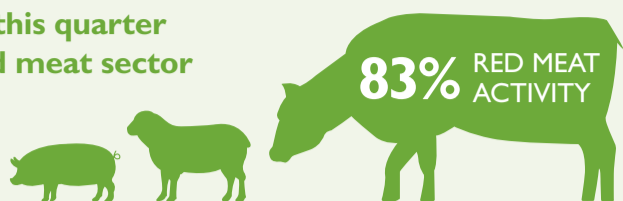


RED MEAT DASHBOARD

January 2021 – April 2021

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



Knowledge Exchange Hub

Technical articles produced by the KE HUB:

-  DUNG, DRUGS AND DISEASE: THE INTERACTION BETWEEN DUNG BEETLES AND FARMING
-  THE BENEFITS OF MIXED GRAZING APPROACHES IN GRASSLAND-LIVESTOCK SYSTEMS
-  REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE: BUZZWORD AND BEYOND
-  AGRITECH 4.0: FUTURE PERSPECTIVES FOR TECHNOLOGY

Mentoring Programme

21 NEW RED MEAT FARMERS ACCESSING THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

476 RED MEAT FARMERS CURRENTLY BEING MENTORED

83% OF ALL MENTEES ARE RED MEAT FARMERS



Demonstration Network

Maestanglwyden: Reducing mastitis incidence at focus site

Maestanglwyden focus site has previously experienced major issues with mastitis within the commercial ewe flock, with 10-13% ewes culled as a result of mastitis annually, and a further 2-3% ewe deaths as a result of severe mastitis. The objective of the project is to reduce mastitis incidence on-farm by vaccinating against Staph. aureus, a contagious bacteria found in the environment which causes mastitis in ewes.

Half of the twin-bearing ewes received a vaccine, five and two weeks prior to lambing with the aim of 'boosting' their immune response against Staph. aureus which they could potentially be challenged with during the housing period at lambing.

This year, the ewes were in better condition before lambing and on this farm that means slightly leaner ewes, averaging a body condition score (BCS) of 3-3.5. Having the ewes in better condition could have contributed to improved health of the ewes and perhaps a better immune response against bacteria found on-farm.

So far this spring, there have been six ewes recorded with mastitis. Three cultures were submitted for analysis, revealing that Staph. aureus is still a problem bacteria found on the farm. Out of the six ewes affected, there have been no deaths. Three have been culled and three recovered/had milder signs and haven't lost the quarter, which could be as a result of protection from vaccination.

Further data is still being collected. Any ewes with clinical signs of mastitis have their ear tag recorded, BCS and a milk sample taken if possible. This allows comparison between ewe BCS pre-lambing and at point of getting mastitis, whether the ewe had received a vaccination against mastitis and milk samples are sent off to culture/identify the bacteria causing the mastitis.



Figure 1: Vaccinating ewes at Maestanglwyden

Moelgan Fawr: Improving calving pattern, conception rates and reducing calving losses

39 smaXtec rumen boluses were administered to yearling Stabiliser heifers at Moelogan Fawr in April 2020. One of the key elements of this project was to identify each heifer's insemination window by using the peak activity data, in order to carry out AI in-house at the most appropriate time within the cycle. Pregnancy scanning was carried out in October 2020.

95% of heifers were identified in-calf; 68% following the first AI service, 5% following the second AI service, and 21% following bull service. 79% of visual and bolus conforming was achieved and an early indication of non-cycling heifers by the bolus of 26% (allowing for prompt vet intervention where required).

As well as positive results as outlined above, some shortfalls were also observed:

- Heifers scanned empty = 5%
- No indication of heat by visual observations = 8%
- No indication of heat by the bolus = 11%
- Lack of regular heat interval according to the bolus = 40%

The first service AI pregnancy rates achieved has increased by >10% following bolus administration. This has resulted in achieving one of the project's key performance indicators (KPIs) set, which was to increase the percentage of heifers which stand to the first service from 57% to >65%. In addition to this, the number of semen straws used has decreased by 4% in 2020 compared with 2019 figures.

Time spent on daily observation labour of the heifers was unchanged from previous years. Table 1 summarises the veterinary costs associated with impregnating the heifers prior to bolus administration, as well as post bolus administration. To note, the cost of the maturity scoring and pelvic measurements is not included as this was an additional assessment carried out as part of the project.

	2018	2019	2020
Vet cost (£/heifer)	£33.73	£29.51	£6.46
Financial saving from previous year (£/heifer)	N/A	-£4.22	-£23.05


Table 2. Veterinary treatment costs associated with impregnating the heifers prior and post bolus application (CIDR (Controlled Internal Drug Release) system for heat synchronisation used in 2018 and 2019; boluses administered in 2020).

