

# SLMG NEWSLETTER

SHETLAND LIVESTOCK MARKETING GROUP

## Mousa Lamb has successfully built up their business using the services provided by SLMG:

### Aaron Sinclair rears native Shetland lambs naturally on the isle of Mousa and processes them through the Laxfirth slaughterhouse.

Aaron comments on how SLMG's facilities have contributed to the success of his business: "The quality of service provided at the slaughterhouse is what really makes it for us. We take our livestock in and, in return, receive our meat packaged and ready to be delivered to our customers – it couldn't be easier.



"We pride ourselves in selling quality Shetland meat and therefore it's important for us to maintain that high standard from start to finish and the slaughterhouse delivers on this for us every time.

"It's very satisfying when delivering our finished product to a customer that we can clearly see they are delighted with their purchase. We couldn't achieve this without the support from SLMG.

"As a member, I also receive a discount on the slaughterhouse charges which is a significant benefit. Last year we processed around 120 lambs, making for quite a saving."

Aaron also raised the possibility of using SLMG's new abattoir facilities for cattle: "Currently we sell our cattle as livestock through the marts. At last year's Shetland Food Festival we conducted some market research to get an idea if people would be interested in sourcing native beef from us. We were delighted with the feedback we received with many people expressing an interest."

"With the opening of the new Shetland Abattoir we will be giving some serious thought to the business opportunities this new facility opens up for us."

## Abattoir update

### The Shetland Abattoir is now close to completion.

Regulations which have recently been brought into force by both the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Scottish Water, along with new building regulations have resulted in essential changes to various parts of the plant to comply with revised regulations, which have caused a delay.

Currently the abattoir is testing systems and commissioning equipment, with the aim of opening later in the year.



Last year Gloria Beaton provided a very welcome café service on mart sale days selling hot rolls, soup, tea and coffee – making for a very sociable day out, and was of course a great warm up on those cold winter mornings.

Due to popular demand, Gloria plans to continue her catering during the 2011/2012 sales period.

## Chairman's comment

August 2011 sees SLMG preparing for a very busy 'backend'. Recent upgrades of the Mart facilities will make the movement of livestock during the upcoming sales season more efficient. Emphasis has been placed on making the systems more user-friendly with easier stock handling and identification. If any shareholders have suggestions for further improvements then let us know and these will be considered.

If the old market guide to predicting the price of store lambs holds true, producers should be rewarded this year with another improvement on last year. Demand remains high with the likelihood that it will be consistent throughout the season for all types.

For those sellers, it - again - was clear last year that prices gained at your own local Mart were impressive when compared to other markets. It is always useful to compare returns from different market outlets if sellers are concerned to get the best prices for their stock.

One issue which has puzzled me, and which I would really appreciate assistance with, is why some crofters and farmers do not wish to be members of this Cooperative, but do wish to take advantage of its facilities. The Mart and the new Abattoir only exist because a significant group of crofters and farmers are willing to remain members of SLMG by paying a very modest membership. Have you? If you do not think membership is a worthwhile idea, I would be earnestly interested in hearing why not.

R. Eunson  
Chairman.

## Sale sponsorship

BOCM Pauls Ltd, one of the UK's leading animal feed manufacturers, will sponsor the show and sale of prime and store lambs which will be held at the Lerwick Marts on Friday 2nd September.



## Taste Shetland

Check out Taste Shetland's new producer's page on their website - [www.tasteshetland.com/our-producers](http://www.tasteshetland.com/our-producers)

Greater focus on healthy living has made people more conscious of where their food has come from. SLMG recognises the ability to trace food back to its origin gives consumers confidence in the food they buy, consequently providing a producer profile will be a great way of promoting locally reared produce.

If you would like to feature on this page email [kirsty.halcrow@shaw-online.com](mailto:kirsty.halcrow@shaw-online.com) for more information

## 2011/2012 membership

Membership is strong again this year and we would like to thank you for your continued support.

