

Activities report to NSA Board 20th November 2019

This report refers to main activities in quarter 3 of 2019. Activities are presented under a set of common headings.

NSA policy, technical and research work

Brexit: Deal / no deal

Between July – September NSA's spent a large proportion of time working on sharing messages about no-deal Brexit. There was a lot of press work produced around the Conservative party leadership contest, and then on to the early stages of Boris Johnson's premiership. There was also a flurry of letters sent to welcome the new Prime Minister and encourage his support of the UK sheep sector. This led on to further letters welcoming the new Secretary of State and welcome back farming minister George Eustice. Correspondence with each of the above was centred around appealing for a deal to be struck and, if one couldn't be, ensuring contingency planning was in place. While the Government had in principle agreed a headage payment, we pushed for something more like the old VPS to support those who would be hardest hit in the event of a no-deal on the 31st October. This idea was picked up by Defra, which changed its mind away from the ewe headage and to focus on the idea of the VPS.

Brexit: Future farm support

With the Agriculture Bill on hold there is still no confirmed clarity over the future of farm support. Basic Payment is committed until 2021 with 'new schemes' roll out expected around 2025 - 27. In England there has been a big focus on ELMS and future public goods recognition via this route. Defra has commissioned around 60 test and trial projects that will be used as learning pilots and NSA has a Test & Trial proposal being considered which aims to test livestock enterprise and public goods farm planning (holistic farm planning). Wales has recently closed its Sustainable Farming and Our Land consultation and is considering a range of options that would appear to have been heavily influenced by early NSA proposals – including the importance of food production being better recognised.. NSA responded in detail to this consultation. Scotland appears to be planning on maintaining the status quo in relation to the Basic Payment for as long as possible.

Sheep in upland areas (including sheep stratification)

A significant proportion of NSA work being done to make the case for the sustainability of sheep farming relates to hill and upland farming. A trip was made to Bangor University where some useful work is being done on GHGs and hill farming and we have managed to use some of their work on Nitrous Oxide, in particular in the information used for our 'Setting the record straight' campaign. We have signed up as partners to Our Common Cause, an initiative being led by Foundation for Common Land. OCC partners have submitted a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to promote good commons management. Phil has joined the advisory committee for FCL. In Wales the NSA/WCF is running a 'National Commons Graziers conference' on 18th November in Builth Wells, presenting the positive aspects of commons grazing and showing a number of cases studies of 'promising practice' within commons groups and partnerships. Phil continues to chair the BMLUP and this partnership is now exploring new corporate governance structures such as a Community Interest Company or a Charitable Incorporated Organisation via which it could raise, hold and administer funds. The partnership has been shortlisted for a Wales sustainable management award on the 28th November at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff.

Sheep in arable rotations

iSAGE funded NSA involvement with the 'benefits of sheep in arable trial' run in collaboration with Brown & Co, AHDB, Organic Research Centre (ORC) and Frontier Agriculture Ltd until end August 2019 when ??? took the project lead. Nicola began drafting the case study before her maternity leave and Wendy in conjunction with the ORC, completed the draft case study before sending it to the work package leader by the deadline of August 31, 2019. This research work has also been included in a series of Innovation leaflets published as part of the iSAGE project. The leaflet FEEDING No 9 Livestock Grazing in Arable Rotations UK

Link summarises the key findings of the work on lamb growth and parasitic burden as well as acknowledging benefits to stock, soil and climate resilience. It is acknowledged that the system provides challenges for both the sheep and arable farmer but with the right advice and good communication these can be overcome. The related case study has yet to be released by the iSAGE project

Integrating trees into sheep farming systems.

A visit was made to Bangor University, in part to look at work being done on agroforestry and sheep grazing, with a helpful discussion over the science behind trees and carbon. In general NSA is working on the basis that policies to encourage agro-forestry and tree integration are good while those to encourage mono forestry plantations are damaging. We are building into policy responses that we support very long term funding commitments being made, both to cover the cost of planting and fencing in addition to area based payments for tree cover, for a minimum period 25 years, in order to contribute to tree planting targets. However, we are also pointing out that permanent grassland is not adequately recognised for its role in carbon storage.

Rewilding

During the third quarter, six sea eagles were released in the Isle of Wight. NSA took its place on the two steering and oversight groups for the project. NSA opposed the release but since Natural England approved it, NSA is now ensuring Sheep Farmers' views are heard and acknowledged. Some victories in this have included stopping the release from feeding the eagles sheepmeat on their release, getting assurance from the Roy Denis Foundation that the birds' release would not be done at the expense of sheep and sheep farmers, and ensuring an exit plan is put in place. While it would be preferable that the birds weren't released, we believe ensuring every precaution is taken to protect sheep farmers interests' is the best option given where the project is.

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

NSA responded to the AHDB consultation on the formation of a new Ruminant Health Group to replace SHAWG and CHAWG. We could not support the proposals entirely although some aspects such as the aim to increase the adoption on farm of health measures, and better cross devolved nation working are ambitions we support. We also made the case that with other health and welfare initiatives also being explored such as the Defra Pathway programme, it is essential that things are properly thought through and planned and that nothing should be agreed until everything is agreed. NSA continues its involvement with RUMA and was pleased to see the 2018 VARRS report show that the UK is recognised as a global leader in terms of responsible antibiotic use. Between 2017 and 2018 the UK reduced its AB use in food producing animals by 9%, down 53% from 2015. Critically important AB is down by 68% over the year. Sheep don't really feature in the report, in part because of low usage and in part because of a lack of data. The sheep targets task force has identified data capture as one of our key future objectives and AHDB are developing an e medicine book that should be available in early 2020. NSA also continues its involvement in SCOPS, which is focussing on both liver fluke and sheep scab this autumn and winter.

