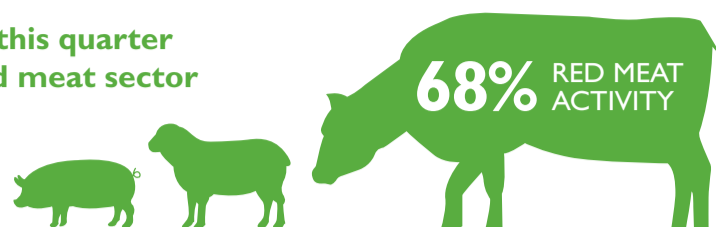


# RED MEAT DASHBOARD

## January – April 2020

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



### Demonstration Network

#### Using technology to improve herd health, fertility and productivity at Moelogan Fawr

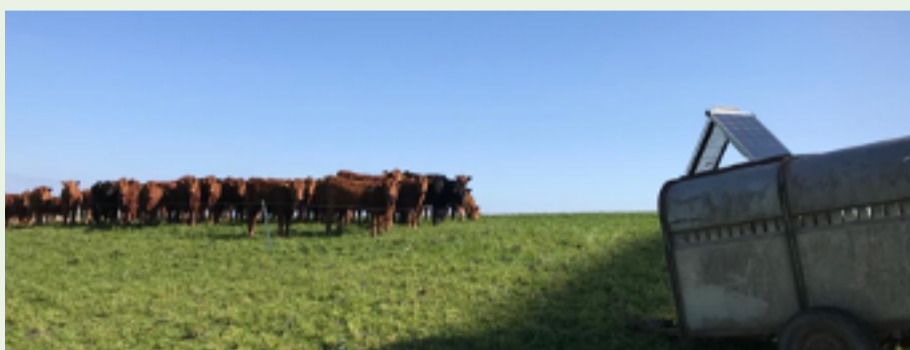
The main aim of the project at Moelogan Fawr demonstration site is to harness the benefits of new technology to tighten the calving pattern and improve health therefore improving herd productivity and efficiency.

During April 2020, boluses were administered to breeding heifers at Moelogan Fawr, Llanrwst. The Smaxtec boluses will provide frequent body temperature readings which indicate when heifers are in heat, as well as identifying any health issues early.

As the bolus is present in the animal permanently, it is possible to determine if heifers are cycling properly prior to the mating period, which will help identify any heifers which are not and ensure they are examined for fertility issues by the vet. Once boluses were administered, readings began to come through straight away by e-mail or text alert. Four heats were picked up immediately as well as high temperature in two heifers. Following examination by the farm's vet, these two heifers were diagnosed with a fever which was treated straight away. Both heifers made a full recovery as a direct result of early intervention. The base station/ receiver is moved with the cattle in a small renovated livestock trailer.

Data will be collected during the pre-mating period and analysed to make justified management decisions. Information gathered from the boluses will be a useful tool during the mating period itself as it will identify when heifers are in heat, therefore providing an accurate time frame for artificial insemination. Insemination within the optimum time frame will increase the chances of heifers standing to the first service, therefore, maximising production efficiency.

A 'Twitter-Takeover' feature on this project was held on 24 April 2020 on the Farming Connect Twitter feed.



Bolused heifers on a rotational grazing system at Moelogan Fawr, with the solar-powered base station which includes the receiver.

#### Revising the bull beef enterprise: Exploring the potential benefits of homegrown crops at Bodwi

The main aim of the project is to maintain the efficiency of the bull beef system at Bodwi. This will be achieved by monitoring costs, and trialling the feasibility of producing homegrown barley to replace purchased concentrates. By trialling the growing and feeding of homegrown barley to bull beef at Bodwi, the project aims to reduce the amount of purchased concentrates by 50%

27 acres of spring barley was sown at Bodwi on 9 April 2020. Immediately after ploughing, the crop was flat rolled to retain as much moisture as possible due to dry conditions forecasted and to ensure a firm seedbed was obtained. 150kg/acre of 15-15-15 fertiliser was applied in the seedbed and will be top dressed further on in the season with a nitrogen-based product. pH indices indicated that lime was required. 200kg/acre of prilled lime was applied before drilling. The crop was sown during good conditions at a seed rate of 75kg/acre.



