1

00:00:00,710 --> 00:00:05,230

[Music]

2

00:00:02,020 --> 00:00:05,230

[Applause]

3

00:00:08,320 --> 00:00:11,679

Hello you're listening

4

00:00:09,679 --> 00:00:13,679

to Ear to the Ground, the agricultural

5

00:00:11,679 --> 00:00:15,599

podcast brought to you by

6

00:00:13,679 --> 00:00:17,680

Farming Connect. Today's episode is

7

00:00:15,599 --> 00:00:18,480

coming from Mountjoy Farm which is not

8

00:00:17,680 --> 00:00:21,359

far from

9

00:00:18,480 --> 00:00:22,240

Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire and,

10

00:00:21,359 --> 00:00:24,560

we're back out

11

00:00:22,240 --> 00:00:26,320

recording on location and thankfully,

12

00:00:24,560 --> 00:00:28,320

with restrictions easing,

13

00:00:26,320 --> 00:00:30,080

it's enabled us to get out and about and

14

00:00:28,320 --> 00:00:31,840

visit some farms and today

15

00:00:30,080 --> 00:00:33,920

we're at one of Farming Connect’s

16

00:00:31,840 --> 00:00:36,719

demonstration farms. It's the home

17

00:00:33,920 --> 00:00:38,559

of William Hannah and his family. He

18

00:00:36,719 --> 00:00:40,879

farms in partnership with his parents

19

00:00:38,559 --> 00:00:42,079

Tom and Mary. William, we've picked a

20

00:00:40,879 --> 00:00:44,160

really good day actually.

21

00:00:42,079 --> 00:00:45,840

It's a dry day in Pembrokeshire and

22

00:00:44,160 --> 00:00:46,879

that's welcome news because it's

23

00:00:45,840 --> 00:00:48,239

been quite wet recently.

24

00:00:46,879 --> 00:00:49,760

Yes, it's been exceptionally wet. We've

25

00:00:48,239 --> 00:00:50,239

had probably one of the wettest

26

00:00:49,760 --> 00:00:53,039

27

00:00:50,239 --> 00:00:54,559

May’s we can remember and mud has

28

00:00:53,039 --> 00:00:56,879

been popping up everywhere.

29

00:00:54,559 --> 00:00:57,600

It's been a bit of a

30

00:00:56,879 --> 00:00:59,199

challenge but

31

00:00:57,600 --> 00:01:00,719

actually, the forecast looks good

32

00:00:59,199 --> 00:01:01,120

and today is certainly a lot better.

33

00:01:00,719 --> 00:01:02,960

34

00:01:01,120 --> 00:01:04,559

I think things are picking up. And we're

35

00:01:02,960 --> 00:01:06,240

in a field. We're surrounded

36

00:01:04,559 --> 00:01:07,600

by dairy cows; you might be able to

37

00:01:06,240 --> 00:01:09,360

pick up some of the noises

38

00:01:07,600 --> 00:01:12,000

in the background. That gives away

39

00:01:09,360 --> 00:01:13,920

Mountjoy Farm is a dairy farm of course.

40

00:01:12,000 --> 00:01:15,759

William, tell us a bit about the

41

00:01:13,920 --> 00:01:19,439

background and the history to the farm.

42

00:01:15,759 --> 00:01:23,040

We're a 600 acre

43

00:01:19,439 --> 00:01:26,720

grass-based late spring calving

44

00:01:23,040 --> 00:01:28,960

dairy farm. We have 370

45

00:01:26,720 --> 00:01:30,079

New Zealand Friesian

46

00:01:28,960 --> 00:01:32,400

cows

47

00:01:30,079 --> 00:01:34,159

that we milk and then we rear

48

00:01:32,400 --> 00:01:38,000

all young stock on-farm as well.

49

00:01:34,159 --> 00:01:40,320

We're late spring calving.

50

00:01:38,000 --> 00:01:42,399

We calve from the 20th of March

51

00:01:40,320 --> 00:01:43,840

and we aim to then milk through the

52

00:01:42,399 --> 00:01:46,479

growing season,

53

00:01:43,840 --> 00:01:48,960

try and make some good silage,

54

00:01:46,479 --> 00:01:51,200

milk into the autumn with that and then

55

00:01:48,960 --> 00:01:52,399

dry off at the end of January and have

56

00:01:51,200 --> 00:01:54,240

a break.

57

00:01:52,399 --> 00:01:55,680

We're a family farm and

58

00:01:54,240 --> 00:01:57,200

it's quite nice to have a break

59

00:01:55,680 --> 00:01:59,920

from milking in the winter.

60

00:01:57,200 --> 00:02:01,439

It makes the winter feel a bit shorter.

61

00:01:59,920 --> 00:02:02,960

It's certainly a family operation. It was

62

00:02:01,439 --> 00:02:03,680

lovely when we turned up on the farm,

63

00:02:02,960 --> 00:02:05,520

you had

64

00:02:03,680 --> 00:02:07,600

your wife with you and your

65

00:02:05,520 --> 00:02:09,759

young children which is lovely to see,

66

00:02:07,600 --> 00:02:11,599

but interestingly, your father was

67

00:02:09,759 --> 00:02:13,040

a first generation farmer so you're a

68

00:02:11,599 --> 00:02:15,520

second generation. I think he bought the

69

00:02:13,040 --> 00:02:17,599

farm back in 1985.

70

00:02:15,520 --> 00:02:19,360

It's changed quite a bit since then.

71

00:02:17,599 --> 00:02:21,440

It has.

72

00:02:19,360 --> 00:02:22,800

He was a first generation. He

73

00:02:21,440 --> 00:02:26,640

was a vicar's son.

74

00:02:22,800 --> 00:02:30,239

He bought 50 acres

75

00:02:26,640 --> 00:02:33,280

at Mountjoy in 1985

76

00:02:30,239 --> 00:02:36,080

and I think he had nine milking heifers

77

00:02:33,280 --> 00:02:36,560

in the first year and some sheep.

78

00:02:36,080 --> 00:02:38,239

Then,

79

00:02:36,560 --> 00:02:40,160

I think he decided he did want to go

80

00:02:38,239 --> 00:02:42,000

into dairy farming

81

00:02:40,160 --> 00:02:44,239

and when I was growing up, basically we

82

00:02:42,000 --> 00:02:46,239

were on that 50 acres and

83

00:02:44,239 --> 00:02:47,519

he tried to rent

84

00:02:46,239 --> 00:02:48,400

land wherever he could get it. But it

85

00:02:47,519 --> 00:02:51,599

tended to be

86

00:02:48,400 --> 00:02:53,040

off-lying land so we were shipping a

87

00:02:51,599 --> 00:02:55,280

lot of silage in and

88

00:02:53,040 --> 00:02:57,040

and muck out and running a more

89

00:02:55,280 --> 00:02:57,599

Holstein sort of system I

90

00:02:57,040 --> 00:03:01,200

suppose,

91

00:02:57,599 --> 00:03:03,360

slightly going for a bit more milk.

92

00:03:01,200 --> 00:03:05,360

Then gradually that

93

00:03:03,360 --> 00:03:07,599

developed. He had an opportunity to buy

94

00:03:05,360 --> 00:03:09,040

the farm we're standing on now which is

95

00:03:07,599 --> 00:03:12,400

Penfeidyr

96

00:03:09,040 --> 00:03:13,360

back in 1998 or around that

97

00:03:12,400 --> 00:03:15,760

time

98

00:03:13,360 --> 00:03:17,360

and that was another 90 acres therefore, with

99

00:03:15,760 --> 00:03:21,120

that then he was able to go

100

00:03:17,360 --> 00:03:24,400

do a bit more grazing.

101

00:03:21,120 --> 00:03:26,920

Then when I came back

102

00:03:24,400 --> 00:03:28,159

from university in

103

00:03:26,920 --> 00:03:32,080

2009-10,

104

00:03:28,159 --> 00:03:35,360

we were about 150 cows

105

00:03:32,080 --> 00:03:38,080

on about 150 acres

106

00:03:35,360 --> 00:03:39,840

doing a spring calving system. I think we

107

00:03:38,080 --> 00:03:41,280

had just about moved to later spring

108

00:03:39,840 --> 00:03:44,000

calving around then.

109

00:03:41,280 --> 00:03:45,840

We had initially tried spring calving

110

00:03:44,000 --> 00:03:48,799

early on. Dad tried it and that

111

00:03:45,840 --> 00:03:49,519

wasn't a goer. We always had

112

00:03:48,799 --> 00:03:51,599

lower

113

00:03:49,519 --> 00:03:53,200

infrastructure I suppose on the farm so

114

00:03:51,599 --> 00:03:54,959

we were calving outside

115

00:03:53,200 --> 00:03:57,680

and calving outside in Pembrokeshire in

116

00:03:54,959 --> 00:04:00,560

February doesn't work.

117

00:03:57,680 --> 00:04:01,439

We like calving outside so

118

00:04:00,560 --> 00:04:03,280

instead of

119

00:04:01,439 --> 00:04:04,560

building sheds and calving

120

00:04:03,280 --> 00:04:06,640

inside,

121

00:04:04,560 --> 00:04:07,840

we decided to move the calving pattern

122

00:04:06,640 --> 00:04:09,840

later. Dad

123

00:04:07,840 --> 00:04:13,519

calved first of April for quite a few

124

00:04:09,840 --> 00:04:16,560

years which he really liked

125

00:04:13,519 --> 00:04:19,040

and now we calve from 20th of March.

126

00:04:16,560 --> 00:04:20,639

When I came back then we were 150

127

00:04:19,040 --> 00:04:23,040

cows and we've

128

00:04:20,639 --> 00:04:24,400

been fortunate. I was

129

00:04:23,040 --> 00:04:26,960

sort of hiking to push on

130

00:04:24,400 --> 00:04:28,960

and fortunately we were able to

131

00:04:26,960 --> 00:04:30,720

get hold of land locally

132

00:04:28,960 --> 00:04:32,639

and we've actually now ended up with a

133

00:04:30,720 --> 00:04:35,440

540 acre block

134

00:04:32,639 --> 00:04:37,759

on this site of which we'd probably milk

135

00:04:35,440 --> 00:04:42,479

off about 420 acres

136

00:04:37,759 --> 00:04:45,120

which is milkable off, which is fantastic.

137

00:04:42,479 --> 00:04:46,639

We're trying to

138

00:04:45,120 --> 00:04:48,160

meet the potential of that land.

