

DEMONSTRATION NETWORK DASHBOARD

March – May 2018

RAG Score

■ Red ■ Amber ■ Green

Green	Projects and events are on target
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Demonstration Network

Innovation sites	8
Demonstration sites	12
Focus sites (Running Total)	93

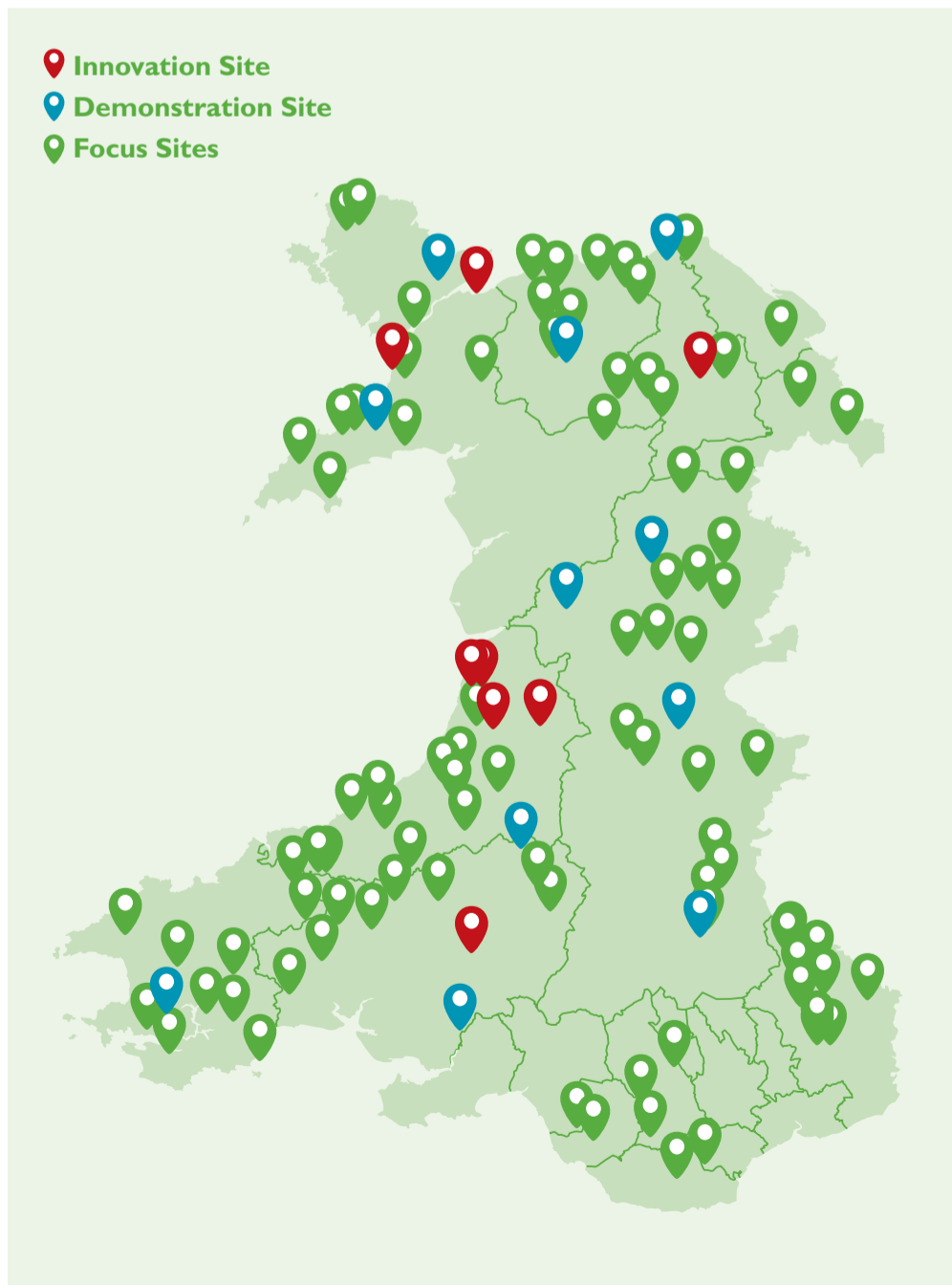
Demonstration Network Events

March – May 2018

Description	Total Events (Annual Target)	Total Events (Undertaken)
Innovation Site events	32	24
Demonstration Site events	36	9
Focus Site events	54	12

690 ATTENDEES AT DEMONSTRATION NETWORK EVENTS 

The map below demonstrates the geographical spread of the Demonstration Site Network.



[Click here](#) to learn more about projects and events on our demonstration network.

On Farm Projects

Focus on Metabolic Profiling

Metabolic profiling is a useful technique to check the nutritional status of livestock at key points in the production cycle. Several projects are running on Demonstration Network farms to see how the results can influence management decisions.

