

# Mentoring Programme

...one-to-one support to help your business achieve its potential

- confidential, impartial support and guidance
- sector-specific experience relevant to your business



**FARMING**  
connect  
cyswllt  
**FFERMIO**

**08456 000 813**



[www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect)

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## Sector Key:



AGRI-ENVIRONMENT



HORTICULTURE



ARABLE



ORGANIC



BEEF



POULTRY



DAIRY



SHEEP



FORESTRY



Welsh Speaker

## Introduction

*...practical guidance and support from experienced farmers and foresters*

- Do you need to take your farm or forestry business forward in a new direction?
- Are you an established business owner who would value mentoring from an independent individual with experience of a particular issue or challenge?
- Are you considering a new business enterprise or project which could increase your efficiency or provide a new stream of income?
- Are you a new entrant setting up and seeking guidance?

If any of the above apply to you, free, confidential mentoring and support from an experienced farmer or forester could provide the help, encouragement and inspiration you need.

## Our mentors and how they can help you

Farming Connect has an approved network of 39 mentors located throughout Wales. Mentors have been appointed after a rigorous selection process based on skills and expertise offered.

### A Farming Connect mentor can...

- Provide an independent, unbiased and confidential perspective
- Discuss your issues, concerns and aims for the future
- Provide a sounding board for your ideas
- Share their experiences with you, both successes and failures
- Challenge you to justify your proposals
- Help you identify problems and find solutions

To find out more about each mentor's background, skills and expertise browse through the detailed 'mentor directory' which can be found at: [www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect).

## Mentoring Programme – eligibility criteria

...reaching more individuals, supporting more businesses

Category of business (confirmed at registration)	Mentoring Programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farm business</li><li>• Forestry business</li><li>• New entrant</li><li>• Niche farming/forestry system over 550 standard labour hours per annum</li><li>• Food business</li></ul>	One to one farm/forestry mentoring 22.5 hours of support to be provided during an 18 month period, starting from the date the application for the service is approved

## How to apply for mentoring

Complete the Mentoring Programme application form on line on:  
[www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect)

You should nominate up to five mentors in order of preference, and we'll do our best to ensure you are matched appropriately.

You will receive an email from Farming Connect confirming your application has been approved and providing contact details of your allocated mentor; you can then arrange your first meeting.

This is usually face to face after which the active mentor/mentee relationship will continue in the most appropriate format as agreed between both parties.

## Our mentors

Abi Reader, Goldsland Farm

Alan Davies, Fferm Llys

Aled Jones, Tregeiriog

Aled Rhys Jones, Hendy

Alwyn Edwards, Holmlea

Alwyn Jones, Camaes

Andy Matthews, Aberbran Fawr

Arwyn Williams, Hendre Nantcyl

Ben Anthony, Frowen

Christopher James, Home Farm

Dafydd Parry Jones, Maesllwyni

David Gravell, Mudlescwm Farm

David Williams, Clawdd Offa

Eilir Evans, Henbant

Eurig Jenkins, Pentrefelin

Glasnant Morgan, Pwllrhwyaid

Glyn Vaughan, Dolcorsllwyn

Gwydion Jones, Tyn y Ffynnon

Haydn Evans, Parceithin Farm

Helen Bennett, Upper Hall

Huw Jones, Prysgau Ganol

Ioan Williams, Brynsegur

James Cowan, Blaencwmpridd

James Raw, Tyllwyd

Jenny Davies, Llwynhelyg

John Booth, Rhual Dairy

John Yeomans, Llwyn y Brain

Keith Williams, Hendy

Llŷr Hughes, Fferam Gyd

Meilir Jones, Gop Farm

Meirion Jones, Tŷ Llwyd

Neil Stoddart, Nantygwynau

Peter Williams, Great House Farm

Phillip Jones, Lan Farm

Rhys Williams, Trygarn

Richard Isaac, Mynachdu Farm

Richard Roderick, Newton Farm

Richard Rogers, Cefndderwen

Richard Tudor, Glanystwyth

Robb Merchant, Whitecastle Vineyard

Robert Powell, Blaenbwch

Romeo Sarra, Peepout Farm

Sion Ifans, Hen Dŷ Brynuchaf

Teifi Davies, Llwynhelyg

Terrig Morgan, Carreg y Llech

Tim Prichard, Castellau Fawr Farm

Tony Davies, Henfron



**ABI READER**  
Goldsland Farm (Cardiff)

#### Key sectors:



#### Specialisms or interests:

KPIs for dairy herd, Consumer relations,  
Animal health and welfare



**ALAN DAVIES**   
Fferm Llys (Denbighshire)

#### Key sectors:



#### Specialisms or interests:

Early lamb production  
Beef finishing



**ALED JONES**   
Tregeiriog (Denbighshire)

#### Key sectors:



#### Specialisms or interests:

Sheep production and shepherding  
Grassland management and grazing systems



**ALED RHYS JONES**   
Hendy (Llyn & Snowdonia)

#### Key sectors:



#### Specialisms or interests:

Genetics  
Grassland management

### THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF

Abi Farms a herd of 190 milking cows on her 750 acre mixed farm where they milk on conventional winter housing and summer grazing system. Abi keeps her farm fully up to date with new practises, technology and wider industry information and keeps up with animal health, nutrition, staff management and accounting. Abi has an excellent understanding of the issues surrounding dairy business practice, staff management, succession, leadership and communication.