139

00:04:46,639 --> 00:04:48,720

We're trying to build stock numbers

140

00:04:48,160 --> 00:04:51,840

up

141

00:04:48,720 --> 00:04:52,960

but we are having some

142

00:04:51,840 --> 00:04:55,040

challenges with TB

143

00:04:52,960 --> 00:04:56,080

and things like that so that's

144

00:04:55,040 --> 00:04:58,240

where we are present anyway.

145

00:04:56,080 --> 00:04:59,759

We're sitting there.

146

00:04:58,240 --> 00:05:00,479

There's a high concentration of

147

00:04:59,759 --> 00:05:01,919

dairy farms

148

00:05:00,479 --> 00:05:03,680

in this particular area and I was

149

00:05:01,919 --> 00:05:05,039

talking to your father early on about 10

150

00:05:03,680 --> 00:05:07,199

mile radius from here,

151

00:05:05,039 --> 00:05:10,000

it's predominantly dairy farms? Yes, it

152

00:05:07,199 --> 00:05:12,400

is, it's a real dairy area.

153

00:05:10,000 --> 00:05:13,360

I guess it's probably climate.

154

00:05:12,400 --> 00:05:15,919

155

00:05:13,360 --> 00:05:17,600

Yes, it's more climate than anything.

156

00:05:15,919 --> 00:05:18,400

It's certainly a grass-growing area. It

157

00:05:17,600 --> 00:05:21,520

grows grass

158

00:05:18,400 --> 00:05:22,080

well and it's also close to a milk

159

00:05:21,520 --> 00:05:24,080

factory.

160

00:05:22,080 --> 00:05:25,680

We've got the First Milk factory

161

00:05:24,080 --> 00:05:27,520

in Haverfordwest.

162

00:05:25,680 --> 00:05:29,360

It's a strong milk area.

163

00:05:27,520 --> 00:05:30,880

But that does have its

164

00:05:29,360 --> 00:05:31,680

problems in that there's a lot of cows

165

00:05:30,880 --> 00:05:35,120

and so

166

00:05:31,680 --> 00:05:37,120

TB is rife and there's

167

00:05:35,120 --> 00:05:39,199

a lot of badgers unfortunately so

168

00:05:37,120 --> 00:05:41,039

TB certainly get’s

169

00:05:39,199 --> 00:05:42,720

crazy. One of the

170

00:05:41,039 --> 00:05:44,720

challenges and I guess

171

00:05:42,720 --> 00:05:46,479

it has an impact on your breeding policy

172

00:05:44,720 --> 00:05:47,919

because you've got 200 followers, you've

173

00:05:46,479 --> 00:05:49,759

got to breed a lot of replacements

174

00:05:47,919 --> 00:05:51,199

because you're almost going to factor in

175

00:05:49,759 --> 00:05:53,039

there is going to be that

176

00:05:51,199 --> 00:05:53,520

percentage or proportion of animals

177

00:05:53,039 --> 00:05:55,520

culled?

178

00:05:53,520 --> 00:05:56,720

Yes, it's a hundred percent that

179

00:05:55,520 --> 00:05:57,759

in the past actually. We've been quite

180

00:05:56,720 --> 00:05:59,440

fortunate and we

181

00:05:57,759 --> 00:06:02,080

haven't actually lost many cows at

182

00:05:59,440 --> 00:06:03,600

all to TB but just now we're really

183

00:06:02,080 --> 00:06:06,080

starting to hit into it

184

00:06:03,600 --> 00:06:08,160

unfortunately but you're right,

185

00:06:06,080 --> 00:06:09,759

we have to rear more heifers than we

186

00:06:08,160 --> 00:06:12,880

need. Our replacement rate

187

00:06:09,759 --> 00:06:13,600

tends to be quite low, sort of 16-17

188

00:06:12,880 --> 00:06:16,080

percent,

189

00:06:13,600 --> 00:06:17,199

but actually we have to rear enough

190

00:06:16,080 --> 00:06:20,800

to replace

191

00:06:17,199 --> 00:06:22,240

25-30 just because of the TB risk.

192

00:06:20,800 --> 00:06:24,080

And yes, if we don't have it, we can

193

00:06:22,240 --> 00:06:25,520

always sell them on but

194

00:06:24,080 --> 00:06:27,440

certainly going forward, that will be a

195

00:06:25,520 --> 00:06:29,919

policy to always rear more than we need,

196

00:06:27,440 --> 00:06:32,319

which actually flies

197

00:06:29,919 --> 00:06:34,160

slightly against the NVZ policy

198

00:06:32,319 --> 00:06:35,440

which is a little

199

00:06:34,160 --> 00:06:37,440

bit different. Yes,

200

00:06:35,440 --> 00:06:38,720

we'll come on to talking a bit

201

00:06:37,440 --> 00:06:40,560

about nitrogen control

202

00:06:38,720 --> 00:06:42,400

in just a moment, but I don't know

203

00:06:40,560 --> 00:06:46,080

whether our listeners can tell, but

204

00:06:42,400 --> 00:06:48,560

the cows are almost closing in on us.

205

00:06:46,080 --> 00:06:49,280

They're inquisitive, they're clearly well

206

00:06:48,560 --> 00:06:51,039

looked after,

207

00:06:49,280 --> 00:06:52,560

tell us a bit more about this type

208

00:06:51,039 --> 00:06:55,039

of cow that you've bred and

209

00:06:52,560 --> 00:06:56,000

developed here.

210

00:06:55,039 --> 00:06:57,680

211

00:06:56,000 --> 00:06:59,440

Originally, Dad had been on

212

00:06:57,680 --> 00:07:01,919

213

00:06:59,440 --> 00:07:03,680

Holsteins and then he had crossed them on

214

00:07:01,919 --> 00:07:04,479

Mountbelious and Jerseys

215

00:07:03,680 --> 00:07:06,240

and then he had

216

00:07:04,479 --> 00:07:08,160

settled on the British Freisian. So, when I

217

00:07:06,240 --> 00:07:09,440

came home, they were quite heavy big

218

00:07:08,160 --> 00:07:12,800

British Friesians

219

00:07:09,440 --> 00:07:15,039

and I suppose I wanted more. I was

220

00:07:12,800 --> 00:07:16,560

looking for more of a grazing animal, an

221

00:07:15,039 --> 00:07:17,759

animal that we were walking quite a long

222

00:07:16,560 --> 00:07:19,280

way and we still are,

223

00:07:17,759 --> 00:07:20,800

an animal which can walk doesn't

224

00:07:19,280 --> 00:07:24,240

maybe carry as much weight

225

00:07:20,800 --> 00:07:26,160

but I really wanted capacity because

226

00:07:24,240 --> 00:07:27,840

basically, the deeper the body and

227

00:07:26,160 --> 00:07:29,840

the more body capacity you have

228

00:07:27,840 --> 00:07:31,360

the more ability you have to convert

229

00:07:29,840 --> 00:07:33,919

forage into milk,

230

00:07:31,360 --> 00:07:35,680

especially grazed grass. Grazed grass

231

00:07:33,919 --> 00:07:36,479

is low dry matter. You need to eat a lot

232

00:07:35,680 --> 00:07:39,280

of it.

233

00:07:36,479 --> 00:07:40,720

We've been searching for

234

00:07:39,280 --> 00:07:43,039

capacity and

235

00:07:40,720 --> 00:07:44,479

cows which are proven on

236

00:07:43,039 --> 00:07:45,919

grass-based systems. Cows that’s got the

237

00:07:44,479 --> 00:07:47,280

fertility there because

238

00:07:45,919 --> 00:07:48,479

we have a strict calving

239

00:07:47,280 --> 00:07:50,560

protocol, if they don't meet

240

00:07:48,479 --> 00:07:53,199

that they'll be sold on to other farms.

241

00:07:50,560 --> 00:07:55,039

That's what we're

242

00:07:53,199 --> 00:07:55,440

looking for, fertility capacity and

243

00:07:55,039 --> 00:07:57,680

then

244

00:07:55,440 --> 00:07:58,960

the result of that then is you

245

00:07:57,680 --> 00:08:00,479

get the components.

246

00:07:58,960 --> 00:08:02,479

We've been breeding quite heavily

247

00:08:00,479 --> 00:08:03,599

for protein and butter fat for the

248

00:08:02,479 --> 00:08:05,440

last

249

00:08:03,599 --> 00:08:07,039

10 years now and

250

00:08:05,440 --> 00:08:08,960

we've seen the results of that.

251

00:08:07,039 --> 00:08:10,400

I also think we've seen the results

252

00:08:08,960 --> 00:08:11,440

in the cows. The last year was their

253

00:08:10,400 --> 00:08:12,800

254

00:08:11,440 --> 00:08:16,000

highest milk from forage they've ever

255

00:08:12,800 --> 00:08:20,000

done. They did 4,700 liters from forage

256

00:08:16,000 --> 00:08:22,000

off a tonne of cake.

257

00:08:20,000 --> 00:08:24,479

The last year, they tend to

258

00:08:22,000 --> 00:08:26,240

average around 6,000 liters

259

00:08:24,479 --> 00:08:28,080

and so trying to get them to do a lot of

260

00:08:26,240 --> 00:08:29,520

litres on forage is quite hard when

261

00:08:28,080 --> 00:08:30,240

they're only doing six thousand odd

262

00:08:29,520 --> 00:08:33,760

litres

263

00:08:30,240 --> 00:08:34,080

in total. But, I

264

00:08:33,760 --> 00:08:35,440

think

265

00:08:34,080 --> 00:08:37,360

the cow type is definitely

266

00:08:35,440 --> 00:08:39,440

really helping.

267

00:08:37,360 --> 00:08:40,800

You're going for longevity, you want

268

00:08:39,440 --> 00:08:42,320

the frame, the

269

00:08:40,800 --> 00:08:43,919

the legs and feet because you want these

270

00:08:42,320 --> 00:08:44,720

cows to last isn't it, that's more

271

00:08:43,919 --> 00:08:46,720

important or

272

00:08:44,720 --> 00:08:48,399

just as important as yield isn’t it?

273

00:08:46,720 --> 00:08:50,240

100%.

274

00:08:48,399 --> 00:08:51,839

Feet are really important. Making

275

00:08:50,240 --> 00:08:54,240

sure that we pick cows which have

276

00:08:51,839 --> 00:08:55,920

good mobility and good longevity.

277

00:08:54,240 --> 00:08:57,920

When I'm picking bulls there's

278

00:08:55,920 --> 00:09:00,399

longevity scores especially

279

00:08:57,920 --> 00:09:01,200

from the New Zealand bulls so we're

280

00:09:00,399 --> 00:09:03,120

searching for that

281

00:09:01,200 --> 00:09:04,720

and we're also searching for

282

00:09:03,120 --> 00:09:06,480

nice udders, cows that you want

283

00:09:04,720 --> 00:09:08,399

to milk as well.