Sychpant Focus Site found that blood tests carried out on dry cows highlighted energy problems with their diet. On further investigation it was suggested that their Dry Matter intakes were too low at 9 KG DM/day and instead they should be aiming for intakes of 12-15 KG DM/day. Advice given suggested this could be achieved through feeding a good quality silage rather than increasing the amount of concentrates.

Aberbranddu Demonstration site tested ewes 3 weeks pre-lambing and the group mean β -hydroxybutyrate (β -OHB) and urea-N results showed that the energy requirements of the ewes were being met. In a thinner group of twin bearing ewes the β -OHB values were raised indicating that their energy requirements were not being met. With 3



weeks to go until lambing their silage allocation was increased and concentrates were increased from 250g/ewe to 300g/ewe. The results also identified some low albumin levels especially in the thinner twin-bearing group, which could potentially be due to a current or previous underlying disease problem. 10 empty ewes were sent for post mortem and fluke infection was identified. Acting on this information, Irwel treated all thin ewes with a drench that killed mature fluke to minimise any further damage.

Blood testing at Aberbranddu

To enable farmers across Wales to access this valuable information, Farming Connect have been offering clinics with vets. Ewes and dairy cows have been tested allowing farmers to check that their ration formulations are achieving the desired results. Where issues are identified changes to diets can be made which will prevent further problems occurring if animals are being over or underfed.

Focus on Grassland Management

Master Grass – bespoke courses for livestock producers to help them maximise production and utilisation of the grass they grow.



DAIRY
15 ATTENDEES



BEEF AND SHEEP
20 ATTENDEES

Feedback from attendees:

“Converting more paddocks to rotational grazing will be a priority using the knowledge and confidence this course has given me.”

“It’s not all about the grass, we will plan more carefully where we place the water troughs.”

Welsh Pasture Project

16 sites in Wales are measuring grass and collecting data which is shown on the [Farming Connect website](#). Farmers can access this data and use it as a guide for their local area by selecting sites closest to them.

For example at the end of May these sites were achieving the following grass growth rates;

Site	Daily growth rate at end of May 2018 (KG DM/Ha)	Average Farm Cover (KG DM/Ha)
Rhuthin (Dairy site)	98.1	2077
Llandeilo	48.7	2400
Abergavenny	45.2	2029

The host farmers will be using this data to plan their grazing allocation and silage fields highlighting the importance of measuring grass to maximise production and make best use of what is grown.

Soil, muck and money

2 EVENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE

with

82 ATTENDEES

Aim: promoting good soil management and nutrient management planning

Discussions at events included:



Additional services offered through Farming Connect that enable farmers to improve their grassland management include:

- MENTORING
- CLINICS
- TECHNICAL ARTICLES
- ADVISORY SERVICE

Feedback from attendees:

"I feel more confident in terms of knowing what the soil needs"

"I was shocked at how valuable slurry is in terms of the financial value"

"I already had a good understanding of the topic but it's always good to refresh your knowledge"

"I've learnt about the importance of healthy soil for productive grassland and arable crops"

"I've been made aware of different management techniques to reduce soil compaction"

"Soil sampling and soil pH are important"

"Focus on the basics"

Focus on Poultry Production

Genauhafod Focus site has been investigating the use of robotic technology to streamline practices on their poultry unit and improve working conditions for staff. Previously staff were expected to lift weights of over 10kg creating high risk of injury from torso twisting and sideways bending. The robot has removed the need for staff to lift weights repetitively improving overall working conditions.

Additionally, the results have shown:

- The egg pallet robot saves 2.5 hours per day
- At an hourly rate of £7.51 this is a daily saving of £18.78 and an annual saving of £6852



Focus on Controlling Red Mites

Using EXZOLT® to control red mites in Poultry Units

Red mites are a serious economic and welfare issue in poultry units. This Focus Site project at Fenton Farm will look at the use of a vaccine to control the mite and will carry out regular monitoring to assess infection levels.

The following flock performance KPIs will be measured:



To learn more about red mites, [click here](#) and go to page 12.

Communicating the results

Communicating the results of work undertaken on the demonstration network is vital. Farming Connect use various ways to ensure maximum uptake of the knowledge gained in undertaking projects, including:

- Articles:** 31 have been produced – all articles are on the website and, depending on the content, some are shared with the Farmers Guardian, Farmers Weekly, NSA and the Farming Unions.
- Blogs and Vlogs** to provide site updates – 9 have been prepared
- Social media**
Facebook posts: 160
Twitter posts: 159
- Videos** 18
- Web Page Hits**
Innovation Site: english 241, welsh 80
Demonstration Site: english 593, welsh 92
Focus Site: english 1,351, welsh 474

