

Activities report to NSA Board November 2018

This report refers to main activities since the August 2018 meeting.

Activities are presented under a set of common headings

Tech and policy

NSA UK P&T Committee

Brexit

The UKLIBG (supported by NSA) continues to be an effective group to share thinking, views and activities. It is also a highly effective way to engage with Defra and DIT teams and regularly in the region of 10 Defra/DIT staff attend our monthly meetings. The group has fed in to a number of consultations verbally and has also been helpful for individual organisations in forming their individual responses. NSA is also a member of the NFU chaired Brexit group for Agriculture.

During the last quarter we have provided responses to: Health and Harmony, Brexit and our Land, Stability and Simplicity, the future of carcass classification and price reporting, 4 DIT consultations on trade agreements, and the call for views on AHDB. The numbers of consultations, mainly relating directly or indirectly to Brexit is astounding but our views are being appreciated and well considered. Following the Health and Harmony consultation the Govt launched its draft Agriculture Bill, a document that we scrutinised and have published a response to. We are using this to inform MPs and others in order to influence the subsequent readings of this Bill. Interestingly, the positions we set out many months ago regarding the future of farm support are well aligned with much of the work coming out of Defra/Westminster and Welsh Govt. Unions are now fighting hard to keep the basic payment – we are doing our best to make use of the interest in public goods and to provide evidence (relating to ISAGE) that grassland managed by livestock is worthy of a baseline reward in return for public goods delivery.

AHDB call for views. Defra opened a call for views on the future of AHDB in September with the call closing on the 9th November. NSA has consulted with our regions and will be responding close to the closing date. We have also attended 2 consultation meetings relating to this call for views.

Red Meat Benchmarking Project (Wales only initiative) was launched by HCC (supported by Farming Connect) to increase benchmarking activities amongst beef and sheep producers. Over the next 2 months (until December 8th), the project is offering £1,000 to the first 2,000 farmers who complete the online questionnaire (and meet eligibility). NSA has sat as a stakeholder on this project (FOC) as it recognises the importance of encouraging benchmarking activities. Participants will also receive a detailed written analysis of the data, evaluating the performance of their business against others within the sector. This bespoke analysis will contain information to enable farmers to identify areas for improvement and deliver the knowledge to make informed changes to businesses. An industry report will also be completed (with stakeholder input) and released more widely before April 2019.

NSA was invited to participate in a Welsh Government hosted conference, discussing 'Achieving low carbon pathway 2020'. The consultation brought together a wide range of audiences from power companies, transport and public sectors as well as farmers, wildlife and environmental bodies to focus on the opportunities, challenges and solutions to reduce carbon production. It also allowed organisations to discuss collaboration on new ideas, ultimately encouraging cross sector innovation. Stemming from this, NSA is thinking about producing a leaflet highlighting the Carbon benefits of sheep and sheep farming. This could be very useful in supporting payment for public goods, discussed in the Ag bill.

Importance of the stratified UK sheep industry: To highlight the importance of our unique stratified sheep system, NSA is in the process of finalising a leaflet. The aim is to demonstrate to the public the value of the system, as well as the challenges and vulnerability of some stratifications going forward. Once complete, this can be used at all NSA events, shows and in social media.

TSE controls

There has been some encouraging progress on carcass splitting with a proposal that has been agreed across all industry bodies, and received the approval of Defra and FSA, now being presented to Ministers for final sign off.

We should have a decision by the end of October on this proposal that would allow no old season lambs to be split before the end of June (and no checking for teeth), and with all old season lambs after the end of June needing to be split. This will put an end to the need to check teeth at all, and do away with the related uncertainty – allowing farmers to plan the finishing of lambs to avoid splitting and value loss.

Sheep and LFAs

Following a very difficult weather season, with snow and cold winds during the Spring, followed by severe drought conditions we saw high lamb losses in some areas and then a serious fodder shortage that has resulted in high feed costs. The result (compounded by Brexit) has resulted in some difficult breeding sales with those higher up the hill feeling the effect at ewe lamb sales and draft hill ewe sales. The percentages of sheep involved in the stratified part of our industry has fallen over the last 25 years and NSA feels we need to do more to stress the importance of the stratified UK sheep industry: NSA is in the process of finalising a leaflet that explains the value of the system, as well as the challenges and vulnerability of some stratifications structures going forward. Once complete, this can be used at all NSA events, shows and in social media. In addition we aim to organize a think tank meeting with relevant participants.

Sheep and Arable

You'll be pleased to hear that the 2-year research project in collaboration with Brown & Co., AHDB, Organic Research Centre (ORC) and Frontier Agriculture Ltd., investigating the benefits of sheep grazing within arable rotations for both the sheep and the arable farmers has finally started. Due to the unseasonably dry summer, pasture establishment hadn't gone as planned and as a result, the study had been delayed. Sheep grazing began early October, so all project deliverables will be pushed back 3-6 months. This is funded as part of the ISAGE project. Early results should be available by summer 2019.

SARIC funding for a similar project "Restoring soil quality through re-integration of leys and sheep into arable rotations" has now been confirmed. NSA are acting as a consultant/advisor on the consortium, working in collaboration with NIAB and the University of Sheffield, alongside AHDB and Cotswold Seeds. Many of the protocols mimic that of the above study, just on a larger scale. 6 farms plus the research farm at NIAB will individually host the grazing trial. This project is BBSRC funded. Still in the protocol confirmation / design stages, trials have not yet begun, but pasture establishment should be in place.

The SEEGSLIP project - 'Sustainable economic and environmental grazing systems: learning from innovative practitioners' project is well underway. A number of sustainability assessments using the Public Goods tool (same as that used in the ISAGE project) have been completed on PFLA (Pasture For Life Association) farms. A project update can be found at: <https://www.agricology.co.uk/field/blog/how-pfl-innovative-practitioners%E2%80%99-project-going>

Sheep in arable projects that are 'in waiting':

- EXPERINET: EXPERIMENTal NETWORK for ecosystem and biodiversity research at Rothamsted. Funding to be announced at the end of the year. Further details in May 2018 board report.
- ASSIST: Achieving Sustainable Agricultural Systems – postponed until Spring 2019. Further details in May 2018 board report).

