**MINUTES OF NSA CENTRAL REGION AMM 24.1.2018, HELD AT THE BLUEBELL AT TISSINGTON, Nr. ASHBOURNE**

Apologies – Sarah Helliwell, Charles Sercombe, Hope & Angus Morris, Edward Cook.

Minutes of AMM 2017 – were read and approved.

Matters Arising – There were none.

Chairman’s Report – Alastair Sneddon summarised the year’s activities, starting with a comment about the continued domination of Brexit on the horizon, with no real indication of what is to come, and a good deal of uncertainty and concern about both subsidies and trade. He has attended meetings on this through both LAA and NSA. Other activities include:-

* Breed Society Forum – held at Melton Mowbray, followed by a farm visit to Charles Sercombe’s farm, where topics included: Signet up-date, RamCompare project, NSA Ram Sales, Zootech – Culling, RBST – Semen storage, UK Export Certificate Partnership.
* Hope Show – NSA had a presence there again.
* Farm Walk, Cheshire – John Gates and family welcomed us to their main base on top of a salt mine and shared with us the advantages and challenges of doing so (when occasionally the brine pipes rupture and flood the fields, rendering them barren for quite some time). They also farm several other blocks of land, including parts of the Cheshire Showground and an estate, all of which enables them to rear both cattle and sheep (including Rouges and North Country Mules). It was an informative day with excellent refreshments.
* English Committee Meetings – several attended in both London and Malvern. Topics included: Brexit, Red Tractor, anti-biotics, lynxes, dog worrying, carcase splitting, price reporting, the Halal sector.
* House of Lords – also attended the House of Lords LAA 200 year celebration of Livestock Markets, hosted by Lord Inglewood who assists both LAA and NSA.
* DEFRA-led Think Tank – attended a meeting on behalf of NSA & LAA, along with NFU, looking to a future where BCMS and ARAMS are merged into a new Database with access to Farm Assurance information TB status etc. etc. David Howlett also attended.
* Regional Managers Meetings – Anne has attended 3 meetings – one in Birmingham and 2 in Malvern – and also went to NSA Welsh Sheep on behalf of the region.
* Regional Committee Meetings – held in June, September & November. Alastair said “Attendances have been variable, but the atmosphere has been good and we have managed to keep procedural matters and the mundane essentials to a minimum. People have made great efforts to attend and with appearances by Charles Sercombe we have had the latest news from high places and Chris Lewis has kept us up to date with matters of a veterinary nature. I am certain those who have attended have found the meetings useful and enjoyable. The more the merrier”.

Trustees Report – Chris Lewis reported on the meetings he attended, saying that many of the topics were the same as those outlined by Alastair. Sam Wharry’s untimely death resulted in Margaret Dalton stepping in as temporary Chair, and this has now been made permanent.

Treasurer’s Report – Robert Helliwell gave information from the financial statement for Year Ended 31.12.17. The essential items were:-

* Profit from Early Gathering Event…………………………………5,806.00

Profit for year (after Regional Costs)………………………………1,923.00

Add funds brought forward at 01.01.2017………………………...24,393.00

Closing funds at 31.12.17……………………………………….. **£26,316.00**

Also, information is being sought as to how to invest some of the capital for the future benefit of the region.

Appointment of Officers

* Chairman – Alastair Sneddon. Prop: Ben Kidd, Sec: Andie Jolley.
* Vice-Chairman – David Howlett. Prop: Alastair Sneddon, Sec: Kath Birkinshaw.
* Sec/Manager – not an elected position. Anne Payne to continue.
* Treasurer – Robert Helliwell, Prop: David Howlett, Sec: Anne Payne
* English Committee – Charles Sercombe, Alastair Sneddon, David Howlett. None due for re-election, so all were re-approved. (It was suggested that Matt Haydon and Fred Love should be considered as possible substitutes for any EC members unable to attend.)
* Board of Trustees – Chris Lewis, not due for re-election and re-approved.
* Committee – should remain “Open to all members”. Prop: Kath Birkinshaw, Sec: Andie Jolley. Unanimous.

Any Other Business – there was none.

NSA Next Generation Ambassadors – There followed impressive presentations from Fred Love and Matt Haydon (Lewis Sayer didn’t arrive) both of whom explained how they’d gained an enormous amount from being on the programme.

Fred Love – high-lighted the Grassland Session (including forage crops) and is now working in partnership with arable farmers to finish lambs, using social media to promote the product. He also itemised the Performance Recording system.

Matt Haydon – told us that as well as all the technical information made available he, like Fred, had learned so much from across the industry in all areas. He very much appreciated NSA’s promotion of young people, and felt that we need to take the sector forward with confidence and energy.

Discussion – focussed on the comment from one member that the Sheep Industry is not very good at promoting ourselves and our excellent products. We should use social media more to emphasise our high animal welfare standards; farm-fed, naturally produced meat; and that we do loads for the environment. This would help counter-act the arguments from vegans and vegetarians. Could AHDB help with this?

Phil Stocker then gave the meeting a comprehensive up-date on policy issues which NSA have focussed on in the past 12 months, and of those that will be addressed in the coming year. The evening concluded with some very tasty sheep meat casseroles for supper.

Anne Payne, CR Manager