



Number of businesses registered:

11,919



Number of individuals registered:

24,834

Mentoring Programme



604

MENTEES MENTORED



35

NEW MENTEES DURING THIS PERIOD

The most popular topics applied for during this period were:

Agri-environment support



Succession planning



Viticulture



Grassland management



Demonstration Network

Bryn Farm: Introducing new enterprises to a mixed farm

Bryn Farm, near Cardigan have been striving to improve the efficiency of their 80-head suckler herd and thinking of ways they can be resilient against the threat of TB. Bryn is a mixed farm with beef sucklers and arable therefore looking into finishing bull beef using male calves from the sucklers and selling feed and bedding from the arable enterprise would complement each other and reduce the risk from TB compared to selling cattle as stores. The rolled barley was sampled to identify the nutritional value and it was balanced with a feed blend to get the adequate feed value for the growing bulls. Huw found the system very easy, ensuring the ad-lib feeders were full and weighing the bulls regularly to monitor their growth. Bull growth rate was above the target of 2kg/d at 2.41kg/d on average. With beef price of £3.70/kg in March 2021 and carcass weights of 330kg they were averaging £1,200/hd.

After removing costs, Bryn Farm achieved a profit of £3,500 and, importantly for Huw, he didn't need to worry about the TB status as they were going straight to slaughter. This extra income from bull beef finishing has introduced a new enterprise onto the farm spreading the financial and TB risk instead of selling everything as stores. After running the bull beef system in 2020 and 2021 Huw will continue with this enterprise and it has encouraged him to try and finish heifers off grass, again a new enterprise on the farm, introducing a new cashflow stream into the business.

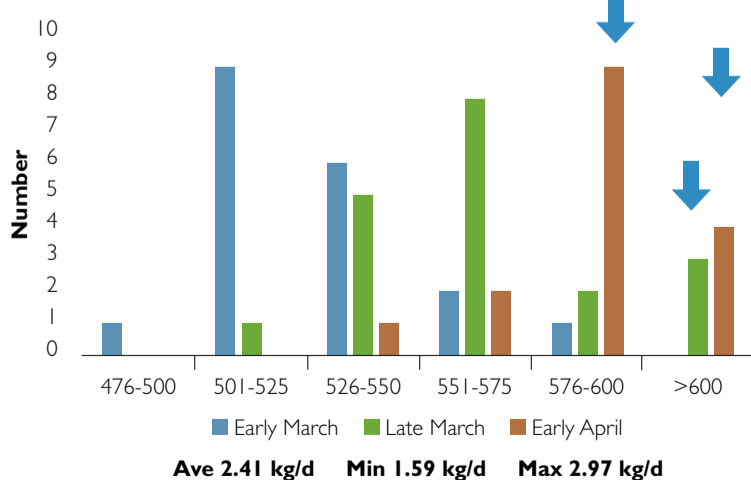


Figure 1. Bull weight distribution in March and April

Gwern Hefin: Investigating the cost benefit of rearing their own dairy heifers

Gwern Hefin farm near Bala is an all year round dairy herd that is run as a flying herd with all the cows put to beef, which are then reared on another holding in Ceredigion. Dairy replacements are bought at market as either calved-down heifers or cows in-milk and the herd is run as an all-year-round (AYR) herd.

Gwern Hefin now wants to move towards a spring calving herd and have bought in dairy bulling heifers that they were served sexed dairy semen in May and June.

Past studies have concluded that rearing a heifer replacement can cost on average £1,800, varying from £1,000 to £3,000. In this project, we will look to see what the total costs are and practicalities of rearing own replacements specific for the focus site against buying in replacements. With these issues in mind, this project sets out to calculate the value/cost of using sexed semen on the best of the bought-in heifers to build in an initial home-bred herd along with the other benefits that this potentially will bring long term to the business.

Webinars



138

BUSINESSES ATTENDED THIS WEBINAR

Could Diversification be a sustainable option for your business? Opportunities through the Rural Business Investment Scheme (RBIS)

Jeremy Bowen Rees of Landsker joined Farming Connect to discuss the benefits of diversification and how diversifying could make your business more sustainable. Katy Watkin from Welsh Government's policy team also joined to present information regarding the Rural Business Investment Scheme (non-Agri) application window. During the webinar, information was also shared regarding the relevant support Farming Connect can offer. Following all speakers, there was a question and answer session.

Agrisgôp



61

ACTIVE GROUPS with



492

MEMBERS attending a total of



62

MEETINGS during this period

Topics discussed:

Tourism & diversification



Growing vegetables



Carbon



Vertical farming



Personal Development Plan

136

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS WERE CREATED DURING THIS PERIOD.



E-learning

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

FARM HUMAN RESOURCES



VAT



FARM BUSINESS DIVERSIFICATION



PLANNING AND FINANCE



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

 **46** APPROVED PROJECTS WORKING

with

 **232** FARMERS AND FORESTERS



Developing the Cambrian Mountains beef group to manage and expand their short supply chain

This group of farmers wanted to work on improving their skills to take more control of how they marketed and sold their beef. There is increasing interest in selling direct to customers but this brings a requirement for additional skills within the business to ensure the investment in time and any new equipment required is economically worthwhile. The group undertook a series of training courses focusing on marketing, branding and butchery techniques as these were all aspects that they had not previously needed to consider. In addition, one of the biggest factors preventing businesses setting up short supply chains is supply of product all year round. This is where working in a group can really benefit and the group members were able to plan how they can manage this collectively.

ICT Programme

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
Computers for Beginners = 115 individuals trained	One-to-one tutoring = 26 individuals trained	Workshops = 132 attendees

Workshop themes included:

- Cyber security awareness
- Making more from your grass
- Farm carbon accounting
- Creating a website

Surgeries

 **23** SURGERIES HELD with  **161** ATTENDEES

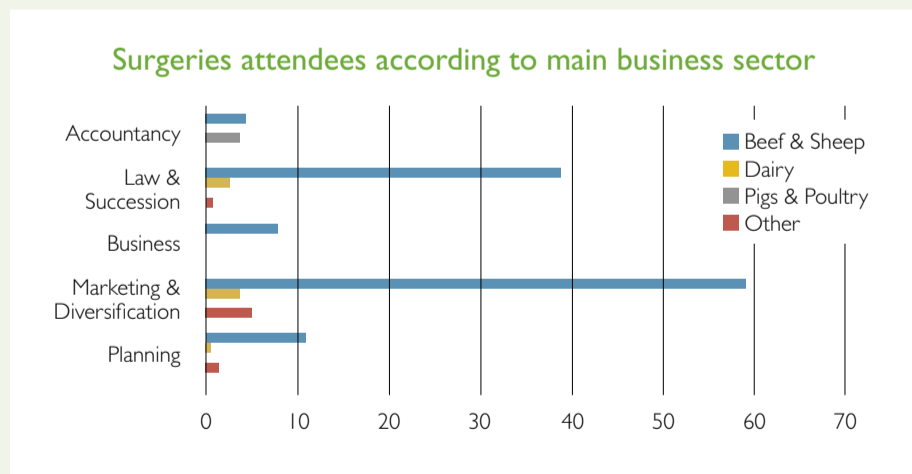


Figure 2. Number of surgeries attended per sector

Feedback from beneficiaries:

“We looked at inheritance tax implications. The implications of land transfer and what it involves for each individual involved. The surgery gave us lots to think about and to research further to choose the best path for myself and the business in the future.”

“The infrastructure surgery we had was very useful and could save us a lot of money in the future. Small changes will make us compliant and we don’t have to spend a large amount of money as we previously thought.”

Advisory Service

Number of businesses who have received support through the Business Categories of the Advisory Service during this period:



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



2 Joint Venture groups received support through the Business Categories of the Advisory Service during this period.

Feedback from businesses on delivery of this Advisory service:

“Service and support were very much needed and helped us to go ahead with the ideas and plans that we couldn’t have put in place ourselves.”

“The business plan will help us move forward with our poultry project. Thank you.”

Discussion Groups

Dairy Developers Discussion Group

Andy Dodd from the Farm Consultancy Group joined the Dairy Developers group to speak about heifer rearing costs. This meeting was held on a farm which has recently invested in a new heifer rearing unit, therefore it was a great opportunity for the members to have a look around and see first-hand how attention to detail can bring about big improvements in efficiency.

Andy suggested that heifer rearing is the second highest cost to dairy businesses after feed, with the average heifer rearing cost around £1,800. No income is generated from those heifers until their first lactation and only 25% of heifers pay back in their first lactation. This goes to show that efficiency, attention to detail with calf health and achieving high growth rates are key in any successful heifer rearing system.

Growth targets should be:

- Double birth weight by 56 days
- 26% mature weight by 6 months
- 50% mature weight by 12 months
- 60% mature weight at breeding
- 85% mature weight post-calving

It was also mentioned that the average age of first calving is 28 months. Ideally, this should be closer to 23 months, or even less, to reduce costs. Members were challenged to calculate their own heifer rearing costs to see how they compared to the industry averages. Group members were also reminded that there are other options such as contract rearing, which has been effective for some businesses.

Key take home messages from the meeting included:

- Calculate your heifer rearing costs
- Focus on calf health
- Maximise growth rates
- Aim for 23 months first calving

Training

Courses	Number of individuals trained during this period
Book Keeping	22
Marketing your Business	12
Business Planning and Development	10
Planning Diversification or New Enterprise on a Farm	9
Understanding your Accounts & Financial Statements	8

