

# DEVELOP YOUR BUSINESS

April – July 2019

## RAG Status

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

### Total registered with Farming Connect since 01/10/2015



10,392  
BUSINESSES

and



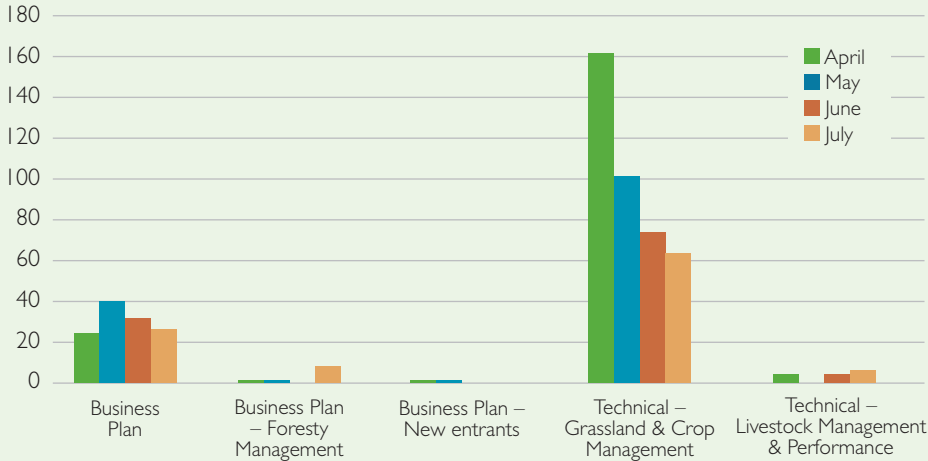
21,049  
INDIVIDUALS

## 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

Applications Claimed by Category



Feedback from businesses on delivery:

"Excellent advice. Soil and crop management advice given and understood more in these couple of sessions than I ever have! So, highly recommended."

"Advisor had an excellent breadth of knowledge of different farming systems, which was required in our case to evaluate the current business and make decisions for the future. With the Advisory Service funding, it has proved very good value for money."

## One to one surgeries

Surgeries are one-hour one-to-one advice sessions with a consultant at designated venues.

Annual target = 60 Target achieved = 42



### 2 DIGITAL BUSINESS REVIEW SURGERIES

14 SUCCESSION SURGERIES

5 PLANNING SURGERIES

### 3 MARKETING & DIVERSIFICATION SURGERIES

## Strategic Awareness Events

...Sector specific roadshows, drop in events and workshops.

Annual target = 70 Events held during this period = 45

Events held include:

HEALTH AND SAFETY  
ROADSHOW



START  
TO FARM



DIVERSIFICATION  
ROADSHOWS



IAITHY PRIDD



SHEARING  
WORKSHOPS



WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE –  
JOURNEYS OF DISCOVERY



45 EVENTS held with 921 ATTENDEES

## Case Study

### Women in Agriculture – Journeys of Discovery

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of 'Women in Agriculture', women working in agriculture throughout Wales were invited to take a road trip for a unique 'journey of discovery' where they were given an insider's view of some of Wales' most successful rural businesses, hearing at first hand from the entrepreneurs and farming families who each have their own inspirational stories to tell.

Six journeys travelled from all four corners of Wales, stopping off at a series of destinations for a 'behind the scenes' tour of some of Wales' most inspirational rural businesses and diversified farms along the way. The day ended at the Marine Hotel, Aberystwyth, with presentations from shearers who featured in the 'She Shears' film.

Feedback from attendees:

"Enjoyed everyone's company and learnt a lot."

"Amazing day! Amazing to be able to visit all these businesses and gain an insight into other businesses."

"Great idea! Fab day and well organised."

"Excellent range of businesses and speakers."



## Red Meat Benchmarking Surgeries



18

SURGERIES with



96

ATTENDEES

Topics discussed:



Improving productivity



Lambing & calving percentage



Planning for the future



Managing costs and increasing output



How to benchmark correctly



Identifying business weaknesses

## Discussion Groups

119

MEETINGS with



764

ATTENDEES

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

During a recent visit to the UK, Murray Rohloff, a specialist sheep consultant from New Zealand, was invited to give talks to 12 various red meat discussion groups across Wales.

During these talks, Murray focused on the challenges and opportunities facing pastoral farmers, particularly Welsh sheep farms in light of Brexit.