Webinars




Examples of webinars held include:


Lamb disease prevention



Pig fertility: ensuring your sows become pregnant



Is your handling system the best for handling stock?



E-learning

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

EYE DISEASES IN SHEEP



GRAZING SYSTEM



IMPROVING SOIL HEALTH



BEEF HERD FERTILITY



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



The impact of herbal leys on the health and performance of grazing lambs

Three farmers in Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire are investigating whether herbal leys really can improve the health and performance of their lambs by running equivalent groups on both conventional ryegrass leys and herbal leys.

Following establishment in early 2020, ewes were introduced to all plots to reinfect the clean plots with parasites. Throughout the grazing season, the lambs were monitored for daily liveweight gain and faecal egg counts (FEC). Lambs were stocked at 2,000kg/ha and rotationally grazed the plots from August to October. There were no differences seen in liveweight gains but the FEC of lambs on herbal leys was 30-65% lower than on the ryegrass leys. Further monitoring will take place in 2021 to see if this is replicated.

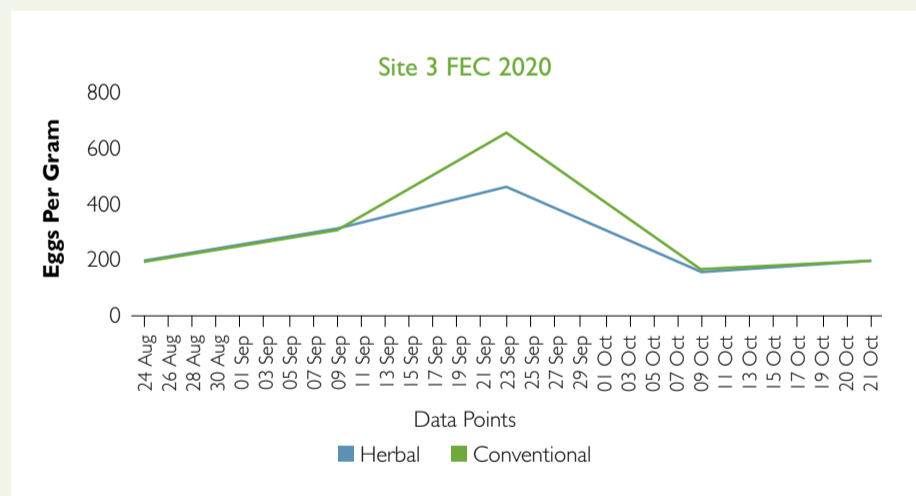
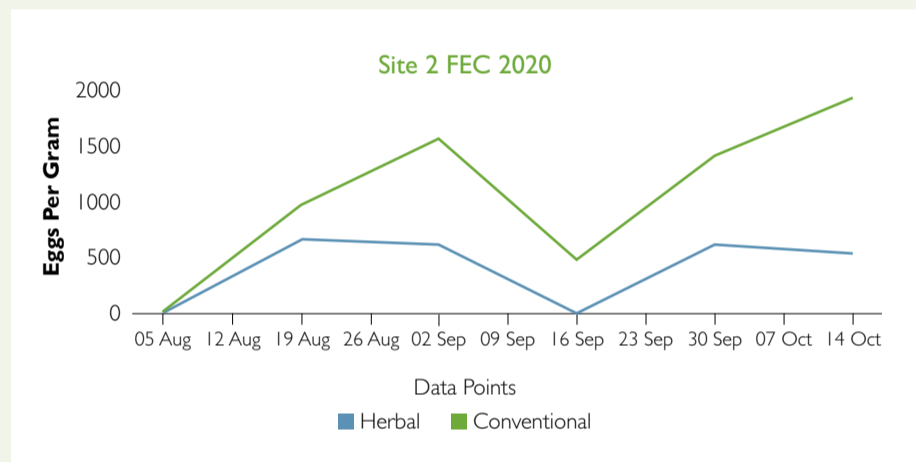
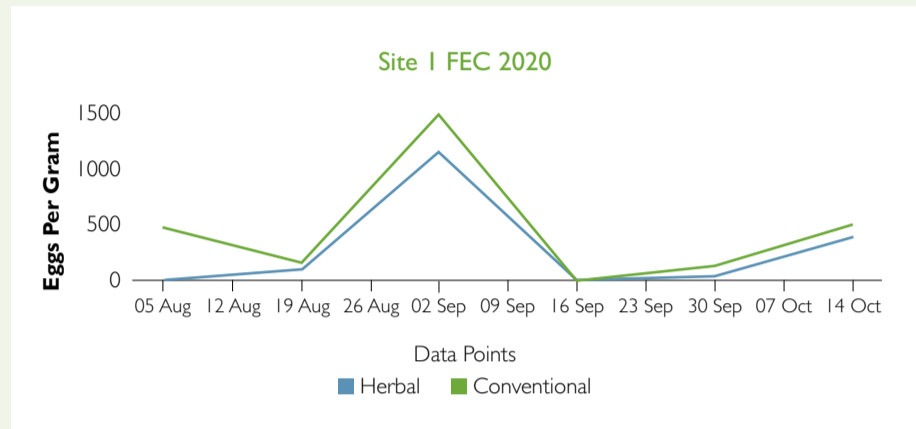
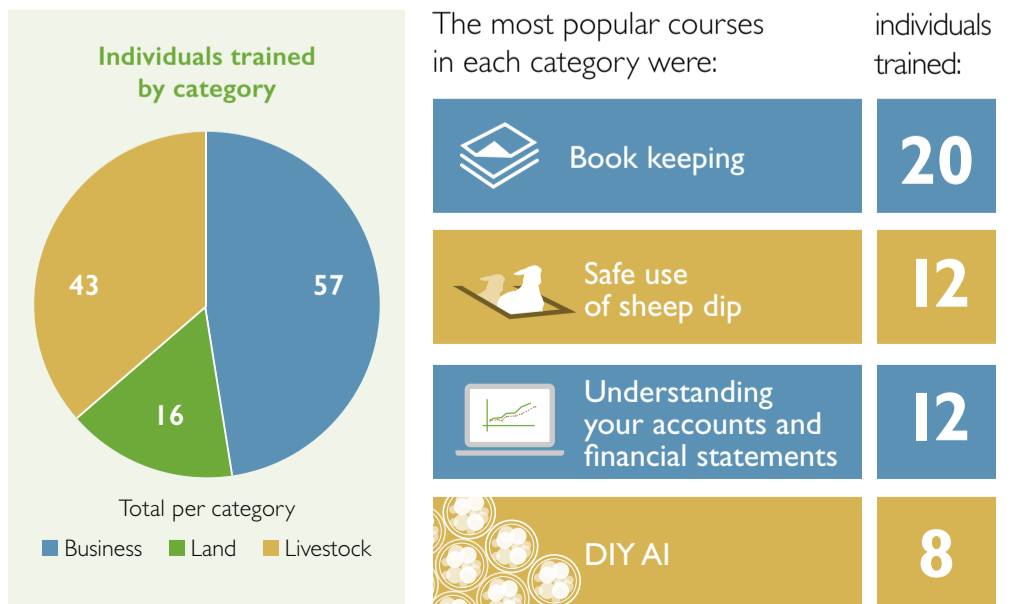


