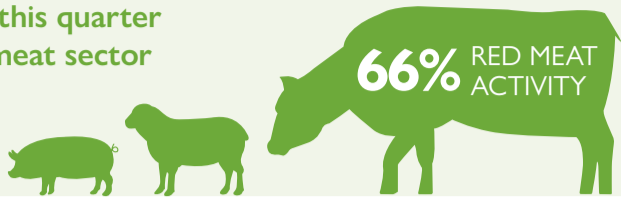


# RED MEAT DASHBOARD

September 2021 – December 2021

66% of all activity in this quarter relevant to the red meat sector



## Surgeries

**20 SURGERIES HELD**

Key topics included:

- Marketing and diversification
- Legal
- Carbon footprinting
- Planning
- Business

72 businesses from the red meat sector attended the surgeries above to look at a variety of topics, including marketing strategies, planning permissions, diversification project ideas, and how to start with calculating their carbon footprint.

## Demonstration network

### Pantyderi: Growing a protein concentrate feed for fattening cattle

The growing of cereals provides enough starch energy to grow and finish the 400 beef cattle at Pantyderi every year, but a 36% protein concentrate blend was bought in to make up the protein shortfall in the ration. The aim of this project was to trial the growing of a home-grown protein crop that could be harvested by crimping and stored in an outside clamp, ready for feeding out in the winter, to improve self-sufficiency. After extensive research, it was decided to grow a bi-crop of peas and beans; the benefits identified were:

- Growing the crops together tends to synchronise any varietal differences in terms of time to maturity.
- Trials have indicated that mixed crops tend to produce more than crops grown individually.
- The peas act to fill the air gaps between the larger particle size of the beans in the crimped clamp, and help create the anaerobic conditions required.
- Output and margins per hectare are improved.

With no previous examples of this bi-crop being grown before, it was trial and error. Following ploughing, cultivating and the addition of lime and manure, a free-draining eight-hectare(ha) field was drilled in two passes on 22 April, with beans sown first at 75mm depth, followed by the peas at 50mm deep. Harvest was undertaken when the crop was at 30-35% moisture.

Beef rations of equal energy and protein to the previous winter's diets were formulated; the cost savings for feeding the peas and beans are shown below.

Year	Growing ration		Finishing ration	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
Cost/head/day £	1.35	1.29	2.39	2.18
<b>Cost saving £*</b>	<b>1,800</b>		<b>3,788</b>	

Figure 1. Cost savings for feeding the peas and beans.

\*Cost saving based on 200 cattle being fed for five months on the growing ration and three months on the finishing ration.

The farmer is very happy with the results, and the project has been of great interest to farmers throughout the country.

### Forest Coalpit Farm: What effect do different diets have on pork quality?

In 2021 Farming Connect, Menter Moch Cymru and Forest Coalpit Farms began a trial to compare the meat quality of pigs finished in a forage-rich paddock to pigs finished in a barren paddock. The fatty acid profile of the pork produced was of particular interest.

#### Conclusions:

Linolenic acid was the fatty acid most affected by the addition of forage. Often referred to as  $\alpha$ -Linolenic acid (ALA), it is an n-3 or omega 3 essential fatty acid. There are multiple benefits of eating products containing ALA for the human consumer (heart attack prevention, lowering high blood pressure, lowering cholesterol, reversing hardening of the blood vessels).  $\alpha$ -Linolenic acid can only be obtained by humans through their diets, because the absence of the required 12- and 15-desaturase enzymes makes de novo synthesis from stearic acid impossible. Pigs are also unable to synthesise ALA, and so the significant difference between treatment groups is a direct result of the addition of forage to the diet.

Studies have shown that through manipulating feed (that is, by adding fish/plant/seed oils), it is possible to make the meat of pigs into a functional food due to omega 3 and omega 6 content. It would be interesting to see if different forage lays can manipulate the functionality of the meat further.

