

RED MEAT DASHBOARD

September – December 2019

% of all activity in this quarter relevant to the red meat sector



Demonstration Network

Automated heat detection in the field

A project focusing on automated heat detection in a suckler beef herd has recently come to a close at Orsedd Fawr, Pwllheli. The project focused on using the Mocoall heat detection system to identify which cows were in heat.

As a spring calving herd, the cattle are out on grass during the bulling period, thus making artificial insemination difficult. By identifying which cows were in heat, the host farmer could easily sort which cows were in heat making artificial insemination an easier task. By using AI, a wider genetic pool is available to select from.

Final project results determined that all cows were detected in heat and submitted for AI at least once between 3 July and 30 July 2019, by which time all straws were used and then an entire bull was introduced to the herd.

By using scanning results and the AI date, it appears that 26 of the cattle stood to the AI on the first cycle, giving a 52% in-calf rate to AI. It is worth noting that 3 of the 50 cows were barren and did not stand to the bull either. If we remove these from the calculations then the in-calf rate increases to 55%.

Improving soil and livestock management to improve carbon capture and reduce farm carbon footprint

Hendre Ifan Goch demonstration site, near Bridgend, is aiming to determine a carbon balance figure for the farm by carrying out a whole farm carbon audit using a carbon footprint calculator. They intend to identify the current levels of soil organic matter with the aim of identifying ways to build soil carbon levels through different management techniques.

The first step has been to identify fields ready to collect soil samples and establish baseline carbon stocks within the different areas of the farms.

Using technology to increase health monitoring to improve calving pattern, conception rates and reduce calving losses

Moelogan Fawr demonstration site, near Llanrwst would like to make use of new technologies to aid data collection on the farm, all with the aim of improving the performance of the suckler herd. A bolus will be used in the cows that links to the LoRaWAN network and provides continuous updates that will inform of heat detection, calving onset and general health of the cows.

Work in November included setting the farm up to enable LoRaWAN coverage across the site wherever the cows need to be recorded.

Improving suckler herd and beef enterprise performance: a whole system approach

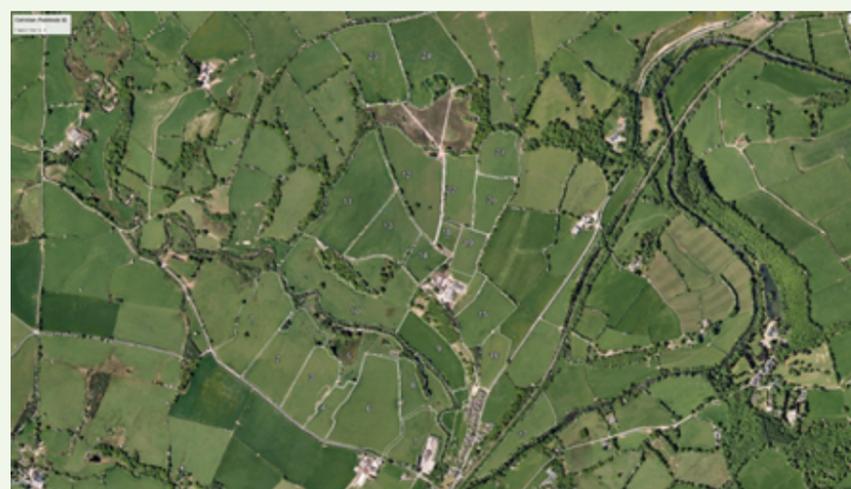
Bryn demonstration site, near Cardigan, is looking to use benchmarking as a way of monitoring business performance to improve efficiency. The enterprise is already performing well but further monitoring will ensure it remains profitable as changes to markets and government policy are inevitable in future months.

Discussions with industry experts have taken place focusing on options for finishing animals versus selling as stores and the impact this has on forage and feed requirements. Diseases, including Johne's, are directly linked to herd profitability and establishing whether this disease is prevalent within the herd will be essential.

Managing the change – sucklers to dairy beef

Cefn Llan demonstration site near Llangammarch Wells is currently going through a transition period of changing from the traditional suckler cow enterprise to rearing bought-in dairy-beef calves. This project will provide a template for understanding the decisions and considerations involved with starting a new enterprise such as this one, as well as creating a blueprint for managing a low-cost, forage-based dairy-beef enterprise. While the first calves will not arrive on-farm until April 2020, the farm has been preparing the grazing platform in readiness.