284

00:09:06,480 --> 00:09:10,240

We don't want to breed cows which

285

00:09:08,399 --> 00:09:10,959

last forever and convert grass to

286

00:09:10,240 --> 00:09:12,320

milk but

287

00:09:10,959 --> 00:09:14,480

then you can't get it off them because

288

00:09:12,320 --> 00:09:16,640

they've got a rubbish udder.

289

00:09:14,480 --> 00:09:18,320

It's a whole picture.

290

00:09:16,640 --> 00:09:20,240

That's one of the projects

291

00:09:18,320 --> 00:09:21,360

that you focused on as a

292

00:09:20,240 --> 00:09:23,279

demonstration farm

293

00:09:21,360 --> 00:09:25,040

with Farming Connect which is trying to

294

00:09:23,279 --> 00:09:26,959

identify those superior genes and

295

00:09:25,040 --> 00:09:29,680

improving the genetic performance

296

00:09:26,959 --> 00:09:30,720

of the herd. Tell us a bit more about how

297

00:09:29,680 --> 00:09:32,240

you've gone about

298

00:09:30,720 --> 00:09:33,760

trying to achieve that genetic

299

00:09:32,240 --> 00:09:35,440

improvement.

300

00:09:33,760 --> 00:09:37,920

We were doing more milk recording and

301

00:09:35,440 --> 00:09:39,600

seeing results from cows on that so

302

00:09:37,920 --> 00:09:40,959

when

303

00:09:39,600 --> 00:09:42,080

Farming Connects we're asking

304

00:09:40,959 --> 00:09:43,839

what would you like to look

305

00:09:42,080 --> 00:09:44,640

into, I thought that there was a lot

306

00:09:43,839 --> 00:09:46,480

of stuff on

307

00:09:44,640 --> 00:09:47,760

genomics and genomic tagging therefore I

308

00:09:46,480 --> 00:09:48,959

thought it would be interesting to do a

309

00:09:47,760 --> 00:09:50,720

project

310

00:09:48,959 --> 00:09:52,000

tagging the calves and just

311

00:09:50,720 --> 00:09:54,160

seeing if we could rank them.

312

00:09:52,000 --> 00:09:55,440

At the time, it looked like we

313

00:09:54,160 --> 00:09:56,160

were going to have a surplus of heifer

314

00:09:55,440 --> 00:09:58,560

calves so

315

00:09:56,160 --> 00:10:00,240

we thought if we rank them

316

00:09:58,560 --> 00:10:03,360

we could always sell on

317

00:10:00,240 --> 00:10:04,000

318

00:10:03,360 --> 00:10:05,920

the

319

00:10:04,000 --> 00:10:07,279

lesser ranked ones but as it

320

00:10:05,920 --> 00:10:09,040

happens, we didn't have a

321

00:10:07,279 --> 00:10:10,800

surplus after all. We just

322

00:10:09,040 --> 00:10:13,040

keep them all but it was an interesting

323

00:10:10,800 --> 00:10:15,760

project and it did show

324

00:10:13,040 --> 00:10:16,640

calves coming through.

325

00:10:15,760 --> 00:10:19,040

We

326

00:10:16,640 --> 00:10:20,480

also genetically tagged a load of

327

00:10:19,040 --> 00:10:21,920

heifers as well and then

328

00:10:20,480 --> 00:10:23,920

scored them on milk recording and you

329

00:10:21,920 --> 00:10:25,839

could see that the genetic results did

330

00:10:23,920 --> 00:10:26,800

correspond with the recorded results as

331

00:10:25,839 --> 00:10:29,440

well. That's good.

332

00:10:26,800 --> 00:10:30,720

It was interesting. It's

333

00:10:29,440 --> 00:10:32,800

definitely got its place.

334

00:10:30,720 --> 00:10:34,720

It's probably got its place more on a

335

00:10:32,800 --> 00:10:36,800

consolidating herd

336

00:10:34,720 --> 00:10:38,320

rather than a herd which is either

337

00:10:36,800 --> 00:10:39,200

expanding or just trying to breed a lot

338

00:10:38,320 --> 00:10:42,399

of numbers to

339

00:10:39,200 --> 00:10:44,000

replace TB losses or

340

00:10:42,399 --> 00:10:45,760

to maximise.

341

00:10:44,000 --> 00:10:47,120

Talk us through the process. You

342

00:10:45,760 --> 00:10:48,800

would genetically test

343

00:10:47,120 --> 00:10:50,800

some of the animals and then did you use

344

00:10:48,800 --> 00:10:52,880

that results to try and map out? ‘Okay I

345

00:10:50,800 --> 00:10:56,000

need to now use this type of bull

346

00:10:52,880 --> 00:10:58,720

on this herd to get me from a to b’?

347

00:10:56,000 --> 00:10:59,760

Yes, slightly, we were using it more as a

348

00:10:58,720 --> 00:11:03,279

score I suppose.

349

00:10:59,760 --> 00:11:05,920

We would genetically test them, we

350

00:11:03,279 --> 00:11:07,760

tag all the calves, do a tissue tag

351

00:11:05,920 --> 00:11:09,519

in the ear

352

00:11:07,760 --> 00:11:10,880

and then we were using that almost to

353

00:11:09,519 --> 00:11:13,920

rank them

354

00:11:10,880 --> 00:11:14,399

from highest to lowest just to see.

355

00:11:13,920 --> 00:11:16,720

356

00:11:14,399 --> 00:11:18,480

The idea

357

00:11:16,720 --> 00:11:19,440

was to keep the best and then maybe

358

00:11:18,480 --> 00:11:21,920

move

359

00:11:19,440 --> 00:11:22,560

the bottom 10% on if we had

360

00:11:21,920 --> 00:11:23,920

surplus.

361

00:11:22,560 --> 00:11:26,720

But actually, we didn't have a

362

00:11:23,920 --> 00:11:29,600

surplus as I said.

363

00:11:26,720 --> 00:11:31,760

This type

364

00:11:29,600 --> 00:11:33,839

of cow hasn't been genetically tested

365

00:11:31,760 --> 00:11:35,360

that much so we were almost

366

00:11:33,839 --> 00:11:36,480

scoring them against themselves rather

367

00:11:35,360 --> 00:11:38,399

than

368

00:11:36,480 --> 00:11:39,519

trying to pick up a point that we were

369

00:11:38,399 --> 00:11:40,880

weak on. But,

370

00:11:39,519 --> 00:11:42,480

it's easier for us to pick that up

371

00:11:40,880 --> 00:11:43,040

probably with milk recording and also

372

00:11:42,480 --> 00:11:45,040

just

373

00:11:43,040 --> 00:11:46,240

working with the herd you can

374

00:11:45,040 --> 00:11:47,839

see if you've got a

375

00:11:46,240 --> 00:11:49,519

slightest issue or if you've got a lameness

376

00:11:47,839 --> 00:11:51,279

issue or anything

377

00:11:49,519 --> 00:11:52,480

you want to change. It’s

378

00:11:51,279 --> 00:11:53,440

probably easier to pick that up from

379

00:11:52,480 --> 00:11:54,959

that point of view.

380

00:11:53,440 --> 00:11:56,720

But from the genetics point of view, it

381

00:11:54,959 --> 00:11:57,600

was much more purely just to use it as a

382

00:11:56,720 --> 00:12:00,079

score

383

00:11:57,600 --> 00:12:01,839

to rank the herd or to rank

384

00:12:00,079 --> 00:12:04,240

that generation of heifers.

385

00:12:01,839 --> 00:12:05,839

And I guess the more you do it and over

386

00:12:04,240 --> 00:12:07,600

a period of time you'll build up a

387

00:12:05,839 --> 00:12:09,200

bank of data which will then become

388

00:12:07,600 --> 00:12:10,720

quite valuable for this farm, which you

389

00:12:09,200 --> 00:12:11,279

could potentially then use to benchmark

390

00:12:10,720 --> 00:12:13,360

against

391

00:12:11,279 --> 00:12:15,760

other herds? Yes, exactly. You could

392

00:12:13,360 --> 00:12:17,440

do that. And I expect

393

00:12:15,760 --> 00:12:19,360

that would be the same with

394

00:12:17,440 --> 00:12:21,839

the milk recording as well.

395

00:12:19,360 --> 00:12:22,399

You could genetically

396

00:12:21,839 --> 00:12:24,639

score

397

00:12:22,399 --> 00:12:25,600

this crop of heifers against other

398

00:12:24,639 --> 00:12:27,680

farm's heifers,

399

00:12:25,600 --> 00:12:29,440

and yes, it would show you. Actually, one

400

00:12:27,680 --> 00:12:32,079

of the heifers

401

00:12:29,440 --> 00:12:33,519

we did test was ranked

402

00:12:32,079 --> 00:12:36,880

second on butterfat

403

00:12:33,519 --> 00:12:39,040

in the UK for a genomic test. Wow!

404

00:12:36,880 --> 00:12:40,240

But she wouldn't have had the litres

405

00:12:39,040 --> 00:12:40,720

that some of the Holsteins have but

406

00:12:40,240 --> 00:12:42,320

because

407

00:12:40,720 --> 00:12:44,079

the cows have been bred for about half

408

00:12:42,320 --> 00:12:45,600

protein she actually did come out

409

00:12:44,079 --> 00:12:46,959

very high so you do get

410

00:12:45,600 --> 00:12:48,800

interesting results like that. And you

411

00:12:46,959 --> 00:12:51,120

could have selected that animal

412

00:12:48,800 --> 00:12:52,000

and then, yes, you possibly could

413

00:12:51,120 --> 00:12:53,519

sort of upscale

414

00:12:52,000 --> 00:12:55,200

it. It's quite a lot of work but you

415

00:12:53,519 --> 00:12:57,440

could upscale it and actually,

416

00:12:55,200 --> 00:12:58,959

in theory, you could breed an elite group

417

00:12:57,440 --> 00:13:01,680

of animals.

418

00:12:58,959 --> 00:13:03,839

Can you use that data to map out

419

00:13:01,680 --> 00:13:05,680

what the financial gain might be?

420

00:13:03,839 --> 00:13:07,360

Could you have you worked out if we were

421

00:13:05,680 --> 00:13:08,959

to get all the heifers at a certain

422

00:13:07,360 --> 00:13:10,800

score that would equate to

423

00:13:08,959 --> 00:13:12,480

x number of pounds per cow per year

424

00:13:10,800 --> 00:13:14,160

going forward? Is it that type of

425

00:13:12,480 --> 00:13:16,240

calculations you'd be looking at?