Spring barley crop at Bodwi, sown 9 April 2020.

The bulls have had an excellent season this year, with an average DLWG since weaning of 1.9kg. 10 bulls were sent to slaughter on 27 April 2020. Average weights are shown below.

Average bull beef weights and daily liveweight gains:

Weighing date	Weight (kg)	DLWG (kg)
23/10/2019	268	
28/11/2019	316	1.3
30/12/2019	390	2.3
30/01/2020	471	2.6
17/02/2020	502	1.7
17/03/2020	535	1.1
23/04/2020	613	2.1

#### Managing the change: Suckler to dairy beef at Cefn Llan

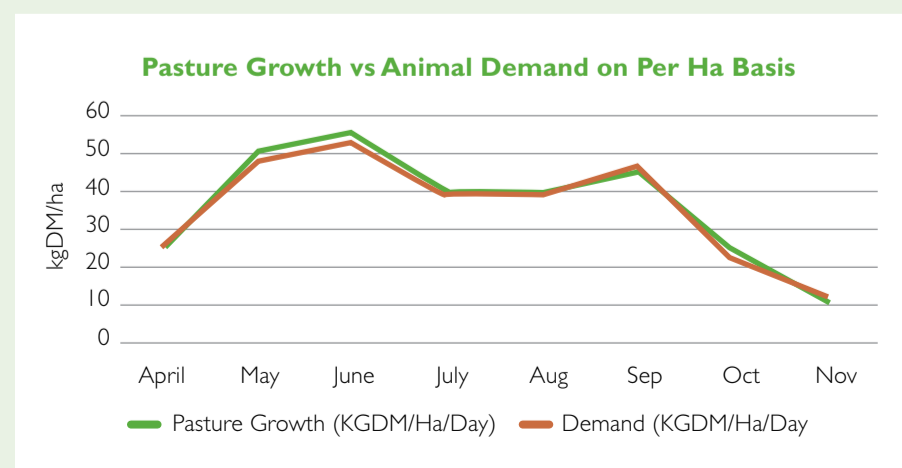
A demonstration site project at Cefn Llan, Llangammarch Wells, is focusing on the feasibility of transitioning from a traditional suckler cow enterprise to rearing, growing and finishing purchased Aberdeen Angus cross dairy calves on a low input, grass-based system.

During April 2020, a feed budget was produced by project specialist Dafydd Jones, Precision Grazing in order to calculate feed requirements for the calves.

The average grass cover measurements on 16 April 2020 was 1,522kgDM/ha. 36 calves were weighed and turned out to grass, weighing an average of 260kg. An electric fence was erected 1/3 of the way into the field where the calves were turned out, to introduce them to the electric fence. These 36 calves were purchased to trial the system ahead of the arrival of 200 calves on the farm later this year.

The next stage of the project will include the arrival of 100, 3-4-month-old weaned calves (weighing approximately 140kg) on the farm in a few weeks' time, with the other 100 calves arriving on the farm in September. Production costs will be monitored closely in order to determine the feasibility of this type of beef production system in comparison to more traditional suckler based systems.

Graph 1. Feed budget produced for calves at Cefn Llan, showing pasture growth and demand between April and November 2020.



### Monitoring sheep health and performance at Glanmynys

The main aim of the project at Glanmynys is to assess the flock health and performance status by collecting data at a farm level to ensure an efficient sheep system.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Reduce variable costs (p/kg) from £47/ewe to £42/ewe
- Increase output (kg/ha)
- Improve lamb daily liveweight gain from 270g to 300g
- Reduce average days to slaughter from 164 days to 150 days

Blood samples were collected from a sample of sheep from different groups, including: ewe lambs, singles, twins and triplets. Results showed that all groups of ewes required supplementary feeding, but at different quantities. Ewes were also body condition scored; results are included below.

