep attacks to be reported and a duty of responsibility for ensuring livestock stay on farmers property.

Ellie is continuing to engage with new police forces seeking advice on rural crime, as well as contacting those where members have raised concern about the police response. This has resulted in a few cases where members have received (late) support from the police as a consequence of NSA's letters. Ellie was due to contact all Police Crime Commissioners ahead of the PCC election in May to discuss rural crime, however the election was delayed because of the pandemic. Ellie was involved in a regional trial of technologies that could be applied to help flocks with thefts and dog worrying however, the pandemic put the trial on ice.

**Farm safety.** Farm Safety Partnership activity has been much reduced during the past quarter. Communication has continued via email and this has mostly focussed around preparations for Farm Safety week in July. The week was again looking to focus on delivering the message of improved safety on farm but also this year drawing attention to a rise in mental health issues due to the Coronavirus pandemic that in turn can affect the incidence of accidents on farm.

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

With Policy development and emergency situations arising very quickly throughout the lockdown, Ellie, Edward, Grace and Helen, and where possible Dave and Phil had semi regular policy catchups to ensure work was joined up and all issues were correctly raised. It was discussed these zoom catchups could continue post lockdown as they provided a useful tool for keeping connected between UKP&T meetings. This was agreed to be pertinent with another massive disruption due imminently with Brexit, and the risk of a second lockdown falling at a more problematic time for the sector. Contributions from this group also helped with work such as getting a letter to all members during the lockdown to give them support when tending to animals, and more.

## **Any other livestock research with NSA involvement not already covered**

During Q2, NSA responded to a series of consultations. These were:

- Written evidence to the Agriculture Bill
- Challenges and choices (water use)
- House of Lords call for evidence on US trade
- Most favoured Nation Global Tariff
- AWC Covid-19 welfare risks
- House of Lords call for evidence on Japan

NSA also arranged a series of engagement sessions with NSA English Committee and NSA Cymru/Wales committee with relevant Governments on co-design for future farm support. These meetings were to take place in Q3.

**General research** - We have been approached by several organisations to help facilitate farmer responses through our social media and WEU channels. Topics such as CODD, joint-ill, MV, effects of COVID-19 on farmers are just a few of the interesting surveys being requested. Distribution comes at a cost to all external organisations to ensure that our members are not overloaded with research requests and allows staff paid time to look through the requests to ensure they are appropriate for our members. Nicola is dealing with all research requests.

**JIGSAW** - Joint Ill Group – Septic Arthritis aWareness. A new research group aiming to improve control of joint ill in lambs to improve lamb welfare and reduce unnecessary costs and antibiotic use on sheep farms. Nicola has taken on representation for NSA and includes close partners such as AHDB, Lesley Stubbings, Fiona Lovatt (FHC Ltd.) and a number of well-known sheep farmers. The main workload falls upon involved sheep vets but assistance from advisory groups should ensure a coordinated effort to increase awareness of good practice principles, collate existing records to establish prevalence & impact and to standardise ongoing records to allow epidemiological studies. All parties are coordinating international research activities to ensure collaboration and synergy and aiming to maximise the impact of available funding.

**ISAGE** – iSAGE has officially ended in terms of the project and all funding has been paid to NSA. Interesting results are still coming out of the project and Nicola will work on to ensure dissemination of appropriate information through SF articles.

**Nottingham University (Seaweed & Sheep)** – An interesting proposal for research funding is being submitting investigating North Ronaldsay Sheep and their ability to convert seaweed into energy. A letter of support has been provided by NSA and should the project be successful, there would be potential funding for NSA's role in this project.

## **Any other consultations not covered under topics above**

### **More general topics (updated if and when activity occurs)**

**Genetics** - We are working hard to rationalise and reduce the volume of semen in the OSA. OSA is jointly owned by NSA and RBST and we have no choice but to work together. We have agreed that a wider 'gene bank' including sheep geno material is important, but that this only needs to hold a range and volume of semen per breed specified by the FAO (25 individuals and 75 straws from each). This does create the opportunity to reduce OSA stores significantly but even that is difficult due to owners' shares held within the archive and getting breed society agreement.

**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)** - Despite a short disruption in the market at the beginning of lockdown the market sprang back well and has stayed strong throughout. NSA called for promotional work to be done as higher volumes of lamb approached the market and as a result

increased promotional work took place during Q2, as levy bodies and Government took action to help prevent market collapse for agriculture. While much of this early work was focused on Beef (as lamb balanced out as well as could be hoped given the conditions), campaigns such as the make it campaign are designed to be used more universally going forwards.

