

PSGHS NEWS

Premium Sheep and Goat Health Schemes

2023 Issue



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John Scholefield Editor

PSGHS, SRUC Health Schemes, Greycrook, St Boswells, Roxburghshire TD6 0EQ

T: 01835822456 E: healthschemes@sruc.ac.uk W: www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk

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PSGHS NEWS

Welcome to the 2023 edition of the PSGHS Newsletter. This year we feature a case study on Rob Beaumont with his award winning Southdowns. We look forward to our face to face PSGHS Advisory Board meeting prior to North Sheep in June. It will be useful to have input from the group when discussing the practical implications of keeping MV/CAE accredited and monitored flocks/herds and looking at workable amendments to the rules. We are delighted that Dave Wilson, Health Schemes Manager has been appointed President of the Sheep Veterinary Society (SVS) and Colin Mason, SRUC's Dumfries Centre Manager has been appointed President of the British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA). We wish both colleagues a successful term in office! We trust that you find plenty of interesting content in this issue to help your enterprise including updates on the Future Farming Resilience Fund (FFRF) and links to the various Animal Health and Welfare funding available to sheep farmers.

Please contact us if you would like your flock to feature in our next newsletter or blogs!



David Wilson, Veterinary Manager of the SRUC Health Schemes, became the new President of the Sheep Veterinary Society in October 2022.

David qualified from Glasgow Vet School in 1994, following an MA in Zoology from University College, Oxford. His background is in sheep and beef practice in Northumberland and South-East Scotland, including 10 years in the R(D)SVS Farm Animal Practice, becoming Senior Lecturer and Chair of the Farm Animal Exam Board, and contributing to clinical research publications, primarily in parasitology. David holds the RCVS Diploma in Sheep Health and Production, and is a RCVS Recognised Specialist.

Members of the Sheep Veterinary Society and Committee are actively involved in helping to forge ideas and policies that will have a direct impact upon the future of the sheep farming industry.



Podcasts

We recently launched the first episodes of a SRUC Veterinary Services podcast! This is hosted on the main SRUC podcast channel, alongside episodes from our colleagues in Education, Research and SAC Consulting.

The first two episodes provide an overview of the Veterinary Services division, and a project on beef calf mortality. Future episodes will cover health scheme topics, disease surveillance and more.

The podcast can be listened to on the majority of podcast apps (Spotify, Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts etc) by searching for 'The SRUC Podcast'.



Advisory Group

The PSGHS advisory group meets at least twice per year to discuss developments within the scheme and to advise SRUC and provide feedback from within the industry. Long serving member of the group, Robin McIlrath, stepped down from his place due to also retiring as CEO of the Suffolk Sheep Society at the end of 2022. Robin was presented with a crystal tankard to show our appreciation of all his hard work and support over the years.

Taking his place both as CEO of the Suffolk Sheep Society and on the PSGHS advisory group is Barrie Turner. Having previously been CEO of the Aberdeen Angus Cattle Society, Barrie looks forward to working with the PSGHS team and advisory group to help further develop the schemes. Barrie commented, "Herd or flock health is very important in many ways, especially with the spotlight that agriculture is under now. Better health leads to higher efficiency, lowering of carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions and a more profitable industry.

Initiatives on prevention rather than cure of health issues within the livestock industry are a positive step and I am really honoured be able to be part of the group that aims to help do that."

Making up the rest of the group is Phil Stocker (NSA), Harriet Fuller (Sheep Veterinary Society), John Matthews (British Goat Society), Jonathan Barber (NSA/Charollais Society), David Knowles (Lleyn Society), Jeff Aiken (Texel Society).



Robin McIlrath (left) and Barrie Turner (right)

SIGN UP

Sign Up to the Future Farm Resilience Fund (FFRF)

The Future Farm Resilience Fund (FFRF) is a FREE service available to farmers and landowners in England. It provides business, environmental, and technical support and is fully funded by Defra. SRUC is one of those providing this support in conjunction with ADAS.

What help is available for farmers?

Farmers and landowners can access a variety of services through SRUC funded through the FFRF.

- Carbon Audits and understanding results.
- Business reviews, business plan implementation, environmental credentials, building support.
- Technical support including animal welfare, soil health etc.

What does this help look like on farm?

In the previous round of the FFRF, SRUC clients benefited from detailed Carbon Management Plans. For example, Will Case's suckler herd in Cumbria looked at the use of manure and impact on productivity and carbon emissions. They are now ready to exploit the up-and-coming Slurry Investment Schemes along with other grants.

Our Team is here to help!

The Team operates from the SRUC Kendal office and covers the whole of England. Simon Travis and Stephen Melbourne manage the day to day running of the service, supported by Linda Robinson and Amy Airey with Agricultural Consultants Marcus Fox, Abigail Teward and Olivia Ward.

Please call the Kendal office on **01539 769059**, or email kendal@sac.co.uk and someone from our team will be in touch!

https://bit.ly/FFRF_update

We will keep our Scottish and Welsh members updated too - watch this space!