426

00:13:14,160 --> 00:13:18,050

You can do calculations like that and

427

00:13:16,240 --> 00:13:19,120

they look nice

428

00:13:18,050 --> 00:13:22,560

429

00:13:19,120 --> 00:13:24,079

but where you gain,

430

00:13:22,560 --> 00:13:26,000

it depends which trait you might rank

431

00:13:24,079 --> 00:13:27,760

them on. But, if you

432

00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:29,519

rank them on production

433

00:13:27,760 --> 00:13:31,519

or butterfat or protein or whatever,

434

00:13:29,519 --> 00:13:32,800

you tend to then push them that

435

00:13:31,519 --> 00:13:34,959

way but then you have to

436

00:13:32,800 --> 00:13:36,399

get a balance of other traits

437

00:13:34,959 --> 00:13:37,920

that you might almost miss, so you do

438

00:13:36,399 --> 00:13:39,440

have to be a bit careful.

439

00:13:37,920 --> 00:13:41,27

440

00:13:39,440 --> 00:13:41,760

Yes, sometimes it can be a trade-off

441

00:13:41,279 --> 00:13:43,040

can't it?

442

00:13:41,760 --> 00:13:45,279

Yes. You might lose fertility for

443

00:13:43,040 --> 00:13:46,480

instance if you can rank

444

00:13:45,279 --> 00:13:49,199

them and you can put a pounds

445

00:13:46,480 --> 00:13:49,760

per head livestock score on it or

446

00:13:49,199 --> 00:13:52,959

whatever.

447

00:13:49,760 --> 00:13:54,399

But,

448

00:13:52,959 --> 00:13:56,560

we take it with a pinch of salt that

449

00:13:54,399 --> 00:13:58,880

score I suppose.

450

00:13:56,560 --> 00:14:00,320

Genetic improvement, it's a long term

451

00:13:58,880 --> 00:14:01,839

journey isn't it. It's not a task and

452

00:14:00,320 --> 00:14:03,199

finish piece of job. It's something

453

00:14:01,839 --> 00:14:03,760

you'll dedicate most of your farming

454

00:14:03,199 --> 00:14:06,320

life

455

00:14:03,760 --> 00:14:08,000

towards getting that improvement and

456

00:14:06,320 --> 00:14:09,519

it's so small, small marginal gains that

457

00:14:08,000 --> 00:14:11,360

make a huge impact

458

00:14:09,519 --> 00:14:12,800

over the entire herd. Yes that's it.

459

00:14:11,360 --> 00:14:13,199

That's the challenge I

460

00:14:12,800 --> 00:14:15,120

suppose.

461

00:14:13,199 --> 00:14:17,519

I really enjoy selecting

462

00:14:15,120 --> 00:14:18,720

bulls that should match

463

00:14:17,519 --> 00:14:21,120

different heiffers and stuff like

464

00:14:18,720 --> 00:14:24,320

that. We do our own AI.

465

00:14:21,120 --> 00:14:25,920

When I AI,

466

00:14:24,320 --> 00:14:27,680

depending on what ever looks like

467

00:14:25,920 --> 00:14:29,040

and what our production traits are,

468

00:14:27,680 --> 00:14:30,160

we can

469

00:14:29,040 --> 00:14:31,680

match them in a bit.

470

00:14:30,160 --> 00:14:33,199

I tend to pick a few different bulls

471

00:14:31,680 --> 00:14:34,880

when I'm picking bulls so that

472

00:14:33,199 --> 00:14:36,800

I've got a bull which will suit

473

00:14:34,880 --> 00:14:38,079

shorter, lower production heifers or I've

474

00:14:36,800 --> 00:14:40,639

got a bull which will suit

475

00:14:38,079 --> 00:14:42,000

the slightly rangier ones and try and

476

00:14:40,639 --> 00:14:43,519

just try and match them up.

477

00:14:42,000 --> 00:14:44,320

We end up with a more uniform herd

478

00:14:43,519 --> 00:14:46,480

maybe.

479

00:14:44,320 --> 00:14:48,000

They are getting

480

00:14:46,480 --> 00:14:51,519

more uniform to be fair

481

00:14:48,000 --> 00:14:53,199

as they go anyway but, yes, there's

482

00:14:51,519 --> 00:14:55,040

always gains in every

483

00:14:53,199 --> 00:14:56,800

aspect of it. There's gains to be

484

00:14:55,040 --> 00:14:58,320

had, which is

485

00:14:56,800 --> 00:15:00,320

good, it's still

486

00:14:58,320 --> 00:15:02,880

just progress isn't it.

487

00:15:00,320 --> 00:15:04,079

We do see genetic progress. We do see it in our

488

00:15:02,880 --> 00:15:07,040

butter fats and proteins

489

00:15:04,079 --> 00:15:08,480

year on year tend to just gradually rise,

490

00:15:07,040 --> 00:15:10,639

especially protein.

491

00:15:08,480 --> 00:15:12,000

The herd average protein just rises a

492

00:15:10,639 --> 00:15:13,440

little bit gradually.

493

00:15:12,000 --> 00:15:15,760

You can just see it rising a little bit

494

00:15:13,440 --> 00:15:17,760

as we breed more and more

495

00:15:15,760 --> 00:15:19,760

protein production

496

00:15:17,760 --> 00:15:21,680

into the cows.

497

00:15:19,760 --> 00:15:23,360

To what extent does your

498

00:15:21,680 --> 00:15:24,560

milk contract influence

499

00:15:23,360 --> 00:15:26,720

your breeding policy? You're

500

00:15:24,560 --> 00:15:28,320

rewarded on milk solids so those are the

501

00:15:26,720 --> 00:15:30,160

type of areas you're trying to

502

00:15:28,320 --> 00:15:32,240

improve on. Yes. We're on a solids

503

00:15:30,160 --> 00:15:34,399

contract with Arla,

504

00:15:32,240 --> 00:15:36,320

and it rewards us for milk

505

00:15:34,399 --> 00:15:37,680

solids especially. Protein

506

00:15:36,320 --> 00:15:39,440

is worth a bit more than butter fat but

507

00:15:37,680 --> 00:15:40,720

we're

508

00:15:39,440 --> 00:15:43,600

breeding for milk solids,

509

00:15:40,720 --> 00:15:44,399

therefore, I suppose we are influenced

510

00:15:43,600 --> 00:15:46,959

by that.

511

00:15:44,399 --> 00:15:47,440

Our calving pattern actually sort of

512

00:15:46,959 --> 00:15:50,320

suits

513

00:15:47,440 --> 00:15:51,920

our contract as well because

514

00:15:50,320 --> 00:15:54,639

we're a later calving herd. We have quite a

515

00:15:51,920 --> 00:15:56,880

level spring autumn profile.

516

00:15:54,639 --> 00:15:58,959

They quite like that.

517

00:15:56,880 --> 00:16:00,320

We're not big spring milk producers

518

00:15:58,959 --> 00:16:02,000

really because we don't

519

00:16:00,320 --> 00:16:04,320

tend to peak until sort of June-

520

00:16:02,000 --> 00:16:07,920

July in milk production.

521

00:16:04,320 --> 00:16:09,120

The second project

522

00:16:07,920 --> 00:16:10,800

you've been looking at as a Farming

523

00:16:09,120 --> 00:16:11,680

Connect demonstration farm is trying

524

00:16:10,800 --> 00:16:14,240

to reduce

525

00:16:11,680 --> 00:16:16,320

the amount of nitrogen fertiliser input

526

00:16:14,240 --> 00:16:18,399

costs, in particular on-farm.

527

00:16:16,320 --> 00:16:20,160

You've been using and gaining access

528

00:16:18,399 --> 00:16:21,519

to some expert advice there.

529

00:16:20,160 --> 00:16:23,279

What are you trying to achieve? Are

530

00:16:21,519 --> 00:16:24,959

you trying to get improved

531

00:16:23,279 --> 00:16:26,480

nitrogen efficiency on the farm and

532

00:16:24,959 --> 00:16:28,399

trying to limit your cost?

533

00:16:26,480 --> 00:16:29,920

I guess it also ties into a lot of

534

00:16:28,399 --> 00:16:31,040

the conversations that are happening

535

00:16:29,920 --> 00:16:34,399

right now around

536

00:16:31,040 --> 00:16:36,240

environmental awareness and

537

00:16:34,399 --> 00:16:37,920

particularly in light of the new water

538

00:16:36,240 --> 00:16:40,480

quality regulations isn't it.

539

00:16:37,920 --> 00:16:42,560

It's all feeding into a regulatory role

540

00:16:40,480 --> 00:16:44,560

but also trying to

541

00:16:42,560 --> 00:16:46,320

looking at ways of improving efficiency

542

00:16:44,560 --> 00:16:48,160

minimising costs and

543

00:16:46,320 --> 00:16:50,399

the benefits that might bring. Exactly, as

544

00:16:48,160 --> 00:16:52,240

you say, trying to

545

00:16:50,399 --> 00:16:53,680

improve nitrogen efficiency. I

546

00:16:52,240 --> 00:16:55,120

think,

547

00:16:53,680 --> 00:16:57,040

when I first came back for the first

548

00:16:55,120 --> 00:16:57,440

eight to ten years ago, we

549

00:16:57,040 --> 00:16:59,360

were

550

00:16:57,440 --> 00:17:01,360

quite heavily stocked and

551

00:16:59,360 --> 00:17:03,040

limited on acreage therefore, we were always

552

00:17:01,360 --> 00:17:05,280

pushing, pushing the land as hard as we

553

00:17:03,040 --> 00:17:06,720

could. We were tending to spread 250-

554

00:17:05,280 --> 00:17:10,240

300 kilos

555

00:17:06,720 --> 00:17:11,199

of nitrogen per hectare.

556

00:17:10,240 --> 00:17:12,959

That's

557

00:17:11,199 --> 00:17:15,120

558

00:17:12,959 --> 00:17:17,600

high nitrogen use

559

00:17:15,120 --> 00:17:18,319

and then we've now had this

560

00:17:17,600 --> 00:17:19,919

opportunity of

561

00:17:18,319 --> 00:17:21,839

more land coming on board so we're

562

00:17:19,919 --> 00:17:24,720

actually a lower stock farm now.