Murray urged farmers to use this interim period to prepare, as well as possible, for Brexit by improving the efficiency of their business by adopting and understanding the influence of the three main points:

1. Business Management
2. The Value of Pasture
3. The Power of Genetics

He discussed with the groups how pasture management and genetics are drivers of profitability as well as the importance of benchmarking the performance of physical as well as financial KPIs, both against themselves and against other similar businesses.

### Seven factors that affect profitability

During his presentation, Murray also focused on seven specific factors that affect profitability from highest to lowest:

1. Better control of pasture quality over late spring / early summer
2. Better fit of early spring pasture supply to demand
3. Matching lambing % / ease of management to the environment
4. Better control of worms
5. Ability to thrive and finish on pasture / forage-only diets
6. Increase in ewe and ram longevity and ram serving capacity
7. Ability to shorten winter by better planned autumn pasture allocation

Each talk was followed by a lengthy Q&A session with much discussion had by all in attendance.

### Farming Connect Website and Social Media

Number of unique page views (April – July 2019)	123,753
Average time spent on website	00:01:45
Number of followers on Twitter as of 31.07.2019	4,882
Number of likes on facebook as of 31.07.2019	8,195

### Demonstration Network

Description	Total number of sites	Total events held during this period
Innovation Site	8	13
Demonstration Site	12	5
Focus Sites (Running Total)	140	44

**1467** ATTENDEES AT DEMONSTRATION NETWORK EVENTS

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

### On-Farm Projects

#### Parasite Management Project

During May, farmers were encouraged to focus on nematodirus which can be devastating for young lambs who cannot cope with the challenge from large numbers of parasite larvae. Monitoring in April and May showed the following results:

Date sampled	Location	Type of stock	Strongyle FEC	Nematodirus FEC	Total EPG
22/4/19	Wrexham	Lambs	210	210	420
29/5/19	Brecon	Lambs	210	70	280
30/5/19	Llanbadarn Fynydd	Lambs	350	70	420
31/5/19	Aberystwyth	Lambs	595	420	1015

This information allows the farmer to make informed decisions on which wormer they use. Nematodirus remains to be the focus, but the white drench used to treat this is sometimes not as effective for strongyle species. The farmers' vets were able to advise on which products are best to use.

Moving into June, the monitoring illustrated how variable the challenge from nematodirus can be, but armed with this information and with veterinary advice, they are able to make accurate decisions on control and treatment

Date sampled	Location	Type of stock	Strongyle FEC	Nematodirus FEC	Total EPG
23/6/19	Llanwrda	Lambs	420	35	455
11/6/19	Aberystwyth	Lambs	1225	490	1715
24/6/19	Llanwddyn	Lambs	35	0	35

### Welsh Pasture Project

The Welsh Pasture Project continues to collect grass growth data from a cross section of farm types in Wales. Using plate meters, the farms are measuring growth and quantity of available dry matter to enable them to plan their grazing regimes and match the supply and demands of the livestock.

The table below shows a snapshot of results from sites during early July demonstrating the range of growth rates that has been observed.

Site	Date	Average daily growth rate (Kg DM/Ha)	Average farm cover (Kg DM/Ha)
Pwllheli	08/07/19	48.2	2196
Llandeilo	08/07/19	57.3	2205
Dinmael	08/07/19	31.9	2131
Llanddewi Rhydderch	08/07/19	30.8	2034

Click [here](#) to read more.

### Using digestate as a fertiliser

The potential of digestate from anaerobic digesters, as a fertiliser, is gaining interest among farmers. At Llyn Rhys focus site, five plots (20 x 20 metres each) have been established and were treated with different rates of nutrients. The digestate was analysed prior to application showing that if 250kgN/Ha was required then the application rate would need to be 32.6m3/Ha. This is higher than required, and so the application rates were scaled back to the following:

- Plot 1 – 20m3/Ha digestate (96Kg N/Ha)
- Plot 2 – 15m3/Ha digestate (72Kg N/Ha)
- Plot 3 – 10m3/Ha digestate (48Kg N/Ha)
- Plot 4 – synthetic fertiliser compound (25:5:5.7) at 125Kg/Ha
- Plot 5 – no treatment

Applications were made with a trailing shoe, and for every tonne of digestate applied, the equivalent of 20Kg of CO<sub>2</sub> is sequestered into the soil, as well as increasing the soil's organic matter. Growth rates will be monitored over the season to assess performance.

### 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:** 20 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: 157

Twitter posts: 3211

Videos: 15

Web Page Hits:

Innovation Site: English 168, Welsh 15

Demonstration Site: English 771, Welsh 46

Focus Site: English 774, Welsh 90

