

## RAG Status

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

Total registered with Farming Connect since 01/10/2015

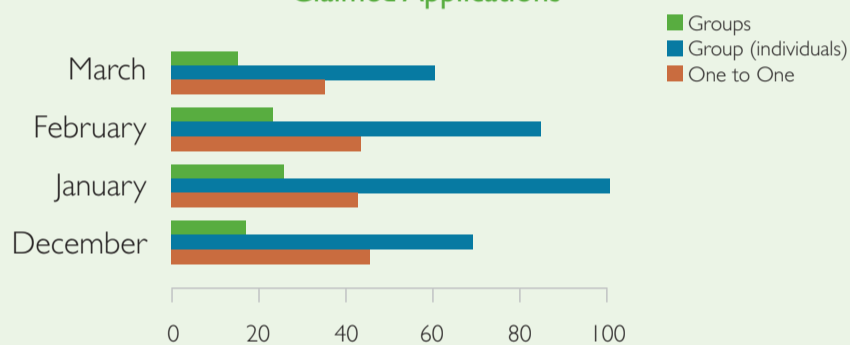


## Advisory Service ■

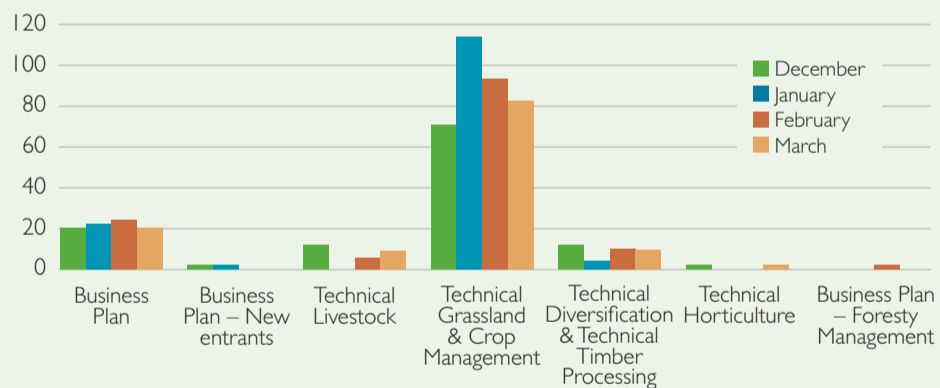
The Farming Connect Advisory Service provides expert, independent, confidential and bespoke advice to Farming and Forestry Businesses. The aim is to ensure businesses:

- benefit from business support and/or technical advice tailored to the business' needs
- reduce costs by increasing efficiency across all areas of the business
- benchmark performance and work towards progress and growth
- identify areas for improvement and find solutions to problems

### Claimed Applications



### Applications Claimed by Category



## Case Study

Simple and cost-effective changes to slurry and effluent controls implemented by Pembrokeshire dairy farmer Randal Williams have allowed him to significantly reduce the volume of waste captured in the farm's lagoon and to make better use of on-farm nutrients. Central to this was infrastructure advice on slurry and manure storage from Keith Owen, an independent buildings and environmental adviser, funded partly by Farming Connect.

Mr Williams' message to other farmers is to make full use of the Farming Connect service, "Seek the advice," he says. "Getting the right advice has saved us thousands of pounds and has given us confidence that we are doing the right things with our slurry management."



Click [here](#) to read more.

## One to one surgeries ■

Surgeries provide one hour one-to-one advice and guidance with a consultant at designated venues.

Annual target = 60 Target achieved = 45



## Marketing & Diversification Surgery Outcome:

After speaking to our marketing and diversification consultant, one client said that the meeting had made them realise that the idea they had been considering prior to the meeting could not realistically materialise. When asked what they had learnt, they wrote: "Different options I should look at before going ahead with plan."

## Succession Surgery Outcome:

One client said: "This session really made us re-evaluate and consider the future of our business." This shows how sessions such as these are key, especially for those that haven't discussed the farm's succession before.

## Strategic Awareness Events ■

Sector specific roadshows, drop-in events and workshops.



Annual target = 70 Events held = 57

Events held include:

- MAKING TAX DIGITAL
- START THE CONVERSATION – SUCCESSION WORKSHOPS
- SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION GRANT
- TENANT FARMERS FORUM

## Start the Conversation...

Following the success of the succession workshops with facilitator Sian Bushell, businesses have since taken up additional services offered to them during the workshops. We have seen an increase in mentor applications and requests to attend succession surgeries. These events were part of a wider campaign; TV adverts and a Succession handbook were also commissioned. We will be holding another series of events in the Summer and continuing to promote...it's good to talk'.