## Webinars

**7 RED MEAT THEMED WEBINARS** held with **116 VIEWERS**

Examples of webinars held include:

Sustainable fluke control in sheep and cattle

Pig housing for good health and welfare

Top tips for feeding your beef cattle over the winter

## Demonstration Network farm events

**10 DEMONSTRATION NETWORK EVENTS** held with **236 ATTENDEES**

Moelogan Fawr Demo Site Open Day

How to identify, control and eradicate iceberg diseases in sheep

Rhiwaedog demonstration farm update

## Mentoring programme

**15 NEW RED MEAT FARMERS ACCESSING THE MENTORING PROGRAMME** and **599 RED MEAT FARMERS CURRENTLY BEING MENTORED**

New mentees sought advice on various topics including:

- Infrastructure on farm
- Recording of KPIs
- Health and safety on farm

Click [here](#) to access the full Mentor Directory.



Targeting anthelmintic use in sheep

This EIP Wales project on five farms is investigating an apparent link between higher FECs (faecal egg counts) and those ewes losing body condition (BCS) around lambing, when they are under nutritional strain. The resultant weakening of the immune system leads to what is known as a peri-parturient rise (PPR) in egg production by worms in the ewe's gut. When deposited on pasture, these eggs develop into larvae and present a worm challenge to lambs later in the season.

According to independent sheep expert Lesley Stubbings, preliminary results from data collected on the project suggests that when BCS loss occurs pre-lambing, the PPR is earlier; in contrast, farms where ewes lose BCS in lactation, the PPR comes after lambing.

"The variations in the early results indicate that there is huge scope not only to minimise the number of ewes treated on these farms (provided we can identify them in a practical and repeatable way), but also to time the treatments given to maximum effect," says Ms Stubbings.

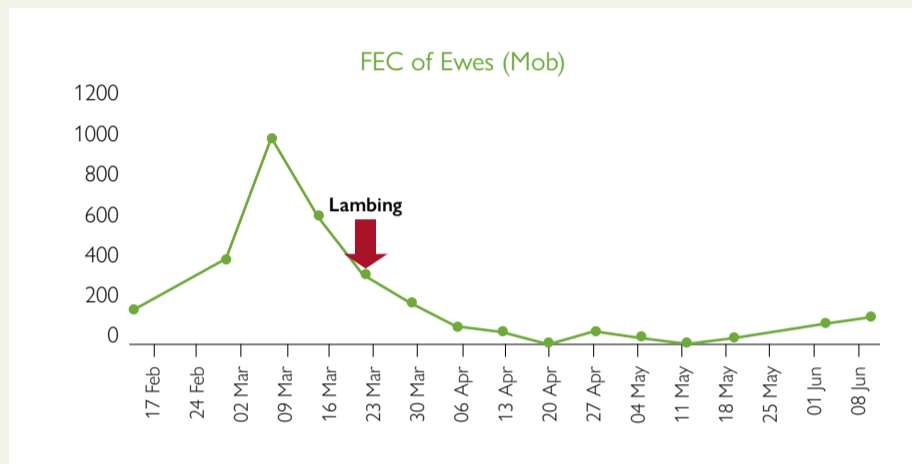


Figure 2. Farm 1 – Peak FEC occurs before lambing. Ewes losing condition up to lambing (50% of the mob) were treated. FEC count then remained low for the whole mob.

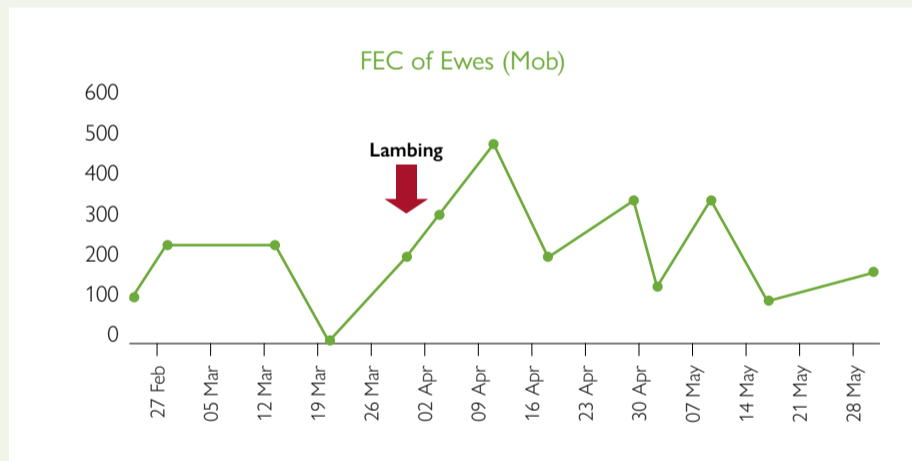


Figure 3. Farm 2 – Peak FEC did not occur until after lambing, when the body condition loss tends to occur as twin-bearing ewes are under pressure for grazing.

