

# CYMRU WALES

## NEWSLETTER



NEWSLETTER  
PRODUCED WITH THE  
SUPPORT OF HCC



ISSUE ONE: SPRING 2022

A NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

## Chairman's Welcome

Kate Hovers

**Welcome to our first members newsletter. I was excited and privileged to be elected as chair of NSA Cymru in February 2020. Little did I know what strange times we were about to enter.**

My first committee meetings and NSA board meetings were all on Zoom and much of 2020 seemed to involve online meetings and getting the best out of technology – not my forte! I live in the Brecon Beacons on my partners sheep farm, we have his, hers and joint sheep of a few hill breeds. I am also a vet with a strong interest in sheep and although not spending much time in general practice these days I do advisory work including vet services to HCC's animal health planning project Stoc+ and a director of Wales Veterinary Science Centre (including occasional days on post mortem duty)

I may not be able to hold a conversation about what's on TV but I am happy to talk about sheep all evening and am passionate about the industry, hence my involvement with NSA. When not working or talking about sheep, I can be found running, cycling, or walking in the hills. I breed the following Breeds – Badger Face Welsh Mountain (Torwen), Hill Radnor, Brecknock Hill Cheviot, Charolais and Texel cross out of all of these.

I joined NSA in 1998 after buying my first Badger face ewes at the society sale in Builth ram sale. Previous President of the Badger Face Sheep Society and the Hill Radnor Flock Book Society.



**Kate Hovers**  
Chairman



**Caryl Hughes**  
Vice Chairman



**Helen Roberts**  
Development Officer



**Tim Ward**  
Treasurer & Trustee



**John Lloyd**  
UK Policy & Tech Rep



**Margaret Dalton**  
Finance & Scrutiny Rep



**Llew Thomas**  
Trustee



your business your future

# 2022

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Tuesday 22nd February  
Annual Members meeting 2.00pm  
In person and via Zoom

Thursday 10th March  
NSA Cymru Wales committee meeting  
to discuss NSA Strategy

Tuesday 10th May  
NSA Cymru Wales Region  
committee meeting 10th May

Wednesday 6th July  
Entries close for NSA Wales and Border  
Early Ram Sale

18th – 21st July  
Royal Welsh

Wednesday 27th July  
NSA Sheep Event – Malvern

Monday 1st August  
NSA Wales and Border Early Ram Sale

Wednesday 3rd August  
Entries close for NSA Wales and Border  
Main Sale Ram Sale

Tuesday 9th August  
NSA Cymru Wales committee meeting

Monday 19th September  
NSA Wales and Border Main Ram Sale

November  
NSA Cymru Wales committee meeting

28th & 29th Nov  
Royal Welsh Winter Fair

Farm walks and other events will be  
planned and publicised via the NSA website,  
NSA Sheep Farmer and social media.

Events: Contact Helen Roberts  
helen@nationalsheep.org.uk  
or call 07976 803066

Ram Sale: Contact Jane Smith  
jane@nsaramsales.co.uk  
01291 673939

## Lambing season

Kate Hovers BVSc CertSHP MRCVS

### Lambing time is approaching, or here, and thoughts turn to those important first few hours of a lambs life.

We know hygiene/cleanliness and colostrum are vital but what do we really mean?. Comparing even the cleanest sheep shed to a human maternity ward, we could wonder how so many lambs stay free from infection rather than why some do get problems. It is impossible to be E.coli (and other bacteria) free in an environment where many sheep are eating, drinking, urinating and defaecating several times a day so we need to do all we can to reduce the levels lambs face and protect them with good quality colostrum.