563

00:17:21,839 --> 00:17:25,199

Part of the way to make that work,

564

00:17:24,720 --> 00:17:26,480

565

00:17:25,199 --> 00:17:28,400

and it's also a good

566

00:17:26,480 --> 00:17:29,440

opportunity to see if we can reduce

567

00:17:28,400 --> 00:17:31,840

nitrogen,

568

00:17:29,440 --> 00:17:33,679

and then maybe we won't grow

569

00:17:31,840 --> 00:17:35,200

quite as much but we might reduce

570

00:17:33,679 --> 00:17:37,280

nitrogen. I think

571

00:17:35,200 --> 00:17:38,480

last year, we reduced it back around

572

00:17:37,280 --> 00:17:40,720

40%

573

00:17:38,480 --> 00:17:42,640

and we

574

00:17:40,720 --> 00:17:44,160

still grew around 14 tonnes.

575

00:17:42,640 --> 00:17:46,160

We probably wouldn't have been growing

576

00:17:44,160 --> 00:17:48,160

maybe only 5-10%

577

00:17:46,160 --> 00:17:49,200

less grass last year which was a good

578

00:17:48,160 --> 00:17:51,200

growing season.

579

00:17:49,200 --> 00:17:52,480

This year we may not, we probably won't

580

00:17:51,200 --> 00:17:54,559

get that high this year.

581

00:17:52,480 --> 00:17:56,240

But, although we've

582

00:17:54,559 --> 00:17:58,960

reduced nitrogen by say 40%

583

00:17:56,240 --> 00:17:59,679

we actually only reduced our growth per

584

00:17:58,960 --> 00:18:02,880

hectare by

585

00:17:59,679 --> 00:18:05,280

say 10% or less to 5%

586

00:18:02,880 --> 00:18:07,039

and that with our land base at the

587

00:18:05,280 --> 00:18:09,440

moment that's pretty

588

00:18:07,039 --> 00:18:10,640

good. That's quite

589

00:18:09,440 --> 00:18:13,440

economically viable

590

00:18:10,640 --> 00:18:14,880

and in theory, it should be

591

00:18:13,440 --> 00:18:16,320

better for the cows and it's

592

00:18:14,880 --> 00:18:19,440

definitely better for the environment.

593

00:18:16,320 --> 00:18:20,960

So, it's trying to make that

594

00:18:19,440 --> 00:18:23,280

fertiliser work hard for you

595

00:18:20,960 --> 00:18:25,120

and not waste it? That's it.

596

00:18:23,280 --> 00:18:26,880

It's little and often. That is the key. We

597

00:18:25,120 --> 00:18:28,640

always spread quite regularly

598

00:18:26,880 --> 00:18:30,240

and we've just reduced the amount we're

599

00:18:28,640 --> 00:18:31,600

spreading regularly so we

600

00:18:30,240 --> 00:18:33,360

are going out with quite small

601

00:18:31,600 --> 00:18:36,400

applications,

602

00:18:33,360 --> 00:18:38,799

say sort of 18 kilos of N

603

00:18:36,400 --> 00:18:40,320

per hectare applications through a lot

604

00:18:38,799 --> 00:18:42,160

of the season. In the spring, we spread

605

00:18:40,320 --> 00:18:44,240

a little bit more and last year we

606

00:18:42,160 --> 00:18:47,520

spread around 160

607

00:18:44,240 --> 00:18:50,720

kilos of N per hectare on the

608

00:18:47,520 --> 00:18:52,000

grazing platform.

609

00:18:50,720 --> 00:18:54,080

That little and often just

610

00:18:52,000 --> 00:18:55,120

after each round of

611

00:18:54,080 --> 00:18:56,880

grazing.

612

00:18:55,120 --> 00:18:58,240

Last year, we saw more

613

00:18:56,880 --> 00:18:59,760

clover last year was a good year for

614

00:18:58,240 --> 00:19:01,440

clover, but we did see more clover on

615

00:18:59,760 --> 00:19:03,200

farm than we've seen

616

00:19:01,440 --> 00:19:04,559

seen in years, probably

617

00:19:03,200 --> 00:19:07,039

ever.

618

00:19:04,559 --> 00:19:08,799

The clover is almost

619

00:19:07,039 --> 00:19:10,000

looks like it’s responding to a

620

00:19:08,799 --> 00:19:12,240

bit lower nitrogen

621

00:19:10,000 --> 00:19:13,919

and is liking it and then it's probably

622

00:19:12,240 --> 00:19:14,799

producing more

623

00:19:13,919 --> 00:19:17,679

624

00:19:14,799 --> 00:19:19,679

natural nitrogen off that.

625

00:19:17,679 --> 00:19:22,080

It's interesting.

626

00:19:19,679 --> 00:19:23,600

It's good

627

00:19:22,080 --> 00:19:25,600

that we've got the opportunity to do it.

628

00:19:23,600 --> 00:19:28,880

We've had input from Chris Duller

629

00:19:25,600 --> 00:19:31,120

earlier through Farming Connect.

630

00:19:28,880 --> 00:19:32,720

We've got

631

00:19:31,120 --> 00:19:33,760

a trial field at the moment which is a

632

00:19:32,720 --> 00:19:36,240

ten acre field

633

00:19:33,760 --> 00:19:38,400

and at the moment last year we did

634

00:19:36,240 --> 00:19:40,960

a full rate application, so say like

635

00:19:38,400 --> 00:19:44,640

25kg of N

636

00:19:40,960 --> 00:19:45,039

every say 30 days or

637

00:19:44,640 --> 00:19:47,200

so

638

00:19:45,039 --> 00:19:49,280

on one side. On another side,

639

00:19:47,200 --> 00:19:51,520

we did half that,

640

00:19:49,280 --> 00:19:52,480

12.5kg of N on that side

641

00:19:51,520 --> 00:19:54,240

and

642

00:19:52,480 --> 00:19:56,799

we did a little bit with no N.

643

00:19:54,240 --> 00:19:58,799

It was interesting.

644

00:19:56,799 --> 00:20:01,360

We actually found the 12.5kg

645

00:19:58,799 --> 00:20:02,000

side which only had about 80 or 90 kg

646

00:20:01,360 --> 00:20:04,720

of N

647

00:20:02,000 --> 00:20:06,480

over the year, it was pretty

648

00:20:04,720 --> 00:20:08,960

marginally less than the full

649

00:20:06,480 --> 00:20:11,760

full side that received 25kg/N/ha side which had

650

00:20:08,960 --> 00:20:16,240

sort of 170 kilos of N.

651

00:20:11,760 --> 00:20:19,280

652

00:20:16,240 --> 00:20:20,400

653

00:20:19,280 --> 00:20:22,559

That was quite

654

00:20:20,400 --> 00:20:24,799

interesting but the area we

655

00:20:22,559 --> 00:20:28,080

spread which didn't have any N

656

00:20:24,799 --> 00:20:29,600

was a bit small and a bit

657

00:20:28,080 --> 00:20:30,960

hard to judge whether we were being that

658

00:20:29,600 --> 00:20:32,400

accurate on that bit. So, this year we've

659

00:20:30,960 --> 00:20:34,240

left a big strip down the middle of the

660

00:20:32,400 --> 00:20:35,919

field with no N.

661

00:20:34,240 --> 00:20:37,600

So that'll give us a fairer response I

662

00:20:35,919 --> 00:20:41,360

think and we've done that this year

663

00:20:37,600 --> 00:20:42,720

off the bat, from first application

664

00:20:41,360 --> 00:20:45,280

and the rest of the fields on normal

665

00:20:42,720 --> 00:20:46,480

application, and we're already this year

666

00:20:45,280 --> 00:20:49,919

seeing a big difference,

667

00:20:46,480 --> 00:20:51,520

from no N to the normal end…

668

00:20:49,919 --> 00:20:52,960

I don't know that's this spring being

669

00:20:51,520 --> 00:20:53,520

particularly challenging, it's been so

670

00:20:52,960 --> 00:20:55,039

cold

671

00:20:53,520 --> 00:20:57,039

and then it's been wet

672

00:20:55,039 --> 00:20:58,320

recently, that I wonder the grass was

673

00:20:57,039 --> 00:21:00,000

more challenged and probably

674

00:20:58,320 --> 00:21:02,320

maybe is suffering more from the lack of

675

00:21:00,000 --> 00:21:04,159

nutrients than it would

676

00:21:02,320 --> 00:21:05,760

in another year.

677

00:21:04,159 --> 00:21:08,640

I think that's where you

678

00:21:05,760 --> 00:21:10,320

notice, you sort of get away

679

00:21:08,640 --> 00:21:12,080

with lower end quite nicely

680

00:21:10,320 --> 00:21:13,760

until you get an extreme of weather

681

00:21:12,080 --> 00:21:15,600

probably and then that's when

682

00:21:13,760 --> 00:21:16,880

it comes to bite you. You have to

683

00:21:15,600 --> 00:21:19,280

be a little bit careful I think.

684

00:21:16,880 --> 00:21:20,880

You have to be aware of that and

685

00:21:19,280 --> 00:21:21,679

willing to maybe up it a bit if you do

686

00:21:20,880 --> 00:21:23,520

get a challenge.

687

00:21:21,679 --> 00:21:25,360

It's having that flexibility to work

688

00:21:23,520 --> 00:21:27,120

with the weather because

689

00:21:25,360 --> 00:21:28,799

have you learned that

690

00:21:27,120 --> 00:21:30,080

timing is important

691

00:21:28,799 --> 00:21:31,919

to try and get the best out of the

692

00:21:30,080 --> 00:21:32,880

nitrogen application, the fertiliser

693

00:21:31,919 --> 00:21:34,400

application?

694

00:21:32,880 --> 00:21:36,720

You've got to judge the timing just

695

00:21:34,400 --> 00:21:38,320

right? Yes 100%.

696

00:21:36,720 --> 00:21:39,520

Definitely. I mean that's like

697

00:21:38,320 --> 00:21:40,320

everything in farming. It's all about

698

00:21:39,520 --> 00:21:43,520

timing really.

699

00:21:40,320 --> 00:21:45,360

But, with

700

00:21:43,520 --> 00:21:46,559

that, ideally obviously you're

701

00:21:45,360 --> 00:21:50,240

spreading it just

702

00:21:46,559 --> 00:21:52,240

before a light bit of rain. But

703

00:21:50,240 --> 00:21:54,000

that is a challenge. I mean we tend to

704

00:21:52,240 --> 00:21:55,679

spread as I say because we are spreading

705

00:21:54,000 --> 00:21:57,919

little and often, we tend to spread this

706

00:21:55,679 --> 00:21:59,840

year every week.

707

00:21:57,919 --> 00:22:01,440

So we'll spread all the ground that the

708

00:21:59,840 --> 00:22:02,799

cows have eaten that week, so that then

709

00:22:01,440 --> 00:22:03,679

gives it a decent break then before

710

00:22:02,799 --> 00:22:07,440

they're back on it.