Since 2005 Abi has been hosting placement students on farm for periods of up to 10 months and has also been a leading figure in the 'Cows on Tour' campaign, taking agriculture into primary schools in London. Abi focuses on KPI's for performance, fertility, mortality, lifespan and mobility and is keen to share her knowledge with others.

### THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF

Alan farms a 250 acre lowland enterprise and rents a further 210 acres in winter. He purchases up to 250 store cattle a year, which he finishes. Alongside the beef enterprise, Alan manages a flock of 700 Texel cross Mule breeding ewes. Alan's aim is to develop a more efficient business by trialling new and different ways of working, producing beef and lamb efficiently in order to meet market requirements.

He is a supporter of his local young farmers' club and keen to impart his knowledge to new entrants.

### THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF

Former Farming Connect demonstration farmer Aled, owns 120 acres and is a contract shepherd for 1,000 acres. His own stock includes 30 Welsh Black cattle plus 40 youngstock, together with 350 Welsh and Mule ewes and 100 ewe lambs. In recent years he has introduced slightly bigger, hardier and more productive ewes and has also focused on improving his grassland and grazing systems.

Aled has helped a number of farmers to fulfil their ambition of becoming contract shepherds. Aled is a strong believer in keeping an eye on costings in order to maximise incomes.


### THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF

Aled has held numerous high-profile positions within the agriculture industry. He has developed his family farm significantly both in terms of milk production and sales of pedigree females and bulls. Aled now has 340 Holstein cows producing 3,350,000 litres annually. He embraces new technologies and innovative ways of working in order to improve standards of farm management and protecting the environment.

Significant investment has been made in energy saving devices and savings have also been made in reducing the use of nitrogen fertiliser by targeted use of slurry.





**ALWYN EDWARDS**   
Holmlea (Brecknock)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Woodland planning  
Management



**ALWYN JONES**   
Camaes (Conwy)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Grassland management



**ANDY MATTHEWS**  
Aberbran Fawr (Brecknock)


**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Business development  
Diversification



**ARWYN WILLIAMS**   
Hendre Nantcyll (Llyn & Snowdonia)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Grassland management

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Chartered forester Alwyn has worked as a self-employed forestry consultant, working with a range of clients in both the public and private sectors to deliver rural management projects, supported by broad environmental advice. His roles have included managing annual rural maintenance budgets and reporting on cash flows, using cost benefit analysis techniques. He has also undertaken Grown in Britain auditing training to look at diversification opportunities that can be achieved from woodland management by adding value from biomass and carbon trading through the Carbon Code.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Alwyn continually strives to improve the way he farms, imparting his knowledge by offering work placements and through his role with the Bro Hiraethog Training Board. He has improved grassland management at his farm through using less fertiliser and making better use of slurry.

As a former Farming Connect demonstration farmer, Alwyn has undertaken various trials, for example feeding yeast concentrate to lambs, adding extra protein to silage and growing red clover. All of these have delivered improved growth and better daily live-weight gains.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Andy, a former Farming Connect demonstration farmer, has over 20 years' experience of farming and contracting. Together with partner Kay, he owns 45 acres with a further 480 acres rented long term. The business has 45 Limousin cross suckler cows and 500 crossbred ewes.

They have expanded their campsite and developed a shop to complement their extended pick your own fruit and vegetables enterprise. They have significantly extended the pick your own season from early/mid June to the end of August, improving viability. A small but successful game shoot has also been established.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Arwyn farms a 390 acre upland farm and at least half of this is moorland. He has 25 Limousin cross suckler cows and 425 Tregaron type Welsh breeding ewes. He also undertakes shearing and fencing contracting work.

This former Farming Connect demonstration farmer uses Aberdale ewes to further increase his lambing percentage. He also undertakes soil testing, which has helped improve soil quality and reduced fertiliser costs. As a result of trial work undertaken by Farming Connect on the farm he now makes better use of slurry and uses slurry bugs to treat manure.



