Phil Stocker
National Sheep Association
Status and future of Curlew in Wales workshop Jan 2018
Key UK sheep industry indicators

2012 lamb and mutton production (tonnes)

- China: 2,500,000
- EU (Excl. UK): 1,200,000
- Australia: 800,000
- New Zealand: 600,000
- United Kingdom: 400,000

China > EU (Excl. UK) > Australia > New Zealand > United Kingdom
Key UK sheep industry indicators

Leading global sheep meat importers, 2015

Leading global sheep meat exporters, 2015
Demographic changes (breeding ewes)

Source: Defra December census
Sheep population density in Great Britain in 2015
Ewe numbers by region in the United Kingdom

Source: Defra
Grazing livestock enterprises are dependent on support payments

Source: Defra, Farm Business Survey
A structure of two halves

% split between the two structures

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2012 numbers with 2003 numbers in parentheses
Changing hill breed numbers

Hill ewes as a proportion of all ewes declined from 57% in 1971 to 31% in 2012
Helpful/unhelpful efficiency drivers

• Grassland improvement
• The need for higher forage quality
• Soil
• Genetic changes
• Supply chains
Changing emphasis and a need for more holistic outcomes

• Michael Gove's direction, the Environment plan, the Agriculture Bill, the Industrial strategy, and a coherent food policy

• WG guiding legislation The Environment Bill and the Well Being of Future Generations Act
Getting it right in the future

• Key considerations:
  • Farmers manage most of our land mass
  • Farmers run businesses. They have proved they can innovate and change - money and viability is an essential, but not only, part of the motivation
  • Farmers (not just farmers) need to be part of the debate and the decision making process
  • Colleges/universities, levy bodies, unions are all vital stakeholders
Thank you