Puerperal fever is an infection women can die from after childbirth. It was common until the 19th century when anecdotes say it was noticed women were less likely to get this after a nurse assisted birth than a doctor and someone worked out that nurses were washing their hands! This story has stuck in my mind. When I qualified as a vet nearly four decades ago, I never saw a vet or farmer wearing gloves for lambing. We washed our hands, but I didn't see that very often on farm. A study into joint ill a few years ago concluded that it occurs on farms with good hygiene and colostrum, but "enhanced hygiene" lowers the risk. Some of the enhanced hygiene measures were always wearing gloves for lambing, washing or disinfecting hands regularly and disinfecting stomach tubes, bottles etc. I have worn gloves for lambings for many years now and we have all got used to more hand washing and carrying a bottle of hand disinfectant with us over the last two covid years. Liquids or tablets for sterilising baby bottles are inexpensive and easy to sterilise stomach tubes and bottles etc. after washing out.

Lambs are born with very little protection against disease and colostrum is essential to give energy for warmth and to keep sucking and provide antibodies against diseases. Recent work has also confirmed that it affects the final development of the reproductive tract so affecting lifetime production in ewe lambs. It really is liquid gold. There is plenty of interesting information on the AHDB website under the #ColostrumIsGold initiative [Click Here](#)

Within the dairy industry, great attention has been paid to colostrum management. It is common practice to measure the percentage of total solid content of colostrum using a Brix Refractometer. This can be done on farm and takes a matter of minutes to do with just a couple of drops of colostrum (see guide below). The refractometer results have been shown to positively correlate with the antibody content (IgG) of the milk and a cut off value of 20% is used in cattle and goats, under this level the colostrum is not good enough quality. Sheep differ and the cut off is higher, the most recent work suggest 26.5%. A Brix refractometer can be bought off the internet and I believe some farm suppliers stock them. A project was run in Wales last year by Flock Health Ltd looking at lamb care around birth and testing colostrum from 20 ewes over lambing. Most found it straightforward to do once they got the hang of it and interesting. It is useful to test some ewes at the start of lambing and investigate with your vet or nutrition adviser if results are poor, then test any poorer ewes, some multiples and a few each week. Don't forget to wash your hands before and after touching the ewe's udder. Blood samples can be taken from lambs 1 to 6 days old to test for colostrum absorption. Again this is often done in disease outbreaks in young calves and as a routine check but less so in the sheep industry although it is a very useful test.

#### A Simple Guide to using a Brix Refractometer:

- Take your refractometer open the plastic cover
- Using a plastic pipette, drop a couple of drops of water on the black pad and place the plastic cover back on top.
- Look through the eye piece and ensure that the blue/white divide is level with zero on the left-hand scale
  - If it isn't on zero, turn the screw on the top to re-calibrate the refractometer
- Wipe the black pad and the plastic cover to ensure that they are dry
- Drop 1-2 drops of colostrum on the black pad, place the plastic cover down on top
- Look through the eye-piece and note down the Total Protein % by reading off the left hand scale
- Clean and dry the refractometer.

# Welsh sheep industry recognised

with prestigious award



**Welsh sheep industry stalwart, Helen Roberts, has received a top accolade in recognition of her outstanding contribution. Helen, of Selattyn, Oswestry, is the 2021 recipient of the National Sheep Association's prestigious George Hedley Memorial Award.**

A very popular and authoritative figure, Helen farms with her husband, Clive, and also runs the Horton flock of Suffolk sheep with her father, John Pryce. She organizes the biennial Welsh Sheep, as well as the flagship NSA Sheep Event in Malvern, and is NSA Cymru/Wales Regional Development Officer and Corporate Sales Manager.

The home farm is on the England/Wales border. Clive and Helen keep 500 Welsh Mules, Texel and Beltex cross ewes in addition to small pedigree flocks of Beltex and Blue Faced Leicesters. Her long association with the industry has also involved wide-ranging commitments and activities on several committees, including as a director of Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers.

She says: "Throughout my time working for NSA and the wider sheep industry, I have always held the George Hedley award in the highest regard for the very high calibre individuals who have been recognised in the past. Therefore, I am extremely honoured to be named as the latest recipient, which enhances the award I received in 2016 when I became the first lady to win the John Gittins Memorial Award.