**BEN ANTHONY**  
Frowen (Carmarthenshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Improving flock performance  
Home-grown crops and forage



**CHRISTOPHER JAMES**  
Home Farm (Pembrokeshire)


**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Low cost forage systems



**DAFYDD PARRY JONES**   
Maesllwyni (Montgomeryshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Grassland and clover management  
Building design



**DAVID GRAVELL**   
Mudlescwm Farm (Carmarthenshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Milk from forage  
Benchmarking

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Ben and his partner Diana own 145 acres, including 35 acres of woodland and rent a further 110 acres. All business decisions are based on performance and profitability. Having carried out research on market requirements and prices, Ben decided to reduce cow numbers and expand the sheep enterprise.

Ben provided improved sheep housing and prioritised investment in what is now a high-output sheep enterprise. He has also improved flock performance through EID, tightening the lambing pattern and monitoring the flock to identify the optimum ewe for the farm.

**British Farming Awards Sheep Innovator of the Year 2016**

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Christopher is a member of various agricultural committees and is a well-known public speaker. He has won numerous grassland awards over the years.

In 2000, he converted the enterprise from a large, mixed estate to a specialist spring grazing unit and has since purchased 500 acres. Christopher has established a joint venture to rear dairy beef calves from his herds. Christopher embraces new technologies including satellite soil sampling, enabling him to use variable rate spreading of nutrients which has achieved considerable cost savings.

**BGS Welsh Grassland Farmer of the Year 2015 and British Runner-up**

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Dafydd has expanded his upland farm which now runs to 470 acres, creating an efficient organic system which utilises grass. Red and white clover is used to produce lamb and beef of the highest quality, with minimum cost of production, for premium markets.

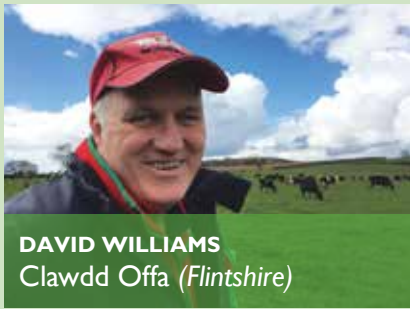
He has developed an upland farming system with low labour requirements as a result of improved buildings and animal handling systems. New technology and streamlined methods have helped him reduce outputs and the farm is 100% protein sufficient.

**BGS British Grassland Farmer of the Year 2014 and Dalehead/Waitrose Lamb Producer of the Year 2014**

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

David's 500 acre farm has evolved significantly through benchmarking and knowledge transfer. A study tour to New Zealand led him to setting up a spring calving, low input, grass-based system and he now strives to strike a balance between farming profitably and sustainably.

A keen advocate of discussion groups which provide the opportunity to explore challenges and opportunities and to assess progress through benchmarking, he is always keen to share his knowledge, hosting many farm visits and encouraging younger farmers to find new and improved ways of farming.



**DAVID WILLIAMS**  
Clawdd Offa (Flintshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Grass/forage based systems  
Financial and business planning



**EILIR EVANS**  
Henbant (Ceredigion)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Grassland management  
Joint ventures



**EURIG JENKINS**   
Pentrefelin (Ceredigion)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Grass-based systems  
Heifer rearing



**GLASNANT MORGAN**   
Pwllyrhwyaid (Brecknock)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Grassland management  
Renewable energy

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

David farms a 296 acre tenanted farm with 198 acres used as the grazing platform for 300 Jersey Friesian crossbred spring calving cows. He also rears 150 replacement youngstock and stock bulls.

By concentrating on budgeting and monitoring cash flow, he runs a profit focused, sustainable business which he has changed from a total mixed ration feed all-year round calving system, to a grass-based, spring block calving herd, which he milks once a day. Knowledgeable on numerous dairy systems, he is a passionate believer in knowledge transfer.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Eilir currently farms 330ha with his partner, Catrin. He converted a 130ha organic sheep farm to dairy and has a herd of 700 cows which have been split into two units.

Eilir has expanded his farm from 100ha to 330ha through purchase and rental, and has great confidence in dealing with the bank, producing budgets, cash flows and commentary. Eilir believes that giving constructive criticism is one of the best ways for an individual, and the business, to improve and grow. What Eilir can offer is a vast amount of experience and open mindedness, from grassland management to financial budgeting, to joint ventures of any kind.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Under the Young Entrants Support Scheme, Eurig is head of holding of this growing family farm which runs to 182 acres owned and 518 acres rented. This former Farming Connect demonstration farmer says the expert advice received enabled him to develop the farm enterprise and his own farm management skills.

A significant programme of expansion has included the installation of major infrastructure for long term profitable milk production. Cow numbers have increased to 410 head of spring calving cows and 280 youngstock.