Simon
Travis



Stephen
Melbourne



Marcus
Fox



Abigail
Teward



Olivia
Ward



Membership Update

The membership of PSGHS continues to grow, an update on membership figures can be seen below (correct as of the start of March 2023).

	Members	Flocks/ Herds
England	1924	2322
Scotland	1045	1243
Wales	542	617
Total	3511	4182

	Total Flocks/ Herds	Fully Accredited
MV	3334	2758
CAE	244	145
EAE	177	132
SMS	174	106
Johne's	253	57

Members may have more than one flock or herd. These are counted separately if they are in more than one scheme (i.e. the same sheep flock is in both the MV and Scrapie schemes), or some members may have a commercial and pedigree flock/herd that they run separately, or separate flocks of different breeds.

The total membership of each scheme is greater than the number that are fully accredited due to a number of flocks that are either still in the process of gaining accreditation (for example doing qualifying tests) or have lost their accredited status and are trying to regain it.

The top ten most popular breeds in PSGHS are listed below, ranked by the number of flocks keeping that breed.

Breed	Flocks
Texel	1368
Suffolk	742
Beltex	531
Lleyn	431
Blue Texel	420
Charollais	400
Zwartbles	360
Mules	332
Texel Cross	288
Dutch Spotted	260



Rob Beaumont Andersey Farm, Wantage, Oxfordshire

Rob Beaumont first purchased Andersey Farm in 1989, with poultry units being the sole livestock focus on the 60 acre holding. Bringing the poultry enterprise to a close in 2004, Rob decided to invest in a flock of Southdown sheep, needing livestock to keep his interest in the farm. The Beaumonts were initially drawn to the breed due to Rob's wife, Jan, liking their appearance, but having researched their history Rob became fascinated by the fact that they had declined in popularity in commercial flocks. *"They seemed to have fallen from grace, which is why I chose to join the Signet recording scheme, to prove they were still a viable terminal sire,"* comments Rob.



Currently running around 80 ewes, Rob has kept the flock closed since becoming MV accredited in 2015. To avoid in-breeding the flock is split into seven ewe families and seven ram lines, with Rob also using the Shearwell Flock recorder and software, as well as the Signet EBV data, to make breeding decisions. Lambing currently begins in the middle of March, with the aim of moving this into April in the future, with all lambs born inside to help ensure they are assigned the correct ewes.



With all sales being done privately off the farm, the main motivation for joining the Premium Sheep & Goat Health Schemes for MV accreditation was to show the health status to prospective buyers, with Rob adding that *"it's also peace of mind that at least one disease is not going to be an issue."* Keeping the flock closed and deciding not to take the sheep to shows and sales are all decisions made to protect their health status. Rob notes that disease has been an issue over the years but with the input of their local vet practice, Larkmead Vets, they have finally got most health issues under control. *"Without vet support the sheep would have left the farm. We use more vaccines than previously, and they work. There was a background problem with abortion which caused me a lot of concern, but we have solved that issue over the last two or three years."*

Having been runner up on a number of occasions, the Andersey flock's 2022 lamb crop won the Cresswell Crook, awarded to the most improved flock of Southdowns. The win represents years of hard work, with Rob breeding his own high-performance rams and culling low index ewes and rams quite ruthlessly. Rob also attributes his success to his commitment to using EID in recording birth details, weights and scanning results, which has been worth the investment.

On the progress made with the breed Rob comments, "if you look at the Signet Recording website, you will see that the Southdown ram is now able to meet the demands of the modern sheep breeder looking for a terminal sire. One of the traits of Southdown rams is they work exceptionally well on ewe lambs." Moving forward, Rob aims to continue to improve the rams as terminal sires and regain their popularity with commercial flock masters, as well as improving the ewes on the maternal side.

For more information visit www.anderseyfarm.co.uk

EuroSheep – a network for interactive and innovative knowledge exchange on sheep health and nutrition across Europe



SRUC and SAC colleagues are part of the EU-funded EuroSheep project which aimed at creating a network of researchers, advisors, farmers and other industry actors interested in sheep health and nutrition. The project started in January 2020 and involves partners from France, Ireland, Hungary, Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey and the UK.

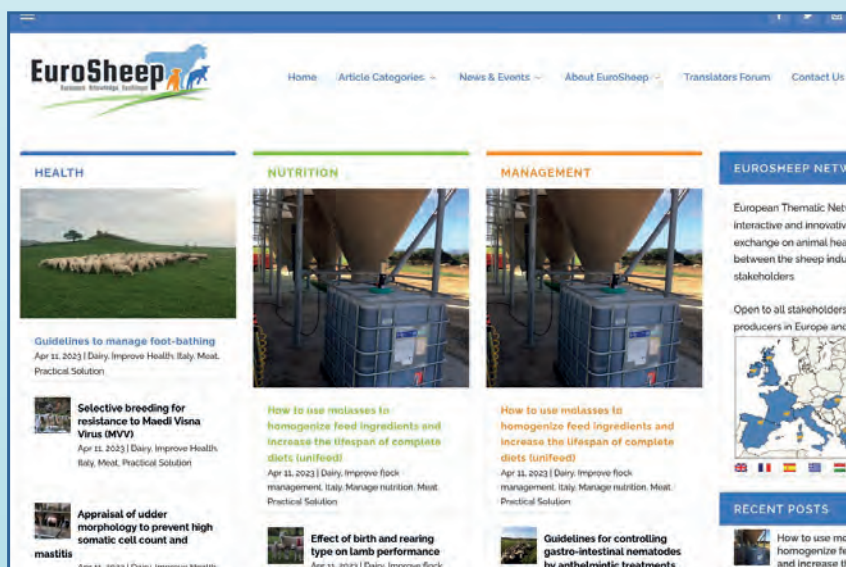
The project relies on efficient regular discussion and knowledge exchanges between the different levels of the network, within and between each country involved. Regular workshops are organised, nationally first to gather knowledge or feedback from each participating country, followed by transnational workshops where farmers, advisors and researchers all meet and share information from their own countries.