Sheep identification and movement recording and reporting

The TDUG continues to meet monthly. Key points of progress include setting up of a new company, Livestock Information Ltd, owned 51% by AHDB and 49% by Defra. TDUG has a formal advisory role within this company. After a rigorous tender and evaluation process LI Ltd has now purchased the National Livestock Movements Database (NLMD) from Shearwell Data and will be using this platform on which to build the new multi species database. No decisions have been made regarding policy developments (paperless moves, batch moves, the 6 day standstill and pre move notification) although this work will be stepping up in early 2020. Discussions are just starting on 'additionality/added value' beyond statutory requirements.

TSE controls

Changes to regulations continue to be delayed. A consultation began towards the end of the third quarter to gather views from across the industry about whether the change was supported and proposing a hybrid style – allowing abattoirs to choose the method of aging they wanted. Third country status – or a lasting deal – needs to be in place to ensure trade is able to continue with the EU. As no third country, or EU country uses a declaration system, there is a risk the EU wouldn't accept UK sheepmeat with that change.

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

Defra proposed two figures for mandatory classification (1,000 head) and reporting (3,000 head). NSA was asked whether these figures were appropriate and after discussion with English Committee proposed 1,000 and 1,000. The Hallmark Scrutiny committee continues to meet regularly and has had a number of positive meetings so far. The committee is open and transparent and ensures stakeholders are well informed of the work being done.

Farm assurance

An RTA B&L Board meeting took place in November followed a few days later by a Technical Advisory Committee meeting. The upcoming standards review process will result in 3 meetings during 2020 and a consultation at the turn of the year before a revised set of standards are introduced in October 2021. At this stage it is expected that the standards will be strengthened in the area of medicine use and, potentially, training requirements or certificates of competence, although environmental standards are likely to come under the spotlight. A new format is expected that gives clearer compliance requirements but risks making the standards significantly more detailed.

Engagement with AHDB

The results of the Defra Call for Views on AHDB are still not released some 2 years after the exercise was conducted (originally staff had been pulled away to Brexit no deal planning and now purdah relating to the General Election is the reason being given). AHDB are towards the end of their own strategic review and have held 2 industry engagement meetings with the Beef and Lamb Board with one further meeting before the New Year. NSA continues to put pressure on all our levy bodies to divert maximum spend into trade and market development, particularly given our exit from the EU and the need to develop as many trade opportunities as possible. We have gained support from AHDB and HCC for our Heritage Breeds initiative although QMS have declined to get involved. But it has been hard work with AHDB in particular and anything that is a change of direction from producing efficient commodities and the lowest price is still difficult. AHDB have appointed a new post of Environment Officer in order to engage with the GHG and wider environmental issues – this was a key recommendation of NSA in our submission to the Defra call for views and a point we have regularly made. AHDB are supporting our Setting the Record Straight events where we are working to discuss and equip members with information and points of view to position the sheep industry in a positive light as well as defend it where necessary. One of these events received the support of Gillian Butler from Newcastle University – input that was well received by attendees.

Rural crime (including sheep worrying by dogs)

NSA continues to regularly take part in rural crime meetings with police forces across the country. During the third quarter NSA created a new rural crime area on the website, <https://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/policy-work/27710/rural-crime/>. There is also a list of rural police forces known to NSA available for members to know whether a rural officer is available to them. New dog worrying signs were designed in this quarter as we ran out of the yellow signs.

Farm safety

The Farm Safety Partnership has not held any meetings during the last quarter but their campaigns for 2019 have been ongoing with the focus for the third quarter of 2019 being that of child safety on farm, timed to coincide with school summer holidays. The campaign has three key messages:

1. Think carefully before letting children in the farm workplace. These can be dangerous and hazardous places.
2. Adult supervision is essential to help prevent accidents involving children.
3. Children under 13 are specifically prohibited from driving or riding on any agricultural machine.

NSA shared these messages through its usual routes of Weekly Email Update and social media.

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

Any other livestock research with NSA involvement not already covered

- NSA partnered with WQB&L to submit a bid to Welsh Govt to deliver their sheep scab initiative, however we were informed in mid November that our bid had been unsuccessful. We are not aware if a successful bid has been chosen. NSA also has a bid submitted with DEFRA ELMS team to deliver a Test and Trials project but the decision is on hold due to purdah. Our bid focuses on holistic farm planning (business enterprise and public goods delivery) building on the sustainability assessment tool via iSAGE. We were however successful in being awarded a grant after submitting a bid to the Govt's Brexit resilience fund. This work resulted in the NSA Brexit Toolkit that appears to have been well received and will additionally offer a big promotional opportunity for NSA.
- **Technology Transfer.** iSAGE also funded an NSA and ORC study into the benefits of incorporating holistic practices using Farm Assessment Tools and developing an understanding some of the barriers to their adoption. Using information gathered by Nicola when she visited 3 UK sheep farmers who had completed holistic farm management training delivered by 3LM on behalf of The Savory Institute and who subsequently completed a Public Goods Tool, the iSAGE case study was jointly written up between Wendy and ORC. The report, submitted to the iSAGE project by the deadline of 31 August 2019, recognised the participants were positive about the usefulness of holistic management principles and their application on farm. The training was useful, albeit 'eye opening' and thought provoking at times. The cost, both in terms of time and finance was acknowledged. The Case Study is summarised in Innovation leaflet 19 [Link](#)
- **Knowledge Transfer.** The ORC conducted a review of the NSA Next Generation Ambassadors Programme through the iSAGE project, (Innovation Leaflet no 27). Participants in the 2017 and 2018 programmes were interviewed and all previous participants were given the opportunity to feedback as to the effectiveness of the programme via an online link. The Ambassadors identified benefits including increased personal skills and competencies, development peer to peer networks and friendships as well as a greater understanding of the wider industry. Benefits to the NSA include active ambassadors, who keep in touch and support the NSA. This case study highlighted the potential value of introducing similar programmes to partner countries.
- Wendy attended the SheepNet final seminar in France on 3 and 4th September. The project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme has formed an EU Network focused on increasing sheep productivity and flock profitability by knowledge exchange. The project focuses on best practices and ideas identified by flock owners and seeks to share these ideas through seminars as well as the web. The three-year project ended in October 2019 but will be succeeded in the New Year by the EuroSheep project and with which the NSA hopes to be involved.

