



Number of businesses registered:

11,501



Number of individuals registered:

23,990

Advisory Service



92 individuals received one-to-one support through the Business Categories of the Advisory Service during this period.



3 Joint Ventures made of 6 individuals received support through the Business Categories of the Advisory Service during this period.

Feedback from businesses on delivery of this Advisory service:

“Very useful to help us understand the different aspects of the change of business direction.”

“All advice was extremely helpful for our business, thank you.”

Demonstration Network

Bodwi: Reviewing the bull beef enterprise by exploring the potential benefits of homegrown crops

The main aim of this project at Bodwi is to assess the effect of producing homegrown feed on the profitability of the bull beef enterprise, reducing the reliance on bought-in concentrates.

At present, the male calves are reared as bull beef, with a small proportion retained as stock bulls, and the remainder finished at home or sent away to a beef finishing unit. However, the enterprise requires a substantial amount of purchased inputs to finish the bulls at 16 months.

The bull calves were weaned in October 2019. In January 2020, a total of 34 bulls were selected to be finished at home on a diet of ad-lib concentrates and straw, achieving an average daily liveweight gain (DLWG) of 1.9kg from weaning up until the end of April.

An additional 40 bulls were sent away to a beef finishing unit and fed on a Total Mixed Ration. At the beef finishing unit, feed intake was weighed daily, with a monthly charge for total feed consumption. In addition to this, a fixed daily charge was applied per head to account for bedding and labour costs. Bull beef liveweight gain (LWG) and cost of production has been quantified for both systems in Figure 1 (based on feed, bedding and labour cost), indicating a saving of £0.11/kg LWG from finishing the bull beef from home in comparison with the beef finishing unit.

Figure 1. Bull beef liveweight gain and cost of production

Variables	Finished at home	Beef finishing unit
LW (beginning)	403 kg	342 kg
LW (at slaughter)	662 kg	658 kg
Average LWG/head	259 kg	312 kg
Total cost	£1.62/kg LWG	£1.73/kg LWG

Approximately 11 hectares of spring barley has been sown and harvested. The barley will be treated as Alkagrain to feed over the winter, with a nutritionist's input to determine a suitable finishing diet. The next steps involve evaluating the cost of production of the homegrown feed system over the winter as well as monitoring the bull performance.

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

A focus of this project is to identify the feasibility of finishing bulls versus selling as stores. As the farm is in a high TB risk area, Huw was keen to explore the option of finishing bulls to reduce the risk associated with a positive TB test. 15 bulls were left uncut and introduced to a mix of purchased concentrates, homegrown oats and rolled barley from November 2019.

Compared to the £13,980 these animals would have netted as stores, with the value of straw sold and feed consumed accounted for, an additional £1,600 was captured by rearing them as bulls. At Bryn, bulls received 1.2t/head of feed compared to the industry target of 1.7t/head. This resulted in an average liveweight at slaughter of 620kg and an average carcass weight of 344kg, with a killing-out percentage of 55%. Although these were all slightly lower than industry targets, margins were still positive and 93% of the carcasses met abattoir specifications.

Out of 75 calves born at Bryn this spring, 34 are bulls. Now breeding bulls have been removed from the herd, these bulls will be introduced to a homegrown mix of oats and rolled barley. The objective is to maximise feed conversion efficiency as bulls are introduced to creep feed at a younger age.

Strategic use of creep at Bryn is estimated to provide an annual gain of +£1,988, taking into account additional weight gain totalling at £1,700 between 34 bulls, as well as £908 saved on housing. This total also takes into account losses of £620 from feeding homegrown rolled barley and oats earlier on.



Figure 2. Cattle rotationally grazed at Bryn demonstration site.

Webinars

18/08/2020: Financial top tips for farmers

In this webinar, Iorwerth Williams from Dunn & Ellis accountants provided advice and suggestions on reviewing farm business finances, focusing on:

1. The importance of looking at the farm as a business and not a way of life
2. How to analyse the accounts you receive from your accountant
3. How to keep a separate record of your sheep/cattle production costs
4. Think twice before buying a new machine – compare the price with a contractor's fee and see which is best
5. What would the financial implications of share farming/renting land out be compared to keeping animals yourself



20/10/2020: How one diversification business became world famous!

This webinar was a part of the virtual Innovation and Diversification week where Farming Connect teamed up with Zip World, a successful, world famous tourist attraction in North Wales. Andrew Hudson, Zip World's Commercial Director, gave a presentation on the business and covered:

1. Zip World's story – from the early stages to today
2. Zip World's greatest achievements
3. Any challenges along the journey – including the weather and COVID-19.



