

PSGHS NEWS

Premium Sheep and Goat Health Schemes

2021 Issue



- 2 Rule Change Reminder for MV & CAE Schemes
- 3 Buyer Beware! Replacements / Embryo Recipients
- 3 Note on Diagnostic Sample Submission
- 4 The Graze Debate
- 5 New PSGHS Monitoring Schemes
- 5 New SRUC Website
- 6 Scrapie Monitoring Scheme Rule Updates
- 7 Member Profile David & Carolyn Gill
- 7 Member Profile Laura Hinnekens
- 8 New Export Rules
- 9 Meet The Team



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PSGHS NEWS

Welcome to the 2021 edition of **PSGHS News**. We all patiently wait for some sense of normality and the chance to be able to meet our members at shows and events again. Until that day comes, this edition will bring you up to speed on all the latest developments within the Sheep and Goat Health Schemes. We hope you enjoy this issue and you can follow us on our social media accounts and visit our new website to keep up to date with further health schemes news.



End of Covid-19 Extension Period for MV Testing

As we have previously made our members aware, we extended MV/CAE status for those who completed a Covid Declaration, giving overdue members until the end of May 2021 before status lapsed. This deadline is unlikely to be extended further so we are encouraging you to arrange to have your overdue testing completed before 31/05/2021

All test paperwork has been posted out as tests became due. However, if you are unaware of your due date and/or have mislaid your paperwork please contact us and we will clarify your due date and, if necessary, send out paperwork. The date for the subsequent test will remain as it would have been had the test been performed at the original due date. As usual, any accredited animals moving flocks will require a test 6–12 months after joining the new flock, and we also recommend a point-of-purchase test. This will help to mitigate any slight increase in risk caused by the extension.

Events

Unfortunately, many of the events that we would normally attend have again been cancelled in 2021. At the time of publication, we are still hoping that the following events will go ahead:

- Great Yorkshire Show – 13th to 15th July
- Westmorland County Show – 9th September
- Borderway Agri-Expo – 29th October
- Agrifest South West – TBC (November)
- AgriScot – 17th November

We hope to be able to return to all of the shows that we typically exhibit at in 2022, including NSA and NBA trade shows and large agricultural shows. Please keep an eye on our social media accounts for further updates on where we will be exhibiting:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SRUCVets Twitter: [@SRUCVets](https://twitter.com/SRUCVets)



Rule Change Reminder for MV & CAE Schemes

We wanted to take the chance to remind all our MV and CAE scheme members, the following new rules were introduced from the 1st January 2019.

Rule 4.1.2 is particularly important for members on two or three yearly testing as the longer window between flock/herd tests increases the risk of infection spreading from added animals.

A brief outline of each rule is given below – you can read the full version of the rules at: http://bit.ly/MV_CAE_Rules

Rule 2.5.2 – Non-MV/CAE accredited animal screen

If accredited and non-accredited animals are kept on the same holding, a screen of 12 non-accredited animals must be performed at the time of every Routine Periodic Blood Test.

Rule 4.1.2 – Adding MV/CAE accredited animals to an MV/CAE accredited flock/herd

All MV/CAE accredited animals added to an accredited flock/herd must be tested between 6 and 12 months after arrival.

Rule 4.1.3 & 4.1.4 – Imported animals, semen and embryos

Imported animals, semen and embryos that are accredited under a non-UK scheme must be kept isolated or not used/implanted until authorisation is given by the PSGHS vet to add them to an accredited flock.

Buyer Beware! Replacements / Embryo Recipients

Livestreaming and online purchasing means that it is more important than ever before not to accept pretty pictures and impressive videos at face value without background health checks! Added animals are the main source disease into a flock. Buying in disease can destroy years of flock improvement and high health status, so putting effort in pre-purchase will reap rewards down the line!



Do those background checks and ask questions!

Check out health status statements by the vendor and check that correct animals are listed on the health status report and it is within date with the correct owner details.