"I see the UK sheep industry and those that support me and NSA as part of a big family that has an integral part to play in the wider social, economic stability of the UK's rural communities. Although I have my name on the award, without the support of the industry to myself and

NSA, this would not have been possible Thank you all for that support."

Devolution and increased activity in Wales have meant Helen has taken on a continuous stream of topics and challenges with confidence, placing NSA in high regard in Wales. Helen has organised NSA's flagship Sheep Event for the past decade, more recently contending with delays presented by covid-19.

NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker comments: "The George Hedley award is a really prestigious recognition of outstanding contribution to the sheep industry in the UK. I'm delighted that Helen received nominations from more than one source and that the selection panel clearly voted Helen as the 2021 winner.

"She clearly lives and breathes sheep farming and is actively involved in so many different aspects of our industry. She now joins a long and very worthy list of recipients who will, I'm sure, welcome her to their ranks."

The formal presentation of the George Hedley award will be amongst Helen's many friends and colleagues from the industry at the NSA Sheep Event dinner on Tuesday 26th July 2022, ahead of the association's flagship event at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire.

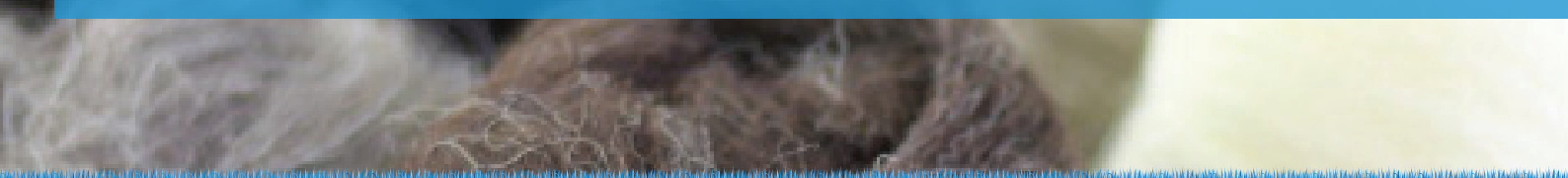
## Putting Welsh Wool on the map

Catrin Jones, Menter Môn

**Menter Môn's ground-breaking project to recognise and maximise the huge potential of Welsh wool is going from strength to strength as the social enterprise works in partnership with Bangor University's BioComposites Centre on the next phase of the project to develop five wool product prototypes.**



The pioneering project 'Made with Wool', led by Menter Môn, aims to improve people's understanding of this versatile fibre. The scheme's purpose is to offer innovative solutions to challenges facing the supply chain, facilitate new products, and add value to Welsh wool as a natural, sustainable and multipurpose material. Graham Ormondroyd from Bangor University's BioComposites Centre said: "We are delighted to be working with Menter Môn on this project. Bangor University plays a major role in innovation, science and technology in north Wales. We hope that these prototypes can be developed and will offer a new way of using wool which increases its value." The project team is keen to work with a different people and businesses to develop products which demonstrate the potential of Welsh wool as a valuable product. Sioned McGuigan, Made with Wool project officer added: "Shearing costs are now higher than the price of the wool itself, which is at an all-time low and farmers are facing significant challenges with the annual disposal of wool. The project aims to add value across the supply chain, from the farm to the end product. The response so far has been fantastic and as we move to the next stages of creating several prototypes, we want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to play a part in the project.





# Supporting Sustainable Sheep Farming

John Richards, Hybu Cig Cymru



**Two years ago, independent research conducted for HCC's sustainability vision – The Welsh Way – showed that sheep farming in the Welsh hills had a very positive story in terms of its environmental impact.**

In terms of emissions, and particularly if carbon sequestration in our permanent pasture and is taken into account, our farming is among the greenest in any comparable international study.

Sustainability will be increasingly important in the marketplace, with consumers and retailers demanding that we can evidence the positive, non-intensive story of the 'Welsh Way' and show continued improvement.

HCC's focus is on helping the sector to be competitive in this global context, using the latest research and technology to pilot measures to help farmers and processors to be as efficient, profitable and sustainable as possible.