Work with Woodland Trust.

Just prior to the launch of the updated 'Role of Trees in Sheep Farming' booklet, NSA presented at the Annual meeting of the Farm Woodland Forum, further plugging the release of the updated booklet (and the Sheep Event itself) to a more widely diverse interest group. We continue to make the case for smaller scale woodland and integrated diverse tree planting as an alternative to large scale softwood plantations.

Genetic & knowledge transfer

The DEFRA funded "UK Sheep Genetic Improvement Scoping Study" is almost in its final stages. Work Package (WP) 1 'Identification of breeding goals' is almost complete, with the second workshop to consolidate initial data findings completed 18th October. The next stages are to economically model the breeding goals confirmed in the previous WP and begin knowledge transfer (KT) using communication channels of the consortium. Ideally, further funding will be sought for a larger, 3-4 year project, to simulate this scoping study in more detail (2019 onwards). The Myomax project: The initial application was unsuccessful but had a large amount of positive feedback from the funders. As a result, all members of the original consortium (CIEL, Tesco & APB) have tweaked the original proposal and resubmitted this bid for innovate UK funding last month (October). Results of the funding should be announced early next year. If successful, NSA will be 70% funded for their time & expenses on this project. NSA

aims to use its current KT channels to offset the 30% that can't be claimed from the project (funding T&C's), to ensure the project is externally funded, without NSA involvement resulting in additional costs being allocated from other NSA budgets.

Technology Transfer.

Research in general – Our livestock researcher (Nicola) is fully settled into the 'new' NSA role and is becoming more widely recognised in the research sector. Having a specific research role has allowed NSA to increase its presence in more formal research areas, which will continue in 2019.

NSA has completed its 'official' commitment to several of the ISAGE work packages, leaving KT activities as its final obligation. Nicola has increased her presence within this project by presenting at the last AGM in May presenting the results of the Public Good tool data to the consortium. She was also heavily involved in organising the industry partners meeting at the end of October. Both herself and Phil presented to the industry partners, covering important questions like '*what makes a farm sustainable? Key innovation at EU level (using UK examples) and what the UK has done to get adoption of innovation in the sheep sector including extension and education?*'. Since the previous report, ORC have employed a statistician to analyse the Public Goods tool data, allowing Nicola's time on the project to be focused on case study write-up and project management. NSA will be assisting ORC in gathering further data for WP 4: Innovations (details of case studies discussed in January 2018 board report), which includes evaluation of our NGA programme and the Flock Health Clubs concept. NSA are also in discussion with ORC about including our Heritage Breeds project (ABC) in ISAGE through WP 2: Supply chain innovations.

Sheep Health and Welfare:

NSA continues as a member of the Defra livestock core group, SHAWG, and SCOPS. We are also taking part in a working group to review the structures of livestock health and welfare groups – watching with care as we are not yet convinced of the value of a proposal for a new Ruminant Health Group that would be driven by AHDB.

The Wellcome Trust 4-year project aiming to “develop new ways of understanding and intervening in livestock disease and welfare” has officially begun. NSA attended the first kick-off meeting in September to meet all consortium members / stakeholders, as well as share their expert opinion on the project. This project is still in its early stages, but NSA will be acting as the lead industry collaborator for sheep health/welfare section.

At this meeting, Nicola was approached by Professor Laura Green, a sheep lameness expert from Warwick (& now Birmingham) University, with regards to NSA assisting in their next lameness survey. Because of this discussion, NSA is working collaboratively to target 600 members from both our Welsh and Scottish regions to take part in a lameness survey. Their aim is to target these two regions specifically, to balance out the 4,000 surveys they will be distributing in England using their own farmer database. All activities conducted on this project comply with the new GDPR legislation. The survey focuses on gathering further data on prevalence/severity/type/even potential causes of sheep lameness in UK flocks. All staff time, expenses and resources used will be fully funded by Warwick University. This project should therefore, bring in revenue to NSA.

The *Echinococcus granulosus* (tapeworm) PhD at Liverpool University began in July. Similar to the project above, NSA is assisting the university in contacting farmers to invite them to participate in research, aiming to establish the prevalence of *Echinococcus* parasite in UK farm dogs. This is part of a wider study investigating the presence of this parasite in livestock (using abattoir data), as well as in other species such as zoo animals. We have successfully conducted two rounds of invitations, with a 3% response rate from the first round (response rate from the second round is unknown as this was only sent out on 24th October). All activities conducted on this project comply with the new GDPR legislation. Again, all staff time, expenses and resources used will be fully funded by Liverpool University. Therefore, this project should bring in revenue to NSA.

Funding for a sheep scab eradication project / reduction project is in discussion. If successful, NSA will play a collaborative role in this project, assisting with farmer contact, KT and project success. To facilitate sheep scab eradication, Nicola has produced a 'mobile dippers leaflet' containing information on contact details, distance the mobile dipper is willing to travel etc. as well as some general dipping information on the reverse. We are waiting for AMTRA to produce an approved certification scheme for mobile dippers, before we release this leaflet into the sector.

Phil has completed 2 surveys to date from Edinburgh University, investigating animal health and welfare. Several topics were discussed in the survey including transport and slaughter, as well as on farm management practices.

In September we were approached by University of Surrey with regards to our support for a project focused on 'Modelling genetic selection to improve sustainability and welfare of farm animals'. NSA has provided a letter of support for the gastrointestinal nematode aspect of this project. Funding decisions will be made by spring 2019.

NSA, working with industry partners and SCOPS achieved a major breakthrough with new Environment Agency licencing and permitting fees. We have more yet to do but the EA agreed to allow mobile dippers, at no charge and no inspection, to congregate and store spent dip for up to 3 months prior to collection and disposal by a licensed waste contractor. There are some conditions around bunding ad size of bunds and all information is available on NSA web site.