711

00:22:03,679 --> 00:22:10,960

So yes,

712

00:22:07,440 --> 00:22:13,200

just doing that really.

713

00:22:10,960 --> 00:22:14,240

And do you do soil testing regularly

714

00:22:13,200 --> 00:22:16,640

across the farm?

715

00:22:14,240 --> 00:22:18,000

Yes, we do with help from

716

00:22:16,640 --> 00:22:19,679

Farming Connect actually. A lot of it is

717

00:22:18,000 --> 00:22:21,440

Farming Connect funded. We

718

00:22:19,679 --> 00:22:22,960

tend to test about a third of the

719

00:22:21,440 --> 00:22:25,679

farm every year.

720

00:22:22,960 --> 00:22:26,880

Last year, because we took

721

00:22:25,679 --> 00:22:29,840

on a new block of land, we

722

00:22:26,880 --> 00:22:30,559

used most of it for testing that.

723

00:22:29,840 --> 00:22:32,400

We do

724

00:22:30,559 --> 00:22:34,720

soil test the farm. When I came

725

00:22:32,400 --> 00:22:36,880

back to farm we hadn't spread much.

726

00:22:34,720 --> 00:22:38,720

Dad hadn't spread much lime and so we

727

00:22:36,880 --> 00:22:41,760

did have some fields which were down

728

00:22:38,720 --> 00:22:44,000

sort of fives or even below that.

729

00:22:41,760 --> 00:22:44,880

And then within the last 10 years or so 12 years,

730

00:22:44,000 --> 00:22:46,320

we must

731

00:22:44,880 --> 00:22:47,760

have spread about

732

00:22:46,320 --> 00:22:48,320

one and a half thousand tonnes of lime.

733

00:22:47,760 --> 00:22:50,880

734

00:22:48,320 --> 00:22:51,840

But the farm is now generally up to six,

735

00:22:50,880 --> 00:22:53,360

six and a half. Yes

736

00:22:51,840 --> 00:22:56,159

that's good. It's pretty much

737

00:22:53,360 --> 00:22:57,679

six all over now and when we take on new land

738

00:22:56,159 --> 00:22:58,480

the first thing we do is soil sample

739

00:22:57,679 --> 00:23:00,640

and try and

740

00:22:58,480 --> 00:23:01,919

bring it up to above six.

741

00:23:00,640 --> 00:23:03,280

Because it just makes a huge

742

00:23:01,919 --> 00:23:06,240

difference for

743

00:23:03,280 --> 00:23:07,679

farming with low N, because it

744

00:23:06,240 --> 00:23:08,640

just means that basically you're

745

00:23:07,679 --> 00:23:10,480

producing

746

00:23:08,640 --> 00:23:12,000

as much natural N as your soil is

747

00:23:10,480 --> 00:23:13,600

going to produce and clover

748

00:23:12,000 --> 00:23:16,480

and grass obviously.

749

00:23:13,600 --> 00:23:18,480

But clover really likes

750

00:23:16,480 --> 00:23:19,520

a correct soil basically.

751

00:23:18,480 --> 00:23:22,240

752

00:23:19,520 --> 00:23:22,720

One of the previous

753

00:23:22,240 --> 00:23:24,720

guests

754

00:23:22,720 --> 00:23:26,400

on the podcast actually described the pH

755

00:23:24,720 --> 00:23:26,799

as the key to the engine that drives the

756

00:23:26,400 --> 00:23:28,880

farm.

757

00:23:26,799 --> 00:23:30,000

100%. And I think that's a good way of

758

00:23:28,880 --> 00:23:31,360

describing it, and

759

00:23:30,000 --> 00:23:33,520

obviously you've become a Farming

760

00:23:31,360 --> 00:23:34,880

Connect demonstration farm during a

761

00:23:33,520 --> 00:23:36,559

period which has been very different and

762

00:23:34,880 --> 00:23:38,480

challenging for us all, so you haven't

763

00:23:36,559 --> 00:23:39,760

had that same opportunity to invite

764

00:23:38,480 --> 00:23:41,760

fellow farmers

765

00:23:39,760 --> 00:23:43,600

to Mountjoy here to see what you're

766

00:23:41,760 --> 00:23:46,240

doing. But you have been

767

00:23:43,600 --> 00:23:46,720

sharing some findings via a digital

768

00:23:46,240 --> 00:23:48,960

means.

769

00:23:46,720 --> 00:23:50,400

You've done a live Facebook event,

770

00:23:48,960 --> 00:23:53,120

how did that go?

771

00:23:50,400 --> 00:23:54,159

Yes, that went well. We did

772

00:23:53,120 --> 00:23:56,559

a

773

00:23:54,159 --> 00:23:58,320

live event with Farming Connect which

774

00:23:56,559 --> 00:24:02,960

was broadcasted on Youtube.

775

00:23:58,320 --> 00:24:04,240

It went well.

776

00:24:02,960 --> 00:24:06,080

The other thing the cows were lucky on the day

777

00:24:04,240 --> 00:24:09,120

on the drone footage was took but

778

00:24:06,080 --> 00:24:10,559

it was good.

779

00:24:09,120 --> 00:24:12,080

It'd be good this year to be honest.

780

00:24:10,559 --> 00:24:13,520

Now that things are opening up a

781

00:24:12,080 --> 00:24:15,440

bit more, it'd be good to

782

00:24:13,520 --> 00:24:17,279

have some on-farm meetings.

783

00:24:15,440 --> 00:24:17,679

It's more beneficial to everyone.

784

00:24:17,279 --> 00:24:19,760

785

00:24:17,679 --> 00:24:20,720

Yes it's nice having on-farm

786

00:24:19,760 --> 00:24:22,880

meetings. You can get

787

00:24:20,720 --> 00:24:25,120

input. The phone is going

788

00:24:22,880 --> 00:24:25,120

again.

789

00:24:28,880 --> 00:24:32,080

We're all hoping that things

790

00:24:31,360 --> 00:24:34,720

will

791

00:24:32,080 --> 00:24:35,840

gradually return to normal and I think

792

00:24:34,720 --> 00:24:37,440

that will be a huge

793

00:24:35,840 --> 00:24:39,200

pent up demand isn't it. Some farmers

794

00:24:37,440 --> 00:24:39,919

haven't had that opportunity to visit

795

00:24:39,200 --> 00:24:42,320

places and

796

00:24:39,919 --> 00:24:43,279

going to see if another farm is

797

00:24:42,320 --> 00:24:44,880

always of interest.

798

00:24:43,279 --> 00:24:47,039

Yes. And there's so much we can

799

00:24:44,880 --> 00:24:48,799

learn from each other.

800

00:24:47,039 --> 00:24:50,159

There's another interesting project

801

00:24:48,799 --> 00:24:51,919

that you've been involved in recently around

802

00:24:50,159 --> 00:24:53,679

biodiversity and

803

00:24:51,919 --> 00:24:54,960

tree planting. Tell us a bit about

804

00:24:53,679 --> 00:24:57,600

that.

805

00:24:54,960 --> 00:24:58,320

Farming Connect suggested it. They

806

00:24:57,600 --> 00:24:59,919

said there's

807

00:24:58,320 --> 00:25:01,600

these new woodland creation grants

808

00:24:59,919 --> 00:25:02,240

coming out, have you got any areas that

809

00:25:01,600 --> 00:25:04,320

might be

810

00:25:02,240 --> 00:25:05,279

worth looking at for

811

00:25:04,320 --> 00:25:07,520

that,

812

00:25:05,279 --> 00:25:09,200

scrubby areas really that

813

00:25:07,520 --> 00:25:09,600

we weren't using? But, they tended to be

814

00:25:09,200 --> 00:25:11,600

815

00:25:09,600 --> 00:25:13,440

overgrown with bracken or just

816

00:25:11,600 --> 00:25:14,400

grass where it was awkward to get to.

817

00:25:13,440 --> 00:25:17,679

So

818

00:25:14,400 --> 00:25:18,880

we did, we found some

819

00:25:17,679 --> 00:25:22,640

0.2 hectares

820

00:25:18,880 --> 00:25:23,520

of land that we thought

821

00:25:22,640 --> 00:25:26,240

would be suitable

822

00:25:23,520 --> 00:25:27,840

and that's been accepted for

823

00:25:26,240 --> 00:25:30,240

that Woodland Creation Grant.

824

00:25:27,840 --> 00:25:31,600

I think we're planning to plant some

825

00:25:30,240 --> 00:25:34,720

trees this autumn

826

00:25:31,600 --> 00:25:36,400

and fence off those areas.

827

00:25:34,720 --> 00:25:38,320

It's all fairly straightforward

828

00:25:36,400 --> 00:25:40,480

to be fair.

829

00:25:38,320 --> 00:25:41,679

It was quite a nice grant

830

00:25:40,480 --> 00:25:42,640

to apply for. It seemed fairly

831

00:25:41,679 --> 00:25:44,799

straightforward and

832

00:25:42,640 --> 00:25:46,000

I think it will pay for itself.

833

00:25:44,799 --> 00:25:47,840

We’re

834

00:25:46,000 --> 00:25:49,120

not doing it to make loads of

835

00:25:47,840 --> 00:25:51,200

money. It's more

836

00:25:49,120 --> 00:25:52,720

a positive thing to

837

00:25:51,200 --> 00:25:54,159

plant trees but also

838

00:25:52,720 --> 00:25:55,679

it looks like it'll cover its cost

839

00:25:54,159 --> 00:25:56,640

because of the ground, it's

840

00:25:55,679 --> 00:25:58,320

good.

841

00:25:56,640 --> 00:26:00,159

And I'm sure a lot of farmers can think

842

00:25:58,320 --> 00:26:02,159

of areas of

843

00:26:00,159 --> 00:26:03,520

less productive land on marginal areas

844

00:26:02,159 --> 00:26:06,000

on their farm that could

845

00:26:03,520 --> 00:26:06,880

be suitable for planting. But to

846

00:26:06,000 --> 00:26:09,200

what extent

847

00:26:06,880 --> 00:26:11,120

is the environmental aspects

848

00:26:09,200 --> 00:26:12,240

coming into your thinking and ways of

849

00:26:11,120 --> 00:26:14,159

farming? We hear

850

00:26:12,240 --> 00:26:15,760

so often about the targets of

851

00:26:14,159 --> 00:26:18,880

trying to get into net zero.

852

00:26:15,760 --> 00:26:20,000

This climate change debate is

853

00:26:18,880 --> 00:26:22,159

ongoing and

854

00:26:20,000 --> 00:26:24,480

the need and ambition there is to

855

00:26:22,159 --> 00:26:27,120

try and get carbon neutrality

856

00:26:24,480 --> 00:26:28,240

in farming. Is that part of your thinking

857

00:26:27,120 --> 00:26:29,520

in farming here at Mountjoy?