**BGS British Grassland Farmer  
of the Year 2016**

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**


Glasnant's family farm has expanded to over 400 acres. The key aim of the business is to keep self-sufficient, ensuring family members make up the labour force. They have 45 Charolais cross suckler cows, with summer calving cows turned out to the mountain to avoid mastitis and release more ground for mowing. They also have a closed flock of 800 breeding ewes plus 210 replacements.

Diversifying into green energy through solar, biomass and hydroelectric, growing crops and reseeded collectively have played a crucial role in maintaining efficiency and have contributed to profitability.

**BGS British Grassland Farmer  
of the Year 2005**





**GLYN VAUGHAN**   
Dolcorsllwyn (Montgomeryshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Pedigree breeding and retailing  
Market requirements



**GWYDION JONES**   
Tyn y Ffynnon (Conwy)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Share farming  
Grass based dairy systems



**HAYDN EVANS**  
Parceithin Farm (Carmarthenshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Youngstock rearing  
Succession planning



**HELEN BENNETT**   
Upper Hall (Montgomeryshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Diversification  
Egg production

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

In 1993, Glyn purchased five pedigree Limousin cows for his 500 acre beef and sheep farm. By today, he has developed a herd of 60 pedigree Limousin suckler cows and followers plus a flock of 500 mainly Welsh ewes.

Glyn's philosophy is to continually monitor the progress of all farm projects through his own purpose built computer breeding programme and to adapt to circumstances as they arise. Through understanding what the market requires, he runs a profitable business which meets buyer needs. Glyn is a strong believer in being passionate about what you do, but to always produce what the market wants and not what you think it wants.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

After graduating, Gwydion returned home to work on the family farm which at that time had 400 sheep and 50 milking cows. To maximise output, he reduced sheep numbers and increased the dairy herd, creating a simple low cost system producing milk from grass. The 240 acre farm now has 160 spring calving cows on an extended grazing system, plus 100 youngstock.

Gwydion also has a 50% share in a joint venture business which has converted a local sheep farm into a 450 dairy cow farm.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Haydn, a former bank manager, bought his farm 20 years ago. He and his son, who is now head of holding, run a 240 acre organic dairy farm split into two units – 84 acres owned, and 156 acres rented. One farm houses the milking herd, while the other is utilised as a youngstock rearing unit. He has 100 British Friesian cows together with 70 followers and two stock bulls – a British Friesian and Hereford. They have invested in renewable energy, including a wind turbine.

Haydn believes that enthusiasm is critical but is no guarantee of success. His tip is to have a business plan for what you want to achieve and get someone to challenge it.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Helen has been part of the current business for over 25 years. The farm extends to 580 acres, plus an additional 300 acres of rented and contract farmed land, which is managed organically. They have 120 Holstein Friesian dairy cows plus 200 followers, as well as 600 pedigree Lleyn ewes and 25 Texel ewes.

The farm has installed renewable energy systems and has invested in a 64,000 bird free range laying enterprise. Helen has ten years' experience in diversification projects such as growing and producing organic vegetables, a Glastir Woodland Creation Scheme, solar PV, biomass and the renovation of farm houses and a holiday cottage.





**HUW JONES**   
Prysgau Ganol (Meirionydd)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Business development  
Forestry business management



**IOAN WILLIAMS**   
Brynsegur (Carmarthenshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Regulation  
Renewable energy



**JAMES COWAN**  
Blaencwmpridd (Ceredigion)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Improving genetics  
Fattening bulls & heifers under 24 months



**JAMES RAW**  
Tyllwyd (Ceredigion)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Renewable energy (Hydro)  
Diversification

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

In 2002, Huw, who had started out on a small family farm and then worked on other farms in his area, took over a 70 acre council upland farm. He has steadily built the farm into a successful forestry business and he has two teams of workers felling both flat areas as well as trees on slopes using a winch.

He also keeps 150 Welsh Mule ewes and four pedigree Welsh Black suckler cows with calves which are sold at 18 months old at local market.

Huw believes that making sure there is a strong demand for your produce is the key to business success. He also thinks it is vital to admit to mistakes and learn from them.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Ioan's 230 acre farm includes 70 acres of broadleaf woodland and 30 acres of designated SSSI land. The farm is let for summer grazing for cattle and tack sheep in winter. Six acres of root crops are grown annually, used as game cover for the small shoot run on the farm, and then sold as a standing crop to a sheep farmer to finish store lambs.

Ioan has a vast knowledge of the pressures that affect the agri-environment in Wales, and has delivered training and knowledge transfer to farmers to develop sustainable, profitable farming enterprises. He has also worked with farmers to improve their soil and nutrient management, resulting in considerable financial savings.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Formerly a Farming Connect demonstration farmer, James' upland family farm comprises 255 acres owned and 180 acres rented. The stock includes 300 beef cattle and 600 Texel mules and Welsh mules. Between 30 and 40 acres of barley and oats are grown for livestock feed, along with swedes for the ewes.