Sheep worrying/attacks:

Our short case study on sheep worrying / dog attacks has been published in '*One Welfare: A Framework to Improve Animal Welfare and Human Well-being, 2018*'. If you would like to see a copy, please email Nicola directly (nicola@nationalsheep.org.uk). We can use this publication as further evidence of our proactive role in increasing public awareness and reducing sheep attacks.

Wool:

Our involvement with CfW continues and we are working more closely with British Wool who are stepping up their market development work. In December NSA staff and BW staff are meeting up to plan what we can do together next year.

In June we were approached by the Royal Agricultural University to discuss our interest in supporting a bid investigating opportunities for novel, sustainable products from farming enterprises as well as supporting farming businesses to grow and develop their product. Our specific interest is in the work package within this project investigating the development of a UK brand of superfine high welfare status merino wool. They have also applied to the Prince's Countryside Fund to support this project. With the value of wool (or current lack of), we have provided a letter of support for their bid. If successful, NSA is keen to act as both an industry expert, as well as steer the project to ensure commercial viability. A decision on funding should be made in spring 2019.

Because of strong relationships established from the ISAGE project, NSA is in discussion with Aristotle University (Greece) to submit a proposal focused on increasing the value of wool. They have some contacts across Europe who are collecting, processing and selling wool products within local markets, making their farm more sustainable. If we can increase KT and exchange good practice techniques, this project could be adapted to the UK, potentially increasing the value of wool to our farmers. A large proportion of the project will be KT to farmers across the different countries.

NSA education:

NSA had been approached by several research students for advice on current sheep related projects. These include:

- La Châtaigneraie, International school of Geneva: '*The extent to which climate change presents a risk to UK livestock from the Bluetongue virus*'. The aim of the project is to identify the infection risk across the UK, as well as highlight methods that could be used to prevent spread. NSA has encouraged our members to participate in this survey through the WEU.
- Harper Adams University: 'Barriers to incorporating trees in existing sheep enterprises in hill / upland situations in the UK'. A short phone interview and a few emails with our livestock researcher ensured our sheep farmers were well represented. The student was also directed towards our updated 'Role of Trees in Sheep Farming' booklet.
- University of Strathclyde: 'The value of 5G mobile phone technology in the agricultural sector'.

Unfortunately, the Turkish Erasmus study tour was unsuccessful in funding, but they have informed us they are seeking other options and will be in touch for our help in the future. All other tours discussed in the previous board report have taken place, where advice only was given by NSA. Future tours will be available at request where remuneration has been offered for the time/help organising. Where skillsets allow, information is being delivered in house at NSA Malvern, rather than being outsourced.

Employer engagement: We continue to get requests from agricultural colleges for NSA staff to attend career open days or provide specific presentations to agricultural students on the roles of NSA / information on the stratified sheep system. The importance of membership promotion to the younger generation and engaging with up and coming farmers is crucial to NSA.

Trade & marketing

NSA continued as a major partner with AHDB in delivering Love Lamb week, and again we attended Countryfile Live to promote British Lamb. At a recent English Committee meeting we were joined by several AHDB staff and it is clear that we have influenced their work and their messaging in relation to new product development, the Halal market, and trade development. Our Heritage Breeds initiative should complete early in 2019 and we are about to embark on some research to check the level of interest. We are pushing hard to make sure this work is being done within/alongside the levy body work and are meeting with levy bodies in mid November. An interim report is available on request.

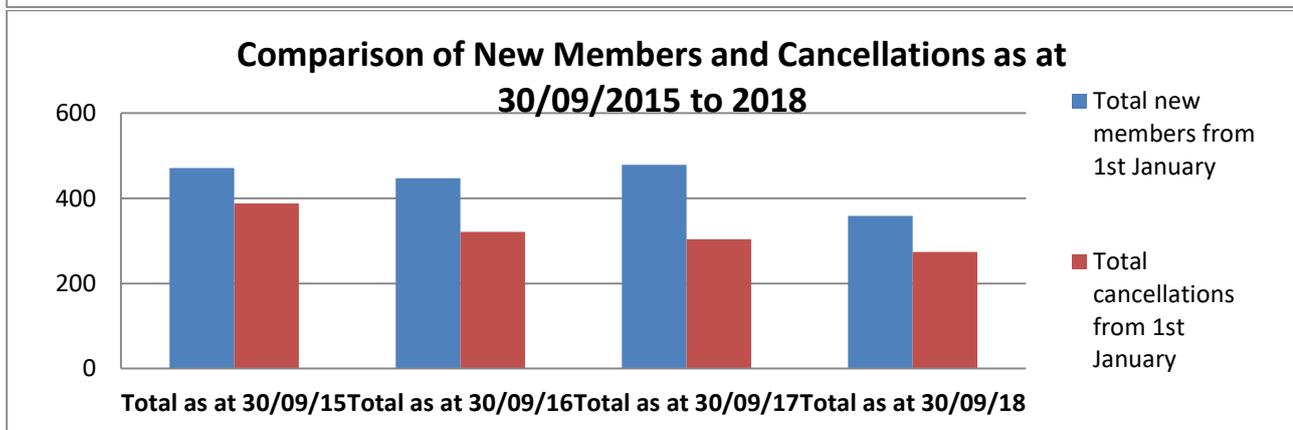
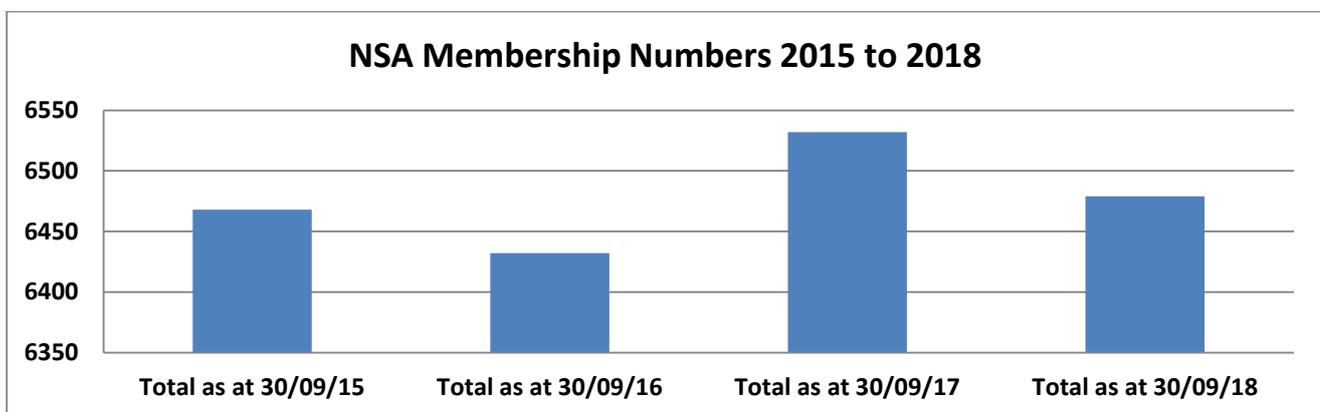
Electronic identification, movement recording, and alternatives to 6 days standstill

The TDUG group continues to meet, usually on a monthly basis, to develop thinking/planning for a new Livestock Information programme. The aim is to have a multi species database that delivers all statutory reporting information but also offers additionality to further the industry. Simplicity of function is at the core of this work. Running alongside are discussions on policy and regulations relating to traceability – nothing has been decided or agreed but the direction of travel is towards a level of real time movements reporting and less movements standstill. There is a set of slides available if anyone wants a deeper understanding of the proposed new LIP. An invitation to tender is expected very shortly for the provision of a core service that Defra would buy and further develop.

Farm Assurance

Adam Watson is now the RTA B&L Board member for NSA. Recently RTA has announced a system of unannounced inspections to give greater robustness to the assurance scheme. It is rolling this out to pigs before other sectors. RTA has also announced its intention to establish a range of levels of assurance scheme (organic/high welfare/high environment), details of this will emerge over the next few weeks. Kevin Harrison as chair of English committee has written to Jim Moseley (CEO of RTA) to get our views across and we have RTA representatives attending our November EC meeting. We should be warned that they are coming to talk about whole life assurance.

Membership Report for Board Meeting November 2018 – 3rd Quarter 2018



Members who pay subs by type:	Total as at 30/09/15	Total as at 30/09/16	Total as at 30/09/17	Total as at 30/09/18	Notes
Direct Debit	5340	5458	5567	5561	
Cash	1040	886	876	835	
Other	0	0	0	0	
Members who do not pay subs by type:					
No of Honorary members	22	22	23	23	
No of Life members	66	66	64	60	
Keith County Show Winners	0	0	2	0	No payment for first year of membership
Total	6468	6432	6532	6479	
Under 27's	355	356	437	404	
Overseas	70	58	59	54	Includes 3 Life Members
Affiliated Breed Societies	82	82	85	84	
Total new members from 1st January	471	447	479	359	
New members from 1 January not paid up	6	10	1	4	Awaiting DD Details/Recalls/Advised by bacs
Cancellations by members (existing/new) from 1st January	220	142	120	118	
Cancellations (existing/new) by NSA/Did not renew from 1st January	168	179	184	156	Cancelled after 3 months
Existing members from 1 January not paid up	22	16	6	15	Awaiting DD Details/Recalls/Advised by bacs
Inactive (yet to renew)	17	57	17	47	Current and previous months
Members by Region					
Scotland	859	834	852	865	
Northern	1053	1040	1085	1069	
Wales	1319	1335	1371	1336	
Central	460	441	446	444	
Eastern	297	294	285	282	
South West	854	838	845	811	
South East	707	715	696	699	
Northern Ireland	175	181	189	177	
Marches	674	695	704	742	
Overseas	70	59	59	54	
Total No of Membership	6468	6432	6532	6479	

* Corporate Supporters as at 30/09/18 = 52 companies, sending Weekly Email Update and/or Sheep Farmer to 257 recipients

New members

Month	Total New Mems 2017	2017 No. Under 27	Total New Mems 2018	2018 No. Under 27
July	44	7	105	31
August	79	19	63	15
September	20	4	44	19

Membership Sources (Reason for Joining) – January to September 2018 (Descending Order)

Source	Number	Source	Number
Sheep Event	73	Balmoral Show	3
Mem Pack Request Website	57	Edenbridge & Oxted Show	3
Ram Sales	27	Reinstated	3
INTERNET	24	Sheep Farmer	3
South Sheep	21	Advertise on Weekly Email Update	2
Lambing List	18	Next Generation	2
Gift	16	Next Generation Newsletter Website	2
Membership Pack	11	Royal Highland Show	2
Not Known	11	Westmorland Show	2
Royal Welsh Show	11	Burwarton Show	1
Scotsheep	10	Ex Member	1
Great Yorkshire Show	9	Hope Valley Show	1
Other	9	Other Ram Sales	1
Sheep Dog Handling Course Scotland	8	Regional Secretary	1
Eastern Region Winter Fair	7	Sheep Event Duchy College	1
Young Ambassador	6	Sheep South West	1
Campaign	4	Thame Sheep Fair	1
Recommended	4	Welsh Commons	1

Membership Cancellations (Reason for leaving) – January to September 2018 (Descending Order)

Cancelled_Reason	Number	Cancelled_Reason	Number
Did not renew	111	Subs too high	4
No reason given	45	Cutting costs	4
Other	22	Renewal Returned	3
Advised by bacs DD cancelled	17	No longer sells at Ram Sales	2
DD Recalled	17	Addressee Gone Away	1
Retired	12	DD details never received	1
Sold Flock	12	No benefit	1
Deceased	10	Payer Retired	1
Sheep Farmer Returned	5	Reduced Flock	1
Leaving Sheep Farming	4		

Recent press coverage

- The very beginning of Q3 (July to September) saw NSA Sheep 2018 held and a flurry of press releases before the event, on the day and immediately afterwards. These included releasing comments made by Phil, Lord Inglewood and George Eustice at the opening ceremony, and launching the NSA-Woodland Trust publication on integrating trees into farmland.
- Away from the Sheep Event, there was a focus on the issues caused by rewilding and the consequences it can bring, such as the Saddleworth Moor fire in June, as well as other wildlife issues such as ravens targeting

lambs and the decline of mammals in the British countryside. Lynx came back into the spotlight due to Lynx UK Trust claiming in the media that it has 100% support from landowners in Kielder. Its press release specifically name-checked NSA for 'scaremongering' and this worked well for NSA, as all newspapers and news programmes picking up the story had to give NSA the right to reply! We got a huge amount of coverage linked to this, and were able to robustly refute Lynx UK Trust's claims. NSA also supported a community group in Kielder by promoting a meeting and releasing a statement afterwards.