In 2022, our EU- and Welsh Government-funded Red Meat Development Programme enters the final eighteen months of the five-year initiative.

It consists of three individual projects, the Stoc+ animal health project, the Hill Ram Scheme looking at sheep genetics within the hill sector, and the Welsh Lamb Meat Quality Project, exploring the effects of on-farm and processing factors on eating quality.

The aim of the Hill Ram Scheme is to develop a critical mass of performance-recorded hill sheep in Wales. 54 farmers have joined the

Scheme representing seven breed-types. DNA technology has enabled these hill farmers to performance record their flocks and over 43,000 DNA samples of ewes, lambs and rams have been collected.

The Welsh Lamb Meat Quality Project has seen 960 consumers participate in consumer taste panels scoring Welsh Lamb's eating quality, contributing to an overall project sample base of around 2,000. Their feedback will inform the sector on how to enhance the Welsh Lamb eating quality experience. The meat's nutritional content is also being analysed scientifically, showing that Welsh Lamb is extremely nutritious and contains high amounts of beneficial fats, minerals and amino acids.

Stoc+ is by now working with over 360 livestock farms and 42 vet practices across Wales to promote proactive flock and herd health management. Since the beginning of the project back in 2018 many farms have seen improved performance in areas such as flock fertility, driven by the work undertaken between the farmer and vet.

HCC's Red Meat Development Programme is a 5-year programme which is funded by the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.



## NEWS FLASH

EARLY 2023 ANNOUNCEMENT: MAY 16TH 2023 – NSA WELSH SHEEP AT RED HOUSE, ABERHAFESP [WWW.NATIONALSHEEP.ORG.UK/WELSHSHEEP](http://WWW.NATIONALSHEEP.ORG.UK/WELSHSHEEP)

## Although 2021 was not an ideal year we did manage to hold two events which proved successful and enabled Members old and new to meet and promote NSA.

In September more than 50 members, friends and neighbours joined a farm walk hosted by Jeff Gwillim and family at Cwm Farm, adjoining the Black Mountains, south of Talgarth, near Brecon in mid-Wales. Attendees enjoyed viewing the farm's 300 acres with ground lying at 600-1,200ft and grazing rights on the Black Mountains running to 2,500ft. There was much discussion among the group about the importance of graziers, like Jeff, in the management of the hill. NSA Chief Executive Phil Stocker spoke about his and the Gwillim family's involvement in the Black Mountains Land Use Partnership (BMLUP), which has been responsible for much work in the area to improve the Black Mountains environment to the benefit of local graziers and the wider community. Thanks go to Jeff and his family for welcoming the large group and providing such an interesting and enjoyable afternoon.

NSA Cymru Development Officer also represents the industry on many stakeholder groups and responds to consultations as needed. In 2021 responses were put in regarding Welfare in Transport, livestock identification, registration and movement, carcase classification and wool to name a few. Meetings with Ministers have taken place to discuss an entire range of topics but most recent was a meeting with Lee Waters Deputy Minister for Climate Change to discuss the concerns our members have with outside companies buying land for trees to offset carbon. We pointed out to him that NSA works in an holistic way and worked with the Woodland Trust to emphasize how sheep and trees can co-exist. Something we will keep pressing home.

NSA Cymru played a part in COP Cymru along with representatives from HCC, FUW & NFU Cymru as part of a panel discussion titled Fields of Ambition which focused 'Nature, Adaptation & Resilience Safeguarding/restoring natural habitats & ecosystems to preserve biodiversity. Helping our communities adapt to impacts of climate change

In August, the Government response to the transport consultation informed industry of the plan to ban live exports for slaughter and also outlined how other proposals in the consultation – about temperature, headroom, and journey times – will now be discussed in more detail with stakeholders.

