

# NSA NEXT GENERATION AMBASSADORS



**Strengthening the sheep sector as a whole, as well as  
developing individuals' skills**

## THE NSA NEXT GENERATION PROGRAMME

The National Sheep Association (NSA) is committed to ensuring the sustainability of the sheep industry in the UK. To this end the NSA Next Generation Programme is designed to support innovative, enthusiastic and professional young people. Encouraging and supporting the young shepherds of the future to look forward positively and enthusiastically to a career in a sector that is crucial to UK livestock production. The programme provides training, events, advice and the opportunity to apply for a place on the NSA Next Generation Ambassador programme.

## THE NSA NEXT GENERATION AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

Launched in 2014 the NSA Next Generation Ambassador programme aims to equip young people with the skills to manage profitable and sustainable sheep flocks, alongside the ability to support and promote the sheep industry. Twelve applicants from across the UK are selected each year to participate in the programme. They are given five training sessions covering a diverse range of topics, including practical demonstrations and farm walks. The programme encourages them to form friendships and networks and introduces them to key people in the industry.

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***Ambassadors are encouraged to share their experiences with others – this may be joining an NSA regional committee, speaking at farmer meetings, taking on a role within the farming community or getting involved in organising an event***

## THE CASE STUDY

The NSA believes that the NSA Next Generation Ambassador programme is an important element in supporting a sustainable sheep industry. The case study assessed the success of the programme from the point of view of both the ambassadors and the NSA management. Participants in the 2017 and 2018 programmes were interviewed and all previous participants offered the opportunity to complete an online survey as to the effectiveness of the programme.



## THE 2017 AND 2018 AMBASSADORS

Access to land was the major issue concerning both the 2017 and 2018 groups

Training was the next highest priority for the 2017 group whereas the 2018 group emphasised marketing and communication and the use of antibiotics and anthelmintics

Both groups recognised the need for improving genetics and commented on the disparity between requirements of the show ring and the market

It was felt that more effort had to go into product promotion to keep the industry sustainable and that there was a 'disconnection' with the wool sector

Both groups placed a low priority on Environment and Wildlife as they considered that farmers already care for the environment




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***Ambassadors joined to broaden their knowledge, meet like minded people and learn new skills***

***"what you think is best for you is not necessarily best for the industry"***

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## 2014-2018 AMBASSADORS

All agreed that the training topics offered in the programme were valuable

Flock Health planning, nutrition, genetics and managing parasite burdens were considered the sessions that had most influenced their farming practice

Taking part in the programme was useful for building networks in the industry

Ambassadors had joined regional committees and were involved in NSA and non NSA sheep initiatives.



British sheep need support from  
NSA Next Generation Ambassadors

## BENEFITS TO AMBASSADORS

- More competent
- More confident and able to approach others for information or help
- Better understanding of different systems
- Peer to peer networks and friendships
- Ability to question own methods
- Broader knowledge of the wider industry
- Direct interaction with the NSA
- More information



## BENEFITS TO NSA

- Active ambassadors
- Competent farmers
- Ambassadors stay in touch and support the network and NSA

***The NSA Next Generation Programme could be introduced to partner countries. Training should be tailored to the specific sheep industries in each country. Ambassadors must be actively supported to join committees and take up industry roles.***

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## POTENTIAL

The NSA Next Generation Ambassadors programme has the potential to enhance the sustainability of the sheep industry by providing relevant training in a wide range of topics of importance to the industry as a whole. The programme produces confident, knowledgeable and articulate proponents of the sheep sector. If educated young people are supported into influential roles both within the industry and the broader agricultural / political landscape the sheep industry will continue to have a voice.

If the ambassadors are to succeed in a sustainable sheep industry issues such as access to land, marketing of product and farm income need to be addressed.



## THANKS TO

The 2017 and 2018 ambassadors for their time in focus groups and interviews and to the 2014-2018 Ambassadors for filling in the survey



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