Brexit with no agreed trade deal remains a huge threat to our markets as we approach the year end, the US trade deal appears to have come to a halt, Japan deal looks promising although likely only small volumes, and trade deals with NZ and Australia are underway.

Relating to new trade deals NSA worked with others to call for the need to protect our high environmental and welfare standards (given our aspiration to raise standards even higher) with the result being the formation of a new Trade and Agriculture Commission. This Commission is to work for a period of some 6 months and will report at the end of this period. It is more likely to make recommendation and set future frameworks than to form any long-term function - although DIT has already set about refreshing its structures and NSA has been invited to take part in DIT's Trade Advisory Group.

We finally set up a new company in July 2020 'British Heritage Sheep' to take forward our work on market development in the niche/artisan area. Directors of the company include Bob Kennard, Dave Gregory and Phil Stocker and we will meet soon to plan to access external funds to drive this initiative forward.

**Wool** - During Q2, NSA had very close engagement with British Wool. During the peak of the lockdown, Ellie engaged in 30-minute meetings with British Wool weekly to allow the two organisations to support one another as fully as possible. This resulted in two lists being created, along with NAAC, to a) link up shearers with contractors, and b) to allow farmers to find local shearers. This work played an instrumental part in avoiding a shearing shortage during the lockdown with shearers not travelling into the UK from abroad this year. These meetings also allowed NSA to have advance warning of the wool price crash that came as a result of the markets in China being shut down in Feb and the rest of the world in March. NSA also raised this issue directly to Government during the pandemic to support British Wool and its producers. Wool prices are disturbingly low but promotional work was in full swing by the end of the quarter and a lot has gone on in Q3.

### **Additional membership information**

#### Breed societies -

Before Chris went on furlough he had planned the breed society forum to take place in May. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 the Forum was cancelled and in Chris's absence Dave Gregory took over the role of dealing with the societies. Zoom calls have been arranged to keep the societies updated and engaged with NSA. Two meetings were set up for breed societies to have their input on the virtual event, one in an evening and one in a morning, the turnout was poor. Breed society bookings have now opened for the virtual event. It is hoped that in the winter a breed society get together face to face can be arranged.

## **NSA communications and knowledge exchange work**

### **Press work:**

A slightly reduced number of press releases were issued during April, May and June, this of course, being linked to reduced industry activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Press work towards the beginning of the quarter was focussed around the effect of the pandemic on the sector and specifically on NSA activity and events such as NSA Sheep Event. As business began returning to a 'new normality' in June, press activity began to increase to close to its usual level.

The table below shows the press releases put out in the past quarter per week – the columns show press releases from either NSA Communications officer, Katie James or NSA Policy Officer Ellie Phipps 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. However, as Katie spent a period of five weeks on furlough during this quarter more of the activity will have been picked up by Ellie, or by Louise Hart in Katie’s absence.

Week commencing	Press releases in 2020 - Ellie	Press releases in 2020 - Katie	Social media reach on press release links - Facebook
06/04/20	1. Covid and walkers in the countryside		1. 7.5k
27/04/20	1. Shearing list launch		1. 10.2k
04/05/20	1. US trade deal discussions		1. 2.2k
11/05/20	1. Response to British Wool statement		1. 7.7k
18/05/20	1. Agriculture bill and trade standards		1. 2.3k
25/05/20		1. Ritchie prize giveaway 2. Launch of Next Gen webinar	1. 4.4k 2. 2.8k
01/06/20	1. Statement of British Wool – Wool prices 2. Respect for countryside 3. Brexit and trade		1. 9.9k 2. 2.7k 3. 2.4k
08/06/20	1. USA standards statement 2. Small abattoirs		1. 2.5k 2. 3.7k
22/06/20		1. Upcoming webinars	1. 2.5k
29/06/20	1. Trade and agriculture trade commission	2. Update on NSA Sheep Event	1. 2.3k 2. 18.2k

### Sheep Farmer magazine – see recent editions

**Weekly Email Update** - The update has been sent to approximately 4000 people each Friday during the last quarter, this includes NSA 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 NSA gaining more members’ email addresses than before. The email has an open rate of approximately 30 % which is very good compared to the industry average open rate of 19%.

There were some initial concerns if enough content specifically relevant to the sector would be available for Weekly Email Update during the Covid-19 pandemic but this has not proved to be an issue. The pandemic does not appear to have affected open rates etc either.

Demand for advertising space in the weekly Email Update continues to be high with the majority of available spaces already booked for 2020. Demand remains high for online advertising as it offers comparatively good click rates for adverts compared to other advertising methods.