- **Have these sheep been born on the farm?**

If they were born on the farm, does the vendor have proof of MV accredited health status in the form of a PSGHS Health Status Report. You can also check vendor details on our member database www.psghs.co.uk or call **01835 822456** (sometimes members have not given their permission to be listed).

- **Have these sheep been bought in by the vendor?**

Where were these sheep born and does the vendor have details of their farm of origin? If they were bought in as accredited, request to see a Health Status Report given to the vendor when he bought the sheep with their ID listed, and use the PSGHS database if necessary.

If these animals were bought in as non-MV accredited (typical for recipient ewes) they need to have passed 2 qualifying tests to be classed as MV accredited. Remember to have passed 2 QT they must be at least 18 months old. Any younger and this is not possible within PSGHS rules. Ask for proof of lab tests or certificates if they are being sold as MV accredited.

- **Do these sheep have their original ear tags – if not why?**

Check that any replacement tags are recorded and cross referenced against their original tags.

If you are satisfied enough to make a purchase

As well as the mandatory testing listed below, all purchased sheep should be isolated on arrival for at least one month (tested and treated for relevant diseases) before being mixed with the flock. In the case of MV accreditation the following applies:

- ALL bought in Accredited animals MUST be tested 6-12 months after arrival, we recommend a point of purchase test too (not mandatory).
- When added animal testing is performed at the same time as your routine periodic blood test, please remember that these animals are IN ADDITION to the calculated number required for the routine test. (if over 55 animals, use testing table to calculate).
- Imported animals under a non-UK Scheme MUST be kept isolated until authorised by PSGHS (authorisation also applies to imported semen/embryos).

Non-accredited animals MUST be isolated and pass two QT at 12 months of age and older before joining flock.

If in doubt check www.psghs.co.uk accredited status or call the bureau on **01835 822456**.

Note on Diagnostic Sample Submission

We can no longer use samples submitted for health scheme testing for additional non-health scheme related diagnostic tests. If you wish to submit

samples for further diagnostic testing unrelated to the health schemes, please provide additional samples and complete the separate diagnostic submission form that can be downloaded from [our website](#).



The Graze Debate

In February 2021, SAC Consulting hosted the second Graze Debate conference online. This was targeted at those wishing to start using rotational grazing.

Evening 1 – Farmer’s Night

Three experienced rotational graziers: Colina Humphrey from Dunblane, Tom Stobart from near Penrith and James Drummond from Northumberland, discussed simple ways to get started, e.g. moving stock around fields more, splitting big fields in half and bringing stock groups together. Rest periods varied from as short as 14 days at peak to 120 days in the winter – according to grass growth.

The farmers had moved from dedicated silage production with fertiliser to opportunistic silage from paddocks when the grass started getting ahead. Their paddock sizes are around 1ha to 1.6ha and mob sizes are determined by their handling capability. All were intending to rotationally graze in February/early March to graze winter dormant grass. They are all looking at increasing cattle to improve management, worm control and add flexibility.

#1 top tip: Get support. Find a mentor, a group, attend meetings, seek people in your area who are rotationally grazing and speak with them. Full recording [here](#).

Evening 2 – SAC Advisor Night

For this evening, SAC Consulting advisors, Poppy Frater and Lorna Galloway, presented some practical approaches to getting started. Poppy introduced the ‘3-week 3-day’ approach, whereby you rest grass for three weeks and graze in three days. This gives flexibility to remove paddocks when grass growth is fast. She linked to a FAS Rotational Grazing Guide, which outlines a starting stocking density for different stock classes and target grass height on entry. Important point: be flexible, if grass height is not reaching target, increase rest, if it exceeds target, decrease rest.

Lorna described the basics of setting up the infrastructure. She suggests you map the relevant features (water, fencings, topography, soil types, wet areas) and start with the easiest areas. She discussed water, fencing and power to design a labour friendly system.

Finally, Poppy introduced the principles of feed budgeting at grass to fine tune your systems and improve decision-making. Full recording [here](#).

Evening 3 – Researcher Night

We welcomed researchers to present recent relevant grazing work. Aurelie Aubry, AgriFood Bioscience Research Institute, Northern Ireland, presented sheep paddock grazing work which indicated that four paddocks were better for lamb performance than 8 paddocks pre-weaning. Sarah Morgan, Rothamsted Research, showed early findings from cell grazing work at North Wyke research platform which was showing how cell grazing can increase liveweight produced per hectare. Claire Morgan-Davies and Malcolm MacDonald (SRUC) discussed virtual fencing technology and success with cattle in Scotland SRUC. Finally, Katherine Tozer AgResearch, New Zealand, presented NZ deferred grazing trials indicating the benefits of deferred grass to the plant energy levels, tillering and to the overall farm performance. Full recording [here](#).

The final night hosted a grass chat, where Poppy Frater, Lorna Galloway, James Drummond and Sarah Morgan returned to discuss the topic further. Recording available [here](#).

We hope these were useful, please contact us grazeup@sac.co.uk or visit [@SACGrazeUp](https://twitter.com/SACGrazeUp) on Twitter for more info.

PSGHS Monitoring Schemes

SRUC's newly launched Monitoring Schemes provide an opportunity for more sheep owners to cost effectively screen for Maedi Visna (MV) and Johne's Disease – including those who already have an accredited pedigree flock, as well as a larger unaccredited commercial flock.



Monitoring will be of value to all sheep owners wishing to minimise the impact of disease in their flocks, especially commercial sheep farmers with large flocks for whom the more stringent biosecurity requirements of the accreditation scheme may be a barrier to joining.

While PSGHS Accreditation is the gold standard, the monitoring schemes provide a level of assurance for buyers looking to reduce disease risk, making them particularly useful for producers of female breeding stock who want to provide reassurance to buyers. Members of the monitoring scheme test three groups of animals:

- **High risk animals – 12 per year for flocks below 500 animals or 20 per year for flocks over 500 animals**
- **All rams on the holding**
- **A proportion of added animals that are not from a monitored or accredited flock**

Samples are taken by your veterinary surgeon at least 6 weeks before animals are due to be sold. The 'high risk' animals for testing are to be selected by the vet, consisting of those that are thinner, have raised poor lambs or had a poor milk yield with no other apparent reason (such as lameness or dental disease).

The farm's vet will also need to carry out an annual appraisal of the biosecurity measures that are in place. In instances where disease is found, members can take a proactive approach to manage the disease with the help of their vet.

Membership of the monitoring scheme is just £40 per year, for one or both diseases, plus discounted testing rates for each disease. Visit www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk for information on PSGHS monitoring schemes or email psghs@sruc.ac.uk



New SRUC Website

SRUC has a brand new website, including new pages for PSGHS and the whole of Veterinary Services. We appreciate any feedback on your experience of using the site – please note that you can still access the PSGHS pages via the www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk url.

Also, the search function in the upper right corner of the site can be used to find anything you need, including health scheme forms.

The Health Scheme Member's Blog that we set up last year is now also hosted on the new site and is the best place to keep up to date with all PSGHS news.

Breed Society – Scrapie Genotyping

We are happy to assist breed societies that would like to collect samples for Scrapie Genotype testing from multiple farms; in order to get a reduced price per sample for bulk submissions.

For the best possible rate, batches should be comprised of 70 samples or more.

Any society interested in this can contact our Edinburgh lab to discuss the process for doing so: **0131 535 3130** or email vsenquiries@sruc.ac.uk.