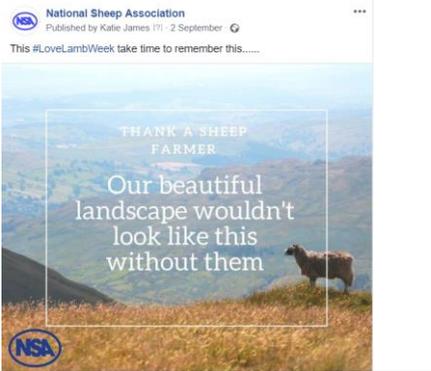
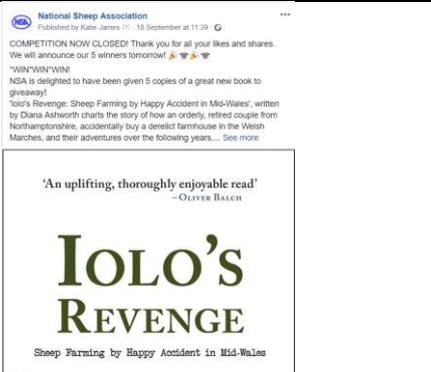
- Regular press releases on Brexit have included our response to a new Brexit secretary and reaction to no deal preparations. NSA's position on urgent action needed by the Government in response to a no deal (such as public procurement and increasing chilling/freezing capacity) gained particularly good pick-up in the national press.
- In response to the drought, NSA challenged AD plants and the fact they get double funding while also using food that livestock could eat. This got a good response within the general press coverage relating to the weather.
- In preparation for Love Lamb Week, press releases were issued in August featuring each of the NSA Next Generation Ambassadors, sent individually to their specific regional press.
- NSA teamed up with NFU, SCOPS and others to publicly urge Defra/the Environment Agency to reconsider its dip disposal charges changing.

Website

- Website traffic has remained stable during the third quarter of 2018, averaging 20,237 visits per month. These figures are just slightly lower than for the same period in 2017, when an average of 20,993 people visited per month during July, August and September. The comparable number of visits to the website are likely the same due to NSA activity at events and ram sales during this period when it is known people are visiting the website to view information such as sale catalogues.
- Visits to the website from a mobile device have increased for another month with more than 62% of visitors using a mobile device rather than a traditional computer/laptop.
- The percentage of new visitors to the website increased slightly again, to 83%. This remains encouraging, as it is evidence the website is attracting new interest in NSA, particularly so when considering the increased activity on the website regarding NSA events and ram sales, hopefully meaning both are attracting potential visitors, vendors, purchasers etc.

Social media

- The reach of social media posts via the platforms of Facebook and Twitter continues to grow with 9,786 likes at the end of the third quarter on Facebook and 10,280 followers on Twitter. This compares with 7,331 likes on Facebook and 8,349 followers on Twitter at the end of Q2.
- Activity on social media throughout the third quarter has focused on NSA events taking place, in particular the NSA Sheep Event in July. Videos produced at this event were posted onto social media and proved popular with many views (Currently more than 20,000 views).
- Social media activity focused on Love Lamb Week, which included posts, shares and videos from NSA Next Generation Ambassadors, resulted in very healthy engagement figures. One ambassador's own video, produced with other NSA Next Generation Ambassadors as a result of discussions at a Next Generation delivery session, has now reached more than 12,000 people.
- Total quarterly reach (amount of people having seen a post or tweet on their pages) on Facebook has been almost 326,000 and on Twitter a reach of almost 261,000, meaning over half a million people have seen a post from NSA during the third quarter.
- The most popular Facebook posts during July, August and September have been:
 - July – Proposed lynx release post – Reach of more than **9,500** people
 - August – Report from Lynx community meeting – Reach of almost **26,000** people
 - September – 'Thank a sheep farmer' – this Love Lamb Week – Reach of almost **43,000** people. More than **1,500** people interacted with the post (Commented, liked, shared etc)

Top three for Q3 on Facebook	Top three for Q3 on Twitter
 <p>NSA National Sheep Association Published by Katie James (1) · 2 September</p> <p>This #LoveLambWeek take time to remember this.....</p> <p>THANK A SHEEP FARMER Our beautiful landscape wouldn't look like this without them</p> <p>NSA</p>	 <p>NSA National Sheep Assoc @natssheep</p> <p>Remember this this #LoveLambWeek</p> <p>THANK A SHEEP FARMER Our beautiful landscape wouldn't look like this without them</p> <p>NSA</p>
43,422 people reached	13,073 impressions
1530 reactions, comments and shares	296 engagements
 <p>NSA National Sheep Association Published by Katie James (1) · 22 August</p> <p>So according to the Lynx UK Trust, landowners in the Kielder forest area support a proposed release of lynx into the wild. But that's not what we heard at a meeting of the local community last night..... Read NSA's press release detailing the community group's opposition to this at www.nationalsheep.org.uk/news</p> <p>25,992 people reached</p>	 <p>NSA National Sheep Assoc @natssheep</p> <p>So it's almost time... LoveLamb week starts tomorrow! A weeks celebration of the fantastic lamb produced in the UK! How are you getting involved?</p> <p>6872 impressions</p>
342 reactions, comments and shares	263 engagements
 <p>NSA National Sheep Association Published by Katie James (1) · 18 September at 11:39</p> <p>COMPETITION NOW CLOSED! Thank you for all your likes and shares. We will announce our 5 winners tomorrow! 🏆 🏆 🏆 🏆 🏆</p> <p>*WIN*WIN*WIN! NSA is delighted to have been given 5 copies of a great new book to giveaway! 'Iolo's Revenge: Sheep Farming by Happy Accident in Mid-Wales', written by Diana Ashworth charts the story of how an orderly, retired couple from Northamptonshire, accidentally buy a derelict farmhouse in the Welsh Marches, and their adventures over the following years... See more</p> <p>'An uplifting, thoroughly enjoyable read' —OLIVER BALCH</p> <p>IOLO'S REVENGE Sheep Farming by Happy Accident in Mid-Wales</p> <p>21,523 people reached</p>	 <p>NSA National Sheep Assoc @natssheep</p> <p>Need some new reading material? NSA is pleased to offer 5 lucky winners a copy of a new book: 'Iolo's Revenge: Sheep Farming by Happy Accident' written by Diana Ashworth in our autumn giveaway! Simply like and retweet below for a chance to win. Entries close 25/09 #win #sheep365</p> <p>IOLO'S REVENGE Sheep Farming by Happy Accident in Mid-Wales DIANA ASHWORTH</p> <p>5865 impressions</p>
850 reactions, comments and shares	168 engagements