- **Sheep Health and Welfare.** The final iSAGE case study that NSA was directly involved with was the Evaluation of Flock Health Club (FHC) service for sheep Farmers. Nicola had carried out research with both vets and farmer members to discover the perceived value of this service. Wendy completed the iSAGE case study that Nicola had begun to draft, it was clear that both vets and farmers perceived this as a valuable service with benefits to both parties including improved and increased contact between farmers and their vets. The results of which have been summarised in Innovation Leaflet FARMER TRAINING No 28 Evaluating the impact of Flock Health Clubs UK. The Case Study is yet to be published but is anticipated before the end of the year.
- The NSA provided a letter of support for the work conducted by the Liver Fluke Team at Liverpool University which was much appreciated. Also, in conjunction with the Liver Fluke Team, the NSA circulated a bespoke survey link to members with reminders. This service was charged on a commercial basis generating income for the NSA. Subsequent feedback from the Liver Fluke team has been very positive in terms of quantity and quality of completed questionnaires which will provide the basis for future research for the team.
- Phil chaired a meeting held to discuss the understanding and impact of iceberg diseases. To gain fuller understanding a short survey was circulated via the NSA WEU. The responses have yet to be fully analysed but provide a range of views and comments for further consideration.
- **Other.** Recognising the volume of requests by students to circulate links to questionnaires and surveys in the past without any form of quality control the decision was made to levy a small charge as from 1 October 2019. The charge (£35 + VAT) to cover the NSA's researcher's time in quality checking any student surveys ahead of being published in the NSA WEU and to monitor topics covered. To date uptake has been limited.
- To support the presentations at the NSA meetings "Setting the Sheep Farming Record Straight" a handout detailing Top Ten Sheep Facts was prepared using links to current scientific research and evidence.
- SMARTER project looking at Breeding resilience and efficiency in Sheep and Goats. The NSA have accepted an invitation to sit on the SMARTER Stakeholders Committee as well the Stakeholders platform. This should bring the NSA closer to the governance and management of this project which seeks to maximise outcomes and impacts for the small ruminants sector. The NSA hopes to attend by video conference the Stakeholders platform session during the Project's Annual Meeting in late November where views and advice on using results will be sought as well as influencing the direction in which the project is moving.

More general topics (updated if and when activity occurs)

- **Trade and marketing (including NSA projects around mutton, heritage breeds etc, and NSA involvement in work addressing red meat consumption concerns e.g. Veganuary etc).** Heritage Breeds. The final report is now complete and has been sent to all funding organisations. A report launch is planned for 29th November at Malvern where we will show a new launch video that includes supporting statements from a number of organisations. The launch event will include a tasting of 3 different muttons. We are written in as funded partners to a potential Heritage Breeds pilot in the Brecon Beacons. The end of project report recommends the setting up of a Ltd by Guarantee 'industry' company that would oversee the delivery of activity. For a full report please contact the office.
- **Wool.** Phil (Ellie, Helen, Wendy) met with Wool Cool to discuss the potential for wool as an insulated packaging material. The NSA was invited and accepted the invitation to join the Network of proposers of the COST Action Proposal 'Transnation and Multidisciplinary Network Challenging Wool from Materials to Best Global Practices' The bid was submitted by 5 September 2019 and the outcome is still awaited.

NSA communications and knowledge exchange work

Press work

- During the third quarter NSA released 28 press releases, which had a good level of press pick up. This was mostly in agricultural press – Meat management, Agriland, Farming UK, Farmers Weekly, Farmers Guardian on agricultural topics such as carcase splitting. There was also a lot of pick up from agricultural press on NSA's press releases defending the industry against unjust criticism, including fighting suggestions that eating meat could be made illegal. NSA also wrote to the BBC to criticise its anti-farming agenda.
- There was also a good level of national pick up with no-deal Brexit press releases, as National Media picked up the risks to the sheep industry. This pick up was included in papers such as the Telegraph, the Guardian, Yahoo news, the Independent and the New European. These stories were also picked up in regional press such as the Yorkshire Post, the and the Courier in Scotland.
- The Annex below shows the press releases put out in the past quarter per week – the columns show press releases from either NSA communications officer and their different focuses as well as the social media reach for posts that have been placed on Facebook relating to the press releases..

Sheep Farmer magazine – see recent editions

Weekly email update

- The update has been sent to approximately 3500 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 email has an open rate of approximately 30 % which is very good compared to the industry average open rate of 19%.
- Demand for advertising space in the weekly Email Update continues to be high. For the entirety of the third quarter of 2019 and the foreseeable future, three adverts were included. Upt0 2019 the Email only included 2 adverts per week. Demand may have increased due to comparatively good click rates for adverts compared to other advertising methods.

Website

- Although visits to the NSA website fell at the start of the third quarter (This may coincide with a busy shearing time), visits recovered with an average of 26, 472 people visiting the main NSA website during August and September.
- Increased press work relating should always see an increase in visits to the NSA website as all press releases are mentioned on social media which then links back to the NSA website, so this does link with the amount of press releases issued for the quarter.
- Over 75% of visits to the website during the third quarter were done so from a mobile device. This is an increase of almost 15% compared to other times of the year and is likely due to increased day length meaning people are out and about for longer periods. This highlights the importance of ensuring all web content is transferable and presentable on mobile devices as well as desktops.

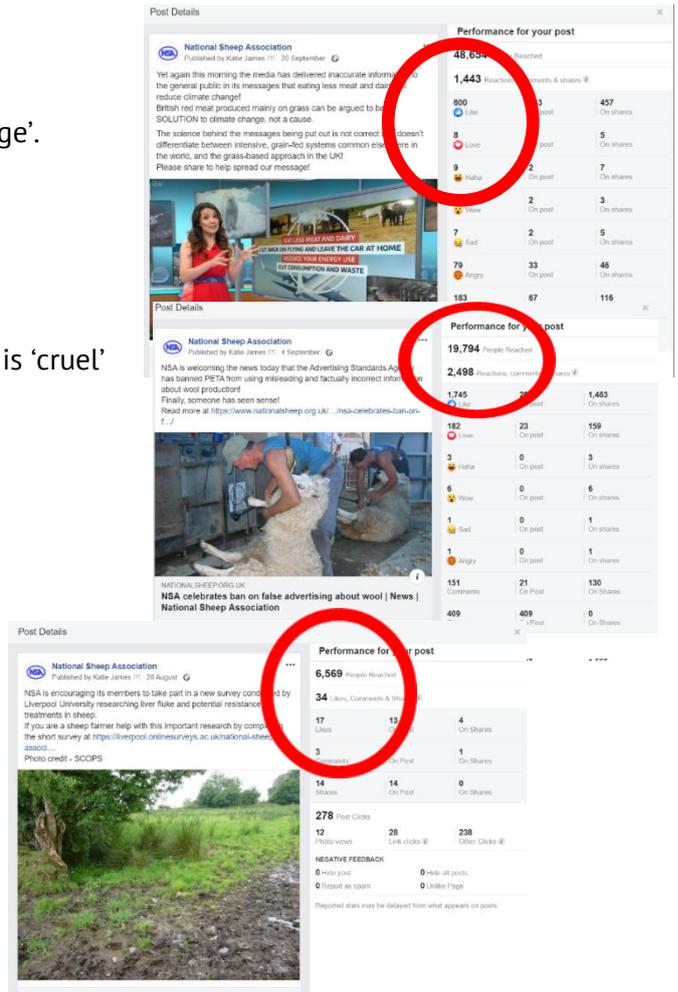
Social Media

- As has been the case for each month since NSA began to use social media platforms Facebook and Twitter the online following continues to increase, with no reduction in the speed of growth despite both sites having been active for several years.
- At the end of the third quarter of 2019 the NSA Facebook page had 12,095 'likes' with Twitter having 11,435, this is a growth of 660 on Facebook and 270 on Twitter.
- With several very emotive issues having been highlighted by NSA press work during the quarter several social media posts have attracted a lot of interaction, specifically posts concerning climate change and animal welfare. The quarter also included Love lamb week (See further information on this in the 'Public facing' section) which is increasingly a social media based campaign. This week is now attracting much attention from extremist vegan activist groups but the NSA page managed to avoid too many

controversial posts during this week, especially when compared with other sites taking part in the promotion of lamb.

Top three performing Facebook posts for the quarter:

1. NSA's argument to red meat 'causing climate change'.
 - a. 48,654 reached
 - b. 1443 people interacted with the post
 - c. 7389 clicks to the NSA website from the post
2. NSA welcomes ban on PETA advertising that wool is 'cruel'
 - a. 19,794 reached
 - b. 2498 people interacted with the post
 - c. 1892 clicks to the NSA website from the post
3. NSA encourage participants of liver fluke survey
 - a. 6569 reached
 - b. 34 people interacted with post
 - c. 278 click on survey link



The top three performing Twitter posts were:

1. 

National Sheep Assoc @natsheep
 Yet again today the media is delivering fake news in its messages that eating less meat and dairy will reduce climate change!
 We need differentiation between intensive, grain-fed systems common elsewhere, and grass-based UK farming - We can be a solution to this issue, not a cause!
pic.twitter.com/4VsCByR86a

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Impressions | 14,224 |
| Total engagements | 423 |
| Media engagements | 239 |
| Likes | 79 |
| Retweets | 45 |
| Detail expands | 37 |
| Profile clicks | 13 |

National Sheep Assoc @natsheep
 We don't know about you, but NSA is getting just a little bit fed up of sheep taking the flack for climate change from media - despite brilliant attributes sheep have that help to tackle climate change...