NVZ's, trade deals and sheep scab have also been reported on during the year. We are now part of a sheep scab collaboration group with disposal of dip been one of the main topics for discussion. One year on from Brexit we may have a deal, but trade deals with the likes of Australia and New Zealand are of a real concern. Let us hope that the UK public, processors, and the service sector will stand by to purchase what we promote and appreciate how it is produced.

As for NVZ's it is a case of watch this space with the NFU Cymru challenge still ongoing. If NVZ's are implemented it will bring major changes to the whole of our industry.

## NSA CYMRU YOUNG SHEPHERD COMPETITION

Tomos Glyn Davies was the winner of NSA Cymru/Wales Region Next Generation Shepherd Day held in August. Tomos previously won the title in 2019 at the NSA Welsh Sheep Event held at Glynliffon college so it is great to see him have another chance to compete in the finals at NSA Sheep Event 2022 in Malvern this year. Competitors were judged on their skills in husbandry, lamb selection, ram MOT, shearing and ATV to give their overall score. Harri Griffiths came second with Dan Owen following in third place. Congratulations to the other 12 competitors who all scored highly. NSA Cymru is grateful to all who made the day successful with a special thank you to our sponsors Texel Sheep Society, ABP Yetminster for providing the lamb for the BBQ and all the judges for their help and support. The event was hosted at Orseddwen home of Clive and Helen Roberts.





## I'm lucky enough to have the opportunity to be farming in North East Wales on the edge of the Berwyn Mountain Range as a partner with my parents and grandmother.

We're working over nearly 1000 acres on 3 sites. Half of this is owned and the other half rented. We keep 1600 ewes, 1250 of these are pure Welsh Mountain ewes hefted to the mountain. The 650 younger ewes will spend most of their time up on the heft and put to a Welsh Mountain ram, with the other older 600 down on the lower ground and put to a Blue Face Leicester. We then keep around 60 of the Mule ewes each year which make up our flock of around 350 Mules which get crossed with a Texel. We keep the smaller flock of Mules to hit the summer fat lamb market as the mule lambs and Welsh take longer to mature to size. We retain all our own Welsh Ewe lambs as well and sell the majority of the mule ewe lambs to the breeding store market. There is also a small herd of suckler cows here which we put to a Limousin bull. We don't finish any beef on the farm so any weanlings/calves we buy in will be sold as stores after a summer out as well as our own bred stock. My brother and I will be the 5th generation of Hughes' to farm at Tuhwntirafon, something we are immensely proud of and grateful for the opportunity to be able to be a part of that history and hopefully leave a positive mark on the farm for the next generations to come.

Mae hi wedi bod yn bleser ac yn anrhydedd i gael fod yn is gadeirydd ar bwyllgor NSA Cymru eleni, ac edrychaf ymlaen at weithio yn bellach gyda'r pwyllgor dros y blynyddoedd nesaf. Dwi'n gobeithio gallu denu mwy o bobl ifanc i'r pwyllgor ac ehangu ar y gwaith pwysig mae Kate, ein Cadeirydd, a Helen ein Swyddog Datblygu yn gwneud. Mae yna amseroedd cyffroes a heriol o'n blaen yn y diwydiant defaid dros y blynyddoedd i ddod, ond mae gennaf hyder yn waith caled y NSA i gefnogi'r diwydiant hyd eithaf ei allu.

It has been an honour and a privilege to be the vice chair of the NSA Wales Region committee over the last few years and I'm looking forward to working further with the committee in the future. I'm hoping to be able to work on attracting more young people to the committee and further the great work that Kate our Regional Chair and Helen our Development Officer does. There are going to be some exciting and testing times for the sheep industry over the next few years but I'm confident that the hard work of the NSA will support the industry through it to the best of its ability.



**John Lloyd**

John farms north of Llandovery on the Carmarthenshire/Powys border and keeps North Country Cheviot ewes. He was chair of NSA Cymru from 2010 to 2012 and is now the region's representative on the Policy and Technical Committee where he can bring his ecological training to the table.