NSA Next Generation

- The winner of the NSA Next Generation Shepherd of the Year competition at NSA Sheep 2018 got good coverage in the farming press and local press. Two workshops at the event, which focused on the future of employed shepherds, attracted a reasonable number of attendees and generated some good ideas for NSA to take forward in terms of supporting people employing shepherds, as well as continuing what we do to advertise available jobs and people looking for jobs.
- The NSA Samuel Wharry Memorial Award for the Next Generation was announced at the Sheep Event Dinner and applications will open in November, to coincide with the the annual NSA Next Generation event, which is being held this year at Hexham Mart, Northumberland, on Wednesday 21st November.
- The 2018 NSA Next Generation Ambassador group has now enjoyed four of five sessions and feedback continues to be very positive. The final session of the year will also act as a reunion for all Ambassadors over the years, and the plan is to assess how individuals are getting involved with NSA at a regional level.

Breed Societies / Breed Society Forum

- All NSA-affiliated breed societies will be contacted in Q4 to give them opportunity to update their regional representatives ahead of the ARMMs in the New Year.
- We have not yet launched the quarterly NSA email newsletters for pedigree breeders, which was suggested in the last Board Report. This is still our intention but has not got off the ground yet.

George Hedley Memorial Award

The period for nominations is now closed and the nominations and voting packs should be available at the time of the meeting.

Internal and HQ

Policies, organisation, management & staff

Abigail Swaffield has resigned from the position of Membership Recruitment Officer and the future for this role is being considered alongside significant changes in the way we seek members and the way we work with NSA regions. Plans and options will be discussed with Board and FGP during November.

Katie and Ellie attended a three-day training course in July on writing and communication skills. It was run by the British Guild of Agricultural Journalists.

Governance

The AGM took place successfully on the 9th August in Malvern. Lord Inglewood was re-elected as President, Dave Gregory re-elected as Hon Treasurer, and all the Vice Presidents re-elected en bloc.

The Audit process was completed and a clean set of accounts was presented at the AGM. The Completion Memorandum (already circulated amongst Trustees) highlights areas of work for further improvement but this is much improved on previous years.

Annual returns have been made to the Charity Commission and Companies House and accounts have been submitted to the Charity Commission, Companies House and OSCR in line with statutory requirements. Dormant accounts have been submitted to Companies House in connection with the NSA/RBST Ovine Semen Archive.

Data Protection:

Nicola continues to work on NSA GDPR compliance. At this time, all documents are up to date and are regularly updated as changes occur. Most of the staff at head office are fully trained on the changes and new compliance with regards to GDPR, and those that aren't have training booked in. Regional managers have been offered training at head office which most have attended after RMMs. All useful documents and information on GDPR have been shared with all staff, including RMs to ensure NSA compliance across the regions. Data processing forms are either signed or have been sent to third parties, as well as our regions. As and when further changes occur, Nicola will endeavour to ensure that all staff are made aware of these changes. Regions should now be aware that they can call head office for GDPR queries.

Sheep Centre site

Bats Loft – Nothing to report.

Firs Farmhouse – Nothing to report.

The barn – Work likely to start mid January.

NSA building at the RWS – A meeting is being held between NSA and RWAS on the 2nd November where we aim to finalise the detail of the lease agreement and all the sharing and cross investments that are made. This will be discussed, along with progress on plans, at the November Board meeting.

Accounts and audit

The Sheep Event in July made a total of £88,480, which is an increase of £2,370 over and above the total made in 2016.

Work is underway to implement new financial systems to accommodate Making Tax Digital. It is currently planned to replace Sage with Xero, with an approximate saving of £550 a year on support services, as Sage charge for their support, however, Xero support is free.

It is also planned to bring payroll processing back in-house at the start of next year with a saving of approximately £1,500 per year in fees to Old Mill for their bureau service.

Debtors currently stand at £4,178.95, of which £1,938.00 is owed by one particularly difficult customer, who has been chased repeatedly.

NSA Sheep Event

Date for 2020 28th July

NSA Regions

Report from Helen Davies, Cymru/Wales region

NSA Cymru/Wales held its last meeting on the 21st Aug when the Welsh Government Brexit consultation was discussed. The response has now gone in for this consultation and a response to a carbon consultation has also gone in.

A farm walk has taken place at Jacob Anthony's Farm, Farmers Weekly Young Farmer of the year. I have attended the Regional Managers meeting.

I will be attending a launch of the Welsh Sheep Scab paper to try to encourage the Welsh Government to find some funding to take this project forward, a further launch to Welsh AM's will also take place on the NSA Stand at the Welsh Winter Fair.

Regional committee meeting took place on the 6th Nov.

Annual Members meeting booked for 20th Feb 2019 but speakers need to be arranged.

Plans for NSA Welsh Sheep on 21st May are under way and a site visit has been planned.