Figure 3. FEC levels of lambs sampled over the data collection period at all three sites

Training

During this period, **116** instances of face to face training were delivered to the Red Meat sector:



Discussion Groups



64 RED MEAT DISCUSSION GROUP MEETINGS

held with



802 ATTENDEES

Number of Red Meat Discussion Groups: 36

Case Study

Dolygarn Discussion Group

James Logan, the Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer of the Year 2019, was invited to present to the group about the changes he has made to his business over the past six years and how they have impacted and reduced his costs of production. James started by informing the group about the farming set-up he has in the Scottish Borders, providing a brief history of the farm and the breeds of livestock they used to manage before making changes.

James said that as a business, they were always aware their costs were high and that they were spending too much money on the wrong areas of the business. In 2011, they experienced an animal health breakdown and this made them re-think the business. They changed their objective: "To develop a business model and farming system which is profitable and sustainable without reliance on subsidies."

James did a lot of research into how he could change their system, both within the UK and by travelling overseas to countries such as New Zealand. A pasture-based system was selected with a focus on reducing costs of production.

Over the past few years, James has started growing fodder beet, kale and swedes to introduce to his new forage system. He changed his sheep breed and decided to concentrate on the breeds fleshing ability off forage. He also moved his lambing start date from 1 April to 22 April. He decided to out-winter his cattle and started up a new venison enterprise in 2017.

Key take home messages:

- Make a plan but be flexible; farm what is in front of you
- Measure what's important and use the results
- Always use a plan B if needed and make sure you have one just in case
- Don't grow more grass if you can't utilise it
- Surround yourself with a great team
- Good advice is worth paying for.

Animal Health & Welfare Workshops



24 WORKSHOPS

held with



299 ATTENDEES

Lambing Losses Part 2: from birth to weaning



Sheep Parasite Control Part 1: Roundworms and blowfly



Sheep Parasite Control Part 2: Sheep scab, lice and liver fluke



Understanding Johne's disease