858

00:26:28,240 --> 00:26:31,120

Are you trying to get there through

859

00:26:29,520 --> 00:26:32,400

reducing your nitrogen application,

860

00:26:31,120 --> 00:26:34,159

planting trees?

861

00:26:32,400 --> 00:26:36,080

Is this something you're looking into?

862

00:26:34,159 --> 00:26:36,480

It is, it's something we're very aware

863

00:26:36,080 --> 00:26:39,679

of.

864

00:26:36,480 --> 00:26:40,320

Our milk processor,

865

00:26:39,679 --> 00:26:43,279

Arla,

866

00:26:40,320 --> 00:26:44,799

who are quite keen on

867

00:26:43,279 --> 00:26:46,000

pushing, and we do a climate check with

868

00:26:44,799 --> 00:26:49,039

them yearly.

869

00:26:46,000 --> 00:26:52,159

870

00:26:49,039 --> 00:26:54,400

871

00:26:52,159 --> 00:26:55,600

We're

872

00:26:54,400 --> 00:26:56,960

doing things, we've got

873

00:26:55,600 --> 00:26:59,440

solar panels on farm,

874

00:26:56,960 --> 00:27:00,880

and a

875

00:26:59,440 --> 00:27:02,960

lot of it is efficiency.

876

00:27:00,880 --> 00:27:04,960

A lot of efficiency gains actually

877

00:27:02,960 --> 00:27:08,159

improve your carbon footprint

878

00:27:04,960 --> 00:27:11,039

anyway, so that's a win-win. I do

879

00:27:08,159 --> 00:27:12,159

have a slight hang-up with the

880

00:27:11,039 --> 00:27:13,760

the fact that they can't measure

881

00:27:12,159 --> 00:27:16,559

sequential at the moment,

882

00:27:13,760 --> 00:27:17,120

which seems like a huge part of it.

883

00:27:16,559 --> 00:27:19,440

884

00:27:17,120 --> 00:27:21,120

It would be nice, if they

885

00:27:19,440 --> 00:27:23,039

can come up with some figures for that,

886

00:27:21,120 --> 00:27:25,120

I think farming actually is part

887

00:27:23,039 --> 00:27:27,440

of the solution as far as climate goes.

888

00:27:25,120 --> 00:27:30,080

It's just trying to get people

889

00:27:27,440 --> 00:27:31,440

off the idea that cows are always bad,

890

00:27:30,080 --> 00:27:33,679

which they certainly have taken a

891

00:27:31,440 --> 00:27:34,159

battering, and yet they've always been

892

00:27:33,679 --> 00:27:36,240

here.

893

00:27:34,159 --> 00:27:38,240

And without ruminates,

894

00:27:36,240 --> 00:27:38,720

we wouldn't have huge grasslands in

895

00:27:38,240 --> 00:27:41,200

the world

896

00:27:38,720 --> 00:27:41,840

taking in huge amounts.

897

00:27:41,200 --> 00:27:44,240

I

898

00:27:41,840 --> 00:27:46,799

suppose we

899

00:27:44,240 --> 00:27:49,919

already do a sort of grass-based system,

900

00:27:46,799 --> 00:27:52,720

which I think lends itself probably.

901

00:27:49,919 --> 00:27:53,760

We're not moving much stuff by

902

00:27:52,720 --> 00:27:55,760

road and we're not

903

00:27:53,760 --> 00:27:56,799

growing crops and leaving land bare

904

00:27:55,760 --> 00:27:58,720

over winter.

905

00:27:56,799 --> 00:28:00,960

We're permanently in grass. I think

906

00:27:58,720 --> 00:28:03,120

we have a positive message already

907

00:28:00,960 --> 00:28:04,880

to say. It's just probably

908

00:28:03,120 --> 00:28:06,320

getting that recognition out there of

909

00:28:04,880 --> 00:28:08,159

which farming systems

910

00:28:06,320 --> 00:28:09,360

are helping, and which maybe aren't so

911

00:28:08,159 --> 00:28:10,640

good.

912

00:28:09,360 --> 00:28:11,760

Definitely something probably that they

913

00:28:10,640 --> 00:28:13,520

need to do going forward. And I'm sure

914

00:28:11,760 --> 00:28:14,159

it's something that's continuously

915

00:28:13,520 --> 00:28:16,159

looked at

916

00:28:14,159 --> 00:28:17,440

in your conversations with Arla, your

917

00:28:16,159 --> 00:28:19,520

milk processor, because they're very

918

00:28:17,440 --> 00:28:22,080

conscious of what the consumer

919

00:28:19,520 --> 00:28:23,440

is wanting, demanding and expecting. And

920

00:28:22,080 --> 00:28:25,600

am I right to say you're on the

921

00:28:23,440 --> 00:28:28,240

Future Farming programme with Arla?

922

00:28:25,600 --> 00:28:30,159

Yes,

923

00:28:28,240 --> 00:28:33,039

like a Young Farmer Challengers

924

00:28:30,159 --> 00:28:33,679

programme which is really good

925

00:28:33,039 --> 00:28:35,679

actually.

926

00:28:33,679 --> 00:28:36,799

There's a good bunch of

927

00:28:35,679 --> 00:28:39,919

guys

928

00:28:36,799 --> 00:28:41,919

and girls,

929

00:28:39,919 --> 00:28:44,159

they're young and keen

930

00:28:41,919 --> 00:28:46,240

to push on, and keen to

931

00:28:44,159 --> 00:28:48,559

shape

932

00:28:46,240 --> 00:28:49,760

Arla in a way, that is going to benefit

933

00:28:48,559 --> 00:28:53,840

us all as well as

934

00:28:49,760 --> 00:28:56,080

meet future goals.

935

00:28:53,840 --> 00:28:58,000

936

00:28:56,080 --> 00:29:00,799

I do feel like farming

937

00:28:58,000 --> 00:29:02,640

has a huge

938

00:29:00,799 --> 00:29:05,279

positive part to play in climate.

939

00:29:02,640 --> 00:29:07,120

But I just think it's the

940

00:29:05,279 --> 00:29:09,039

measurement tools that needs to be adapted

941

00:29:07,120 --> 00:29:10,399

possibly. You can't

942

00:29:09,039 --> 00:29:11,200

measure farming in the same way as you

943

00:29:10,399 --> 00:29:13,200

can measure

944

00:29:11,200 --> 00:29:14,559

another industrial business and just

945

00:29:13,200 --> 00:29:16,240

score it.

946

00:29:14,559 --> 00:29:18,240

There's huge benefit that

947

00:29:16,240 --> 00:29:20,399

farming has that

948

00:29:18,240 --> 00:29:22,880

are probably overlooked and need to be

949

00:29:20,399 --> 00:29:24,559

recognised more.

950

00:29:22,880 --> 00:29:26,080

I think it's right to say, it can

951

00:29:24,559 --> 00:29:27,200

be a complicated

952

00:29:26,080 --> 00:29:29,520

or could be seen to be quite a

953

00:29:27,200 --> 00:29:30,240

complicated formula and I'm sure with

954

00:29:29,520 --> 00:29:32,480

time,

955

00:29:30,240 --> 00:29:33,679

the technology, the science will refine

956

00:29:32,480 --> 00:29:34,720

itself and will improve, and there will

957

00:29:33,679 --> 00:29:36,960

be some very very

958

00:29:34,720 --> 00:29:38,159

accurate means of measurement that can

959

00:29:36,960 --> 00:29:40,960

then be used to come

960

00:29:38,159 --> 00:29:41,520

make realistic comparisons between farms

961

00:29:40,960 --> 00:29:43,760

and between

962

00:29:41,520 --> 00:29:44,880

sectors. Looking into the

963

00:29:43,760 --> 00:29:47,600

future,

964

00:29:44,880 --> 00:29:49,200

we stand in this field surrounded by

965

00:29:47,600 --> 00:29:50,320

the fantastic herd of dairy cattle

966

00:29:49,200 --> 00:29:52,640

you've got here,

967

00:29:50,320 --> 00:29:54,240

any plans, an expansion, what's

968

00:29:52,640 --> 00:29:55,120

going to be the next steps here at

969

00:29:54,240 --> 00:29:57,440

Mountjoy Farm?

970

00:29:55,120 --> 00:29:58,720

We've been fortunate to

971

00:29:57,440 --> 00:30:01,600

take on

972

00:29:58,720 --> 00:30:02,399

more land right next door in the last

973

00:30:01,600 --> 00:30:05,760

year or so.

974

00:30:02,399 --> 00:30:07,039

And we were

975

00:30:05,760 --> 00:30:08,399

already maxed out to be honest on

976

00:30:07,039 --> 00:30:09,840

infrastructure, especially parlour

977

00:30:08,399 --> 00:30:12,640

infrastructure

978

00:30:09,840 --> 00:30:13,760

with the 370 going through it. It was

979

00:30:12,640 --> 00:30:15,440

sort of taking three and a half, four

980

00:30:13,760 --> 00:30:17,679

hours in the morning and three hours

981

00:30:15,440 --> 00:30:18,480

in the evening to milk. So the last cows were

982

00:30:17,679 --> 00:30:21,279

waiting

983

00:30:18,480 --> 00:30:21,679

seven plus hours in the collecting yard,

984

00:30:21,279 --> 00:30:23,440

which

985

00:30:21,679 --> 00:30:24,799

isn't any good. And we were seeing

986

00:30:23,440 --> 00:30:26,240

more sole ulcers and stuff.

987

00:30:24,799 --> 00:30:28,000

We were having too much pressure

988

00:30:26,240 --> 00:30:30,799

really on the parlour.

989

00:30:28,000 --> 00:30:31,360

The plan is to change the parlour

990

00:30:30,799 --> 00:30:34,640

991

00:30:31,360 --> 00:30:36,080

this year now coming. And then with

992

00:30:34,640 --> 00:30:38,720

this extra land, really

993

00:30:36,080 --> 00:30:40,000

to fulfill it. We

994

00:30:38,720 --> 00:30:43,360

probably just need to have

995

00:30:40,000 --> 00:30:45,120

a few more cows, not loads. I don't

996

00:30:43,360 --> 00:30:47,679

want to have more cows just

997

00:30:45,120 --> 00:30:48,880

for the sake of it. I just want

998

00:30:47,679 --> 00:30:50,080

to be able to use the land really that

999

00:30:48,880 --> 00:30:52,559

we've got available.

1000

00:30:50,080 --> 00:30:54,480

And the farm

1001

00:30:52,559 --> 00:30:57,200

supports three families,

1002

00:30:54,480 --> 00:30:58,000

and plus some part-timers as well.

