



**NSA Samuel Wharry Memorial Award for the Next Generation
Travel Bursary 2019/20 Application Form**

Name	Charlotte Beaty	
Date of birth	11/04/1995	
Age (at 22/04/19)	24	
Region	NSA Marches Region	
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NSA membership number, if a member	
Valid UK passport	Yes
Full driving licence and access to a vehicle	Yes
Longer-term commitment than just travelling overseas	Yes
Health concerns or travel restrictions	Cannot travel in harvest or lambing (February/March)

Application Questions
1. What is your current involvement in the sheep sector and what are your future plans?
<p>I am currently working at home on the family farm, following 4 years of study (BSc Hons in Agriculture at Harper Adams University) and 18 months working on farms across Australia. The farm is a tenanted property in North Warwickshire that was taken on by my grandfather in the late 1950s. It is a typical mixed farm which compromises of arable, beef and sheep enterprises. We run a flock of 300 breeding ewes, the majority of which are North Country Mules and are put to a Charollais tup. The breeding ewes are the smallest enterprise on the farm, and are farmed to fit around the arable and cattle work. I have always been passionate about working with sheep and have had numerous sheep-related jobs away from home including lambing and milking. I also spent 3 months in 2018 working on a stock property in New South Wales, Australia, where the genetics and breeding focus mainly on wool production, rather than meat production as is generally the case here in the UK. Since returning home I have been looking at ways to increase our flock size and productivity by improving the grassland management. The ewes and lambs are grazed over 200 acres of permanent pasture, alongside 20-30 cows and 30-40 beef stores. The pasture receives minimal input and the majority of the lambs are finished on grass, although the last 30 or so are usually housed and fed concentrates to finish. I believe that better grassland management is the key to increasing the productivity of the flock at the lowest cost.</p>

2. What topic would you like to study, why is it relevant to your sheep farming situation and how would you implement any findings within your own sheep farming situation?

A third of UK lamb is currently exported to the EU, but there are fears that a 'no-deal' Brexit will collapse this market. There is also uncertainty surrounding the future of agricultural subsidies in the UK following Brexit. With this, I feel that sheep farmers should be looking to lower production costs by maximising the potential of the cheapest feed available to them – grass. I would like to study the role of grass management in lowering production costs for UK sheep enterprises. Grass has the potential to be the cheapest feed, as long as it is managed well. Despite this, I feel that many sheep farmers (ourselves included) do not utilise grass as a feed supply to its full potential. It is something that has a lot of room for improvement here at home, to reduce the amount of concentrates we feed, in turn reducing our cost of production and increasing the profitability of our sheep enterprise. I would like to look at the factors involved in growing high quality grass, such as soil fertility, grazing systems and grass varieties. I would like to look at grazing systems that involve both sheep and cattle, something that is very relevant to our situation. It is commonly known that there are anthelmintic benefits to grazing sheep and cattle alongside each other, but I would like to look further into how a symbiotic relationship can be achieved here. Farmers tend to be a lot happier with judging grassland quality by what they can see, but I think that there is a lot to be learnt from the soil in grassland management. The quality of a pasture could be just as easily, but possibly more effectively, judged by the number of worms in the soil as the number of weeds on top. This is something that needs to be addressed, and farmers need more encouragement to use soil tests to help them judge the best way to manage that particular field. I would also like to look at re-seeding and over-seeding routines and how they many differ from farm to farm. It is said that farmers should aim to re-seed 10% of their grassland every year, but I feel that that actual re-seeding requirement will differ massively between farms. I would like to study the factors that farmers should consider before deciding whether or not to reseed and how they can differ between

3. What do you already know about your chosen topic and its relevance to the UK sheep sector? How might you share the practical findings with other sheep farmers?

Grassland management is relevant to all sheep farmers across the UK, whether they be lowland, upland or hill, intensive or extensive. I have a fairly general knowledge of grassland management, following my degree and other reading that I have undertaken, but I would benefit massively from seeing other systems first hand and being able to ask questions and discuss with those running them. I would like to share the knowledge that I gain using social media platforms and through my involvement in Young Farmers.

4. Please outline your travel plans – where do you plan to go, for how long and to see what, and what will the various components roughly cost?

For my chosen study topic, I would like to visit New Zealand. I feel that this may be seen as a fairly generic answer, but I honestly don't think that grass management could be seen better in any other country. Also, with a climate not dissimilar to that of the UK, I feel that a study in New Zealand would be most relevant. Having already (albeit briefly) visited New Zealand, there are other countries that are higher on my list to visit, but I feel that New Zealand is best suited to this particular topic. I would be very interested in spending time visiting Agricultural colleges/universities to see any current study projects that are being undertaken, as well as private farms to assess and study their methods of grassland management. Although I am from a lowland farm, I would like to assess methods of hill, upland and lowland enterprises, which the diversity of farming in New Zealand would allow me to do. I feel that 6 weeks would be a sufficient amount of time to spend studying, even though I would happily stay 6 months given half a chance! I estimate that flights would cost around £900 return, which would be the main cost of the trip. Whilst I would be more than happy to use public transport, I feel that I would be able to make the most of my time in the country with my own transport which would allow me to travel freely between farms. Hire of a car would amount to around £700, plus fuel. Accommodation costs could be kept to a minimum by utilising hostels and current (and future) contacts within the industry.

5. The Staple has a particular interest in wool production and the related textile industry. If your study topic is not directly linked to wool, what might you learn about wool on your travels?

Around 30 years ago, wool was one of the main exports of New Zealand, closely followed by lamb meat. Today though, the situation has reversed and New Zealand's meat exports are up, whilst wool exports continue to decrease due to the availability of synthetic fibres. Despite this, New Zealand is still the world's third largest wool producer, behind Australia and China. I would be interested to learn how and if New Zealand is addressing the falling wool export market by advertising the benefits of wool compared to other (namely synthetic) fibres. I would also like to learn more about the classification of wool, having spent a small amount of time in a shearing shed seeing fleeces sorted, whilst in Australia last year.

6. What appealed to you about this award and what makes you a suitable candidate? How will you make the most of the opportunity?

The opportunity to travel whilst farming was what appealed to me most about this award. I am a very keen traveller, but I enjoy it most when visiting other farms. I often say that I would like to travel the world, one farm at a time! I am a very sociable person that finds it easy to meet and talk to new people. I am happy travelling and working either alone or with company and I enjoy learning 'hands-on'. I am an extremely suitable candidate as I am happy to talk to people both one-on-one and in large groups, which would be ideal for meeting people when travelling and then sharing my findings in the future. I am not afraid to ask questions and am open to trying new ideas. I would love the opportunity to study a topic that I am passionate about that I can then talk to other people about, and I would be thrilled to pass on anything I learn to anybody that would like to listen. I am very passionate about both travelling and farming and would really appreciate you considering for me for this bursary.