DISCOVER INNOVATION
December 2017 – February 2018

FARMING connect cyswllt FFERMIO

RAG Status

Red: Behind with target **Amber: Nearly achieved target** **Green: Target on track**

Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hub

Key outputs during the quarter:

3 Technical Articles

Technical articles published:

- MULTI-SPECIES GRASSLAND: IS IT TIME TO CONSIDER YOUR ROOTS?
- BETTER SOIL MANAGEMENT: AVOIDING SOIL COMPACTION
- THE NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE EWE DURING GESTATION

Factsheets produced:

- THISTLES – A PRICKLY PROBLEM!
- INJURIOUS PECKING IN LAYING HENS
- FEED EFFICIENCY
- EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES FOR MEASURING GRASS QUANTITY: SWARD HEIGHT OR COVER (KGDM/HA)
- MULTI SPECIES GRASSLAND
- POULTRY MANURE MANAGEMENT

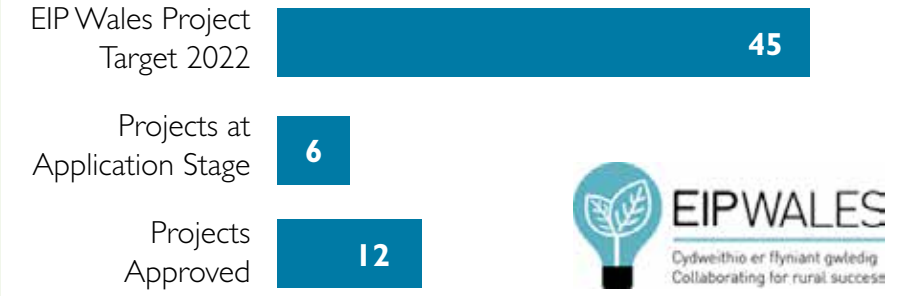
Multi-species grassland:

- Higher rates of biomass production than monoculture
- Needs less fertiliser input
- Can capture and sequester more carbon in soils and vegetation
- Higher rates of biodiversity
- Greater farm business efficiency

European Innovation Partnership

New projects approved during this period:

- Alternative forage systems for marginal land
- Electrophysical dock control
- Night milk – assessing the reliability and economic benefit
- Organic asparagus



Updates on current projects:

Alternative forage systems for marginal land

This spring, three upland farms in the South Wales Valleys will be reseeding 4-5 ha of marginal upland with a multi species ley alongside a conventional ryegrass/white clover ley to compare outputs from the two systems as part of a 3 year EIP Wales project.

Welsh landscapes vary significantly in soil quality and fertility, therefore understanding the effectiveness of different sward compositions will allow a more efficient, targeted approach to sowing grass on marginal land.

If increased floral diversity can also reduce lamb finishing times and/or improve animal health, a true multi-species grassland could offer the potential to manage marginal land in Wales for both production and general biodiversity.

Reducing antibiotic use on sheep farms at lambing time through best practice management, by improving nutrition and hygiene

The global burden of antimicrobial resistant infections is growing and poses a serious threat to human and animal health.

This project is further developing the research that changes in flock management, mainly through improved nutrition and hygiene, can reduce the need for antibiotics and at the same time increase production, while maintaining high standards of animal health and welfare.

Study Visits

In February the Harlech Discussion Group visited Scotland to look at how the Bowhill Estate has diversified and developed a successful farming business. Considering the current economically difficult time and the proposed changes to Government payments, the group feels that it is vital that agricultural businesses look at every option. The group had a chance to learn how the business was run and how each enterprise had developed. Members learnt that benchmarking and keeping a detailed record of costs, performance etc is vital to running a successful business. They also had a farm tour of the suckler herd, flock, deer enterprise, poultry site and the anaerobic digester.

As the suckler herd is experiencing difficulties and the members' interest in different breeds, the group decided to stop by the Luing Cattle Society sale in Castle Douglas during the journey up to Bowhilll. The group also travelled to the Cumbria uplands where they received a presentation and demonstration by Katy Cropper on the art of training, rearing and preparing sheepdogs for mountain work.

Click here to read more about their visit.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in Rural Areas
Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government