1003

00:30:57,200 --> 00:30:59,919

1004

00:30:58,000 --> 00:31:01,120

So the aim

1005

00:30:59,919 --> 00:31:03,279

is to support

1006

00:31:01,120 --> 00:31:04,320

the farm and being

1007

00:31:03,279 --> 00:31:06,880

profitable.

1008

00:31:04,320 --> 00:31:08,000

Of course. But sustainable and

1009

00:31:06,880 --> 00:31:10,000

enjoyable.

1010

00:31:08,000 --> 00:31:11,679

I don't want to get stuck

1011

00:31:10,000 --> 00:31:13,840

on the treadmill of just pushing numbers.

1012

00:31:11,679 --> 00:31:15,360

So I don't really have

1013

00:31:13,840 --> 00:31:17,840

an intention of going up

1014

00:31:15,360 --> 00:31:19,360

in numbers hugely. But if we can

1015

00:31:17,840 --> 00:31:19,760

cut milking times to a couple of hours a

1016

00:31:19,360 --> 00:31:21,200

day,

1017

00:31:19,760 --> 00:31:23,519

then that'll be fantastic.

1018

00:31:21,200 --> 00:31:25,200

Free up some time.

1019

00:31:23,519 --> 00:31:26,640

I think every farm can find their sweet

1020

00:31:25,200 --> 00:31:27,919

spot isn't it, where

1021

00:31:26,640 --> 00:31:29,279

the numbers are just right and it

1022

00:31:27,919 --> 00:31:31,039

doesn't put too much strain on the

1023

00:31:29,279 --> 00:31:32,720

facilities and the infrastructure

1024

00:31:31,039 --> 00:31:34,320

and you can justify that a

1025

00:31:32,720 --> 00:31:35,760

realistic investment. Yes.

1026

00:31:34,320 --> 00:31:37,360

You've been very lucky that pockets of

1027

00:31:35,760 --> 00:31:38,080

land, parcels of land have come up over

1028

00:31:37,360 --> 00:31:40,159

the years,

1029

00:31:38,080 --> 00:31:42,399

which has meant that you can expand,

1030

00:31:40,159 --> 00:31:43,440

without necessarily having to travel

1031

00:31:42,399 --> 00:31:45,840

or

1032

00:31:43,440 --> 00:31:46,480

bring feedstuffs in. Yes exactly.

1033

00:31:45,840 --> 00:31:48,240

1034

00:31:46,480 --> 00:31:50,240

Our cows hardly have to travel at

1035

00:31:48,240 --> 00:31:51,120

all. Pretty much the animals stay on

1036

00:31:50,240 --> 00:31:53,600

this one block.

1037

00:31:51,120 --> 00:31:55,440

And as you say, we

1038

00:31:53,600 --> 00:31:58,240

can slurry pump,

1039

00:31:55,440 --> 00:32:00,000

around 540 acres can be hit with

1040

00:31:58,240 --> 00:32:01,440

with an umbilical system. So

1041

00:32:00,000 --> 00:32:03,519

we don't have to put hardly any slurry

1042

00:32:01,440 --> 00:32:04,240

in tankers. We do tanking once a year I

1043

00:32:03,519 --> 00:32:06,880

think.

1044

00:32:04,240 --> 00:32:08,240

We've been very

1045

00:32:06,880 --> 00:32:10,159

fortunate

1046

00:32:08,240 --> 00:32:12,000

with location really, and just

1047

00:32:10,159 --> 00:32:13,600

I suppose we just

1048

00:32:12,000 --> 00:32:15,679

got the message out there. They were

1049

00:32:13,600 --> 00:32:16,159

keen and keen to work with

1050

00:32:15,679 --> 00:32:18,559

people

1051

00:32:16,159 --> 00:32:19,840

and that does work over time. I

1052

00:32:18,559 --> 00:32:23,440

suppose people sort of think ‘oh

1053

00:32:19,840 --> 00:32:23,440

maybe do something with them’.

1054

00:32:24,559 --> 00:32:28,000

Before we wrap things up William. It's a

1055

00:32:26,720 --> 00:32:29,760

question we're asking

1056

00:32:28,000 --> 00:32:32,399

all the guests on our podcast this year.

1057

00:32:29,760 --> 00:32:36,480

But, in your opinion, what makes

1058

00:32:32,399 --> 00:32:39,679

a successful farmer?

1059

00:32:36,480 --> 00:32:40,880

I suppose a farm

1060

00:32:39,679 --> 00:32:43,200

does have to be profitable

1061

00:32:40,880 --> 00:32:44,320

to be sustainable. So I suppose you do

1062

00:32:43,200 --> 00:32:46,559

need to be profitable,

1063

00:32:44,320 --> 00:32:48,320

but it does need to be enjoyable as well.

1064

00:32:46,559 --> 00:32:49,440

I think a successful farmer

1065

00:32:48,320 --> 00:32:51,120

really enjoys it

1066

00:32:49,440 --> 00:32:52,480

and gets a good work-life

1067

00:32:51,120 --> 00:32:55,760

balance out of it as well.

1068

00:32:52,480 --> 00:32:58,000

If I

1069

00:32:55,760 --> 00:32:59,760

was working 24 7,

1070

00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:02,000

or seven days a week

1071

00:32:59,760 --> 00:33:03,440

flat out, I

1072

00:33:02,000 --> 00:33:04,799

don't think I'd see that as successful.

1073

00:33:03,440 --> 00:33:06,240

It does have to have that

1074

00:33:04,799 --> 00:33:09,279

work-life balance I've got.

1075

00:33:06,240 --> 00:33:10,559

I've got four kids and

1076

00:33:09,279 --> 00:33:12,559

it's important to have family time

1077

00:33:10,559 --> 00:33:14,640

as well as farm time.

1078

00:33:12,559 --> 00:33:17,279

I suppose success for me is just

1079

00:33:14,640 --> 00:33:20,320

profitable, sustainable, enjoyable.

1080

00:33:17,279 --> 00:33:22,320

But yes there's

1081

00:33:20,320 --> 00:33:24,000

lots of factors which come into that.

1082

00:33:22,320 --> 00:33:25,600

Of course, but I like that line it's

1083

00:33:24,000 --> 00:33:27,440

important to have family time as

1084

00:33:25,600 --> 00:33:27,760

well as farming time isn't it, and

1085

00:33:27,440 --> 00:33:29,840

it's

1086

00:33:27,760 --> 00:33:31,200

striking the right balance between

1087

00:33:29,840 --> 00:33:33,519

the two. It's nice

1088

00:33:31,200 --> 00:33:35,039

to be on a very traditional family

1089

00:33:33,519 --> 00:33:36,960

farm and it's something that's so

1090

00:33:35,039 --> 00:33:38,399

synonymous with Welsh agriculture isn't

1091

00:33:36,960 --> 00:33:39,519

it. Yes. And it's so important that we're

1092

00:33:38,399 --> 00:33:41,919

trying to preserve that

1093

00:33:39,519 --> 00:33:43,440

tradition but it's nice to

1094

00:33:41,919 --> 00:33:44,799

see how you're embracing

1095

00:33:43,440 --> 00:33:46,559

new developments to make sure that

1096

00:33:44,799 --> 00:33:47,919

you're sustainable going forward. Yes.

1097

00:33:46,559 --> 00:33:50,159

And supporting the three families which

1098

00:33:47,919 --> 00:33:52,720

I think is a fantastic achievement

1099

00:33:50,159 --> 00:33:53,200

for you. Well William, I've really

1100

00:33:52,720 --> 00:33:55,360

enjoyed

1101

00:33:53,200 --> 00:33:57,679

visiting you here at Mountjoy. We've

1102

00:33:55,360 --> 00:34:00,080

created quite a stir in this field.

1103

00:33:57,679 --> 00:34:01,919

We've gathered so much and got

1104

00:34:00,080 --> 00:34:02,559

so much attention from the cows around

1105

00:34:01,919 --> 00:34:04,159

us. They've

1106

00:34:02,559 --> 00:34:05,760

hardly been grazing at all. So probably

1107

00:34:04,159 --> 00:34:07,440

there might be a dip in yield in the

1108

00:34:05,760 --> 00:34:10,079

tank this afternoon, who knows.

1109

00:34:07,440 --> 00:34:11,919

We best leave them to do what they

1110

00:34:10,079 --> 00:34:13,119

do best and that is produce milk

1111

00:34:11,919 --> 00:34:15,119

and to let you get on with all the

1112

00:34:13,119 --> 00:34:16,800

various things you've got to do on a

1113

00:34:15,119 --> 00:34:18,399

rare dry day this May.

1114

00:34:16,800 --> 00:34:19,839

There's plenty for you to do. William,

1115

00:34:18,399 --> 00:34:21,119

thank you ever so much for joining us.

1116

00:34:19,839 --> 00:34:24,079

It's been a pleasure.

1117

00:34:21,119 --> 00:34:24,079

No thank you.

1118

00:34:24,480 --> 00:34:28,079

If you would like more information about

1119

00:34:26,240 --> 00:34:28,720

the support available through Farming

1120

00:34:28,079 --> 00:34:30,560

Connect,

1121

00:34:28,720 --> 00:34:32,320

then please contact your local

1122

00:34:30,560 --> 00:34:32,960

development officer or the Service

1123

00:34:32,320 --> 00:34:37,919

Center

1124

00:34:32,960 --> 00:34:39,679

on 08456 000 813.

1125

00:34:37,919 --> 00:34:41,440

And there we are, we've reached the end

1126

00:34:39,679 --> 00:34:43,119

of yet another episode.

1127

00:34:41,440 --> 00:34:44,879

We'll be back in two weeks’ time with

1128

00:34:43,119 --> 00:34:46,960

plenty more to talk about.

1129

00:34:44,879 --> 00:34:49,440

But in the meantime, don't forget to hit

1130

00:34:46,960 --> 00:34:51,839

subscribe on whichever platform you use

1131

00:34:49,440 --> 00:34:53,599

to keep notified of all new episodes of

1132

00:34:51,839 --> 00:34:55,359

Ear to the Ground.

1133

00:34:53,599 --> 00:34:57,200

So, on behalf of the team at Farming

1134

00:34:55,359 --> 00:34:58,880

Connect and myself Aled Jones,

1135

00:34:57,200 --> 00:35:03,839

thank you for listening and goodbye for

1136

00:34:58,880 --> 00:35:03,839

now.

1137

00:35:08,580 --> 00:35:16,070

[Music]

1138

00:35:20,480 --> 00:35:22,560