

% of all activity in this quarter relevant to the dairy sector

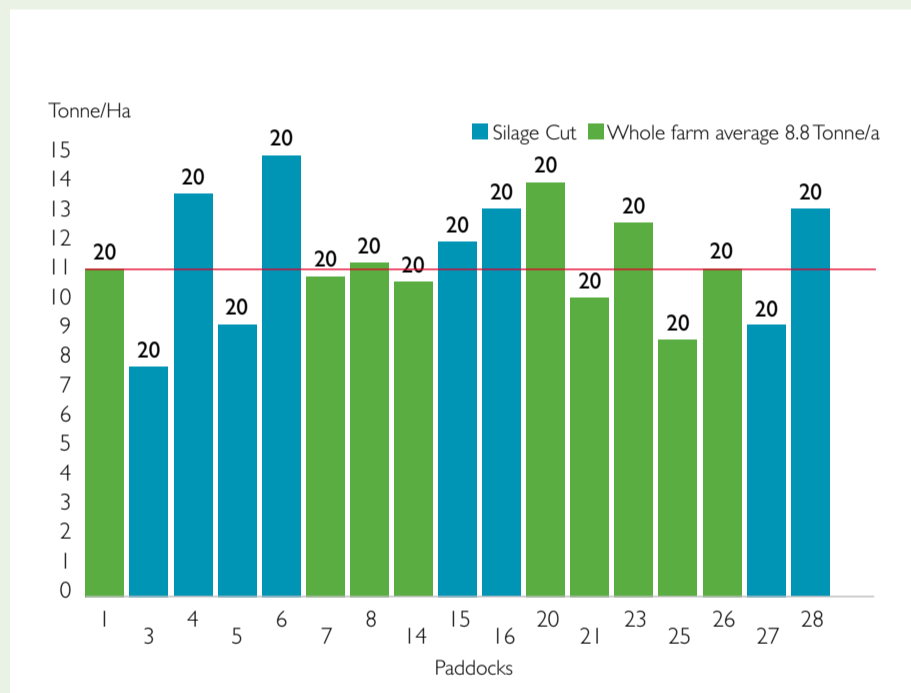


Demonstration Network

Nantglas: Improving fertility in a split block calving herd

The breeding for the spring calving portion of the herd has now come to a close for Iwan at Nantglas farm. This year, the first three weeks submission rate was 89%, which is acceptable given the AHDB industry target of 90%. 24 of those 92 cows in the spring calving block repeated, giving Iwan a 3 week non return rate of 74% and a predicted conception rate to first service of 64%. Predicted empty rate is 7.1% which is well within the industry target of below 10%. In the next few months, scanning will be carried out to confirm these predictions.

Erw Fawr: Increasing yields from grazed grass in an AYR herd



Total grass growth at Erw Fawr so far this year has averaged at 8.8 tonnes of dry matter (DM) per hectare. There has been a huge variation in the amount different paddocks yield in grass growth. Some of the best performing paddocks have produced almost 15 tonnes whilst others only 7.5 tonnes of DM. The detailed grass measurements and recordings will give an invaluable insight into individual field performance, allowing for effective remedial action on underperforming fields.



The impact of improved grass utilisation at Erw Fawr

One of the main aims of the project at Erw Fawr has been to increase utilisation of grazed grass. Many top grazing operators are achieving over 90% utilisation whilst some set stocked units would only achieve 50% regardless of the amount of grass grown. Using predicted annual grass growth, increasing utilisation from 60% to 85% at Erw Fawr would equate to cows eating annually an additional £10,125 worth of dry matter (DM) from grazed grass rather than supplemented by costlier concentrate and silage.

The cost ratio of concentrate, silage and grazed grass usually follows a 3:2:1 ratio in terms of £/tDM



Herd 1 has based the cows ration on grazed grass and topped up in the parlour with concentrate.

Herd 2 has based the cows ration on high quality silage and topped up with concentrate.

Herd 3 has based the ratio on concentrate and silage with some grazing in the summer months.

Using the low yielders at Erw Fawr as an example the ration has been based on a situation similar to Herd 1 where grazed grass makes up the main portion of the ration at 17kgDM/cow/day with concentrate fed at 5kgDM/cow/day. This not only keeps the cost of feeding based on a £KgDM/cow low it also promotes better grazing behaviour from the cow and better grass regrowth. The example shown in Herd 3 where the Total Mixed Ration (TMR) has a larger proportion of concentrate and silage compared to grazed grass, won't facilitate good grazing behaviour, effective utilisation or grass regrowth.

EIP

A targeted approach for selective dry management



Selective dry cow therapy targets cows with low somatic cell counts and implements drying off procedures that do not require antibiotics. In this EIP project the farmers are using the latest technology by carrying out milk leukocyte differential (MLD) testing which scans milk samples microscopically. It is able to test each quarter of the animal prior to drying off to determine whether individual quarters require antibiotic therapy or whether they could be dried off using an internal teat sealant only. Some of the latest results have highlighted how this additional information is helping farmers make decisions.

