

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **NSA SCOTSHEEP 2010 SEMINAR PROGRAMME TO FOCUS ON TOPICAL ISSUES**

Three highly topical issues of vital interest to sheep farmers will be addressed by industry experts at a series of seminars at NSA Scotsheep 2010.

Scotland's biennial national sheep event, organised by NSA Scotland with Bank of Scotland as main sponsor, will be held on the farm of Douglas and Lynda Graham at Mains of Burnbank, Blairdrummond, Stirling, on Wednesday, June 2.

Three hour-long seminars, scheduled to start at 11.30am, 1.00pm and 2.30pm, will cover sheep health, nutrition and renewable energy. The discussion will be led by eight speakers, experts in their field, who will each give a short, sharp presentation on their subject, before inviting questions and contributions from the audience.

“The three seminars will focus on highly topical and relevant areas to help sheep farmers manage the health, nutrition and husbandry of their flocks more successfully and identify where renewable energy might help to reduce costs and develop a second income stream,” said NSA Scotland development officer, George Milne, Kinaldy, St Andrews, Fife.

Leading the sheep health debate will be Sheila Voas, the Scottish Government's recently-appointed assistant chief veterinary officer, who will give an overview of the “Scottish Sheep Industry”, in a session to be chaired by SAC head of communications and former BBC Scotland agricultural correspondent, Ken Rundle.

They will be joined by Dr Chris Cousens and Dr David Bartley from the Moredun Research Institute who will discuss the growing threat of OPA in sheep flocks in Scotland and ways in which farmers can minimise the problem of drug resistant gutworms in their sheep.

In a recent survey, 38% of flocks tested were found to be positive for the virus which causes OPA, even although only 12% of the farmers in the survey admitted having experience of the disease.

“OPA is turning out to be a silent predator,” says Dr Cousens. “We need to tell farmers more about the disease, its symptoms, and how they can prevent it entering their flocks.”

Resistance to the three chemical groups used to kill roundworms in sheep is now widespread in Scotland. A new product, based on a new “fourth” chemical group, is now available. However, researchers at Moredun are urging farmers to use all wormers effectively to ensure that the efficacy of this new anthelmintic, as well as the other existing wormers, is maintained for as long as possible.

“Moredun has developed a practical solution which enables farmers to reduce the amount of anthelmintic they need to use while reducing the development of resistance

and maintaining – and in some cases enhancing – the performance of their lambs,” said Dr Bartley.

The seminar programme is sponsored by Rumenco who will convene the session on nutrition which will be chaired by NSA Scotland chairman, Jimmy Sinclair, Crookston, Heriot, Midlothian.

Presentations will be given by David Thornton, technical manager of Rumenco, on using forage test results to best effect in formulating diets, and SAC sheep specialist, Dr John Vipond, on feeding to meet the needs of ewes – and the consequences if you don't.

“Our aim is to encourage farmers to achieve greater precision and accuracy in their rationing by correctly balancing purchased feeds and supplements with what is available on the farm,” said Mr Thornton.

The final seminar on renewable energy will be chaired by Sandy Hay, head of agriculture Scotland with Bank of Scotland, and will focus on climate change and the opportunities available to sheep farmers to benefit from renewable energy.

Discussion will be led by SAC director, John Gilliland, chairman of the rural climate change forum, who has pioneered the development of renewable energy on his own farm in Northern Ireland, along with David Barnes, deputy director of the Scottish Government's agriculture and rural development division, who will give the Scottish Government's view, and SAC environment and design consultant, Jim Campbell, who will highlight renewable energy opportunities for sheep farmers.

Entry to the seminars is free to visitors attending NSA Scotsheep which will be open to the public from 9.00am. Admission is £12 or £6 for NSA members on production of 2010 membership card and students on production of a student card. Under 16 years of age – free.

Further information and details of sponsorship opportunities and trade stands available from the co-organisers – Euan Emslie Tel: 01430 441870, Fax: 01430 448432, Mob: 07718 908523. E-mail: [ewan@AppliedRemedies.co.uk](mailto:ewan@AppliedRemedies.co.uk) or Julie Sedgewick Tel: 01388 609322. Mob: 07774 041425 E-mail: [jas@nationalsheep.org.uk](mailto:jas@nationalsheep.org.uk)

**END**

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** A press briefing to announce final details of NSA Scotsheep 2010 and provide photo opportunities on the host farm will be held at Mains of Burnbank on **TUESDAY, MAY 11**, commencing at 10.30am, followed by lunch. Full details will follow nearer the time.

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