Please see 2011/2012 membership statics below:

Membership total	247
Renewed members	22
First time members	2

It's very encouraging to see former members returning and we are also delighted to welcome two new members to SLMG.

Please remember to take advantage of your membership benefits:

- Better returns: members will receive a higher price for lambs supplied to the abattoir (extra 10p per kg)

**For example:**

- The price of lamb per kilo is £4.05. If you supply 20 lambs all at 15 kilo, as a member you will take home £1,245 (£30 more than a non-member).

- Have your say: members have the right to vote on shaping SLMG's future
- Less money to pay: A significant 17.5% discount can be made on all homekill slaughtering costs
- SLMG offer a storage facility in Lerwick with a 10% discount to members
- Access to PR support
- Regular members newsletter
- Less paperwork: we can help with administrative services and provide advice on form-filling
- Provide basic advice and information: we aim to make your life easier with one-to-one information and advice available on a wide range of topics including livestock, dead stock, sales and movements.
- Opportunity to supply livestock to SLMG
- Access to meat finishing workshops
- Investment in the long-term future of Shetland agriculture

## SLMG fights for acceptance of 'Vulnerable Areas'

SLMG has been part of a small group of local organisations led by Chairman, Drew Ratter, which has, with the backing of Shetland Islands Council, seen the commissioning of an important report on further development of the LFA support scheme. The concept of Vulnerable Areas was first floated in the Pack Report and is a refocusing of the current LFASS to take greater account of natural disadvantage. Rural Analysis Associates have produced a very comprehensive and well-researched proposal, which highlights a much more compelling argument for redirecting support away from the 'more

favoured' areas to the 'real' LFA. They have identified Articles 18 of the EU LFA Regulation – Land biophysically restricted in terms of slope, elevation, exposure and/or more than 800m from a road – and Article 20 - Remoteness – being more than two hours drive time from a major town and with a high level of vulnerability. These existing EU regulatory mechanisms have not been used to date to design a transparent and credible LFA policy.

Maps have been produced to define the new area, which take in all the current Very Fragile Area and part of the Fragile Area. These provide a robust position along with their analysis of climatic, economic and environmental evidence.

Importantly, it is now looking likely, for the first time, that all the local authorities affected by LFA support deficiencies will speak as one to the Scottish Government.

SLMG is proud to have played its role in this significant drive to address a problem, which has proved a very difficult nut to crack.

## Keep up to date online

Remember to keep up to date during the 2011/2012 sales season by checking the website regularly [www.slmg.co.uk](http://www.slmg.co.uk), to view all the recent sale reports online as well as the upcoming sales dates.

## The Shetland Abattoirs new price list for 2011/2012

### Cattle (under 30 months)

Home Kill £115.00 per animal  
Includes one week hanging in the chill

### Pigs

Home Kill £40.00 per animal  
Includes one week hanging in the chill

### Sheep

Home Kill  
Members £9.50 per animal  
Non-members £11.30 per animal

Note: max of 10 sheep allowed at this rate per member with CPH number

### Commercial Kill

Members £12.00 per animal  
Non-members £13.80 per animal

### Delivery charge (for sheep)

Within a 5 mile radius of abattoir £3.00 per animal  
(please note this charge will not exceed £20.00)

Outwith abattoirs 5 mile radius Price to be negotiated at the time

For further information please call the SLMG office on 01595 696300. These are provisional prices and may be changed due to operational costs. Payment on time significantly reduces costs and therefore a Switch machine is now in place for immediate payments.

## Upcoming farmers' markets

Browse through the stalls of local produce and crafts, and sample the tea and homebakes provided.

### Baltasound Hall, Unst

Sunday 28 August 12noon - 2pm  
Sunday 25 September 12noon - 2pm  
Sunday 30 October 12noon - 2pm

### Tingwall Hall

Saturday 3 September 10am - 2pm  
Saturday 1 October 10am - 2pm

To book a table or for more information, please contact Ralph Mair on **01595 840343**