James has significantly improved the genetics of his herd and has made the farm more self-sufficient by producing more home-grown feed. He has led many discussion groups and hosted knowledge transfer beef production days addressing marketing, health, breeding and correct nutrition.

**Farmers Weekly Beef Farmer  
of the year runner-up 2013**

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

James shares his time between his three holdings, Tyllwyd, Blaencwm and Nanteos, a combination of hill farms and lowland. James has a flock of 900 Welsh Mountain ewes, but also keeps 35 Limousin cows which he sells as store cattle. Additional to this, he has two 100 kW Hydroelectric schemes, 20ha of forestry land from which he sells as firewood, a small farm campsite, has short term letting properties and grows 5-10ha of combinable Barley. Recently, James won the "Most Carbon Neutral Farm 2016" at the Energy Now UK Awards.

With 20 years of experience James has developed his business by adapting the farming systems according to external influences and believes it is vital to recognise and utilise potential developments for businesses to thrive.



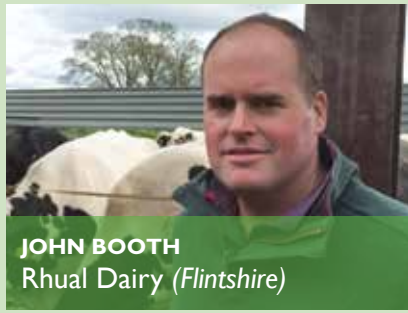
**JENNY DAVIES**  
Llwynhelyg (Ceredigion)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Farm diversification  
Farm gate retail



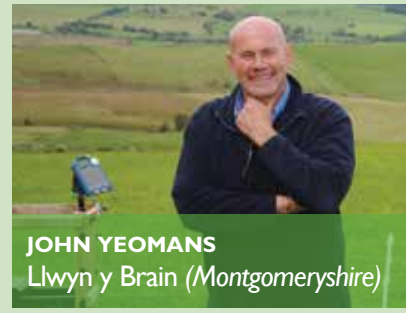
**JOHN BOOTH**  
Rhual Dairy (Flintshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Share farming  
Farm infrastructure



**JOHN YEOMANS**  
Llwyn y Brain (Montgomeryshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Performance recording  
Benchmarking



**KEITH WILLIAMS**  
Hendy (Radnorshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Low cost sheep production  
Rotational grazing

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Jenny, along with her husband Teifi (who is also a mentor) diversified from dairy farming to set up one of Wales' first farm shops. Jenny's emphasis has always been to stock home grown & local products and has won many accolades for local retailing, sustainability, local sourcing & best farm diversification. Jenny is proficient in farm accounts and records, VAT and working out costings, profitability forecasts both on the farm and especially with the farm shop business. Jenny can advise on how to meet trading standards and environmental health requirements.

Along with the Farm Shop, Jenny and Teifi farm 100 acres, keeping a herd of 50-60 cattle and growing vegetable and herbs.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

In addition to his role as assistant manager of a large dairy unit, John runs a share farming dairy enterprise with 320 cows plus 160 youngstock, on an all year round calving system with an average yield of 8,800 litres.

John has recently upgraded his slurry store to comply with a Nitrate Vulnerable Zones designation, along with developing the infrastructure of the farm to accommodate the bigger herd. He is involved with a number of local dairy groups.

John believes in honesty and having the ability to listen, learn and react with confidence for business success.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

John's farm extends to 284 acres, with 231 acres owned and 53 acres rented. He has a closed suckler herd of 70-75 pedigree Limousin and crossbred cows and 12-19 heifers, calving at two years old. He also has a closed flock of 500 Beulah ewes and 160 Beulah ewe lambs, now scanning at around 160%.

The farm includes a small area of woodland and has invested in renewable energy with solar panels.

John is a strong believer in sharing problems as there are always people who have been through the same things.

**British Farming Awards Sheep  
Innovator of the Year  
Runner-up 2016**


**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Keith's farm runs to 360 acres, plus 20 acres rented. He keeps 880 ewes, including 60 performance recorded Texels, plus 240 ewe lambs. He also has a closed suckler herd of 20 pedigree Welsh Black cattle. Since taking over the family holding he has worked steadily to develop the business through improving soil and grassland management and introducing high EBV stock.

Keith helped develop Farming Connect's Comparable Farm Profit template to help farmers better understand their businesses.

**Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer  
of the Year 2013**



**LLŶR HUGHES**   
Fferm Gyd (Anglesey)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Genetics  
Home-grown feeds



**MEILIR JONES**   
Gop Farm (Flintshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Progress monitoring of beef unit to maximise returns  
EID



**MEIRION JONES**   
Tŷ Llwyd (Carmarthenshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Share farming  
Early lambing



**NEIL STODDART**  
Nantygwynau (Carmarthenshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Land management  
Environmental projects

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Llŷr's family farm runs to 350 acres owned and 100 acres rented. The land is very exposed, with soil mainly clay loam and shale outcrops. Ten percent is cropped and re-seeded every year and animals are housed in winter. The stock includes 80 spring and 30 autumn calving suckler cows including 40 pedigree Limousins, plus 650 Suffolk cross ewes put to Beltex cross Texel rams.

Stock quality and genetics, good pasture management and making the most of home-grown feeds have been some of the key areas Llŷr has targeted for improvement.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Former Farming Connect demonstration farmer Meilir, sells 1,350 head of finished cattle annually from Gop Farm, which extends to 250 acres. He also finishes 1,500 store lambs annually. The farm also hosts 60 DIY livery stables. He grows 10 acres of fodder beet and has installed two wind turbines and roof mounted solar panels.

He has increased the daily live weight gains by 0.2kgs per day (equating to £76,000 per year) through the use of EID, individually assessing each animal. This change in methods has secured the buoyancy of the beef fattening enterprise in an often difficult market.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Since 2015, Meirion has been involved in a successful share farming agreement. Together with his young business partner, the 700 acre holding has 1,100 ewes with 200 replacements and 100 store cattle bought in at 10-12 months old and sold at 20 months old. They also contract rear 50 Friesian heifers and have invested in renewable energy.

The farm has undergone a significant improvement programme of land drainage and reclamation, fencing and erecting buildings to improve the overall output and reduce input costs.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Neil farms a 50 acre holding. He has 150 cross bred ewes and pedigree North Country Cheviot sheep and contract rears 40 suckler cattle during winter. With 30 years' experience in forestry operations, his knowledge includes tree safety, public access, community agreements, partnership working, plus planting, tree maintenance and timber harvesting.

His environmental projects include large scale peat restoration, restoration of ancient natural woodland habitat, and the management of designated sites. Recreational work includes managing public access and CROW dedicated land, the provision of mountain bike trails and a visitor centre.

**BGS Welsh Grassland Farmer  
of the Year 2010**

**Farmers Weekly Beef Farmer  
of the Year 2015**

**British Farming Awards Farming  
Partnership of the Year 2016**





**PETER WILLIAMS**  
Great House Farm (Monmouthshire)

#### Key sectors:



#### Specialisms or interests:

Animal husbandry  
Diversification



**PHILLIP JONES**   
Lan Farm (Carmarthenshire)

#### Key sectors:



#### Specialisms or interests:

Low input, low cost systems  
Improving genetics



**RHYS WILLIAMS**   
Trygarn (Llyn & Snowdonia)

#### Key sectors:



#### Specialisms or interests:

Share farming



**RICHARD ISAAC**  
Mynachdu Farm  
(Rhondda Cynon Taff)

#### Key sectors:



#### Specialisms or interests:

Maximising grass to drive income  
Pedigree breeding

### THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF

Peter, a former Farming Connect demonstration farmer, has 170 acres of owned land and 100 acres rented. He keeps 30 cross bred suckler cows and 400 ewes.

He has also introduced some trending diversification options including camping and hosting small festivals. The farm includes 20 acres of woodland and cereal and green crop is grown for livestock feed.

Peter strongly believes in taking time to step back from the business to reflect in order to recognise elements of the enterprise which aren't working.

### THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF

Phillip, a former Farming Connect demonstration farmer, has an upland farm which extends to 400 acres, including 200 acres rented. He has farmed organically since 2006, with 100 organic suckler cows and followers, mostly Limousin crosses with total stock running at around 200. He has improved genetics by using better bulls and AI. Tack sheep are taken over the winter.

Phillip's grassland management has improved significantly and the farm is self-sufficient in protein through red clover leys. He has been able to save money on concentrates through targeted reseeding.

**Farmers Weekly Beef Farmer  
of the Year 2013**

### THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF

Rhys owns 200 acres and rents a further 1,400 acres as part of a share milking enterprise. He has developed a business that now milks 1,150 cows on a low cost spring calving system, with 910 cows owned outright. Rhys acknowledges that working in New Zealand exposed him to a system and way of life he was keen to replicate at home. He is always open to new ideas and through his work as a former Farming Connect demonstration farmer, he has implemented a programme to manage Johnes disease.

With a large business to run Rhys relies heavily on the skills of the team around him. He feels communication skills are therefore paramount and believes there is always something to learn from others.

### THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF

Richard has a 370 acre hill farm and rents a further 370 acres of lowland. The business has 50 pedigree Welsh Black suckler cattle, finished on grass and sold as stores at 18-24 months. He has a flock of 700 Texel cross Welsh and 600 pure bred South Wales Mountain sheep.

To improve grass leys, the business uses high sugar varieties, reducing the need for bought in feed. Richard uses EID to maintain accurate records as well as recording lamb weights to monitor productivity. He has installed wind turbines and solar panels.





**RICHARD RODERICK**  
Newton Farm (Brecknock)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Forage crops  
Environmental schemes



**RICHARD ROGERS**   
Cefndderwen (Anglesey)


**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Joint ventures  
Intensive rotational grazing system



**RICHARD TUDOR**   
Glanystwyth (Ceredigion)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Grassland management  
Sheep production



**ROBB MERCHANT**  
Whitecastle Vineyard (Monmouthshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Wine production  
Diversification on small scale farms

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Richard has more than 30 years' experience of running an agricultural business, and is currently a Farming Connect demonstration farmer. The focus for his flock, which includes 1,050 Suffolk cross Mules and Aberfield cross breeding ewes and 260 ewe lambs, is to improve genetics and reduce costs through maximising the use of high quality forage. With his herd of 270 suckler cows, he concentrates on Stabiliser cows to improve maternal performance and to finish beef from forage.

The family has developed holiday and long-let properties as well as various renewable energy schemes.

**Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer of the Year 2015 and Dalehead/Waitrose Lamb Producer of the Year 2013**

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Former Farming Connect demonstration farmer Richard owns 600 acres with a further 150 acres on a Farm Business Tenancy. He has 800 breeding ewes and a joint venture in a dairy enterprise which has 360 crossbred cows on spring block calving, with an extended grazing system. In addition, 800 male Friesians are reared as calves on an intensive rotational grazing system and are finished at 24 months. Richard's focus has been to investigate the costings and profitability of different systems, resulting in a greater emphasis on grassland productivity and rotational grazing.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Richard owns 550 acres with a further 1,100 acres in shared ownership with his brother.

He decided to sell the farm's suckler cows some years ago, instead increasing sheep numbers to 1,850 ewes and 200 ewe lambs. Richard converted the farm to an organic system in 2011 but has since reverted to farming conventionally but has maintained many organic farming principles including growing red clover alongside home grown cereals.

Richard has employed more than 20 students during his time running the farm. He is eager to help young people develop securing a future within agriculture.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

As the current chairman of the Welsh Vineyard Association, Robb has a passion for the growing of quality grapes and the production of quality Welsh Wine. Robb is supported by his wife Nicola on their 5 acre vineyard that is now one of Wales's premier wine producers. They also have a CL Caravan site, a 16th Century barn which is used for large group events and a cellar door/shop that's open for food and wine tasting.

Robb often gives talks on living on 10 acres or less and diversification on small scale farms. Robb is adamant that the skills he has developed over the years were vital in setting up White Castle Vineyard. Robb is keen to use his skills in a constructive way to improve understanding, confidence & performance.



**ROBERT POWELL**  
Blaenbwch (Radnorshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Paddock grazing  
Growing root crops



**ROMEO SARRA**  
Peepout Farm (Pembrokeshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Soils, Potatoes,  
Field scale horticulture



**SION IFANS**  
Hen Dŷ Brynuchaf (Powys)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Monitoring and improving flock performance  
using EID, Benchmarking sheep KPIs



**TEIFI DAVIES**  
Llwynhelyg (Ceredigion)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Farm diversification  
Farm gate retail

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Former Farming Connect demonstration farmer Robert has 680 acres on which he finishes Welsh Black cattle. He keeps 2,200 ewes plus 500 ewe lambs – a mixture of Aberdale, Aberfield, Brecknock Hill Cheviot and Eppynt Hardy and plans to further increase crossbreed numbers. He has introduced paddock grazing systems and reduced the cost of winter feed by growing more swedes, fodder beet and stubble turnips; and the newly planted leys either contain chicory, plantain or a herbal mix. He also undertakes contract fencing, ploughing and sowing. Robert believes that being open to change is vital for business success. He says, just because something has always been done a certain way, does not mean it cannot be improved upon.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Romeo's organic holding extends to 60 acres. Originally a small dairy farm, 40 acres are now used for three to four year rotations for potatoes or brassicas, vegetable crops and fertility crops or grass. Romeo also grows summer salad crops. He markets his produce through social media, selling boxed vegetables delivered or collected from the farm, but also sells via a local wholesaler. His skills and experience cover all practical aspects of horticultural production, including land selection, cultivation, planting, seeding, propagation, weeding and harvesting along with advising on associated equipment, pests and disease, and sourcing seeds and plants.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Sion and his wife are tenants on a 49ha Powys County Council farm and he also works with his wife's family farming 365ha of hill land. They farm 900 Welsh Mountain Ewes and have a flock of 320 Romney Ewes and Romney Aberfield crosses. He also rears between 20-25 calves per year, selling at 15-16 months as breeding heifers. Sion was the TAG Project Co-ordinator on behalf of Menter a Busnes for 6 years and has been performance recording the flock on his farm using EID service since 2009. As a mentor, Sion can share extensive knowledge and understanding with businesses using EID for the first time as well as those who have already established systems and wish to use them more effectively.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Under the management of Teifi, and his partner Jennifer (who is also a mentor), the family farm has grown from 22.5 acres to 100 acres through purchase and renting. They combine their time between farming 100 acres and a herd of 50-60 cattle and their Farm Shop enterprise specialising in Welsh food and drink. The farm shop business, Llwynhelyg Farm Shop, has enabled them to stay on the family farm and has led to many successes in the Wales True Taste awards and UK local business awards. They are currently holders of 'The Best Independent Retailer 2016 – Wales' award. Teifi has worked in the food & farming industry since leaving school, and then moving to a product development role, before returning to the family farm.



