

% of activity relevant to the Horticulture Sector:



16% HORTICULTURE ACTIVITY **265** BUSINESSES REGISTERED with Farming Connect are from the Horticulture sector.

Demonstration Site Network

Farming Connect is working with farms across Wales, trialling new techniques and implementing best practice. Examples of events linked to the horticulture sector include:

Agroforestry at Henbant Bach, Caernarfon

The project at Henbant Bach will involve a no-dig, bio-intensive, ecological approach using the principles of permaculture to have multi-layered growing. An agroforestry approach to food production not only adds the advantages of sustainable land use, but also contributes to animal health and carbon sequestration. Trees can modify temperature and wind speed with benefits for animal welfare, providing shelter and fodder. Agroforestry systems are believed to have a higher potential to sequester carbon because of their perceived ability for greater capture and use of light, nutrients and water than single-species crop systems.

Introducing top and soft fruit agroforestry lanes amongst both holistically managed pasture and a new bio-intensive no-dig market garden is an approach to diversifying and creating resilience on a small upland farm.



Plan for market garden area showing proposed bed and tree layout:



Plan showing layout of new silvopasture paddocks:

Welsh growers feeding the nation as pandemic exposes supermarket flaws

Local growers say now is the time for shoppers to buy Welsh food direct from suppliers as the coronavirus pandemic exposes supermarket supply chain flaws. While the shelves at some major retailers in Wales are stripped bare of eggs, meat and milk, produce is still in plentiful supply at the many farm shops, growers, raw milk suppliers and other local food businesses working hard to keep the nation fed.

Gerald Miles, who runs Caerhys Organic Community Agriculture (COCA) from his farm at St Davids, is urging Welsh shoppers to grasp the opportunity to stock their cupboards with locally produced food. He hopes the current crisis will change buying habits and result in long-term support from consumers to local businesses, not only at times when they can't get key items at a supermarket.

"What the country is experiencing now really gives us a reality check on who we should be depending on for food and produce," says Mr Miles, whose work as a Farming Connect focus farmer resulted in a rapid composting system that provides nutrition for the vegetables he grows.

Although early spring is the 'hungry gap' at Caerhys, so-called because the variety of food grown on the farm is limited, COCA is overcoming this through its link with other community-based organisations. These deliver other kinds of organic vegetables and fruit and products like flour to the farm so members still get a plentiful supply of food. Mr Miles says COCA had 60 members before the pandemic but in the last fortnight more people had joined.

Click [here](#) to read more.

Soil sampling informing nutrient management at Welsh fruit farm

Soil sampling at a Welsh fruit and vegetable farm has demonstrated the benefits of nutrient management planning in horticulture. Claudia Lenza grows fruit and vegetables on 7.6 hectares (ha) at Llanvihangel Crucorney in Monmouthshire.

Her main enterprise at The Fruit Farm is an orchard growing 3.2ha of dessert apples. She also grows 0.6ha of pears together with soft fruits including strawberries, raspberries, tayberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants, gooseberries and blackberries. There is also a 1ha vegetable patch where she grows a variety of crops including pumpkins, broccoli, beans, brassicas and salads. Produce is mainly sold from a farm shop on site, and the farm is working towards organic certification.

With 80% funding through the Farming Connect Advisory Service, soil samples were taken strategically across the farm to inform nutrient management planning in the orchard and soft fruit and vegetable areas; 20 samples were taken to cover every growing zone.

Dr Delana Davies, Farming Connect technical officer, says having an accurate knowledge of the nutrient status of the soil is important in the growing of any crop, but especially so in the case of a horticulture enterprise which grows a variety of fruit and vegetables on a condensed area.

"It is important to recognise that different crops have varying nutrient requirements, and the health and productivity of the crop will depend on supplying those needs," she says.

With a complete set of soil nutrient results for every growing area, detailed recommendations can be made for every plot according to the crop grown and soil balance.

Click [here](#) to read more about the advice given.

KE Hub

Technical articles produced by the KE HUB;

- MISCANTHUS AS AN ALTERNATIVE CROP FOR WELSH FARMERS
- PUBLIC GOODS AND FARMING

Squill production in north Wales

Squill (*Drima maritima*) is a plant native to the Mediterranean and squill extracts have been used for many years as herbal medicine. Bangor University has identified that squill grown in north Wales has higher levels of the main bioactive compound than reported for squill grown in its native countries, hence this EIP project investigated whether it is possible to grow the crop in Wales.

The project demonstrated that:

- Squill grew successfully at a number of locations across north Wales
- It does contain a number of high value compounds
- There is existing technology that can be adapted to plant and process squill at a commercial scale
- There are potential high value/low volume products suitable for animal and human health markets, but further work would be required to develop these
- There is interest in squill as a ruminant feed additive and this would be a quick route to a lower value/high volume market



Growing small scale asparagus on organic farms in Wales



Asparagus has good potential in Wales as it is a high value crop that falls into the hungry gap period. The project is investigating best practice from establishment through to harvest to help producers understand what is required. In addition, the outputs will be monitored and the financial aspects of growing the crop will be assessed to help new producers decide whether this crop offers a potential enterprise to their system. Harvesting commenced in April 2020

on the project farms and they will be assessing the yield in their first year of production.

Strategic Awareness Events

18 Events Held with 827 attendees



<p>FARMING FOR THE FUTURE</p> 	<p>PDP WORKSHOP</p> 
<p>FEEDBACK EVENTS</p> 	<p>ACCESSING TECHNICAL EVENTS</p> 

*Strategic Awareness Event themes are often cross-sectoral that tend to attract farmers from all sectors, including the Horticulture sector.

Venture

 <p>3 HORTICULTURE OPPORTUNITIES</p>	 <p>5 SEEKERS ARE LOOKING FOR HORTICULTURE OPPORTUNITIES</p>
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Discussion Groups




 <p>2 DISCUSSION GROUP MEETINGS</p>	<p>related to the Horticulture sector held with</p>	 <p>18 ATTENDEES</p>
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Mentoring Programme

7 NEW HORTICULTURALISTS ARE ACCESSING THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

57 HORTICULTURALISTS are currently being mentored which is **11%** OF ALL MENTEES

Topics discussed to date include:

 <p>Beekeeping</p>	 <p>Growing flowers</p>	 <p>Diversifying into horticulture</p>
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Agrisgôp


21 MEETINGS HAVE BEEN RELATED TO THE HORTICULTURE SECTOR

Group themes include:

 <p>Regenerative Agriculture</p>	 <p>Counting worms in the soil</p>	 <p>Soil health</p>
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Personal Development Plans

During this period a total of **699** PDP's were created, of these **6** were completed by clients who selected horticultural worker as their job title.



Training

During this period **598** instances of training were delivered in total. Of this number, **12** instances were from businesses including Horticulture as their primary or sub-sector.

Course Name	Individuals trained
Marketing your Business	3
Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Pesticides (PA1) & Safe Application of Pesticides (PA2)	2
Business Planning & Development	2
DIY AI	8
Chainsaw maintenance, cross-cutting, felling and processing trees up to 380mm	1
Tractor Driving – Front End Loader	1
Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Pesticides (PA1) & Safe Application of Pesticides (PA6)	1
Felling and Processing Trees over 380mm	1
Total	12

E-learning

Some of the e-learning courses completed within this period relating to the Horticulture sector:

 <p>Business Planning</p>	 <p>Organic Horticulture</p>	 <p>Improving Soil Health</p>
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Click [here](#) to visit the website.