Wales and Border Ram Sale report from Jane Smith

With both sales done and dusted, it was as expected a difficult trading time and whilst we put aside a budget of £10K for the Anniversary celebrations we anticipate an overall loss for the year, although all sales figures are not finalised. The Main Sale benefited from the visit by HRH The Princess Royal. This gave the sale a great deal of added publicity, and I would have to thank Gaina Morgan for the interest the visit generated.

Committee members are very concerned about the total lack of interest from the media in food production and the difficulties facing farming. The quarantine rules for Wales give an unfair playing field and as a committee we will be lobbying for rules to be brought in line with England. Without doubt the rules cause major difficulties during the autumn sales and the outlook for the smaller village shows is dire.

We await the meeting with NSA/RWAS regarding the proposed new sheep centre on the showground and look forward to assisting taking the project forward. On 15th November, after the committee meeting scheduled for that date we are hosting a lunch where sponsors, retired committee members and others will join the existing members to round off the 40th Year.

The main sale dates have reverted to the original format after consulting with both auctioneers and breed societies so the date for 2019 is 23rd September.

Northern Ireland Region – report from Edward Adamson

I have attended two Stakeholder Meetings on Ammonia Emissions with DAERA but industry has not been happy with the direction DAERA are going and there have been several industry meetings with UFU leading. The sheep

sector do not contribute much to these emissions but most sheep farmers in N.I. have cattle on farm which seem to be getting most of the blame so I think NSA needs to support industry on this one.

I have been involved with a sub group putting together a N.I. Animal Health & Welfare Policy Framework which is nearing completion and should be ready for industry consultation in November.

As Vice Chairman of Agrisearch Sheep Committee I am involved in the management of the work they are doing. AgriSearch has undertaken numerous projects to improve herd/flock health and are currently working with a small number of pilot sheep farmers focussing on in depth health planning with veterinary professionals.

As regards AMR and antimicrobial use specifically, Agrisearch are leading a project in Northern Ireland named STAMP; **Strategic antimicrobial use in dairy, beef and lamb production (STAMP) project**. The overall objective of the project is to by December 2020 develop, evaluate and implement on several farms a veterinary medicine recording and benchmarking system at farm and individual animal level. Risk assessments related to two areas where antibiotic use is common will be developed, complete with step through decision support tools suitable for both farmer and veterinary practitioner with the impact of implementation quantified. The outcome of the project will be a ready to implement system, with quantifiable financial and animal health benefits that would enable NI agriculture to respond to concerns over antibiotics use in food producing animals.

In late September we held a Next Generation Day – open to all those who had shown an interest in The Young Ambassador Programme. A small number attended but proved to be a very useful and interactive day with everyone enjoying the experience.

We have held our first Sheep NI 2019 meeting to start the process rolling again.

Scottish Region – report from George Milne

8th Aug - Sent a written report for Farming Scotland Magazine.

9th Aug - First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced £200,000 of new funding to support Quality Meat Scotland's 2018 Scotch Lamb PGI promotional campaign, this was launched at the end of August. NSA Scotland's Chairman, John Fyall was present at the launch along with representatives from NFUS and QMS.

3th Aug - NSA Scottish committee meeting in Stirling

14th Aug - Attend Laing lamb sale to speak to members and farmers in that area. This sale is generally used as the barometer for the autumn store lamb trade saw 3,750 ewe lambs average £76.54, up £0.02 on the year and 8,944 wedder lambs average £51.11, up £0.05 on last year. Chairman, John Fyall and George Milne attended the sale.

16th Aug - NSA Scotland replied in-depth to the consultation launched by the Scottish Government "Stability and Simplicity" The large document contained proposals for the next 5 years for a rural funding transition period. The Scottish committee had met to finalise the response so our reply was supported by all the members present at the meeting. The paper containing 46 questions, covered a wide variety of schemes in both Pillar 1 and Pillar 11 for agriculture ranging from Basic payment scheme, LFASS and new entrants to Leader.

17th Aug - UK Brexit livestock group meeting in Birmingham

23rd Aug - Submitted written evidence to a Scottish Parliament Committee for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform on the Climate Change Bill. (See submission below.)

28th Aug - Present policy update at Blackface sheep breeders meeting in Stirling

4th Sept - UK Brexit livestock group meeting in Birmingham

7th Sept - Attend Rural Planning summit conference in Inverness.

The event was jointly chaired by Fergus Ewing and Kevin Stewart, Minister for Housing, Local government and Planning. The Cabinet Secretary opened the meeting saying that there was a real need for further rural housing specifically aimed at affordable and mid-range build. He said there could be opportunities for farmers to be encouraged to build one or two houses on their farms to support the need for rural housing. Mr Stewart said the government had set a target to build 50,000 new houses and was set to invest £3 billion over the course of parliament.

14th Sept - Attend Kelso ram sales. Speak to members and farmers on specific issues and concerns.

18th Sept - Meeting with Scottish government on LFASS

20th Sept - QMS board meeting

25th Sept - Meeting in Scottish Parliament with Rosanna Cunningham

28th Sept - UK Brexit livestock group meeting in Birmingham

9th Oct - Meeting with Scottish government on LFASS

John Fyall and George Milne met with Government officials to discuss LFASS and the proposal to use the parachute system under EU law, which will see LFASS payments reduced by 20% for 2019 year for payment in 2020. Our purpose in meeting was to discuss and emphasise the vital importance of LFASS payments for the many farmers and crofters that receive a payment. We hope under future talks and discussion that a way forward can be found to avoid this reduction in 2019.

13th Oct - Attend Blackface tup sale in Stirling. Speak to members and farmers.

15th Oct - ARD stakeholder meeting. Concerns raised around the Agricultural Bill.

16th Oct - Sent a written report for Farming Scotland Magazine.

22nd Oct - UK Brexit livestock group meeting in Birmingham

23rd Oct - Invited to give evidence to the Farm Animal Welfare Council in Aberdeen

Up and coming dates;-

NSA CRYSTALYX ROADSHOW Once again NSA Scotland is delighted to have joined up with Crystalyx to host an evening meeting entitled "Brexit- opportunities for Scotch lamb". The meeting will take place on the 8th November at Carrs Billington ,1A Whitfield Dr, Ayr , KA89RX. Start time 7.00 for 7.30. Speakers will include George Milne NSA, Euan Hart Crystalyx and Iain MacDonald QMS. The meeting is open to members and non-members of NSA

NSA Highlandsheep 2019 will be held on Wednesday 12th June at Sibmister Farm, Murkle, Thurso, Caithness

For reference; - submission below.

**Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill
SUBMISSION FROM National Sheep Association Scotland**

The NSA does not believe the ambitious targets laid out in the paper are realistic and with regard to the livestock sector we believe there will be serious impacts on red meat production for Scotland. With 85% of Scotland classed as Less Favoured Area, this provides a natural grazing habit for the biggest proportion of sheep production across the country. The hill flocks managed across fast areas of Scotland already contribute significantly to reducing climate change targets purely by the way in which they graze and control grass growth were no other animal or human can do that. Managed grazing of grass and rough grass is much more efficient for the climate and also reduces the risk of wildfires, as has been experienced in some parts of the UK this year.

If breeding sheep numbers were to be reduced, purely, as a mechanism to meet GHG emission targets then the social, economic and environmental impact would be devastating across rural parts of Scotland. People would simply disappear from the remotest areas, as without sheep and sheep farming there will be no reason for people to live up many of the remote glens of Scotland. Evidence of this land abandonment can already be seen in many parts.

The livestock farming industry also has a duty and responsibility to provide beef and sheep meat in order to achieve the Scotland Food and Drink targets of doubling its turnover by 2030. The sheep industry plays a vital part in contributing towards this target and any reduction in sheep numbers in order to achieve a zero GHG emission target will undoubtedly reduce our contribution towards achieving the Food and Drink targets.

We believe that Scotland has never really had a starting point within the sheep sector and over recent years the industry has made improvements which have gone unrecognised. We also believe that sheep farming delivers many environmental benefits which contribute significantly to meeting climate change targets which also goes unrecognised. These benefits currently delivered could a have financial benefit to sheep farmers, this could be delivered though some form of carbon audit specially designed for hills and uplands.

Whilst we as an industry are not against making improvements for efficiency and GHG emissions we should be realistic in what we can achieve, which maintains our sheep numbers. Scotland has fast areas of hills and uplands and provides a natural grazing environment for sheep, this in turn delivers a scenic back drop for a very large number of tourists each year.

In summing up we do not believe these targets are realistic, they are not evidence based, agriculture will not be in a position to meet these targets whilst maintain breeding livestock, we have never had a starting point set to begin reductions and we have moved a significant way in already achieving major reductions which have not been taken into consideration.

Significant external meetings and contacts not covered above

3rd July - Joanne attended the quarterly SHAWG meeting

10th July - Joanne spoke at a liver fluke workshop at the Great Yorkshire Show

19th July - The group involved in the Red Meat Industry trip to New Zealand in March got together. NSA hosted the meeting at NSA HQ and Joanne represented NSA. Agreed actions were for the New Zealanders to work with the UK levy bodies around positive red meat messages (e.g. low environmental impact)

25th July - Ellie and Katie attended the National Police Chief Council (NPCC) Rural Crime Summit to highlight issues around sheep worrying by dogs

13th August - Industry wide meeting with Defra and FSA on carcass splitting

16th August – Judging farmers Guardian Sheep Innovator of the Year competition

16th August – Visit Dunbia at Preston to support statement in case between Dunbia and FSA

17th August – UKLIBG meeting plus meeting with UKECP to pave the way for Kevins trip to China

20th August – New Ruminant Heath group proposal meeting

20th August – Hallmark scrutiny committee meeting

21st August: Ellie attended a community meeting in Kielder opposing release of the lynx

21st August - NSA Cymru meeting

22nd August - English Committee

28th August: Ellie attended RSPCA meeting to review its sheep assurance standards

30th August - Visited Geoff Eyre in Derbyshire to see upland vegetation work

3rd Sept - TDUG meeting

4th Sept - UKP&T

5th Sept - Joanne attended a RUMA strategy meeting

8th Sept – Southsheep

12th Sept – NFU Brexit group meeting

13th Sept – Westmoreland show – all day with David Ruttley new Minister for supply chains

14th Sept – NZ Hgh Commission summer barbecue

17th Sept - Builth ram sale

17th Sept – Hallmark scrutiny committee meeting

18th Sept – Brexit breakfast briefing

18th Sept – royal Smithfield Club debate on future needs of the red meat industry

24th Sept – North Wyke research group meeting with Princess Anne

25th Sept – Hallmark Scrutiny committee meeting

25th Sept - Joanne attended six-monthly SCOPS meeting

26th Sept – BMLUP Project Board and partnership meeting

28th Sept – Defra livestock welfare meeting ref Brexit

28th Sept – National Common land Stakeholder group

4th Oct – EA/Defra meeting on sheep dip disposal

8th Oct – Defra meeting on AHDB call for views

9th Oct – Skin on Sheep working group meeting

10th Oct – Eastern region ARMM

15th Oct – TDUG meeting

22nd Oct - UKLIBG meeting

23rd Oct - Meeting with APHA and SoS team at Melton Mowbray and close by farms – looking at traceability.

24th Oct - Industry meeting with Defra re carcass classification and price reporting

25th and 26th Oct - ISAGE research industry meeting

29th Oct - Evidence to FAWC and Defra on sheep welfare and transport

29th Oct – Meeting with Treasury re NSA Technical Notice on what sheep industry would want in a no deal

29th Oct - Meeting with Lord Inglewood re Agriculture Bill

30th Oct - Agric organisations lobby in House of Commons

31st Oct – Regional Managers meeting

1st Nov - MP advisers meeting Westminster

1st Nov – Defra future farm support meeting

2nd Nov – Meeting with RWAS to discuss lease agreements re potential new build

5th Nov – Michael Gove talk re Farmers Club