

The AFS Beef and Lamb Sector Board is appointed both from within and outside the beef and lamb industry and is responsible for overseeing the management of the company and its activities.

John Thorley O.B.E., Chairman
Representing NSA - sheep farmers



In 1968 John joined the National Sheep Association (NSA). From 1976-1985 he was Secretary of the National Cattle Breeders Association and for two years he was additionally General Manager of British Semen Export Company.

John's enthusiasm for farming and his outstanding services to the sheep industry have been reflected in his array of awards. In 1988 the NSA presented him with the George Hedley Memorial award, two years later he received the Giovanni Marcora prize by the Italian Government, in 2002 he was awarded the Royal Smithfield Club bi-centenary Award and in 2006 he received his O.B.E for services to sheep farming. In addition to this, during 2006, the Royal Agricultural Society of England awarded him their National Agricultural Award.

Andrew Blenkiron
Representing NFU - beef and lamb farmers



Andrew is married and started his career by managing two farms in Northumberland after leaving Harper Adams in 1987. He moved to Staffordshire in 1997 to work as an Associate Partner for Smiths Gore, becoming head of the Farm Management Department for the Lichfield Office. In 2008 he became Managing Director of a privately owned farming company based near Wimborne in Dorset. The farm has a total of 5,000 acres of which 2,300 is organic, it finishes to bacon weight 1,000 organic outdoor sows, has 400 organic dairy cows and beef-finishing herd. 2,500 acres of non-organic cereals, 1,000 non-organic outdoor sows finished to bacon weight and a bloodstock/livery business.

During his time in Staffordshire Andrew was involved in the local agricultural community as Chairman then National Council delegate of Staffordshire NFU, Chairman of the Staffordshire and Birmingham Agricultural Society and became heavily involved in the County Show, the National Primestock Show, Staffordshire Rural Hub, local food initiatives and the West Midlands Business Council.

Norman Bagley
Representing Small/Medium Processors



Norman is married with two children and lives on a small farm in North Yorkshire. Following a long career as an Auctioneer, latterly when he took a keen interest in the increasing regulatory burden affecting his abattoir customers, Norman was asked to set up AIMS in 2001 to represent medium and small abattoirs. This followed the successful Maclean Task Force on meat inspection charges upon which Norman sat and which for the first time recognised the importance of the medium and small sector. AIMS, now represents over 250 red and white meat abattoirs, cutting plants, catering butchers and processors who are at the forefront of serving the farming and food industry in meeting the needs of domestic and export customers for high quality, locally produced meat. Norman served as a founding Board member of EBLEX and sits on the FSA Advisory Body for the delivery of Official Controls in Meat Plants.

David Clarke

Representing Assured Food Standards (AFS)



David Clarke worked in the food service industry for over 20 years after originally graduating as a microbiologist. Most of his early career was in the Forte Group where he was ultimately Technical Director with particular responsibility for supply chain management.

Moving on in 1997, he spent a year with the United Kingdom Accreditation Service establishing the principles for accreditation of inspection and certification in the food industry. Much of this work involved certification in assurance schemes and in 1998 he became directly involved in the livestock schemes, becoming chief executive of Assured Food Standards a couple of years later.

David has been a member of several industry and governmental advisory bodies and has been a regular contributor to trade publications and other texts.

Chris Dodds

Representing LAA - Auctioneers



Chris was born on a family run dairy farm near Hexham, Northumberland. He has 25 years experience as a livestock auctioneer and valuer in both England and Scotland.

In addition to this he is also qualified as a Fellow of the Institute of Auctioneers and Appraisers for Scotland. Chris is currently Executive Secretary for The Livestock Auctioneers Association (LAA), representing livestock auctioneering companies in England and Wales and is the Vice President of the European Association of Livestock Markets.

Eddie Harper M.B.E.

Representing hauliers



Eddie started in the livestock transport industry in the mid 60's working for Percy Read Ltd and then B.N. Grays Ltd. He ran his own haulage company before joining A E George and Sons, Somerset in 1993 as Export Manager.

Since 1998 he has been an Independent Livestock Consultant and is committed to providing technical information to all aspects of the livestock and transport industry.

At the 2002 ATA Conference in Mexico, Eddie was awarded the Animal Transport Associations Welfare of Animals for his outstanding contribution to international welfare of animals during transport. He is a former member of FAWC and is currently Chairman of the RHA's Livestock Transport Group. Eddie was awarded an MBE in June 2007 for his services to livestock transportation.

Stuart Roberts

Representing processors

Stuart is currently a Director of ABP Ltd. Previously he was Director of British Meat Processors Association (BMPA), where he was responsible for the day to day operation of BMPA which represents abattoirs and meat manufacturers throughout Great Britain.

Prior to this position, he worked for DEFRA/Food Standards Agency where he held various positions in the FSA communications team and Defra project manager for the reintroduction of over thirty month cattle into the food chain.

In 2003, Stuart secured a Nuffield scholarship and looked into agricultural risk management. He is also a partner in his family organic arable farm in Herefordshire, a district councillor for Harpenden and a trustee and committee member of Herefordshire Agricultural society.

Robert Robinson

Representing beef farmers



Robert lives in Alnwick, where he farms 3000 acres and has a herd of 700 suckler cows. From 1998 to 2005, Robert was the Chairman of National Beef Association (NBA) and joined ABM in 2001. Robert is married with 2 children.

Duncan Sinclair

Retailer



Joined Waitrose in January 2007 as Agriculture Manager covering the Meat, Poultry, Fish and Dairy sectors. He works closely with the Waitrose supply chain across the wide range of livestock producer groups that has been established over the last 20 years and has responsibility for their future development. Prior to joining Waitrose he spent 17 years at the Meat and Livestock Commission where he was latterly Economics Manager for Beef and Lamb. In 2005, he successfully completed the Leadership Course run by the Institute of Agricultural Management.

Nick Allen

Sector Director of EBLEX



Nick has 20 years practical farming experience, which equipped him for his role as Industry Relations Manager at the MLC, this was followed by a position as Senior Regional Manager at EBLEX, before taking up the position of Sector Director for EBLEX in October 2009.

Nick is married with two children, and enjoys clay pigeon and game shooting, following Harlequins rugby club and cooking in his spare time.