Number of Samples	Price (per sample)
1-14	£32.00
15-29	£27.00
30-49	£21.50
50-69	£19.00
70+	£16.00

Scrapie Monitoring Scheme Rule Updates

The following applies in the old rules, and will also be in the new rules: There are three types of show/sale:

- **Dedicated** – Defra authorised events only for animals of a monitored status
- **Segregated** – Defra authorised events that allow animals of monitored status and animals of no status to attend with requirements for separate show rings, separate loading areas etc
- **Unsegregated** – all other shows/sales with no requirements for separate facilities for monitored/non-monitored status animals

Animals with a monitored status can attend unsegregated shows/sales in the May to August window, or throughout the entire year if the shows/sales are exclusively for male animals. At unsegregated shows/sales, animals with monitored status must not be transported with or penned with non-monitored status animals, and Negligible Risk animals (flock SMS for 7 years) must not be transported with or penned with Controlled Risk animals (flock SMS for 3 years).

The change in the new rules in this area is that they will have an explicit requirement that there is no nose-to-nose contact between SMS and non-SMS animals, and between Negligible Risk and Controlled Risk animals at any time, including at unsegregated shows and sales.

This is due to post-Brexit international trade arrangements, and is a Defra requirement. None of the movement/mixing restrictions apply to sheep that have a certificate of ARR/ARR genotype from a Defra-approved export laboratory (currently APHA and SRUC laboratories). You can find out more about the Scrapie Monitoring Scheme rules on our [digital brochure](#).

SAHPS – NEW HEALTH PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT MOBILE APP FOR BEEF FARMERS



- Record production/health data and share the information immediately with your vet
- Record medical treatments and create an e-medicine book
- Record movements/births/deaths and sync with BCMS
- Use the app offline and sync with SAHPS desktop and BCMS later



Special offers are available for existing SAHPS clients and SRUC's Health Schemes members.

For more info visit www.sahps.co.uk or email us enquiries@sahps.co.uk

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David and Carolyn Gill

Uping Down Flock

Chantmarle Farm, Frome Valley, Dorset

David and Carolyn first purchased two pedigree Shetland ewe lambs 8 years ago for the simple reason of wanting to manage a patch of grassland at their home in East Dorset on the edge of Cranborne Chase.

Having both worked as aeronautical engineers and business managers, their introduction to keeping sheep sprang from a conversation with a Shetland Sheep breeder at the Dorset County Show. Their flock is now the first to achieve the new monitored status for MV and Johne's Disease.

Settling on the Shetland breed because of the sheep's small size, primitive instincts and impressive fleeces, the Gills' flock has grown from the two lambs, keeping their patch of grassland under control, to currently just over one hundred sheep. Having moved to West Dorset three years ago, the flock is now run on just over 20 acres of south-west facing chalk hillside where the sheep graze outdoors all year round.

The flock has been built up entirely from private purchases, with David and Carolyn making the decision to invest progressively in a number of distinct blood lines. They now keep a closed flock, lambing in April, with the aim of growing their breeding flock steadily. As one of the larger flocks of pedigree Shetlands on the UK mainland, the Gills are also active members of the Shetland Sheep Society and currently produce the monthly members' newsletter.

David and Carolyn focus on producing high quality pedigree rams and specialise in breeding patterned 'katmoget' Shetlands that have badger markings on their faces and dark legs and bellies. They show the best of their flock each year at

agricultural shows, with significant success in recent years. In 2019, a home-bred ram was the Reserve Show Champion at the RBST National Show at the Three Counties, Malvern, and in 2018 a pair of their rams were the Show Reserve Champion Pair at the Dorset County Show, coming a close runner-up to a pair of Texels. David and Carolyn shear with hand blades, and as well as spinning and knitting the wool themselves, they also plan to handweave it and sell handwoven products straight from the farm. Other ventures include selling Shetland hogget locally each summer and keeping a few colonies of honey bees.

The Gills take great pride in the fact that the Uping Down flock is the first to achieve SRUC's monitored status for MV and Johne's Disease. They are committed to maintaining their flock to best-practice health and welfare standards and want to have confidence that the sheep are not suffering from these iceberg diseases. David commented: **"Our aim is to maintain a sustainable, high-welfare flock that is free from disease. Since joining the scheme we feel reassured that MV and Johne's are highly unlikely to be present in our flock and that we have a system in place to help us maintain this status. We are also pleased to offer the Shetland Sheep breed some resilience in case of future national disease emergencies."**

While considering themselves to still be relative newcomers to farming, David and Carolyn have made great strides in future-proofing their business, and aim to continue to improve their flock management based on modern technologies and latest sheep health and welfare advice.