Map of the EuroSheep countries

The project is focused on farmers' needs and challenges regarding sheep health and nutrition. After an online survey, where more than 1300 people responded, more than 90 technical and/or practical solutions have been proposed by the project countries, with 49 on health. Additionally, a series of 26 factsheets, with 8 of them particularly centred on health issues, have been produced by the consortium. Finally, a collection of 52 "tips and tricks" proposed by farmers from the participating countries has been compiled.

The project is reaching an end, but all solutions, tips and tricks and factsheets are available on the EuroSheep website (www.eurosheep.network), which has been setup in 7 languages. The project is also supported by social media, e.g. Twitter (@EuroSheepEU), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/EuroSheep/>) and a dedicated YouTube channel (EuroSheep EU), where videos of the best practices and solutions from the partner countries have been uploaded.



Project website with the pool of solutions and factsheets

These platforms are a great resource for farmers who may wish to get ideas or answers to improve health and nutrition management on their farms.



Information Points

A new PSGHS A4 size table top exhibition pack is available for breed societies ready for the show season. If you would like one for your stand we can post one out to you, please email alison.braddock@sruc.ac.uk



Click on the links below to see what is happening in each Country covering animal health and welfare!

SCOTLAND

Rural Payments and Services (Scottish Government)

Visit https://bit.ly/scotgov_sustainablefarming and then click on the Animal Health and Welfare Interventions Link.

This initiative aims to encourage livestock keepers in Scotland to improve the health and welfare of their cattle and sheep, regardless of the size of their business or current health status. It is a starter package to prompt a review of your flock or herd, and to help you consider health and welfare interventions that improve performance.

ENGLAND

The annual health and welfare pathway
https://bit.ly/DEFRA_pathway

The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway is a long-term, project partnership, co-designed by government and industry, across cattle (beef and dairy), sheep, pig and poultry (layer and broiler) sectors to support continual improvement in health and welfare. The first of four steps launched in Spring 2022 to provide farmers in England with a fully funded vet visit.

WALES

https://bit.ly/Wales_HealthWelfareStrategy

Our ambition is for all animals in Wales to have a good quality of life. During this term, we will introduce a broad range of policies to maintain the momentum of reform for farmed, companion and other kept animals. We will deliver the plan in a coordinated way. This will be done alongside the implementation plans of the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework https://bit.ly/Wales_HealthWelfareFramework.



Events

It was fantastic to be able to go ahead with a normal schedule of events in 2022, giving us the chance to meet a good number of our members as well as receiving a lot of interest in our schemes from those wanting to join.

Our event schedule for 2023 is in the table below. We are also hoping to attend as many breed society open days or similar events – if you have an event that we could exhibit at please get in touch!

NSA Sheep South West	10th May	Honiton, Devon
NSA Welsh Sheep	16th May	Newtown, Powys
Scotland's Beef Event	6th June	Dalswinton Estate, Dumfries
NSA North Sheep	7th June	Ponteland, Northumberland
Royal Highland Show	22nd – 25th June	Ingliston, Edinburgh
Great Yorkshire Show	11th – 14th July	Harrogate, North Yorkshire
Royal Welsh Show	24th – 27th July	Builth Wells, Powys
Westmorland County Show	13th – 14th September	Milnthorpe, Cumbria
Borderway Agri-Expo	27th October	Carlisle, Cumbria
AgriFest South West	8th November	Exeter, Devon

Meet the Team



Alison Braddock
Marketing and Business
Development Manager
BSc (Hons)



David Wilson
Veterinary Manager
SRUC Health Schemes
MA BVMS DSHP MRCVS



Caroline Robinson
Veterinary Investigation Officer
BVMS MSc MRCVS



Heather Stevenson
Veterinary Investigation Officer
BVM&S, DSHP, MRCVS



John Scholefield
Marketing and Business
Development Officer, BA



Fiona Crowden
Veterinary Investigation Officer
BVM&S CertAVP MRCVS



PSGHS, SRUC Veterinary Services,
Greycrook, St Boswells, TD6 0EQ
T: 01835 822456
E: healthschemes@sruc.ac.uk
W: www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk