



**Sheep Veterinary Society**  
Division of the British Veterinary Association

March 2022

## Update from the President

It's fair to say that two years on, most of us would not have anticipated that high case numbers of Covid-19 would still be the backdrop against which we are all working and planning the next Sheep Veterinary Society conference. The gradual easing of restrictions has seen some face-to-face meetings restarting, though the majority are still via Teams / Zoom. The extensive use of virtual meetings has been a double-edged sword as the ease of joining them has led to a proliferation of requests for SVS involvement, but the Executive Committee have shared the load admirably.

While we look forward to meeting up and enjoying the craic in Belfast at our Spring conference, it's impossible to ignore the war in Ukraine. I recently listened to an interview with a Ukrainian sheep farmer, Grygoriy Minich, for the Scottish Farmer which detailed the uncertainties and difficulties of keeping livestock amid threats to water supply and the need for survival by supporting the military, whilst maintaining a staunch optimism despite plans for the future being in disarray. SVS has joined other membership organisations in offering free membership to vets who find themselves seeking refuge in the UK through the RCVS support scheme for refugees. This scheme is open to all refugee vets, not just those from Ukraine.



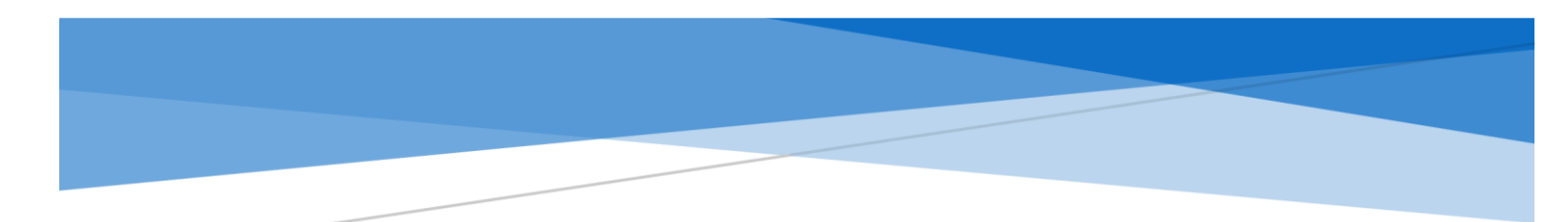
The Autumn conference in Cheltenham last September was, for many, the first opportunity to get together for sheep CPD and socialising in a long while. There was a wide range of interesting presentations and a high-quality parasitology workshop on the Monday morning. The conference ended with members departing clutching freshly cut sunflowers following a great farm visit to Overbury Estate and heads bursting with information on the integration of sheep in no-till agriculture. The AGM was also held during the conference and minutes are included.

Details about the upcoming conference in late May at the Hilton Templepatrick Golf and Country Club, on the outskirts of Belfast, are included in this mailing. The programme has a good mix of subject matter, and the Monday morning workshop will cover everything you need to know on liver fluke investigation and control. For the farm visit we are heading to the Glens of Antrim to a hill and upland farm which, as well as running 300 ewes, form a part of the Game of Thrones set. I look forward to seeing many of you there. An OGM will be held during the Belfast conference and any items for the agenda should be notified to the secretariat in advance please.

## COP26 and sustainability

One week into my presidency I received a call from a journalist, writing an editorial piece for the VetRecord, seeking my views on COP26 and the challenge of net zero greenhouse gas emissions relating to farmed livestock. This was unexpected and led to some late-night reading and fact checking! Though it did tee me up nicely for the BVA and divisions Sustainability workshop in early November, where each division was asked to summarise actions and issues for their sector. Sustainability is a key priority of the current BVA President, Justine Shotton.

SVS has committed to several actions including adopting the BVA food procurement policy at conferences, considering public transport links when organising events and getting local meetings restarted to reduce travel. It is likely that we will continue to have online events, such as the recent webinar with AHDB, to improve access to CPD for those with difficulties travelling to face-to-face conferences.