The project is seeking to isolate factors that identify ewes producing high levels of contamination, to allow the proportion treated around lambing to be minimised without compromising lamb performance.

Knowledge exchange hub

Technical articles produced by the KE HUB;

- USING SEXED SEMEN AND GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE DAIRY AND BEEF HERDS
- IS BUYING BISON BETTER THAN BEEF? AN ALTERNATIVE LIVESTOCK OPTION FOR THE UK
- THE FAT-TAILED SHEEP AND ITS INTRODUCTION TO WALES

Strategic awareness events

4 Events held with 42 attendees

Key topics included:

Embracing technology and training to tackle antimicrobial resistance

Agricultural pollution workshop

Securing your farm business for future generations: is a joint venture an option?

\*Strategic awareness event themes are often cross-sectoral, and tend to attract farmers from all sectors, including the red meat sector.

Discussion groups



72 RED MEAT DISCUSSION GROUP MEETINGS

held with



479 ATTENDEES

Case Study

South Welsh Mountain Sheep group

Matt Smith won the Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer of the year award in 2017, and was a finalist in the British Farmer Awards for the Sheep Innovator of the Year award in 2021. Matt was invited to speak to the group about his farming system in Cornwall, and the changes made to the business since he got involved with his wife Pippa's family farm.

Matt was brought up in New Zealand, shearing worldwide for 14 years, before settling in Cornwall with his wife and expanding the sheep livestock numbers, as well as introducing deer into their farming enterprise. Matt and his wife are currently farming around 1,100 breeding ewes, alongside 700 breeding deer.

Matt informed the group that a high health status in his flock is his main priority, and anything that shows signs of underperformance or health issues is culled out from the flock. He breeds for resilience, and has been involved in a project looking at anthelmintic resistance in the sheep sector for around seven years.

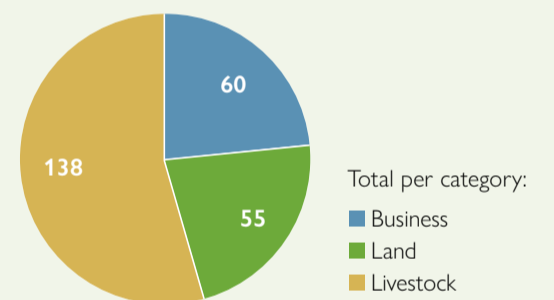
Matt explained that he has worked very closely with grassland consultant James Daniels from Precision Grazing, to increase the amount of high-quality feed for both his sheep and deer systems.

The business has also recently invested in an on-farm slaughterhouse processing plant, as they sell directly to retail and the consumer. However, this comes with its pitfalls, as carcass balance can be a problem. Pet food manufacturers have helped a lot with the purchase of unpopular meat cuts.

Training

During this period, 253 instances of face-to-face training were delivered to the red meat sector.

Individuals trained by category:



The most popular courses in each category were:

Course Name	Business	Land	Livestock	Grand Total
DIY AI			28	28
Safe use of sheep dip			16	16
Sheep scanning			15	15
Cattle foot trimming			15	15
Book-keeping	13			13
Rodent control on farms			12	12
Safe use of vet & med			11	11
Level 2 Award in the safe use of pesticides (PA1) & safe application of pesticides using hand-held equipment (PA6)		11		11
Level 2 award in the safe use of pesticides (PA1) & safe application of pesticides using vehicle-mounted boom sprayer equipment (PA2)		10		10

E-learning

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

GRAZING SYSTEMS

MASTITIS IN CATTLE

SEASONAL REPRODUCTION IN EWES

TRACE ELEMENTS IN SHEEP

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