Discussion Groups



Case Study

Tom Greenham of Advance Milking joined a south west discussion group meeting to look at making the most out of milk recording data.

All group members do some form of milk recording and the purpose of this meeting was to provide information on how best to interpret the data, how to identify any trends or patterns and how to address any problems and issues highlighted by the data.

Tom began by outlining the importance of recording clinical mastitis cases as this data, coupled with somatic cell count data, gives a better picture of what's happening on farm and how to address any issues. Some discussion took place on how the group members currently record their data and the different software packages available.

Tom then covered some points regarding what information the milk recording data provides the farmers and discussions were based around the following points:

- Predominant pathogens
- High risk groups of cows
- Challenging management periods
- High risk seasons

The above information allows farmers to focus on areas for improvement.

Some example data sets were then analysed including the data set from one of the group members and Tom facilitated a discussion covering the following points on the data sets:

- Are there any problems?
- What patterns, if any, can be seen?
- Are there spikes in mastitis cases and high SCC?
- Potential reasons for the above e.g calving, weather, housing
- What group of cows are most at risk i.e heifers or older cows?

Mastitis and high SCC in heifers was discussed, with Tom giving examples of farms where this had historically been a problem but has been improved by the use of pre-calving sealant on maiden heifers. Selective dry cow therapy was then discussed in some detail and the importance again of recording mastitis cases.

Agrisgôp

Working together within a group, Agrisgôp members can learn new management skills, access specialist information and explore and develop viable futures for themselves, their families and their businesses.

67 ACTIVE GROUPS with **545** MEMBERS
attending a total of **112** MEETINGS DURING THIS PERIOD

Educating consumers	Dairy supply chain
Diversification	Meat boxes

Mentoring Programme

541 MENTEES MENTORED **27** NEW MENTEES DURING THIS PERIOD

The most popular topics applied for during this period were

Woodland management	Succession
Health and Safety	Agri-environmental schemes

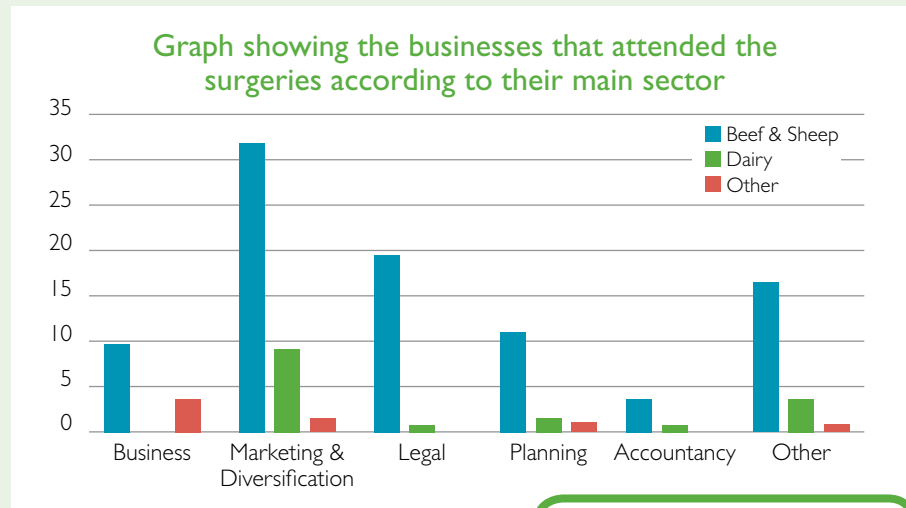
Personal Development Plan

165 PDPS WERE CREATED DURING THIS PERIOD



Surgeries

26 SURGERIES HELD with **182** ATTENDEES



Feedback from beneficiaries:

"This was a valuable service during a difficult time."

"Very useful consultation that has saved me a lot of money already. Looking forward to an advisory service visit for more in-depth work."

"I would recommend this subject and approach to others. The one to one approach was easy and we covered a lot of subjects in a short time."

E-learning

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

FARM HUMAN RESOURCES	FARM BENCHMARKING
PLANNING AND FINANCE	VAT

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

Training Courses

Course Name	Number completed during this period
Marketing Your Business	16
Business Planning & Development	15
Book Keeping	4
Agricultural Health & Safety – Preparing for an Inspection	2
Mind Your Own Business Workshop I	3

ICT Programme

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
6-week training course = 4 individuals trained	One-to-one tutoring = 39 individuals trained	Workshops = 189 attendees

Workshop themes included:

Email marketing	Social media training
Safe and secure data storage in the cloud	Precision livestock tools and techniques