Read more here:
<https://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/news/27859/sheep-have-a-vital-role-in-tackling-climate-change/> ... pic.twitter.com/h41GZpj8RQ

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Impressions | 5,948 |
| Total engagements | 179 |
| Likes | 64 |
| Link clicks | 45 |
| Media engagements | 27 |
| Retweets | 15 |
| Detail expands | 15 |
| Profile clicks | 12 |

2.

National Sheep Assoc @natsheep
 NSA is welcoming the news today that the Advertising Standards Agency has banned PETA from using misleading and factually incorrect information about wool production! Finally, someone has seen sense!
 Read more at
<https://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/news/27782/nsa-celebrates-ban-on-false-advertising-about-wool/> ... pic.twitter.com/lz1YS6LJwm

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Impressions | 5,060 |
| Total engagements | 128 |
| Media engagements | 40 |
| Likes | 39 |
| Link clicks | 23 |
| Retweets | 10 |
| Detail expands | 0 |

3.

Public facing activity

Love Lamb Week took place as usual during the last quarter, in the first week in September. Now in its fifth year the campaign once again attracted media and public support with increased sharing of adverts promoting lamb's nutritional benefits, the sheep farmers role in environmental management and the delicious taste and versatility of lamb across the news and social media. During the week NSA posts on Facebook promoting the campaign reached a total of approximately 17, 000 people and on Twitter approximately 25,000 people.

'Reputation First' meetings

Having attended meetings organised in response to 'Veganuary' on behalf of NSA, Communications Officer Katie James is now representing the organisation at a series of meetings including other industry bodies such as NFU, HCC, QMS and AHDB in a new group titling itself as 'Reputation First'. This group is working on ideas to represent the industry favourably in light of the ongoing blame put at its feet for climate change. The last quarter saw only the first of these meetings so its work is in early stages but more will be communicated to the Board as it develops.

Other areas of NSA activity

NSA Next Generation activity

- The third quarter of 2019 saw a large amount of Next Generation activity, with much of this being focussed on the new two day residential workshops. A total of five workshops had been planned but despite much publicity unfortunately only two workshops went ahead, however these were very successful. A variety of reasons could be the cause of the lack of uptake for some of the workshops, including the possibility of there being a cost to attend (although this was heavily subsidised by NSA), the dates of the workshops clashing with other events or simply coming during summer when people may be less able to commit to time away from the farm (due to haymaking, harvest etc) and in the Welsh and Northern Irish regions the fact that many free workshops are already on offer by organisations such as farming Connect, AFBI etc. The events that went ahead attracted between 15 and 20 people and feedback received was that they were incredibly valued and enjoyed by attendees. A review of the events will be conducted as it is the intention to try a smaller number of these again in the future so lessons must be learnt to ensure their success.
- The two recipients of the NSA Next Generation Samuel Wharry travel bursary awards continued their plans for their study trips during the third quarter of the year. Marie Prebble has produced a

questionnaire for both shearers and farmers which NSA has helped to publicise. So far this has reached a very good number of people and should help Marie greatly in her studies.

- The promotion of NSA head office (and NSA regions should they choose) offering to sponsor an attendee at this year's Sheep Breeders Round Table took place during the last quarter. This resulted in the choice of Francesca Grieve, a Harper Adams student to attend. Francesca was incredibly enthusiastic and could be a very good supporter for NSA in the future.
- Plans have started during the third quarter for the annual NSA Next Generation winter workshops with the decision this year to hold two events rather than just one in an effort to reach a higher number of young sheep farmers both North and South. Next generation is also planning to take a group of young sheep farmers with a specific interest in agricultural policy to visit Westminster, incorporating a tour, a Q and A session with relevant MP's Lords and Civil Servants and also a round table discussion session to enthuse those looking to get more involved at an NSA committee level. This trip had been planned for the first week in December but due to news of the General Election this has now been postponed to early 2020. The trip is being arranged through the kind support of Lord Inglewood and his office.

Engagement with NSA-affiliated breed societies

An update was sent to NSA-affiliated breed societies on 3rd October. This included information if they wanted to sponsor a young person to attend SBRT, plus plans for the NSA 'setting the sheep farming record straight' meetings and winter Next Generation events. It also confirmed the dates for NSA Breed Society Forum and sheep events in 2019, and reiterated how keen Chris is to work with breed societies to promote membership recruitment messages.

George Hedley Memorial Award

The presentation of the 2018 award was made at the SBRT on 17th November. The voting for the 2019 is closed and the result of the voting by Board and Vice Presidents will be announced at the January 2020 Board meeting.

NSA internal work / operations

Sheep Farmer performance / corporate supporters / income from commercial companies

The Oct/Nov edition of Sheep Farmer was smaller than usual, but advertising interest in the Dec/Jan edition has rallied well. This seems to reflect uncertainty created by political upheaval. Conversely, demand for advertising in the Weekly Email Update continues to be high. This is because of interest from companies in getting to online audiences, and the fact we limit the Weekly Email Update to only three adverts a week. We will need to watch this in the future, as it looks likely that advertising will continue to move online, and NSA does not have many online vehicles. This is through choice, as we do not want to use our website or social media platforms as advertising vehicles, but we need to keep an eye on how things move longer-term. We've had two Corporate Support companies recently choose not to renew their Corporate Support packages with NSA, but both are due to internal issues within those companies (e.g. change of personnel) rather than anything NSA has done wrong. We should have picked up at least two new companies by the end of the year.