Issues around medicine usage were highlighted, particularly the environmental concerns of unnecessary treatments with macrocyclic lactones and disposal of organophosphate dips. BCVA has produced a policy statement on integrated anthelmintic use. The sheep industry has benefited over the years from the advice of SCOPS. Though the focus for reducing unnecessary treatments may have been to reduce anthelmintic resistance rather than from an environmental perspective the two aims are of course compatible. In many ways we are ahead of other sectors in this area,

To offset the increased impact of travel to the Belfast conference we have set up a Just Giving Page with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) charity <https://www.tcv.org.uk/northernireland/>. We would encourage you to donate [TCV Belfast & South East - JustGiving](#)

This charity works to create and improve green spaces and connect volunteers and communities with nature, benefitting both the environment and mental health. As an example, to offset CO2 equivalents (ranging from 0.15 – 0.24 tonnes depending on which calculator you use) for a flight from England to Northern Ireland equates to a donation of £2.24 - £5.00

### **Membership fees**

Reminder to members that your membership was due on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. Please check your standing order is for the correct amount. Details for membership fees are on the website.

### **SVS website**

The new website has now been live since June 2021. It's the place to find the latest news, events listings and information, and there will be a section added for the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway soon which will link to other resources providing information on the annual vet review visit, relevant training and more!

SVS members have additional access rights and can request to add their practice details in the 'Find a Vet' tool. There are also full conference proceedings (with a handy search function). Please get posting on the discussion forum as critical mass to encourage a good flow of information has yet to be reached. Information on joining SVS is also online so please promote membership to your colleagues.

Also on the website are a number of recorded webinars:

- AHDB/SVS webinar - BCS and genetics to improve ewe fertility and breeding
- SRUC - An update on OPA
- SRUC - Novel diagnostic techniques on OPA

### **Forthcoming events**

- SVS Spring conference, Templepatrick, Northern Ireland. 23-24<sup>th</sup> May 2022
- NSA Scotsheep, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 at Over Finlairg, near Dundee
- BVA Live – 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at NEC Birmingham
- NSA Sheep event at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022
- SVS Autumn conference in Penrith 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### **International Conferences**

- The 10th International Sheep Veterinary Congress (ISVC), 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in Seville, Spain
- The 11th International Sheep Veterinary Congress (ISVC), 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2025 in Woolongong, Australia

Next year, 2023, there will be only one face-to-face conference in the Autumn, as is the norm when the ISVC conference is in the Springtime. Based on feedback following events held online during the pandemic and since it has been agreed to continue with one face-to-face and one virtual meeting each year going forward. This improves access, reduces costs and will allow us to make good on our commitment to BVA sustainability aims. We are open

to changes in format / scheduling in the future, though it has often been a challenge to meet the costs of face-to-face conferences and so for now it is not viable to continue with two face-to-face meetings each year.

### 'Sheep Meet' local meetings, supported by Ceva Animal Health



Following a pause since 2019 we are very pleased to announce that the local meetings, now known as 'Sheep Meets' and supported by Ceva Animal Health are restarting! These are a good opportunity for vets in an area to get together and share information on all things ovine, with refreshments provided of course.

Anyone wishing to organise a 'Sheep Meet' should contact the SVS secretariat for more details. There is now scope to hold meetings for vets and farmers on a 'vet plus one' basis if the discussion topics are likely to be of interest to both audiences. It would be great to have meetings across the UK and to encourage young vets into working with sheep.

### Committee

At the September meeting we welcomed Jonathan Hobbs and Miranda Timmerman to the committee. We will be seeking two new members to join the Executive Committee at the Autumn conference. It would be great to have representation from different regions of the UK and different areas of veterinary work. This does not have to be an onerous task. Meetings are held online and there is scope for involvement in the working groups that are in your areas of interest. Over the years the Society's role has evolved and many industry working groups now benefit from our involvement. If you have ever felt as if SVS does not represent your views, then get involved! Speak to one of the current committee members if you'd like more information.