Ewe body condition scores – February 2020:

Ewe group	Lowest BCS recorded for group	Average BCS	Target BCS at lambing
Ewe lambs	1.75	2	3
Single bearing ewes	1.5	2	3
Twin bearing ewes	1.75	2	3-5.5
Triplet bearing ewes	1.5	2	3-3.5

Following supplementary feeding as recommended, ewes lambed outdoors (except for 70 triplet bearing ewes which were lambed indoors) during April, in favourable weather conditions. Approximately 550 ewes lambed, out of the total 900 during the first week of lambing. Few health issues have been recorded during the period. Issues recorded include prolapses in ewes (which have been more common than usual), as well as a few cases of joint ill in lambs. Lambs will be weighed between 6-8 weeks old and again at weaning. Lambs will also be drenched accordingly. Ewe health and body condition will also be monitored during this period.

### KE Hub

Technical articles produced by the KE HUB;

-  LAMB PRODUCTION AND WALES: A HOLISTIC ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT
-  STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES TOWARDS REDUCED LAMENESS IN CATTLE
-  CARBON AND CLIMATE CHANGE – AN OVERVIEW
-  CAN PRECISION FARMING HELP MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE?

### Mentoring Programme

**9** NEW RED MEAT FARMERS ACCESSING THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

**414** RED MEAT FARMERS currently being mentored

**83%** OF ALL MENTEES ARE RED MEAT FARMERS

**8** OF THESE ARE PIG FARMERS



New mentees sought advice on various topics including:

 Calf rearing	 EID
 Developing a profitable business	 Grassland management

### Discussion Groups



**65** held with RED MEAT DISCUSSION GROUP MEETINGS



**650** ATTENDEES

### Number of Red Meat Discussion Groups: 36



### Case Study

Jeanette Fisher is a calf rearing specialist from Tasmania, and founder and principal consultant of HEIFERMAX. She utilises her extensive expertise to assist businesses to improve their calf and heifer management and the majority of her work is with calves in the first 4 months of life. The Gower Beef Discussion Group were lucky enough to have her speak to them about calf and heifer management.

Points of discussion included:

1. Colostrum intake
2. Feed intake
3. DLWG – an improvement of 100gms DLWG can result in an additional 150 litres in first lactation.
4. Quantify a 'good start'?
  - Calves don't lose body condition
  - Coats are sleek and shiny
  - Calves double birth weight by 8 weeks of age
  - Know death rate on farm (avg 6%)
5. Calves experiencing stress are more susceptible to infection.
6. Calves navel is a source of infection; navel dipping was recommended.
7. The shed space should be well ventilated – air flow above the level of the calves is ventilation, below the level of the calf is a draught.
8. Vaccination routine.
9. Fresh and clean water should always be available.
10. Heifer calves receiving 2kg of grain and 1kg for bull calves to be ready for weaning, provided in a trough and placed at brisket height.

Jeanette tasked the group to consider the following:

- Benchmarking.
- Building great relationships with the people and businesses the farmers are purchasing calves from. Try and find out as much about their systems as possible so that the transition stage from farm to farm has minimal effect on calves' DLWG and overall health.

### Strategic Awareness Events

**9** Events Held with **611** attendees

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE



PDP WORKSHOP



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

### Venture

**3** NEW RED MEAT PROVIDERS

**12** NEW RED MEAT SEEKERS

**3** POTENTIAL RED MEAT MATCH ESTABLISHED DURING THE QUARTER

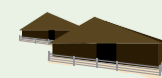
**8 RED MEAT MATCHES**

currently being supported via the Advisory Service

Current opportunities available:  
Number of opportunities offered:

**12 RED MEAT UNITS**

Total land area offered:



**785 HECTARES** (RED MEAT UNITS ONLY)

## Surgeries

### 42 Surgeries Held



Digital business review	Grassland
Staff management	Planning
Business planning	Animal health

117 individuals from the Red Meat sector attended these surgeries.

### Agrisgôp

35 MEETINGS WITH A RED MEAT THEME TOOK PLACE with 174 ATTENDEES

Group themes include:

Preparing for lambing	Marketing mutton	Butchering red meat
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### Animal Health & Welfare Workshops

68 WORKSHOPS held with 1,088 ATTENDEES

Workshops held:

Antibiotic Resistance	
Lambing Losses Part 1: Abortion & Nutrition	
Lambing Losses Part 2: Post Lambing Losses from Birth to Weaning	
Sheep Parasite Control Part 2: Sheep Scab, Lice & Liver fluke	

### Management Exchange

#### Stuart Hammond's Management Exchange, January 2020

**Topic:** Better technical performance could make beef finishing more profitable

**Country:** Portugal



During January 2020, Powys beef finisher Stuart Hammond travelled to Portugal to complete his exchange. Stuart contract-finishes 400 black and white Holstein-Friesian steers annually for Dunbia. He applied to the Management Exchange programme as he

wanted to improve his system to achieve the 1.5kg daily liveweight gain (DLWG) needed to make his business profitable. An overarching lesson he learned from the farms he visited was to keep systems simple and that improving performance isn't down to just one thing – farmers should make a number of improvements continually on as many things within their control. Through his exchange, Stuart has gained valuable knowledge which he hope will improve his business. He has also started making changes on-farm, such as switching to a different feeding system in light of what he learnt through his exchange.

Click [here](#) to read more.

### Farming Connect & Menter Moch Cymru Pig Events



During February 2020, Farming Connect, in conjunction with Menter Moch Cymru, hosted two follow-on events to the pig diversification events held in November 2019.

These events focused on the importance of business planning for profitable pig production. Speakers at the events included Menter Moch Cymru officer, Ken Stebbings, as well as Graham Leaver, a pig specialist from Egis Consultancy Ltd.

Some of the key messages from the event included:

- There are many important factors to consider when diversifying into pigs, which include:

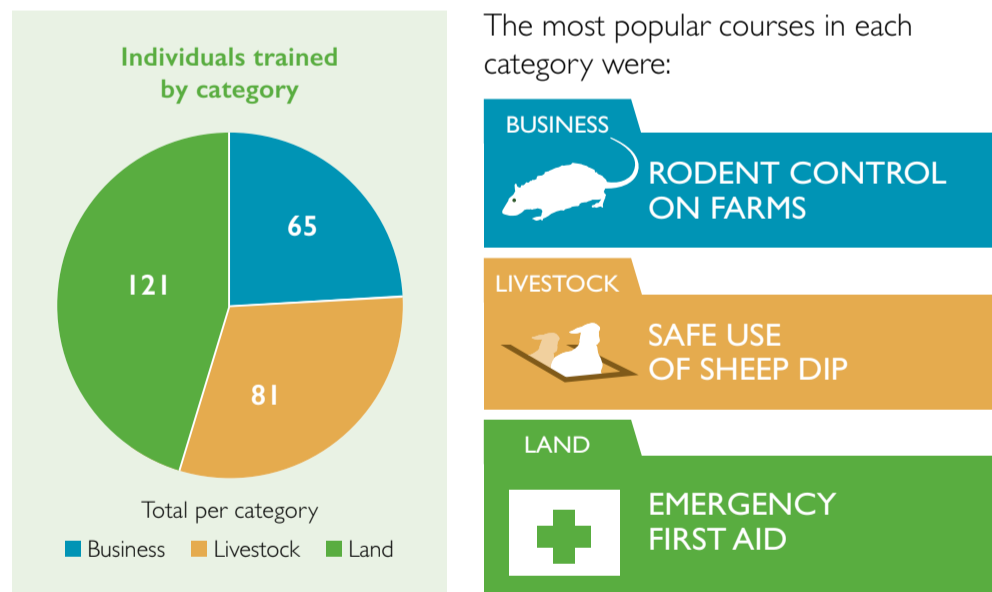
Different systems – which is most suitable; indoor or outdoor production	
Market opportunities – how to market meat produced and ensure a profitable business	
Feed sources – where will feed be sourced	
The capital costs associated with setting up a new pig enterprise	
Breed options – which breeds would be most suitable for different purposes	

- It is fundamentally important that plans are made which work well for the producer.
- Capital investment and working capital requirements should be assessed thoroughly.
- Loan applications should be prepared thoroughly and to fine detail to optimise the chance of a loan being offered to support new pig enterprises.

### Training

During this period, 267 instances of face to face training were delivered to the Red Meat sector.

The chart below shows the breakdown of individuals trained by category during this period.



### E-learning

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

EWE NUTRITION		SHEEP LAMENESS	
SHEEP SCAB		JOHNE'S DISEASE IN SHEEP	

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