

# PSGHS NEWS

Premium Sheep and Goat Health Scheme



2018 Issue

We look forward to meeting you as we travel round the country this show season. Do come and visit John and Alison on the PSGHS stand. We still have a long way to go educating commercial producers about Maedi Visna. Please contact us if you would like us to come and talk about Health Schemes at a farm walk or Breed Society Meeting.

## MV Accreditation Scheme – Rule Change

As of September 2017, the MV Accreditation Scheme's rules were modified to take into consideration cases where a single animal in a flock tests positive for the disease. This is referred to in Rule 7.1.3 which states:

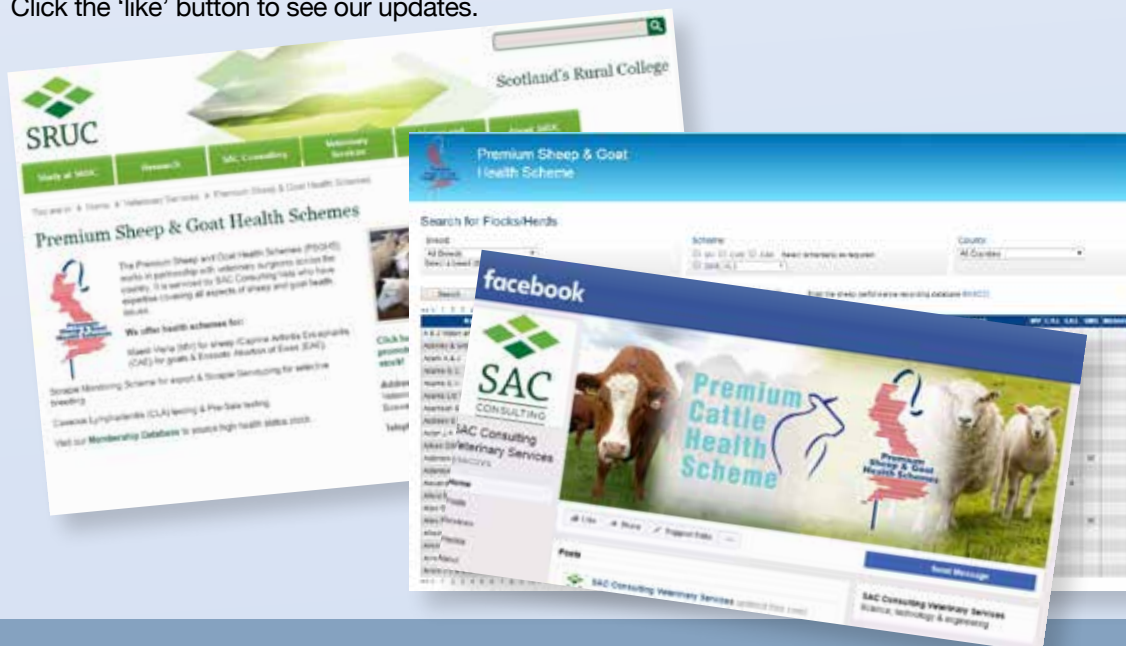
- Where there is a Routine Periodic Blood Test failure with a single animal reactor, the re-accreditation time-scale for the flock will be assessed by the PSGHS on an individual flock basis, following consideration of the biosecurity risk factors that apply.

## Website and Facebook

You can find everything that you need to know at [www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk](http://www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk)

- Downloadable versions of all our health scheme forms and documents for sample submissions, up to date rules for each scheme, past copies of our newsletters and more
- A new FAQ section, where we have added answers to the questions that we are asked most often by our members
- The PSGHS Member Database, listing contact details for all of our members who have opted in. The database can be filtered by breed, scheme and county and shows up to date accreditation status for each disease, making it an invaluable tool for marketing your stock as well as for sourcing animals that match your own accreditation status.

Visit [www.facebook.com/SACCVS](https://www.facebook.com/SACCVS) or search 'SAC Consulting Veterinary Services' on Facebook. Click the 'like' button to see our updates.