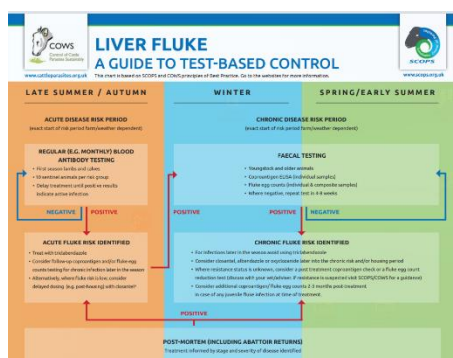
### BVA Consultations –

SVS were involved in multiple BVA consultations in the last six months including:

- EFRA committee - labour shortage in the food and farming sector (Sept21)
- BVA response and our own on DEFRA call for evidence on labelling (Dec21)

Meeting and consultation prior to the change in legislation on Non penetrating captive bolt devices and approval for euthanasia of young lambs, goats and piglets. The change in legislation to introduce non-penetrative captive bolt as an additional humane killing method came into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 (Annex I of retained Council Regulation (EC) 1099/2009). Concerns were raised by SVS on availability of devices and the importance of training to use and maintain the devices.

### SCOPS



A new infographic on Liver Fluke control and best use of diagnostics produced by SCOPS if you can't attend the CPD workshop on the Monday morning in Belfast then check this out and share within your practices to get the message out.

<https://sheepvet.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/FINAL-Fluke-Diagnostics-Treatment.pdf>

The SCOPS nematodirus forecast is live and always worth checking for the risk in your area when advising farmers

<https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>

### Red Tractor

Nick Hart was heavily involved in the reviewing of standards for the Red Tractor standards, which have applied since Autumn 2021. Jonathan Hobbs and Shona Mouncey have now taken on the role of representing SVS and will provide feedback on how the new standards are working in practice.

## **Medicines including The Responsible use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) and Sheep Antibiotic Guardian Group (SAGG)**

Recent meetings have focused on the launch of the 'Colostrum is gold' campaign on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 and collaboration with SVS resulting in the publication in December 2021 of the guidance for vets on appropriate prescribing for control of watery mouth in neonates. The guidance was updated earlier this month and is included with this mailing. It's relatively straightforward reaching SVS members, but it's important that this information reaches **all vets** who may be prescribing antibiotics to sheep flocks. Please circulate the information to colleagues who may not be SVS members but nevertheless would benefit from understanding the rationale behind the guidance.

VMD are reviewing the role and regulation of SQPs. Feedback was sought at relatively short notice, but was provided by SVS based on the thoughts and opinions of committee members.

In December 2021 there was a meeting to discuss with VMD changes to standards post-Brexit on metaphylactic / prophylactic use of antimicrobials. There will be a public consultation on the upcoming changes to the Veterinary Medicines Regulations later this year.

On a similar subject there is also currently a European Medicines Agency (EMA) public consultation on prophylactic use of antimicrobials in animals. SVS will be providing a response and any opinions should be sent to the secretariat by mid-April 2022 for collation in advance of the deadline. Further information can be found here <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/news/public-consultation-reflection-paper-prophylactic-use-antimicrobials-animals>

### **RCVS Knowledge - Farm Vet Champions**

A stakeholder meeting in February shared progress to date and the latest on phase 2, which will include SMART goal setting for both individuals and teams. Sign up to learn more about antimicrobial stewardship and explore the wealth of available material on the learning platform <https://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/forms/register-your-interest-to-become-a-farm-vet-champion/>

### **Medicine supply issues**

From time-to-time, problems occur in supply of veterinary medicines, such as current problems with availability of Heptavac P Plus. Knowing about this can be useful in determining the likelihood of cascade prescribing and offer guidance on alternatives if needed. Where there are supply issues with veterinary medicines please consider letting VMD know by emailing [supply@vmd.gov.uk](mailto:supply@vmd.gov.uk)

### **Animal Health and Welfare Pathway**

Pathway is the replacement for the Direct Payments for farmers now that we have left the EU. It covers England only. SVS involvement in co-design of the Pathway has been ongoing for some time, with many meetings of the various subgroups. The scheme was launched last month and there is plenty of information available online, though the application process is not yet live.