Sheep Event

The date is Tuesday 28th July. A title of 'Celebrating the UK Sheep Sector' has been chosen. Two committee meetings have taken place with regular internal staff meetings also happening. The website has been updated and applications have started to come in, a new page for Individual Sheep Breeders has been added and the Terms and conditions have been updated. Elanco, Shearwell and MSD have confirmed as a major sponsors with AHDB and SAI Global to confirm. All other sponsors from 2018 have been contacted and replies are expected in due course. Trade prices have remained as 2018. Dinner tickets have gone up to £45 (£37.50) including Vat as the caterer has increased their price to us. Pre event farm tour is in hand with Field Farm Tours arranging this. Seminars are progressing. Pinstone will look after the PR for the event and Farmers Guardian will be the media partner. We have a number of new competitions in the pipeline with shearing to make a return. The event will also mark 40 years of being on the TCAS showground and this will be acknowledged within the dinner and event. Next meeting of the committee will take place in early January.

Governance

The formal reply has been made to Old Mill's Completion Memorandum. Annual returns to OSCR, Charity Commission and Companies have been made and accounts submitted for year ended 31.12.2018. Work has started to assess NSA's compliance with the Charity Commission's Governance Code in order to develop a governance policy as recommended by Old Mill.

NSA Data Protection

Katie James is currently looking after all data protection issues at NSA head office, this is whilst Nicola Noble is off on maternity leave. As a lot of time was put into this area for the changes to GDPR in May 2018 very little ongoing work is required but all new members of staff are informed of NSA's policy on Data Protection at induction. In the last quarter Katie has been through the GDPR regulations with new Accounts assistant Alexandra Abbot.

Accounts and audit

The pre-audit meeting with Old Mill took place on 14th November in Chippenham. They were pleased to hear the progress being made towards having all regions using Xero for their accounts, and the fact that everyone will be using a common chart of accounts. Because Xero is a cloud-based system, the auditors will have remote access to NSA's financial information for the first time.

Alexandra Abbot joined NSA on 19th August, as planned. She has settled in well and her help with processing the bookings for the South East Region conference has been invaluable. She has also been doing the bookkeeping for Central, Marches, Northern Ireland and South West regions, along with South West Ram Sales.

Sheep Centre site

The section of boundary wall has been repaired and one of the roadside signs that was blown down in recent gales is being repaired and replaced. There has been a request to install radiators in the offices occupied by John Thorley on the ground floor of Bats Loft and this work has been postponed until 2020 as it was beyond the 2019 budget. Some maintenance will be required to Bats Loft external decoration in 2020.

Regional activities (to include NSA ram sales)

Cymru/Wales region

- Brexit contingency planning meetings have been attended with Welsh Govt favouring a ewe premium scheme in the event of a no deal Brexit.
- 3rd Sept - NSA Cymru/Wales Region hosted its farm walk at Newtown, Powys, by kind permission of John and Sarah Yeomans. Attendees were treated to in-depth discussions about everything from flock health to grass management and were able to see the hard work the Yeomans have been putting into

reclaiming land of their hill areas. Lamb steaks were supplied by Dunbia. Many thanks to all who attended and supported the event.

- A comprehensive response has been put into the Welsh Govt regarding the recent consultation on Sustainable Farming and our land. The response followed a meeting with David Ashford of WG and comments received from NSA Cymru members.
- We have a location for NSA Welsh Sheep 2021 Near to Newtown, Powys back in the heart of Wales.
- We have not taken a stand at the Welsh Winter Fair 25th & 26th Nov but we have sponsored the Hill and Native Breed section and part of the young handers competition. We must also congratulate Margaret Dalton on winning the John Gittins Memorial award for recognition for her work in supporting the sheep industry in Wales. Margaret will be presented with her award at the Welsh Winter Fair.
- Regional meeting held 13th Nov when plans for the annual meeting on 19th Feb 2020 were put in place.

Wales and Border Ram Sale

- The Main Sale saw a drop in entries to just over 4500. There was much improved clearance on 2018, with 86% sold and a turnover of £1,827,255.41. However, the sale is not profitable unless we have 5000+ entries and we face stiff competition from other multi-breed sales hosted by auctioneers in their own markets. Our costs continue to rise, with the rental paid to RWAS now approaching £20K, and all other items acquired through RWAS are on top of that, toilet cleaning, tables and chairs, electricity and water charges, plus over £9K to clean the buildings after the sale.
- We have written to several of the breed societies with a view to doubling up in some of the buildings but this will not make a significant decrease in our costs. We will aim to discuss a reduction in rent with RWAS but don't hold out much hope. We are very concerned that the increase in membership fees coming in 2020 will further reduce the numbers being entered as it does not make economic sense to pay NSA membership, + our entry fees to sell a sheep for 100 – 200gns, which is a price quite a few of the minority breeds achieve. These breeders are leaving the sale to sell at alternative venues where costs are lower, although most say they would rather sell at Builth as better prices are achieved generally.
- During a meeting at Malvern the subject of vendors needing to be NSA members was openly discussed and while we always thought it was a requirement of Gift Aid we agreed that the situation would be clarified and further discussed at the Board meeting on the 20th November at which we will be present.
- The RSC believes that the increase in membership fees will have a further knock on effect with our entries and don't believe that the new group categories for membership will have much influence.

Other significant external meetings – attended by Phil unless otherwise stated

- 15/07 Wendy Jones and Kevin Harrison, Delivering Low Emissions Farming Workshop, NFU, Stoneleigh.
- 22-25/07 Phil, Jo, Katie, Chris, Helen and others – Royal Welsh Show
- 30/07 Jo and Chris – meeting with XLVets about membership recruitment
- 12/08 Jo and Chris – meeting with Pinstone PR about NSA opportunities with their clients
- 15/08 Jo meetings with Animax and NAAC about NSA opportunities
- 20/08 Filming for Points West re Brexit at Lye Cross farm
- 20/08 Jo and Wendy – meeting with NIAB about NSA opportunities
- 20/08 Met with Huw Davies and Jim Dobson Dunbia re contingency support
- 21/08 Katie – Three Counties Young Stars competition
- 22/08 All staff – FCN recognising mental health problems training
- 22/08 Met with Woolcool – wool insulation company
- 23/08 UKLIBG meeting
- 27/08 Met with Will Jackson AHDB
- 27/08 Met with NFU to discuss Heritage Breeds
- 28/08 Spoke at Moredun farm event Crieff. Chris also attended for membership recruitment
- 28/08 Jo – met with Three Counties Farmer about supporting agricultural awards in 2020
- 03/09 Met with Geoff Samsome Nat England
- 03/09 Liz Genever represented the NSA at FIELD project update on.
- 03/09 Jo – SCOPS meeting
- 05/09 Ellie – Defra policy round table on future regulation and enforcement.

- 05/09 Wales sheep scab programme bid planning
- 05/09 Black Mountains Land Use Partnership
- 05/09 Chris – began auction mart roadshow – 15 marts in September and October
- 06/09 Met with Geoff Grant NZ High Commission
- 06/09 Defra productivity round table meeting
- 07/09 Spoke at Southdown sheep AGM
- 09/09 Sheep Vet Society conference
- 10/09 Met with FSA food crime unit
- 11/09 Attended NFU chaired UK beef and lamb meeting
- 12/09 Wendy attended Defra's Farm Animal Genetic Resources (FAnGR) committees' workshop
- 12/09 RUMA Board and Alliance meeting
- 16/09 Livestock Information programme/ TDUG meeting
- 16/09 met with Defra re contingency payment planning
- 17/09 Highgrove visit with Bryan G
- 19/09 Visit Bangor University re upland beef and sheep research platform
- 19/09 Ellie attended Dartmoor commoners & police meeting RE rural crime.
- 20/09 UKLIBG meeting
- 24/09 Defra ELMS deep dive meeting
- 25/09 NFU Livestock welfare standards meeting
- 25/09 Katie – Veganuary planning meeting
- 26/09 Visit to Harper Adams with Chris Brown ASDA
- 26/09 Conf call with British Wool re Responsible Textile Standards
- 27/09 Conf call Our Common cause
- 30/09 LIP/ TDUG meeting
- 01/10 Met with W&B ram sale officials
- 02/10 SHAWG meeting in Belfast
- 03/10 NFU led Brexit meeting
- 04/10 Defra defining animal welfare standards meeting
- 07/10 Ellie – Dyfed Powys police meeting
- 08/10 Met with DIT re overseas missions – Nick Corley
- 09/10 Met with George Eustice
- 09/10 Katie – presentation to students at Hartpury College
- 14/10 Met with WCF and then WG re Sustainable Farming and Our Land. Ellie also at WG meeting
- 15/10 Consultation with Coventry University re sheep farming
- 16/10 Phil, Katie and Ellie – Met with AHDB MI team
- 17/10 Spoke at Ripon Cathedral Hill farming seminar
- 17/10 Ellie – UK Livestock Brexit Group meeting
- 18/10 Spoke at BCVA conference Southport
- 21/10 Met with QMS
- 21/10 Spoke at Moredun event on sustainability of sheep farming
- 22/10 Attended AHDB exports conference
- 22/10 Attended launch of APPG report on Farming and Brexit
- 23/10 Filmed for heritage sheep video
- 23/10 Participated in Farming Futures debate House of Lords with Sir Don Curry
- 23/10 Ellie – Sea eagles meeting on Isle of Wight
- 24/10 First of 'Setting the sheep farming record straight' meeting – Chris attending all nine; Phil or Ellie all attending
- 29/10 RUMA conference – antibiotics
- 29/10 Defra meeting on sheep ageing and splitting
- 31/10 Foundation for Common Land advisory meeting
- 1/11 Black Mountains workshop on future governance structures for the partnership
- 7/11 Red Tractor Assurance Technical Advisory Committee
- 11/11 Traceability Design Users Group (LIP)
- 12/11 NFU General election manifesto launch
- 12/11 Farmers Club lunch hosted by Duke of Montrose
- 12/11 Attended seminar on consultation on future of National Parks and AONBs
- 15/11 Phil and Katie – Sheep Breeders Round Table

- 18/11 NSA Welsh Commons Forum – National Commons Graziers Gathering in Built Wells
- 19/11 Presentation and discussion forum at Bath University re sustainability

NSA Scotland Activity Report for NSA Board meeting – Wednesday 20th November 2019.

Tuesday 6th August – NSA Scotland Committee meeting, UA Stirling.

Thursday 8th August - Aileen McFadzean & Peter Myles attended NSA Board meeting Stirling.

Friday 9th August – Various NSA Scotland Committee Members attended NSA AGM at Stirling.

Thursday 15th August – NSA Scotsheep 2020 Organising Committee meeting – Over Finlurg, Dundee.

Wednesday 28th August – Various NSA Scotland Committee Members attended the – Moredun/NSA- Healthy hill sheep for profitable farming in the hills open day - Connachan Farm, Crieff.