**Website** - Visits to the NSA website increased during the last quarter, to an average of more than 21,500 visits per month. Advice to farmers during the coronavirus pandemic proved to be a popular source of searches to website, particularly when it was thought that certificates may be needed to be carried to prove

travel was necessary to check on livestock and these were available to download from our site. Plans for the Sheep Event 2020 also drew traffic to the website.

**Social media** - The past three months have seen a faster increase in growth of NSA's social media pages.

At the end of the second quarter of 2020 the NSA Facebook page had 14,198 followers with Twitter having 12,226, this is a growth of 1174 on Facebook and 295 on Twitter. The increase in this growth can be attributed to a concerted effort to increase social media activity during lockdown. This included some popular prize giveaways that helped to grow our following.

Total Facebook reach for the first quarter shows that during this time more than 400,000 people have viewed NSA Facebook posts, this is a growth of 150,000 on the previous quarter. A total reach of almost 175,000 has been recorded for Twitter at this time. A growth of 30,000.

Posts performed well across a range of topics. Those giving advice and directing to the NSA website for Covid-19 related downloadable information attracted a lot of attention as did the prize giveaways that were featured on Facebook during the period. Updates on NSA events were also shared by a large audience. The NSA social media dog worrying campaign also took place during this quarter and is reported on in the dog worrying section of this report.

The top three performing Facebook posts for the quarter were:

1. 'Who wants a cuppa? – Competition to win 'Herdy' mugs.
  - a. 34, 206 reached
  - b. 1097 people interacted with the post
2. What is dog worrying?
  - a. 26,717 reached
  - b. 526 people interacted with the post
3. Covid-19 downloadable poster for walkers through farmland
  - a. 25,430 reached
  - b. 298 people interacted with post
  - c. 744 downloads from website

The top three performing Twitter posts were:

1. UK farming standards – Reaching 7127
2. What is dog worrying? – Reaching 5873
3. NSA Sheep Event moved to October date – Reaching 4376

### **Public-facing activities**

For this quarter see dog worrying campaign.

## **Other areas of NSA activity**

### **NSA Next Generation**

Next Generation activity for the quarter was adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Planned Next Generation Ambassador delivery sessions were of course, postponed and it is now hoped the programme will be able to recommence in Autumn / Winter 2020.

To fill the void left from the ambassador delivery sessions the groups have taken part in two online calls during the second quarter. The first with independent sheep consultant Lesley Stubbings about parasite



control and the second with Rob Hodgkins discussing his NZ Romney genetics. Both sessions were found to be informative by the group.

The wider NSA Next Generation programme hosted a webinar on 'Getting started in sheep farming' in June. The webinar was aimed at a younger audience and was joined by four excellent speakers explaining the opportunities available when starting out in the sheep industry; John Fyall, Adriana Vaux from the Tenant Farmers Association and two of 2020's Next Generation Ambassador group Amy Jo Reid and Dylan Laws.

### **Engagement with NSA-affiliated breed societies**

Due to the cancellation of the planned 2020 Breed Society Forum in Edinburgh due to Covid lockdowns we held 4 Zoom meetings with breed societies to keep them up to date and engaged with our work. These meetings focussed on ram sale plans, our plans with Sheep 2020 alternatives, aiming to secure their involvement, and then a general update on policy and markets. Attendance at all meetings was not great but we received some useful feedback and attendees seemed appreciative. In particular it felt helpful to talk in a group about their involvement in our event as well as the ram sales, and overall the attendance was probably as good as we would have had with a face to face meeting

**SBRT 2021** – Nicola has taken on representation for NSA in SBRT 2021. Due to the uncertainty of AHDB's role in the event in 2021, NSA is assisting Emma Steele and Liz Genever in the joint role of secretary. This should allow workload to be shared, should AHDB decide to remove their usual role.

## **NSA internal work / operations**

### **Sheep Farmer performance / corporate supporters / income from commercial companies**

**Sheep Event.** A decision was made at the last Board Meeting to run with three virtual events, running on the following days: -

12th & 13th Aug – Breeding the best – This will look at preparing for the sales, Ram MOT, EBVs, genetics etc.

21st & 22nd Oct – Feeding the Flock getting it right – This will look at winter grazing, nutrition, ewe BCS, finishing lambs, health (parasites), mobile fencing, BREXIT, species diversity and habitats, feeding and nutritional aspects of root and leaf crops

13th & 14th Jan – New year 'farming resolutions' – This will look at preparing for lambing, control of internal parasites and vaccination programmes, Veganuary, promotion of +ve of red meat

A series of sponsorship packages have been put together and the initial uptake looks good with the Aug event having a packed programme of webinars etc. Oct already has interest from British Wool, Rumenco, Agriweb and Woodland Trust for workshops and webinars.

A fleece competition will be launched at the Aug event with the winners announced within the Oct event. Photography, stand and carcass competitions have also been organised for Aug.

A new website has been constructed for these events and will be there for future use if needed.

### **Regional activities (to include NSA ram sales)**

The Regions still struggle to adapt to life without being able to hold face to face meetings, with some holding no meetings at all since March due to the remote nature of getting technology to work and the ones that have held a Zoom meeting have found attendance poor, probably with the exception of a couple. Central Region have planned to hold a face to face committee meeting in August, socially distanced, regulation allowing.

The Regional managers however seem to have thrived during the last 5 months, finding that Zoom enables them to hold shorter more frequent meetings which can have more current content, they also now communicate via a new WhatsApp chat group, finding this quicker and easier to use.

A large amount of the content within Managers meetings is dedicated to next year's regional events. With the outlook uncertain for mass gatherings and no idea what will need to be done to adhere to social distancing, making any decisions is challenging however at this point all events plan to go ahead whatever it takes.

August will see 3 of our ram sales take place with entries good and markets able to return to near normal all is needed are our purchasers to return and support us.

There's been a good response to the online Ram Register set up by Jane and the W&B team with over 100 vendors now advertising on the platform, the cancellation of the main ram sale at Bultth seems to have been taken up by several smaller sales being organised by auctioneers and a reported huge increase in farm to farm sales. The cancellation of the main sale at Bultth now seems to have been vindicated following the cancellation of Kelso, the NSA and Jane having come in for a lot of criticism in the days following the announcement of the cancellation.

#### **Northern Ireland Region Activity Report** from Edward Adamson

All meetings are via Zoom at present.

June 2 - Met with Ulster Farmers Union to discuss wool prices

June 3 - Met Ulster Wool Board on wool prices

June 11 & 29 - Meetings with Agrisearch to formulate the direction and role of Agrisearch in the future to best serve N. Ireland Farmers

June 22 - Farm visits looking at possible venues for NSA SheepNI 2021

#### **NSA Cymru/Wales** from Helen Roberts

A zoom meeting will take place in August when someone from Welsh Government will join us to discuss the new schemes that will come into place after BPS and what the interim period may look like. NSA Cymru will also try to facilitate meetings in other parts of Wales to discuss this subject.

Kate & I have taken part in many Welsh Government meetings where we have discussed lamb promotion, the start of Brexit discussions and health and welfare. Dipping and obtaining dipping licences seems to be a mind field with no one from WG or NRW able to give good sound advice.

Plans for NSA Welsh Sheep are starting to take place, however, COVID rules will be monitored closely to see how we put together the event risk assessment. The hosts are very amenable and willing to work with us during this difficult time. Stand prices will remain the same, this is a decision which has been discussed with other NSA event organisers.

We hope to have a face to face meeting later in the year.

#### **NSA Scotland Activity Report for NSA Board meeting – Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May** – NSA Scotland Executive Committee Meeting attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson, Euan Emslie, Mary Dunlop, Aileen McFadzean, Peter Myles, John Fyall, Sybil MacPherson and Grace Reid

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May** – Animal Health and General Welfare Stakeholders Group Meeting attended by Grace Reid

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May** – ARD Stakeholders Group Meeting attended by Grace Reid

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May** - Animal Health and General Welfare Stakeholders Group Meeting attended by Grace Reid

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June** – NSA Webinar “Getting Started in Sheep Farming” Webinar aimed at the U27 age bracket. Speakers: John Fyall, Adriana Vaux (Tenant Farmers Association), Amy Jo Reid (NSA Next Generation Ambassador 2020), Dylan Laws (NSA Next Generation Ambassador 2020)

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June** - NSA UK Policy and Technical Committee Meeting attended by John Fyall and Grace Reid.

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June** – NSA Regional Managers and Secretaries Meeting attended by Euan Emslie and Grace Reid

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June** – Scot Gov COVID 19 Agriculture Communications Group meeting attended by Grace Reid.