	Farm 1 (since June 2020)	Farm 2 (since December 2019)	Farm 3 (since November 2019)
Cows dried off	44	160	125
Treatment used:			
Sealant only	9	81	36
Antibiotics & sealant	35	79	89
Cows that would have been treated with sealant only if using SCC milk records alone	16	20	35

KE Hub

Technical articles produced by the KE HUB;

- MORE MILK FROM FORAGE
- ADDING VALUE TO COW'S MILK
- IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO – GENOMIC TESTING OF FEMALE DAIRY CATTLE
- RUMEN FILL SCORING FOR MONITORING HEALTH IN DAIRY COWS
- ROBOTIC MILKING AND CATTLE WELFARE

Discussion Groups



Number of Dairy Discussion Groups: 17

Case Study

Sam Fenemore of ProStock Vets joined a South West Discussion Group to discuss dairy herd health and in particular IBR.

Prior to the meeting, the group submitted the following:

- Percentage of current herd bought-in since 2015
- Number of holdings animals are bought from in the last 5 years
- Number of sheep bought in or tacked from another holding since 2015
- IBR, BVD, Lepto, Johne's – present on farm in last 5 years
- TB status

Focussing on the data provided, Sam categorised each farm into low, medium or high risk based on the information provided. These are a few areas of risk that were discussed:-

- Co-grazing sheep
- Boundaries
- Watercourses
- Staff/personnel/vets/Al/ reps/ advisors
- Contractors/shared equipment
- Wildlife
- SD/fresh air/drainage
- Disease protocols, farm infrastructure, testing, quarantine

Sam then outlined the results from a trial by the Welsh Regional Veterinary Centre that outline that open dairy herds had a significant higher chance of having infectious diseases in comparison to closed herds. Sam emphasised by having zero disease, you are more likely to be able to achieve maximum and most efficient production.

Discussions continued looking at the group's current IBR, BVD, Lepto and Johne's disease status, vaccination, accreditation and best practice, and how overall herd health could be improved.

Surgeries

78 Surgeries Held



Businesses from the dairy sector have attended surgeries on all topics during this period. A particularly popular surgery in the dairy sector has been the Marketing and Diversification surgeries. Many businesses have been looking at the idea of selling raw milk from vending machines directly from the farm.

Mentoring Programme

96 DAIRY FARMERS currently being mentored

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

Webinars



Examples of webinars held include:

- ECONOMICS AND PRACTICALITIES OF REARING HOLSTEIN/FRIESIAN DAIRY HEIFERS ON AN UPLAND SHEEP FARM
- EVALUATING THE BENEFITS OF MILK RECORDING IN THE SPRING CALVING HERD
- IMPROVING FERTILITY OF A SPLIT BLOCK CALVING SYSTEM
- LINER CHOICE: HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT MILKING LINER FOR YOUR HERD

Agrisgôp



Group themes included:



Animal Health & Welfare Workshops

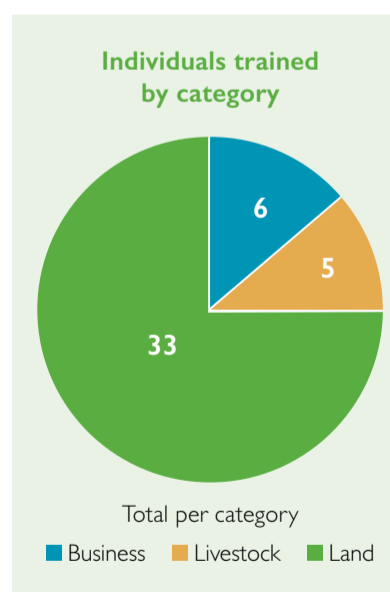


Workshops held:

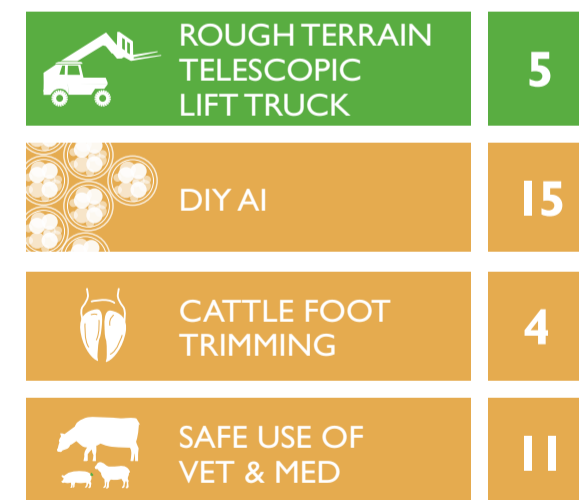


Training

During this period, **44** instances of face to face training were delivered to the Dairy sector:



The most popular courses in each category were:



E-learning

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



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