**TERRIG MORGAN**   
Carreg y Llech (Flintshire)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Succession planning, Grass growing, Business skills



**TIM PRICHARD**  
Castellau Fawr Farm (Glamorgan)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Breeding pedigree sheep  
Artificial insemination in sheep



**TONY DAVIES**  
Henfron (Powys)

**Key sectors:**



**Specialisms or interests:**

Renewable energy

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Terrig, a former Farming Connect demonstration farmer owns 180 acres and rents 267 acres, including 35 acres of winter wheat grown for stock feed. A new entrant to dairying in the early 80s, Terrig now has 225 cows and 140 followers plus 67 male calves.

Although the industry has changed, Terrig feels his experience of discipline and focus are still relevant and he continues to produce annual cash flow and business plans. In recent years he has invested in a new cubicle shed, milking parlour, slurry store and solar panels.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Tim owns 120 acres, of which 20 acres is woodland. He has 100 pedigree Charollais ewes and 50 yearlings, along with 125 commercial ewes. As well as keeping Blue Faced Leicester sheep, Tim decided to develop the Charollais breed within his flock. He has been using AI for 20 years and embryo transfer for 10 years to improve the genetics of the best ewes.

Tim does all the preparation for the procedures, injecting the embryo ewes twice a day for four days. He averaged 19 embryos per ewe in 2014 and 2015. The majority of the Charollais in the AI and embryo transfer programme lamb in early December.

**THE MENTOR – IN BRIEF**

Tony is a fifth-generation tenant farmer of the fully organic Henfron and also has 680Ha of mountain farm land of which 80% is SSSI status. The farm management focuses on environmental improvements with Glastir Organic, Glastir Advanced and Glastir Woodland Creation agreements.

His passion for renewable energy diversification started 30 years ago, he has 20 years' experience with solar PV, small wind turbines and biomass heating systems with further expertise in off-grid and battery storage systems. With a track record of applying for, and claiming, both the 'Feed in Tariff' (FiTs) and the 'Renewable Heat Incentive' (RHI) Tony has the expertise to guide claimants through the process.

# TOP TIPS

Remember that learning is a continuous cycle, even now I learn something new about farming every year.

Always admit when things go wrong and learn from any mistakes. Failure is when you stop trying, not when you don't succeed.

I believe everyone deserves a chance to succeed, but on the way there is nothing wrong in getting a little help.

You need to understand, appreciate and collaborate with your market. Be prepared to be open, and to adapt to ever changing consumer trends and market demands.

## How to contact us

The Farming Connect Service Centre is open between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, excluding all public holidays.

→ **Web:** [www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect)

→ **Phone:** Service Centre - **08456 000 813**

→ **E-mail:** [farmingconnect@menterabusnes.co.uk](mailto:farmingconnect@menterabusnes.co.uk)

You will find detailed information about all Farming Connect services and can keep up to date with the wide range of events and knowledge transfer opportunities taking place throughout the year on our website.

Our team of local development officers will be pleased to provide you with support and guidance on how Farming Connect can benefit you and your business.

They will also provide support on how to access and benefit from the enhanced range of services. The contact details for all development officers are available on our website.

You can also follow us on Twitter/Facebook



Facebook.com/FarmingConnect



@FarmingConnect

Registration for eligible individuals is a quick and simple process either online (*please see web address above*) or by contacting the Service Centre.

### **You will need to provide:**

- Your Customer Reference Number (CRN) and your County Parish Holding (CPH) if applicable.

*All those registered under the previous Farming Connect Programme, i.e. before October 2015, will need to re-register.*