**Margaret Dalton**

A member of NSA since early 1990s, Farming mostly Lleyn sheep in west Wales since 1963. Margaret lost her husband 12 years later, continuing farming on her own until her son went into partnership. Receiving Women Farmer of the Year in 2000 and an OBE for services to the Community and Agriculture. Margaret has worked many years to get Skin on Sheep legalised. Winner of both George Hedley and John Gittins awards, past National Chair of NSA and NSA Cymru Region. Present role in NSA – NSA Cymru rep on the F&GP committee.



**Tim Ward**

Breeds of sheep kept – Currently Kerry Hill and Dorset Down (have previously also kept Ryelands, Coloured Ryelands and Southdowns). Did you know - Work for Shropshire council and one of my roles is Commons Registration Officer.

Tim is NSA Trustee and also served on the F&GP committee, past chair of NSA Cymru and regularly seen judging and stewarding on the UK show circuit.



**Llew Thomas**

Llew has served on the NSA Cymru committee for the last 15 years, he has a past Chair of the Region and represented the Region on the F&GP committee as well as a Trustee for the last 6 years.

Llew has kept Lleyn sheep and sat on the Lleyn Council for 6 years and is a familiar face at the Royal Welsh where he has acted as ring steward for over 30 years. He currently stewards the Lleyn section.

# Annual Regional Members Meeting

Tuesday 22nd February 2022

**To be held upstairs of the International Pavilion on the Royal Welsh Showground and Via Zoom on Tuesday 22nd February 2022. Open to members and non-members from 2pm onwards.**

## PROGRAMME & SPEAKERS

### AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To confirm the minutes of the last ARMM held 24th February 2021 – Available on NSA Website.
3. To consider matters arising from the above.
4. Chairman's Report
5. To review the accounts for 2021
6. To appoint officers and secretary for 2022 / 2023
  - a) Chairman
  - b) Vice Chairman
  - c) Treasurer
  - d) Secretary
  - e) Committee
  - f) Confirm Nominations for NSA Board of Directors, Finance & General Purposes & UK Finance & Scrutiny committee
7. To confirm Secretary's Remuneration and expenses which were set at the last Regional meeting
8. To consider any other business

## The Annual Meeting will be followed by a series of presentations on - Sheep farming in a changing world

### What NSA is doing to make sure sheep farming continues to thrive.

Britain is going through the biggest changes experienced in generations, and this within a wider changing world. Farming, food, and land management are all highly affected by challenges posed by climate change and the loss of the natural world – and this is compounded by significant economic, social, and political uncertainty. For sheep farming we are on the cusp of big changes in trade patterns with trade deals advanced with Australia and New Zealand, and a complete revamp of farming, food and environmental policy that will restructure farm support. But while there are many risks and challenges there are equal opportunities and the future is bright for those willing to adapt and move with the changing tides. NSA is working tirelessly to defend sheep farming, to position it as one of the solutions to many of the world's challenges, and to take actions to turn some of our opportunities into reality. Come and listen about some of the work being done and hear from one of our members about the route they are taking to succeed in the future.

### Programme:

2.45pm	Introduction and welcome by NSA regional Chair – Kate Hovers
3.00pm	Sean Riches – What is NSA doing to defend, protect, and lead the sheep industry in these changing times
3.30pm	John Richards HCC Industry Development and Relations Manager
4.00pm	Carys Jones from Llandeilo on her approach, just one of many, to survive and thrive into the future? Carys is part of HCC's Hill Ram Scheme programme and was a winner of one of the Romney Rams offered through NSA last year.
4.30pm	Chris Adamson - Importance of NSA membership and getting involved
5.00pm	Close with refreshments for those attending in person.

To attend in person please and to confirm numbers for refreshments contact: Helen Roberts on [helen@nationalsheep.org.uk](mailto:helen@nationalsheep.org.uk) or 07976 803066 or register via the following [www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events/forthcoming-events/35097/nsa-cymru-wales-region-armm](http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/events/forthcoming-events/35097/nsa-cymru-wales-region-armm)