If you are a veterinary practitioner in England, then Pathway offers an opportunity to engage with your sheep flocks and effect real change to animal health and welfare. Year 1 funding of £436, paid to the farmer, will focus on a vet-led health and welfare review and includes testing to determine anthelmintic efficacy. Pilot testing will start next month with wider rollout early Summer. Areas where SVS have contributed include the data collection, health and welfare priorities, biosecurity, endemic disease priorities, capital grant items and training resources. Links to more information are on the SVS website and gov.uk

<https://sheepvetsoc.org.uk/news/defra-update-on-the-animal-health-and-welfare-pathway/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-health-and-welfare-pathway>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-secretary-sets-out-animal-health-and-welfare-support-for-livestock-farmers>

## All Party Parliamentary Groups

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Animal Welfare, chaired by Lord Trees, has met twice in recent months with a focus on sheep scab. It provides a forum for sharing information on current research and discussion of what role government may have in future control.

A stakeholder meeting for a new All-Party Parliamentary Group on agricultural advisory services, chaired by Green Party peer Baroness Natalie Bennett, met for an initial discussion to establish support and determine objectives.

The above are a summary of key areas of involvement since the last newsletter. It's been a busy but stimulating period as president so far. If you are interested in further details on any of the content, please get in touch [secretariat@sheepvetsoc.org.uk](mailto:secretariat@sheepvetsoc.org.uk)

I look forward to seeing many of you in Northern Ireland in May and at industry events over the summer. Thanks to all members and the committee for the continued support.



Rebecca Mearns  
President

## Nominations for Membership of the Sheep Veterinary Society

<u>Name</u>	<u>Proposed By</u>	<u>Seconded By</u>	<u>Membership</u>
Annabelle Wheeler	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Hannah Childs	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Daisy Hawkins	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Laura Huntenburg	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member
Aine O'Brien	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member
Esther Nelson	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member
Catherine Macleod	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Oliver Sheldon	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Jenny Harrison	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member
Mohammadreza Mokhtari Hooyeh	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Associate member
Bhavisha Patel	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Sarah O'Reilly	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Amy Cockett	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Edward Noblett	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Esther Skelly-Smith	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Poppy Izat	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member
Jessica Hannay	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member
Abigail Liston	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member
Chris Middleton	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Andrew Robertson	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member
Lucy Johnson	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member
Leighton Richards	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Full member
Eleanor Cockman	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson	Student member



Contd...

Claire Langrish  
Tobias Newport  
Henry Potter  
Mary Hill  
Samuel Hailes  
April Cromie  
Lauren Westwater  
Elizabeth Harries  
Dawn Bezuidenhout  
Reinard Everts  
David Walsh  
Sophie Gumble

Rebecca Mearns  
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Full member  
Student member  
Student member  
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Associate Member  
Student member  
Full member  
Full member  
Full member  
Student member  
Full member

Leanne Ford  
Ravi Suryavansi  
Elizabeth Ainsworth  
Lucy Giles  
Orla Mcalister  
Luke Johnson  
Fiona Kane  
Emily Walton  
Rachel Mallet  
Sarah Grantham

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Full member  
Associate member

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Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

It's more than a sheep.  
**It's one of the  
22.5 million whose  
welfare you ensure.**

#### Opportunities for Vets

Join us, and whatever your current veterinary background, the impact of your work will be felt on a national scale. Explore different areas of work and develop a new breadth of specialist knowledge and skills. Expand your veterinary horizons. **Apply now.**

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