Animal Health and General Welfare Stakeholders Group Meeting attended by Grace Reid

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

NSA Scotland Committee Meeting attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson, Euan Emslie, Mary Dunlop, Aileen McFadzean, Peter Myles, John Fyall, Sybil MacPherson and Grace Reid

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June** – Update with Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity Fergus Ewing attended by Jen Craig, Mamie Paterson, Grace Reid

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June** - Animal Health and General Welfare Stakeholders Group Meeting attended by Grace Reid

Joint Board and Finance and General Purpose meeting attended by Jen Craig, Aileen McFadzean and Peter Myles

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Jen Craig

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July** - NSA Regional Managers and Secretaries Meeting attended by Euan Emslie and Grace Reid

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July** - Animal Health and General Welfare Stakeholders Group Meeting attended by Grace Reid

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July** – ARD Stakeholders Group Meeting attended by Grace Reid

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July** – Jen Craig and Grace Reid presented to Carse of Gowrie JAC and spoke about what NSA Scotland does and the outlook for sheep in the future alongside what options are available to younger people in starting sheep farming

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector attended by Grace Reid

Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Animal Health and Biosecurity update meeting with Ian Murdoch attended by Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson and Grace Reid

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July** – Webinar hosted by the Scottish Land Commission (SLC) on the subject of Regional Land Use Partnerships attended by Jen Craig

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector to be attended by Grace Reid

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector to be attended by Grace Reid

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector to be attended by Grace Reid

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August** - Animal Health and General Welfare Stakeholders Group Meeting to be attended by Grace Reid

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector to be attended by Grace Reid

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> August** - ARD Stakeholders Group Meeting to be attended by Grace Reid

**Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August** - Farming round table teleconference with organisations from across the sector to be attended by Grace Reid

### **Other significant external meetings** – attended by Phil unless otherwise stated

28<sup>th</sup> April RHWG Chair interviews

28<sup>th</sup> April Meeting with Minister International Trade Greg Hands

30<sup>th</sup> April RHWG Chair interviews

30<sup>th</sup> April NSA Iceberg webinar

30<sup>th</sup> April Farming Brexit round table

4<sup>th</sup> May Breed Society meeting

5<sup>th</sup> May BMLUP SMS Board meeting

6<sup>th</sup> May English committee

6<sup>th</sup> May Pathway meeting

7<sup>th</sup> Brexit Livestock Chain Advisory Group meeting

11<sup>th</sup> May RHWG Chair interviews decision making

11<sup>th</sup> May TDUG

12<sup>th</sup> May E medicine hub meeting

13<sup>th</sup> May Meet with Joe farren BW

13<sup>th</sup> May ELMS engagement group

14<sup>th</sup> May Meet with Steve Hughson RWS

14<sup>th</sup> May Pathway meeting

18<sup>th</sup> May English committee

18<sup>th</sup> May Antibiotic guardian group meeting

19<sup>th</sup> Michael Seals Pathway meeting

20<sup>th</sup> May Iceberg webinar

21<sup>st</sup> ram sales meeting

22<sup>nd</sup> May UK Livestock Chain Advisory Group

22<sup>nd</sup> Contract sheep dippers meeting  
26<sup>th</sup> May TDUG  
27<sup>th</sup> May CIEL webinar  
27<sup>th</sup> May SW ram sale meeting  
1<sup>st</sup> June BMLUP SMS Project Board meeting  
2<sup>nd</sup> June ELMS engagement meeting  
3<sup>rd</sup> June RUMA  
3<sup>rd</sup> June BMLUP bracken ground truthing tool demo  
4<sup>th</sup> June UKP&T  
4<sup>th</sup> June Pathway meeting  
5<sup>th</sup> June Brexit Livestock Chain Advisory Group  
5<sup>th</sup> June Regional Managers meeting  
8<sup>th</sup> June TDUG  
8<sup>th</sup> June BMLUP SMS Board meeting  
8<sup>th</sup> June Meeting with Royal Ag University team  
8<sup>th</sup> June W&B ram sale meeting  
9<sup>th</sup> June Red Tractor TAC  
10<sup>th</sup> June Carcass class scrutiny committee  
11<sup>th</sup> June meet with Phil Hadley and John Wilkes ref US trade  
12<sup>th</sup> June NFU/NSA meeting  
16<sup>th</sup> June ELMS engagement meeting  
16<sup>th</sup> June Randall parker and NFU meeting re Brexit exports  
17<sup>th</sup> June SHAWG  
19<sup>th</sup> June Call with Newton Rigg developers  
19<sup>th</sup> June Roundworm webinar  
22<sup>nd</sup> June TDUG  
23<sup>rd</sup> June sheep dipping contractors meeting  
23<sup>rd</sup> Ag Bill discussion with NFU  
24<sup>th</sup> Bishop Fleming webinar – managing change  
24<sup>th</sup> joint Board FGP  
26<sup>th</sup> June RHWG Gen Sec interviews  
26<sup>th</sup> June Defra Productivity Group  
27<sup>th</sup> Agri webb webinar  
28<sup>th</sup> radio Glos interviews  
29<sup>th</sup> June RHWG Gen Sec interviews  
30<sup>th</sup> June RTA TAC  
30<sup>th</sup> June e medicine hub meeting  
1<sup>st</sup> July Round worm webinar  
2<sup>nd</sup> July AHDB reputation group  
2<sup>nd</sup> July Pathway meeting  
6<sup>th</sup> July TDUG  
6<sup>th</sup> July Webinar Q&A filming  
7<sup>th</sup> July RTA Board meeting  
8<sup>th</sup> July FGP  
9<sup>th</sup> July meet with WBLP assurance schemes  
10<sup>th</sup> July Breed societies meeting  
10<sup>th</sup> July regional Managers meeting  
14<sup>th</sup> July Sheep dipping group meeting  
17<sup>th</sup> July LCAG meeting  
20<sup>th</sup> July TDUG  
20<sup>th</sup> July Interview with Anglia University ref env and sheep  
21<sup>st</sup> ELMS engagement meeting