For more information on the Uping Down Flock visit www.upingdownshetlands.co.uk



Laura Hinnekens

Quothquan, Biggar, Lanarkshire

Laura came to the UK from Belgium nearly 5 years ago with just her car and a pack of dogs, having graduated in Agronomy from Liège University.

Laura comments, "I am not from a farming background whatsoever, but I have always been obsessed by animals and I was desperate to come to Scotland. During my studies I came back and forward to do some work experience in the UK. I could speak very little English and had no idea what shepherding really was. It was an exciting time in my life!"

After first being employed on a hill farm, Laura then became self-employed and built up a network of farms where she lambed, gathered and did general sheep work, but always with the hope to start her own flock. Then two years ago, she met a farm adviser through her partner Euan, who introduced her to Andy and Lyn Barr from Biggar.

Andy and Lyn were looking for a new entrant, with a view to being able to get a young person started and prove that on a small farm with a little help, it was possible to establish a flock and ultimately go onto to a larger business.

Andy said, "Lyn and I had talked for several years about our wish to give a young person the chance to get a foot hold in farming and came across Laura through a farm consultant friend. She was exactly the kind of candidate we were looking for, being incredibly enthusiastic, hard-working and with a clear vision of her ambitions. We also knew that our Parkhouse holding alone was not large enough at 150 acres, to make a living from. Another income was needed to supplement a flock on the farm. Laura breeds, trains and sells working sheep dogs and also does contract shepherding so she was able to supplement her income from the farm. We were always keen to find out the sustainable potential of the farm in producing healthy disease-

free stock and knew Laura was the very person to help us achieve that."

Laura now owns 300 North Country Cheviots in lamb to traditional Bluefaced Leicesters, 100 Cheviot Mules in lamb to Texels and 100 to the pure Cheviots. She also intends to sell 200 MV accredited mule gimmers this year.

Laura intends to run a disease-free closed flock as much as possible. Having invested heavily in the future health of the flock, all bought in breeding stock were tested for Maedi Visna and are now fully accredited, having passed their second qualifying test last summer.

Having been influenced to join the scheme after seeing the benefits in Andy and Lyn's pedigree Texel flock, Laura has incorporated selling accredited gimmers as part of her business model and believes that further benefits will come from having lower replacement cost and disease-free stock.

Some of the Cheviots are kept pure for replacement but the majority go to the traditional Bluefaced Leicester or Texel. Laura added, **"the lambs are doing fantastic at the market and as lamb boxes. They also give excellent strong Cheviot cross ewe lambs which will be sold as MV accredited gimmers for breeding."**

In order to further the health of the flock Laura is also taking part in the Targeted Selective Treatment (TST) trial led by the Moredun Research Institute in partnership with other experts. This trial targets individual rather than

whole flock worming optimising treatment to combat wormer resistance.

“This new entrant opportunity is an amazing way for me to gain more experience but also to build up my numbers and to buy assets to be able to jump into the next step,” Laura adds. However, this opportunity isn’t permanent and at the end of the 5 years lease, Laura will have to find another farm and more new challenges, to give room to another young entrant.

Laura was recently offered a contract on a hill farm close by in the Scottish Borders. The farm is stocked with 800 Scottish Blackface run on 1600 hectares. She hopes to use the experience that she has previously learnt on many hill farms to improve the flock and looks forward to the increased responsibility.

On her sheep dog ventures Laura says, “I’m really dedicated to my dogs; they make my work so much easier. I train my own dogs and sell some at times. I also enjoy competing. The sheepdog world is amazing, you get to know people and see new places. I have had many job opportunities through it and I’m very grateful to be part of this community.”

Laura has also given sheepdog tuition in several countries including Belgium, France, Switzerland, Canada, and America. She qualified for the Belgian team with Fudji to run at the World trial in 2014 and after moving into Scotland, made the 15th place with Meg in the Scottish team in 2018. She qualified for the Four Nations after getting the 6th place at the Scottish nursery final in 2020 with her dog Zorg.

In terms of her motivation, Laura emphasises her goal to change negative perceptions of agriculture and wanting to promote the positive aspects of farming. Laura and her partner Euan have started a new venture of selling lamb and mutton boxes direct to customers and use social media and YouTube for promotion and education (as well as channels for their sheepdog content). They have also previously given demonstrations with sheep and sheepdogs at a local school and hope to do more of this when possible.

Lawhill Lamb (lamb and mutton boxes)
www.lawhilllamb.co.uk | [YouTube](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

SheShepherds (sheepdog and shepherding)
[YouTube](#) | [Facebook](#)



New Export Rules

Exporters of sheep/goats and germplasm from Great Britain to the EU and Northern Ireland now need to meet additional requirements for export certification, health declarations and scrapie regulation. This article gives you an overview of what needs to be done and who to contact.

1. Export Certificates

[Visit the official website](#) which details the changes in the certification process and includes information for Official Veterinarians and farmers.

If you have any queries about Export Health Certificates, please email livestockexports@apha.gov.uk at APHA.

2. Health Declarations

Health declarations need to be made regarding Johnes disease, CLA, OPA, MV/CAE and contagious agalactia. Further details are available on the website above.

Where an owner can provide proof of SRUC's PSGHS status (MV/CAE Accredited status or Johnes disease Risk Level 1 or 2); this will be accepted as evidence of status for those diseases.

3. Classical Scrapie

Those trading from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will need to meet new scrapie requirements.

Animals/germplasm must either come from holdings that meet the legal definition of Controlled Risk under the Scrapie Monitoring Scheme, or must have a genetic test from a Defra-approved lab showing that they are resistant to the disease (ARR/ARR) and they come from a holding which has had no restrictions imposed due to BSE or scrapie during the last two years.

SRUC can provide advice on SMS membership to help businesses adapt to the new requirements. Relevant advice and rules can be found [on our website](#) or for more info email: psghs@sruc.ac.uk

(For all Export queries contact APHA Centre for International Trade, Carlisle Tel: **03000 200 301** or Email: livestockexports@apha.gov.uk

Do not Forget Existing Requirements!

Traders will also need to continue to comply with existing requirements, including Northern Ireland import requirements for MV/CAE from Great Britain. [More info can be found here.](#)

Injury and Infection Following Routine Treatments

It is not unusual for SRUC Veterinary Services to diagnose injury or infection resulting from routine treatments as the cause of death in sheep submitted for postmortem examination.

Bolus and drenching gun injuries often come to light one to two weeks after the animals have been handled. Affected sheep can appear dull and reluctant to eat or may be found dead. Blood around the nose and mouth is sometimes reported. Others develop a swelling under the lower jaw that can be mistaken for signs of liver fluke infection.

Postmortem examination usually reveals a circular wound penetrating through the tissues at the back of the throat caused by the end of the dosing gun. The damaged tissues then become infected. Multiple deaths are not uncommon and, given that the damage is usually severe and infection well established prior to a diagnosis being reached, the prognosis for any remaining affected animals is poor.

The risk of introducing infection during routine administration of vaccines is increased if the sheep are wet or dirty. An abscess may develop at the injection site; the bacteria can infect adjacent tissues causing a cellulitis; or they may spread via the bloodstream to other sites such as the lungs or joints. Swelling at the injection site is not always obvious and affected animals may appear lame or be found dead. If infection tracks into the spinal canal sheep may be found down and unable to rise. Inadvertent injection of products into the spinal canal has also been seen. Treatment is often unsuccessful and losses can be high. It is important to use appropriate well-maintained equipment, employ adequate restraint, and administer all products with care following the guidance given by the manufacturer.



Meet the Team



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