- 1 MV Accreditation Scheme - Rule Change
- 1 Website and Facebook
- 2 Maedi visna wipe out – cull and restock!
- 3 A Busy First Year for SRUC's New Mobile CT Scanner
- 4 You can get PIs in sheep too!!!
- 5 Practical Buying Guide for flock owners
- 5 Reduced price of scrapie genotyping using more efficient 3-codon test
- 5 The PSGHS Advisory Board
- 6 New Johne's Disease Health Scheme
- 6 Show and Sales Inspections
- 7 Scrapie Monitoring Scheme – Bitesize Rules
- 8 Events

John Scholefield Editor

PSGHS, SAC Veterinary Services, Greycrook, St Boswells, Roxburghshire TD6 0EQ

T: 01835822456 F: 01835823643 E: [psghs@sac.co.uk](mailto:psghs@sac.co.uk) W: [www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk](http://www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk)

SAC Consulting is a division of SRUC. SRUC is a charity registered in Scotland, No. SC003712



# Maedi visna wipe out – cull and restock!

Maedi visna (MV) virus infection is becoming more commonly diagnosed as a cause of major production losses in commercial flocks and is an increasing threat to the UK sheep industry. The importance of MV accredited flocks should not be understated. Accredited flocks are now in demand as a source of MV free replacements.

“I was impressed from the very first time I saw the Lleyn ewes” says Jimmy Law who farms at Baillieknowe near Kelso. Unfortunately their Greyface flock was wiped out by MV in the Summer of 2017 so they decided to source MV accredited Lleyn replacements.

Jimmy refers to it as the perfect storm! They scanned the original flock of mules last Jan at 215%. “The ewes looked in fantastic fettle but within a month after housing they were all skin and bone” commented Jimmy. They put it down to the stress of housing at lambing time and they were also aware the flock had problems with Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma (OPA) also known as Jaagsiekte.

The flock was blood tested after lambing and they found 61% of the flock was infected with MV. Following a meeting in May between the flock owner, land agent, Jimmy and vets they decided to cull the entire Greyface flock. “There were just too many infected sheep to attempt to separate out infected animals from non infected animals” Jimmy explained. “The financial loss was massive! We only got fat value for 800 breeding mules and Texel tups! - it was a traumatic year - farmers simply don't appreciate how bad it is!”

## Farm Health Overview

- The flock had had an ongoing problem with poor milk production in ewes with lambs taking longer to finish.
- At tupping time 7% of the ewes were found to have signs chronic mastitis.
- Ewes were in good condition at scanning time but by lambing around 50% were in poor body condition and had insufficient milk supplies.
- Due to this a large number of lambs had to be reared on artificial milk and took longer to finish requiring supplementation with creep feed.
- As part of the investigation post mortem examinations of three ewes were performed by the local Veterinary Investigation Centre and MV infection was confirmed in all three.

A source of accredited mules could not be found and the decision was made to restock with MV accredited Lleyns. Jimmy managed to source MV accredited replacement Lleyns just 6 miles away. The sellers were

cutting down numbers due to their shepherd's ill health so they bought all their ewes and tups from them and plan to operate a completely closed flock operating a family system of breeding. The farm is now a member of the PSGHS. Jimmy who is preparing to lamb their new flock says “I thought MV accreditation was a bit of a gimmick for selling sheep until last year! It all happened so quickly – within 6 weeks!”



*MV infection can cost £30/ewe in commercial flocks (higher in Pedigree flocks) in lost production but £1000s if the infection means a complete re stock!*

As more commercial flocks are being diagnosed with MV there will be an increased demand for maternal breeds that are MV accredited.

## MV facts and symptoms

- The words ‘maedi’ and ‘visna’ are Icelandic words meaning ‘gasping or panting’ and ‘shrinking or wasting’ respectively
- MV was introduced into the UK through imported sheep over 30 years ago
- It has a long incubation period and is subtle and slow to develop
- Symptoms include weight loss, breathlessness, mastitis and reduced milk yield and swollen joints
- Production losses may include poor lambing percentages and reduced lamb weaning weights.
- Transmission is via nose to nose contact, colostrum and infected equipment
- It is fatal, with no current cure or vaccine available.
- MV is difficult to diagnose due to its long incubation period and the fact clinical signs are often not seen until at least 50 per cent of the sheep in a flock are infected. It is possible to carry out a blood test for the antibody to MV
- An initial screen of 12 cull ewes will tell you if MV is the likely cause of disease in your flock.
- The longer the disease circulates in your flock the harder it will be to eradicate or control it and the more impact it will have on your flock's productivity
- To keep MV out of a flock, only purchase breeding replacements from MV accredited flocks and avoid contact with MV-positive stock

# A Busy First Year for SRUC's New Mobile CT Scanner

The new mobile CT scanner run by Scotland's Rural College, has completed its first year on the road. The scanner, in its purpose built trailer, provides livestock breeders, processors and researchers with unique insights into meat yields, fat distribution and other traits important for the meat supply chain.