Wednesday 4th September – John Fyall attended the NSA UKP&T meeting in Birmingham.

Monday 9th September – NSA Scotland RHS Sub Committee meeting – Lanark.

Wednesday 11th September – Euan Emslie measured up farm buildings at Over Finlurg for NSA Scotsheep 2020.

Friday 13th September – NSA Scotland/NSA Stand at Kelso Ram Sales. Maimie Paterson, Mary Dunlop, John Fyall & Euan Emslie attended.

Tuesday 24th September

☑ Jen Craig & Maimie Paterson met Fergus Ewing at Scottish Parliament.

☑ John Fyall attended an ARD Stakeholder Group Meeting, Edinburgh.

Thursday 26th September - NSA Next Generation residential summer workshops, Barony, Peebles including a visit to Jen Craig's farm.

Tuesday 1st October – Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson & Sybil MacPherson meeting with Fergus Ewing in Edinburgh.

Thursday 3rd October – NSA Scotland Executive Committee Teleconference mainly to discuss proposals to put to Fergus Ewing on LFASS/ANC as well as discussing the role of the NSA Scottish Region Co-ordinator position.

Saturday 5th October - NSA/British Wool, Auction Roadshow stand, UA Stirling – Various NSA Scotland Executive Committee Members helped out on stand.

Friday 11th October

☑ Jen Craig met David Mundell MP on her farm

☑ Euan Emslie had meeting with the publisher and editor of The Scottish Farmer to discuss media partnership for NSA Scotsheep 2020.

Monday 14th October

☑ Jen Craig attended the Animal Health & Welfare Stakeholders Meeting, Edinburgh.

☑ NSA Scotsheep 2020 – Committee Meeting – Forfar Mart.

Monday 21st October – Jen Craig attended an event as a guest at the Pentlands Science Park to celebrate Moredun's commitment to the contribution of livestock to food production, biodiversity and the environment.

Tuesday 22nd October – Jen Craig judged a Lamb Cooking Competition with QMS.

Wednesday 30th October – Euan Emslie attended the NSA regional managers and secretaries meeting at Malvern.

Monday 4th November – Euan Emslie met with Head of Agriculture with Clydesdale Bank at Carlisle to finalise major sponsorship of NSA Scotsheep 2020.

Tuesday 5th November – NSA Scotland Committee Meeting – Caledonian Marts, Stirling.

Wednesday 6th November – Jen Craig telephone in to the NSA F&GP Committee meeting.

Thursday 7th November – John Fyall Chaired the NSA/British Wool/QMS - Setting the Sheep Farming Record Straight meeting at Forfar Mart. Also in attendance were Maimie Paterson, Peter Myles and Euan Emslie.

Saturday 9th November – Jen Craig, Maimie Paterson & Donna Mackenzie manned the NSA Scotland Stand at the Stars of Future Calf Show - UA Stirling.

Wednesday 13th November – Jen Craig & Maimie Paterson meeting with Scottish Government Officials - Convergence/LFASS/ANC.

Saturday 16th November – Maimie Paterson attended the Premier Meat Exhibition at Scotbeef, Bridge of Allen.

Wednesday 20th November

☑ Jen Craig attending RSABI AGM, Ingliston.

☑ NSA Scotland sharing stand with Honda at Agriscot, Ingliston.

☑ NSA Board Meeting, Malvern.

Future Meetings

Thursday 21st November – John Fyall speaking at Lewis and Harris Sheep Producers Association AGM.

Saturday 22nd November – NSA Scotland stand at Livescot and sponsoring Sheep Young Handlers Classes – Lanark.

Monday 25th November

☑ Maimie Paterson attending the Farm Advisory Service stakeholder meeting - SRUC Oatridge Campus.

☑ Mary Dunlop attending the SEFARI Gateway and Just Transmission Commission Workshop – Melrose.

Appendix – Press releases issued and their social media reach

| Week beginning | Press release | Social media reach |
|----------------|---|---|
| 01/07/19 | 1. Domestic promotion important. 2. Welcome Jeremy Hunt pledge. 3. Misleading media messages must stop. 4. Moratorium on agri-environment stocking reductions. 5. Next Gen Sessions | 1. 1.4k. 2. 2.4k. 3. 3.2k. 4. 5.2k. 5. 6.9k |
| 14/07/19 | 1. SCOPS jetter statement. 2. JFC winner | 1. 1.6k. 2. 2.3k |
| 21/07/19 | 1. Welcome new Prime Minister. 2. New Secretary Theresa Villiers. 3. Cabinet reshuffle | 1. 2.3k. 2. 2.5k. 3. 2.7k |
| 29/07/19 | 1. No deal Brexit action needed. 2. SCOPS mid season wormer. 3. One year to NSA Sheep Event | 1. 2.9k. 2. 2.1k. 3. 3k |
| 5/08/19 | 1. Hard border Northern Ireland. 2. Auction Mart roadshow | 1. 1.7k. 2. 1.8k |
| 12/08/19 | 1. Lord Inglewood. 2. Next Gen workshop success | 1. 1.9k. 2. 3.2k |
| 19/08/19 | Sea Eagle release | 889 |
| 26/08/19 | SCOPS nematodirus | 1.7k |
| 30/08/10 | PETA wool ban reversal | 19.8k |
| 02/09/19 | Scottish convergence funding | 1.2k |
| 16/09/19 | NSA sponsored place at SBRT | 5.5k |
| 23/09/19 | Climate change | 4.9k |