21<sup>st</sup> July BMLUP SMS Board meeting  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting with British wool  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting with James Owen dep Director Welsh Govt  
 22<sup>nd</sup> July meeting with MSD ref webinars  
 22<sup>nd</sup> July Meeting with Red Tractor CEO and Comms Director  
 23<sup>rd</sup> July Sustainable Beef and Lamb project interview RCVS  
 23<sup>rd</sup> July WG SMS evaluation interview  
 27<sup>th</sup> July ELMS research meeting  
 28<sup>th</sup> July Trade and Ag Commission launch  
 29<sup>th</sup> July Meet with Woodland Trust  
 30<sup>th</sup> July RTA TAC  
 30<sup>th</sup> July Meet with Michael Seals Pathway  
 31<sup>st</sup> July Brexit LCAG meeting

Published	Post	Type	Reach	Post Clicks	Reactions, comments & shares
29/07/2020	NSA Photograph Competition Reminder	<i>Photo</i>	298	15	1
28/07/2020	NSA Re-Post NSA Sheep Event 2020	<i>Photo</i>	741	31	5
27/07/2020	British Wool for British Insulation Petition	<i>Photo</i>	529	13	0
25/07/2020	Scottish Farmer IAAS Article	<i>Link</i>	309	4	0
24/07/2020	NSA Photograph Competition - Shearing Showdown	<i>Photo</i>	804	39	13
22/07/2020	Farm Safety Week RSABI #KeepTalking with Jim Smith	<i>Photo</i>	413	7	3
21/07/2020	Re Post of SAYFC Farm Safety Week Post Including Amy Jo Reid	<i>Photo</i>	522	41	0
21/07/2020	Re Post NSA Farm Safety Week Day 2	<i>Photo</i>	483	4	4
18/07/2020	IAAS Updated COVID 19 Guidelines	<i>Photo</i>	683	45	7
17/07/2020	Rural Matters COVID 19 Loan Scheme Support	<i>Photo</i>	807	70	5
11/07/2020	Aberfeldy Young Farmers Sheepdog Trials Video	<i>Shared Video</i>	953	56	11
08/07/2020	Re Post Kelso Ram Sales Cancellation	<i>Status</i>	414	35	1
07/07/2020	NSA Wales and Border Ram sales Online Registrations	<i>Photo</i>	671	33	1
06/07/2020	Invitation to NSA Scotland Regional Advisory Groups	<i>Link</i>	1K	39	29
04/07/2020	Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill	<i>Photo</i>	2K	122	26
03/07/2020	NSA Sheepdog Picture Competition	<i>Photo</i>	2.5K	244	74
01/07/2020	Results NSA Scotland Photograph Competition - Lockdown Sheep Work	<i>Photo</i>	2.6K	453	106
27/06/2020	Emma Harper MSP Livestock Worrying Bill Evidence	<i>Shared Video</i>	667	17	5
26/06/2020	FAS New Entrants to Farming - Land Opportunity, Dingwall	<i>Photo</i>	936	79	4

Published	Post	Type	Reach	Post Clicks	Reactions, comments & shares
23/06/2020	NSA Scotland Photograph Competition - Lockdown Sheep Work	<i>Photo</i>	3.5K	593	95
23/06/2020	Predator Evidence Survey Reminder Closing Date	<i>Photo</i>	596	17	1
23/06/2020	Scotch Lamb for St Andrews Day - United Auctions	<i>Photo</i>	395	9	2
22/06/2020	NSA Wool Week	<i>Photo</i>	1.2K	37	27
21/06/2020	NSA Sundays at the Highland Show - Sheep Shearing Bike	<i>Photo</i>	2.1K	401	65
20/06/2020	NSA Marquee at the Highland Show 2019	<i>Photo</i>	1.2K	225	29
19/06/2020	RSABI #KeepTalking David Leggat Poem	<i>Shared Video</i>	581	20	7
18/06/2020	NSA Ram Sale 1989 video	<i>Shared Video</i>	1K	77	4
12/06/2020	Pictures from NSA Scotsheep 2021 host farm, Over Finlurg, Tealing, Dundee	<i>Photo</i>	1.4K	239	44
10/06/2020	Tandoori Lamb Skewers   Recipe   Simply Beef & Lamb	<i>Link</i>	664	9	2
09/06/2020	Results NSA Scotland Photograph Competition - Blast From The Past	<i>Photo</i>	10.2K	1.4K	332
06/06/2020	NSA Scotland Chair Jen Craig shared picture	<i>Photo</i>	1.4K	46	25
03/06/2020	NSA Scotsheep 2020 at Over Finlurg video insight into rescheduled date of Thursday, May 27th, 2021	<i>Video</i>	15.8K	1.8K	546
03/06/2020	NSA 'Getting Started in Sheep Farming' Webinar Reminder	<i>Photo</i>	703	57	5
02/06/2020	Scottish Land and Estates - threat of wildfires	<i>Photo</i>	773	7	2
02/06/2020	NSA Dog Worrying post - reminder to keep dog on lead and under close control	<i>Photo</i>	704	6	5
30/05/2020	Scottish Craft Butchers - New Season Lamb	<i>Photo</i>	720	6	5
29/05/2020	Emma Cheape produced some excellent information posters for walkers	<i>Photo</i>	1K	102	13
29/05/2020	NSA 'Getting Started in Sheep Farming' Webinar Wednesday 3 June 2020	<i>Photo</i>	11.9K	1.1K	151
29/05/2020	Gass and Over Finlurg top breeding sheep	<i>Link</i>	743	27	7
29/05/2020	NSA Dog Worrying Post	<i>Photo</i>	632	5	3
27/05/2020	NSA Scotland Predator Evidence Survey 2020	<i>Photo</i>	14.2K	805	144
26/05/2020	Robert and Hazel McNee, Over Finlurg, sell hogs with lambs at foot at United Auctions	<i>Photo</i>	1.4K	72	48
26/05/2020	Extended Closing Date Photography Competition - Blast from the past	<i>Photo</i>	676	47	8
23/05/2020	Scottish Farmer - Livestock Worrying Bill Update	<i>Shared Video</i>	734	31	6

Published	Post	Type	Reach	Post Clicks	Reactions, comments & shares
21/05/2020	Over Finlurg Video of Sheep For Sale At UA Stirling	<u>Shared Video</u>	977	65	13
20/05/2020	RSABI #KeepTalking Jim Smith	<u>Photo</u>	920	32	14
19/05/2020	Photo Competition Blast From The Past	<u>Photo</u>	2.1K	153	37
15/05/2020	Emma Harper MSP Livestock Worrying Bill Update	<u>Photo</u>	1.1K	62	11
14/05/2020	Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme Payment Update	<u>Photo</u>	2.1K	394	28
14/05/2020	NSA Scotsheep 2020 Postponed Until May 2021	<u>Photo</u>	17.7K	772	216
13/05/2020	Scottish Land and Estates - Reminder to keep dog under control and respect Scottish Outdoor Access Code	<u>Photo</u>	855	20	3
11/05/2020	Photography Competition Winner - Scottish Hill Farming	<u>Photo</u>	2.9K	686	272
10/05/2020	Video - Fantastic views caught of what it means to be a sheep farmer in Sutherland.	<u>Shared Video</u>	1.1K	48	15
08/05/2020	Reasons to support the Scottish sheep industry	<u>Photo</u>	4K	72	81
07/05/2020	Scot Gov new powers over CAP - Agriculture (Retained EU Law and Data) (Scotland) Bill	<u>Photo</u>	4.7K	284	56
05/05/2020	Photography Competition - Scottish Hill Farming	<u>Photo</u>	2.2K	345	108
05/05/2020	NSA Milk bottle challenge	<u>Link</u>	964	48	11
04/05/2020	Scotch Lamb & Beef promotional video	<u>Shared Video</u>	647	18	5



## Webinars

For the first time ever NSA has taken to delivering webinars, which have proven to be a great success. We have had fantastic feedback including 'A first class webinar' and 'excellent, brilliant way to keep the farming community connected and informed' not to mention people tuning in from Colombia, USA, Canada and Finland. Thus far we have hosted a range of topics from CODD to one for a younger audience aimed at helping them to get into sheep farming.

Phil has also played a part in other webinars organised by external companies including Elanco on sheep worms and liver fluke.

Each webinar is briefly explained below with details on numbers of those who tuned in, they are also available for both members and non-members to catch up on here <https://nationalsheep.org.uk/webinars/>. The webinars have been a very good way of collecting data on non-members, we have already converted at least 2 people who have attended webinars into membership. It is also planned to contact these non-members with details of face to face events in the new year (fingers crossed they are able to take place) to encourage them to come and see more of the NSA and meet us face to face.

### NSA and Moredun 'Iceberg' disease webinar

20<sup>th</sup> May 2020, 8.30am

Phil Stocker, Craig Watkins (Moredun Institute), Chris Cousens (Moredun Institute) Alison Braddock (SRUC), Louise Hart

- Held in association with the Moredun Foundation and the SRUCs Premium Sheep and Goat Health Scheme.
- Covered approaches to reducing the risks and losses from 'Iceberg' diseases.
- Phil Stocker introduced Iceberg diseases including why and how they should be managed more effectively.
- Craig Watkins presented on the management and control of Johne's disease
- Chris Cousens on Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma (OPA).
- Dr Alison Braddock provided an overview of the Premium Sheep and Goat Health Scheme, which currently includes options for Maedi Visna and Johne's disease.
- Total of **320** unique registrations across all 3 webinars.

### NSA Under 27 'Getting Started in Sheep Farming' Webinar

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, 7pm

John Fyall, Adriana Vaux (TFA), Amy Jo Reid and Dylan Laws (NSA Next Generation Ambassadors), Grace Reid

- John Fyall, a current tenant farmer, agricultural valuer and immediate past NSA Scotland Chairman gave his top tips on what he learnt when starting out in sheep farming
- Adriana Vaux, an advisor at the Tenant Farmers Association, explained the ins and outs of applying for a tenancy and creating a business plan.
- NSA Next Generation Ambassadors Amy Jo Reid and Dylan Laws inspired with their stories and proved that it can be done and had some very useful advice from a young person's perspective.
- **76** unique registrants, 51 attendees

### NSA webinar on 'The Challenges of Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis (CODD)'

25<sup>th</sup> June 2020, 7.30pm

Liz and Bryan Griffiths, Liz Nabb (sheep vet), Jennifer Duncan (University of Liverpool), Louise Hart

- Liz and Bryan Griffiths, NSA Chairman gave an overview of their flock and the challenges they have faced with lameness, culminating in their ongoing efforts to tackle CODD.
- Jennifer Duncan, a Senior Lecturer at University of Liverpool and sheep vet, Liz Nabb discussed how to get your vet involved and the potential difficulties in diagnosis. They considered a holistic approach to lameness of the 5-point plan with emphasis on how it is relevant to CODD along with the responsible use of antibiotics and the importance of quarantine protocols for purchased sheep.
- **258** unique registrants, 121 attendees

### **NSA and CIEL grassland webinar**

8<sup>th</sup> July 2020 7.30pm

Mark Young (CIEL), Phil Stocker, Debbie McConnell (AFBI), Helen Mathieu (Germinal) Liz Genever

- Phil Stocker set the scene.
- Mark Young described the background to CIEL and their involvement in grassland.
- Dr Debbie McConnell from Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), talked through the GrassCheck project and how farmers can be using the information to plan their grazing and conserved forage during this tricky year caused by the weather.
- Helen Mathieu from Germinal highlighted options for this year to boost forage production and discussed other pasture species that could be incorporated into leys to help improve resilience during variable years.
- Total of **177** unique registrations, 100 attendees

### **Planned webinars**

We have planned some further webinars these include a follow up to the grassland webinar and we currently have one in the pipeline for September.

### **NSA and GrassCheck GB Live Chat with farmers Rhys Edwards and Aled Evans**

5<sup>th</sup> August 7.30pm

Liz Genever, Rhys Edwards (sheep farmer, Bridgend, south Wales), Aled Evans (beef and sheep farmer, Carmarthen)

Liz Genever (independent sheep consultant) will be talking to Rhys Edwards (sheep farmer, Bridgend, south Wales) and Aled Evans (beef and sheep farmer, Carmarthen) about their experiences of using GrassCheck over the last two grazing season. There will be a particular focus on how they have used the information during the dry spring and summers to help them plan their grazing management. There will be a discussion on what else is needed to help them improve their grassland utilisation.