Over the course of the year, the unit was located at sites in Aberystwyth, Dorset, Devon and Warwickshire, as well as its home base in Edinburgh.



Jointly funded by SRUC and Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock (CIEL), one of the four Agri-Tech Innovation Centres supported by UK Government, the new multi-slice scanner is fast, capturing 16 images at once. It not only collects more detailed information about the subject but, because of its speed, offers improved welfare as live animals spend less time in the process, compared to previous CT scanners. It can also generate 3-D images, offering new ways to measure traits linked to the animal's composition, conformation and shape or product quality.

SRUC's Animal and Veterinary Sciences group has operated a scanning service for the last two decades. While they are best known for their work with pedigree sheep they have also worked with live fish, plants, soil cores and even meat joints. They are keen to expand these services and offer the opportunity to other researchers, breeders and institutes to use CT in their work. **SRUC-BioSS CT Unit, Pentland Building, Bush Estate, Penicuik EH26 0PH Tel: 01315353251**

## You can get PIs in sheep too!!!

Border Disease Virus (BDV) is the sheep equivalent of BVD and is spread by animals that are born persistently infected with border disease virus (PIs). PI lambs never produce antibodies to border disease and can be ill thriven. They may scour and die around weaning time but some appear normal and survive to maturity. They continue to shed virus for their whole life acting as a source of infection to other sheep. Border disease virus can infect cattle but this is a very rare occurrence. It is much more common for BVD to spread from cattle to sheep. High losses from infertility, abortions and eventually lamb deaths follow the introduction of a PI animal to susceptible pregnant ewes. What can you do to avoid problems?

- Maintain stock proof boundaries that prevent nose to nose contact.
- Do not graze/house pregnant ewes alongside cattle.
- Blood sample purchased sheep and screen for Border Disease virus (see buying guide article).
- Run purchased ewes in isolation from the rest of the flock from arrival until after lambing. This is also good practice to guard against the spread of other causes of abortion such as EAE, salmonella and campylobacter.
- Consider testing some sheep in your flock for Border Disease antibody when you do your routine MV test to check Border Disease status.
- Screen sheep pre sale to promote the health status of your flock and protect your reputation as a reliable source of breeding replacements.



# Practical Buying Guide for flock owners

Buying flock replacements can be a risky business; a healthy looking animal may be carrying disease. Don't be afraid to ask direct questions about an animal's health status. One wrong assumption can potentially devastate profits in your own flock. The table below gives a summary of recommendations for best practice when purchasing replacement animals.

Before purchasing it is important to consider what diseases might be present in your own flock. Discuss screening of both accredited and commercial flocks for production limiting diseases such as Johne's disease, border disease and CLA with your own vet.

Purchasing animals for Maedi visna accredited flock - a reminder

Prior to buying an MV accredited animal you can check the flock's status at [www.psghs.co.uk](http://www.psghs.co.uk) (most members have given PSGHS permission for us to display their information and it covers Scrapie Monitoring, EAE and CAE as well as MV) or ask to see their MV/CAE Health Status Report and check it is within date.

## Purchasing MV accredited animals

- The biggest cause of flock breakdowns amongst MV Members is **added animals!**
- Always ask to check the seller's health status report and ensure it is within date and still valid.
- All added animals coming from MV accredited flocks must be tested within 12 months of purchase
- Purchasing animals through markets and transporting animals poses a potential disease risk.

## Purchasing non accredited animals

- Non MV accredited animals **MUST NOT** have any contact with your MV accredited flock
- Non accredited animals must have passed two qualifying tests 6-12 months apart and written confirmation of these results must be received before they are added to your flock

**Good biosecurity applies to goat owners too - see CAE Rules!**



Disease	Recommendations
Maedi Visna	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Purchase from accredited flocks and test within 12 months of purchase</li> </ol> OR <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Quarantine and test immediately</li> <li>3. Repeat test in 6 months before release from quarantine</li> </ol>
EAE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Purchase from accredited flocks</li> <li>2. Keep purchased ewes separate from tugging until after lambing</li> </ol> OR <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Avoid buying pregnant or maiden ewes</li> <li>4. Avoid buying in foster lambs</li> <li>5. Quarantine and blood test bought in sheep</li> </ol>
Sheep scab	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep in quarantine for 1 month</li> <li>2. Treat with suitable product or consider blood sampling after discussion with your vet</li> </ol>
Scrapie	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Buy in from NSP flocks only</li> <li>2. Blood test bought in sheep for PrP genotype</li> <li>3. Ensure seller's flock free from disease</li> </ol>
CLA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check for lumps in skin</li> <li>2. Ensure seller's flock free from disease</li> <li>3. Blood sample for CLA antibody</li> </ol>
CODD and footrot	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quarantine, foot bath and observe</li> <li>2. Check feet after 7 and 14 days</li> </ol>
OPA/ Jaagsiekte	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Request information about flock's OPA status</li> <li>2. Discuss the pros and cons of scanning the lungs with your vet.</li> <li>3. If any animals die investigate the cause of death.</li> </ol>
Orf	Check for damaged skin and scabs typical of orf infection at the following sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lamb faces, mouths, feet</li> <li>• ewe udders, inner thighs</li> <li>• ram's poll</li> </ul>
Border disease	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quarantine for 1 month</li> <li>2. Blood test for border disease virus (PCR)</li> </ol>
Johne's disease	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Request information about flock's Johne's status</li> <li>2. Consider testing blood or faeces for Johne's disease.</li> </ol>

## Tips for Commercial Flocks

As a useful rule of thumb all purchased sheep should be isolated on arrival for at least one month (and tested as necessary) before being mixed with the home flock.

If purchasing from an auction mart and using transportation there is potential for cross infection.

It's no good buying in high health status animals if your flock is infected. They won't perform if they are exposed to a heavy disease burden in their new home – get your flock screened so you are aware of disease risks within your home flock. Undertake an annual screen of 12 older thinner ewes to monitor flock health.

# Reduced price of scrapie genotyping using more efficient 3-codon test



The selection of breeding stock with genetic resistance to scrapie over the past 25 years, together with measures to improve the safety of animal feed, has resulted in scrapie becoming a disease that is diagnosed rarely. Nevertheless, ongoing genetic selection for disease resistance is still required. SACCVS have been running an improved scrapie genotyping test since April 2017.

All samples submitted to SAC Consulting Veterinary Services are given a 3-codon (136/154/171) result. Previously a 2 codon test result was also an option, however the majority of clients opt for the 3 codon test as this is the one required for export.

The benefit of this improved test for the sheep breeder is its reduced price for 3-codon at £30/animal for 1 – 14 samples, and £25/animal for 15 or more samples against the former price of £32 (+VAT). Further price savings for larger batches are also available (£15/animal for 70 or more samples). Allowing breeders to test pedigree ewes and lambs for breeding stock, sales and management decisions.

The test places the sheep into one of five scrapie risk categories. Breeders are advised to select those with the greatest protection against scrapie so as to minimise the risk of the sheep and its offspring developing the fatal brain disease.

For more information visit [www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk](http://www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk)

## Interesting Scrapie Facts

- 1. Scrapie is a fatal neurological disease of sheep and goats. The disease is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy; one of a family of such diseases including BSE seen in cattle and CJD in man. These diseases occur in adult animals. Scrapie is a notifiable disease.**
- 2. Sheep in the scrapie susceptibility category risk group 1 (ARR/ARR) can be freely traded within the EU. Breeders of sheep with high genetic merit are advised to select breeding animals from the most resistant scrapie susceptibility groups to avoid the disease.**
- 3. The genetics of scrapie susceptibility in sheep were elucidated 30 years ago. Since then various selective breeding programmes have increased the genetic resistance to the disease of the British and European sheep flocks.**



**The PSGHS Advisory Board** meets face to face each year in June and by conference call in December/January each year to discuss a range of issues related to sheep and goat health and the running of our national schemes. We are extremely grateful for the time and effort that the board commit in support of PSGHS.