Feedback from individuals outlining what they learnt:

- "How important it is to talk to family members about the business and expectations"
- "I have a better understanding of how partnerships work"
- "It's important to plan ahead and not put things off!"
- "I have a better understanding of wills"
- "I now know what support is available"

## Discussion Groups ■



Farming Connect Discussion Groups allow businesses to learn from each other, discuss challenges, consider opportunities and potentially find new and improved ways of doing things.



### Case Study

A **North Wales Dairy Discussion Group** met for its annual benchmarking review meeting in March. The group took the opportunity to compare farm data together, and discovered that the results were quite consistent. The following points were raised as common issues:

- Energy costs are very high on every farm in the group
- Veterinary costs are still high per farm as compared to last year
- Most farms had a very high cost against youngstock rearing
- Most were currently in receipt of a fair milk price

The group had a constructive discussion on the issues identified, including ways in which it could try and reduce some costs. The Development Officer has offered each member the opportunity to have an on-farm clinic with an expert on renewables and energy efficiency, who can look in detail at their farm energy usage and suggest ways of saving both usage and costs. The majority of group members have taken the opportunity to have a one-to-one on-farm clinic with renewable energy expert Chris Brooks and these clinics are currently being arranged.

### Farming Connect Website and Social Media

Number of unique page views (December 2018 – March 2019)	124,611
Average time spent on website	00:01:45
Number of followers on Twitter as of 31.01.19	4651
Number of likes on Facebook as of 31.01.19	7846

### Demonstration Network

Innovation Sites	8
Demonstration Sites	12
Focus Sites (Running Total)	125

### Demonstration Network Events

Description	Total Events (Annual Target)	Total Events (Undertaken)
Innovation Site events	32	6
Demonstration Site events	36	20
Focus Site events	54	32

### 1555 ATTENDEES AT DEMONSTRATION NETWORK EVENTS



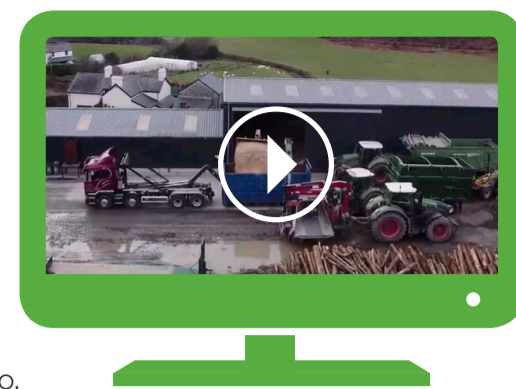
The map below demonstrates the events held across Wales linked to the Demonstration Network.

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

### On-Farm Projects

#### Sourcing a supply of timber for biomass from a sustainable natural resource

With increased interest in energy from biomass, Garthmyn Isaf Focus Site has been investigating how it can develop a sustainable supply of timber to meet the growing demand. The video below was created to showcase the outcomes of the work carried out to date.



Click the [TV Screen](#) to view the video.

#### Using cervical AI in combination with frozen semen to fast-track genetic improvement in sheep flocks

Llysfasi College is investigating the use of cervical AI to improve the rate of genetic improvement in its flock. In the UK, laparoscopic AI is typically the method of choice, but this is expensive and very invasive. In Scandinavia, cervical AI is used successfully and following his Management Exchange visit, Alwyn Phillips is helping to bring this method to Wales. The first lambs have been born and initially the results are disappointing with only 10% of the ewes holding to the AI. However, the team are confident that they can improve on this as they noticed at the time of service that ewes were coming into heat sooner than expected. It is therefore likely that heats were missed and ewes were inseminated at sub-optimal times.

#### Using a Mastitis Control Plan at Longlands Focus Site – Six month review

In the last six months Longlands Farm has been focusing on improving dry cow management following a spike in somatic cell count. Changes made include:

- Dry cow therapy selected for each cow and administered using hygienic methods
- Bedding practices amended with clean straw applied daily in the calving yard
- Increased space in the loafing area
- All clinical cases of mastitis treated with antibiotics and recorded on farm software

Improvements recorded include:

- 15% of cows with Somatic Cell Count >200,000 cells/ml compared to 20% in 2018
- Dry period infection rates reduced to less than 10% compared to 20.5% in 2018
- The clinical mastitis rate has stabilised at around 30 cases per 100 cows/year

Sub-Clinical Mastitis Cost			
Cost on farm £££	October 2018	March 2019	Cost difference
Per Year	£27,720	£21,600	£6,120 Saving
Per Cow	£81.53	£63.53	£18.00 Saving

As outlined above, cost savings are being seen in only six months.

### Communicating the results

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

**Articles:** 15 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 – 4 have been prepared

Facebook posts: 5  
 Twitter posts: 3  
**Videos:** 11  
**Web Page Hits:**  
 Innovation Site: 176  
 Demonstration Site: 720  
 Focus Site: 837

### Social media