In November 2019 the whole farm grass cover was measured using a plate meter and the data inputted into AgriNet to establish the amount of available feed for the winter for the existing stock on the farm.



KE Hub

Technical articles produced by the KE HUB;

-  THE USE OF HERBAL ESSENTIAL OILS IN PIG NUTRITION – IS IT ALL HOGWASH?
-  PUBLIC GOODS AND FARMING

Agrisgôp

 59 MEETINGS WITH A RED MEAT THEME TOOK PLACE WITH 322 ATTENDEES

Group themes included:



Mentoring Programme

60 NEW RED MEAT FARMERS ACCESSING THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

405 RED MEAT FARMERS CURRENTLY BEING MENTORED

84% OF ALL MENTEES ARE RED MEAT FARMERS

8 OF THE ABOVE ARE PIG FARMERS



New mentees sought guidance on various topics including:



Discussion Groups



Number of Red Meat Discussion Groups: 33

Case Study

Gower Beef Discussion Group

Miriam Parker visited the Gower Beef Discussion Group to look at the group's on-farm livestock handling practices when handling animals for tasks such as TB testing.

Miriam started by discussing with the group what factors they encounter when working with cattle. Topics discussed included:

- Herd hierarchy
- Animal warning signs (head, tails etc)
- Animal instincts, along with providing the group members with an idea of a cow's vision when walking/moving with the use of specifically designed glasses provided by Miriam.

The second part of the meeting included a walk with Miriam through a livestock handling system which was based on-farm. Miriam talked through each aspect of the cattle yard and handling race with the group, and discussed in detail the collecting yard spacing, race width and dimensions. She also discussed the importance of minimising the time livestock are within the actual race so that it doesn't cause the animal to become distressed, which in turn can have an effect on their actual performance.

As a follow-up from the meeting, members were able to have a 1-2-1 on-farm session with Miriam to identify specific areas for improvement. Areas of conversation included space allowance, ideal measurements for races along with the ideal layouts for proposed new handling systems.

Benefits of the advice received will:



Strategic Awareness Events

26 Events Held with 639 attendees



*Strategic Awareness Event themes are often cross-sectoral that tend to attract farmers from all sectors, including the Red Meat sector.

Surgeries

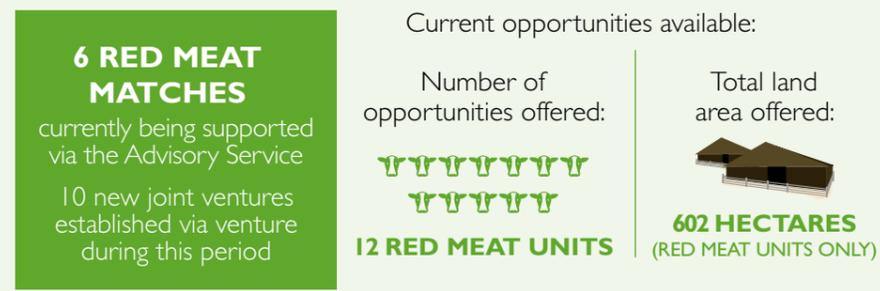
28 Surgeries Held



*Surgeries are cross-sectoral events and a mixture of farmers from all sectors attend, including farmers from the Red Meat sector.

Venture

3 NEW RED MEAT PROVIDERS **6** NEW RED MEAT SEEKERS **4** POTENTIAL RED MEAT MATCH ESTABLISHED DURING THE QUARTER



Animal Health & Welfare Workshops



Workshops held:



Training

During this period, **250** instances of face to face training were delivered to the Red Meat sector.



E-learning

Some of the e-learning courses completed within this period:



Click [here](#) to visit the website.

Ear to the Ground Podcast

John Yeomans was interviewed for the fourth episode of the Ear to the Ground Podcast which was released in November. John discussed his Management Exchange experience researching grassland management and carcass classification.

*John's opinions are his, not those of Farming Connect.



Click [here](#) to listen.