Current members include:

- Jonathan Barber (representing Charollais Society /NSA)
- John Matthews (veterinary surgeon and representative for goat breeders)
- David Knowles (representing Lleyn Society)
- Robin McIlrath (representing Suffolk Sheep Society)
- Andy Barr (representing Texel Society)
- Harriet Fuller (representing Sheep Veterinary Society)
- Phil Stocker (representing NSA)

SAC Consulting Veterinary Services members include:

- George Caldo (Head of Veterinary Services)
- Lynn Gibson (PSGHS Veterinary Manager)
- Alison Braddock (Business Development Manager)

# New Johne's Disease Health Scheme

As with the Johne's Disease health scheme for cattle, the sheep and goat equivalent is based on a risk level accreditation, ranging from Risk Level 1 to Risk Level 5 with 1 being the optimum level.

The same bacteria cause Johne's disease in cattle, sheep and goats, making this scheme not only useful for sheep owners who also have cattle, but for any flocks which may come into close proximity with any cattle (or other sheep that have been in contact with cattle). The bacteria can survive for many months on pasture and may be carried by wildlife such as deer and rabbits.

As the signs of the disease take a few years to develop and because scour is less often seen in affected sheep than in cattle, the disease can spread throughout a flock undetected. Loss of condition is the main symptom, while bottle jaw may be seen in the later stages. Young lambs and lambs around weaning are the most susceptible to infection.



Control measures can include:

- Avoiding co-grazing of sheep with cattle and keeping stocking rates as low as possible
- Using plenty of bedding and dagging ewes if necessary will also help
- Moving stock out of the lambing shed/field into lower risk areas as soon as possible
- Culling suspected and confirmed cases as soon as possible and not keeping the offspring of infected animals as replacements
- Providing mains water from clean troughs where possible
- Weaning lambs onto grass that was not previously grazed by adult sheep that year
- Vaccination will reduce losses but it will not eradicate Johne's from a flock or herd and would negate the use of the blood test in the health scheme

Testing for the scheme can be done by taking blood, faecal or milk samples, with either annual blood tests for all animals over 12 months or quarterly individual milk tests for milking flocks to gain accreditation. Members of the scheme must also follow the scheme rules for biosecurity and quarantine procedures as well as having a health plan in place.

Members of the MV accreditation scheme do not have to pay any additional membership fees to join the Johne's scheme and receive discounted rates for blood testing for Johne's. For more information and to download the scheme rules and price list visit the website.

## Show and Sales Inspections

Anyone running a show or sale involving MV/CAE accredited stock MUST register for approval with the Dumfries office. There are over 125 events on our books taking place around the country. Each event must have a plan of the showground/sales area and arrangements for keeping MV/CAE accredited animals separated from non accredited animals particularly with regard to:

- Penning
- Unloading and reloading
- Routes of movement e.g. from pens to sale/exhibition ring including Grand Parade
- Judging arrangements

There were forty three show/sale inspections in 2017 and rule infringements were picked up at a third of these. Any rule breaches were reported and appropriate action taken as well as a repeat inspection the following year. The main areas of concern included:

1. Incorrect signage - signs must read "MV accredited" or "non MV accredited".
2. Certificates not checked prior to unloading - this rule applies even if a copy has been received prior to the show/sale.
3. Routes for MV accredited and non MV accredited sheep not clearly marked.
4. Disinfection of judge's hands not carried out between mouthing individual sheep - this rule applies even in the MV accredited ring. This issue can be avoided if mouthing is carried out by the handler rather than the judge.
5. Event not registered with SACCVS - no approval letter received.
6. Loading in incorrect areas - MV accredited sheep loaded from non MV accredited area and vice versa.
7. Tup taxis - MV accredited and non MV accredited sheep should not be carried in the same taxi - a 2m gap must be applied at all times. Tup taxis must be washed out between sheep.

Despite these issues, in many cases, inspectors were complimentary about the level of understanding shown by organisers and the efforts being made to comply. We wish all our members a successful show season!

### Farms

A proportion of member farms are inspected at random each year. Emergency inspections follow a breakdown or someone reporting rule infringements. Please check that you are able to keep to the rules which are available online and you are fully prepared if your premises is inspected [www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk](http://www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk)

# Scrapie Monitoring Scheme – Bitesize Rules



At present there is no practical test that allows confirmation of diagnosis of scrapie in the individual. There is no vaccine to prevent the disease. The disease is invariably fatal.

## Risk Status

There are two risk levels within the Scrapie Monitoring Scheme:

- Controlled Risk is given to flocks/herds that have complied with the rules for a minimum of three years
- Negligible Risk is given to those that have complied with the scheme for a minimum of seven years.

For trading purposes animals must have been in the flock/ herd for this length of time for the relevant risk level to apply, or have been on the monitored holding since birth.

## Export

If you wish to move sheep or goats for breeding to EU Member States (and many other countries), you must join the Scrapie Monitoring Scheme. Austria, Denmark, Finland and Sweden will only allow import of animals from Negligible Risk flocks/herds.

## Monitoring

If any of your animals are showing clinical signs of Classical or Atypical Scrapie, and if you or the Official Veterinarian suspect that an animal is affected, there is a legal requirement to report the incident to the local APHA office.

Your holding must be checked at least annually by an Official Veterinarian to ensure your animals are not affected or at risk of being affected by Scrapie. The OV will also carry out checks to ensure that your flock/herd and the holding comply with the rules.

Any animal in the flock/herd over the age of 18 months that is culled or dies must be tested unless culled as part of an official disease eradication campaign or for reasons of physical injury only or for human consumption. Either the head of the animal or the whole carcass must be submitted to APHA, an SAC Disease Surveillance Centre or an agreed fallen stock collection centre.

## Contact

Animals from monitored holdings must not be allowed to come into contact with non-monitored animals. Animals from Negligible Risk holdings must not be allowed to come into contact with animals from Controlled Risk holdings.

Under no circumstances can the same premises or accommodation be used for lambing /kidding animals from both monitored and non-monitored flocks/ herds, or from negligible risk and controlled risk flocks/ herds, even if the lambing/kidding takes place at separate times.

If animals of a different risk status are kept on the same holding they must be kept as far apart as possible, ideally, at least 2 metres apart and must never be housed together. Equipment such as ear tattooing forceps, drenching guns, hypodermic needles, medicines etc. must not be shared between animals of a different risk status. Handling facilities and livestock trailers must be cleaned and disinfected between uses of animals of a different risk level status.

## Genetic Material

Embryos and semen for export must also comply with the rules of the scheme.

Donor animals must be:

- From a scrapie monitored flock since birth
- or
- Been part of a scrapie controlled flock for at least 3 years
- or
- Where rams (in the case of semen) and rams and ewes (in the case of embryos) are from animals with the ARR/ ARR prion protein genotype.



Rules available to download at [www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk](http://www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk)

# Events

Every year SAC Consulting Veterinary Services exhibit at a number of shows and events around the country to promote both the Premium Sheep & Goat Health Schemes and the Premium Cattle Health Scheme.

We have used these as an opportunity to run prize draws and exclusive show offers and we have met a huge number of existing health scheme members as well as people wanting to join.

Follow us on Twitter and like our Facebook page to keep up to date with where we will be and make sure you come and meet our team!



## 2018 Shows and Events:

- Dairy Sheep & Goat Conference – 19th and 20th February, Bristol
- NBA Beef Expo – 25th May, Shrewsbury
- NSA ScotSheep – 30th May, Ayrshire
- Royal Highland Show – 21st to 24th June, Edinburgh
- Great Yorkshire Show – 10th to 12th July, Harrogate
- NSA Sheep Event – 18th July, Malvern
- NSA South Sheep – 8th September, West Sussex
- Westmorland Show – 13th September, Cumbria
- Borderway Agri-Expo – 2nd November, Carlisle
- Agrifest South West – 7th November, Exeter
- Agriscot – 21st November, Edinburgh



**Alison Braddock**  
Marketing and Business  
Development Manager BSc (Hons)



**John Scholefield**  
Marketing and Business  
Development Officer BA

## Meet the Team



**George Caldwell**  
(Head of Veterinary Services)  
BVM&S, MSc, CertCHP,  
Dip ECBHM, FRAgS, MRCVS



**Heather Stevenson**  
BVMS, DSHP, MRCVS



**Barbara Watson**  
BVMS, MRCVS



**Lynn Gibson**  
(PSGHS Veterinary Manager)  
BVM&S, MRCVS



**Julie McDiarmid**  
(Senior PCHS  
Administration Manager)  
BSc (Hons)



[www.facebook.com/SACCVS](http://www.facebook.com/SACCVS)



[@SRUCVets](https://twitter.com/SRUCVets)

[www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk](http://www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk)