THE MAGAZINE FOR FARMING & FORESTRY IN WALES

FARMING connect

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Demonstration Network
Addressing anthelmintic resistance

Welsh Pasture Project
More farms and more growth rates for 2021

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

ISSUE 32 - March/April 2021 | www.gov.wales/farmingconnect

Nantglas - Demonstration Site

Demonstration Site: Nantglas, Talog, Carmarthenshire

Technical Officer: Gwenan Evans

Project Title: Increasing milk from forage

Project Introduction:

Grazed grass is the cheapest feed available on most Welsh dairy farms and provides over half the dry matter (DM) intake of most dairy cows. Iwan Francis, who farms Nantglas, would like to improve grass utilisation, either from conserved forage or grazed grass. The aim of the project is to improve the total yield from conserved forage and grazed grass from the 200-split block calving New Zealand type herd. The aim is to focus on small changes in pasture management and silage making to boost milk yield without the need to increase concentrates. Due to the heavy peaty soils at Nantglas, winter grass growth is limited and it is therefore key to ensure that the last round of grazing allows for a spring wedge for turnout in late March. The nutrient requirements of a dairy cow can be fulfilled from quality silage, which will reduce milk production costs by decreasing the amount of concentrates used and maintain a healthier rumen and reduce the potential for metabolic diseases. On average, 5-18% of DM is lost during the respiration and fermentation stage of silage making, and Dave Davies of Silage Solutions Ltd will focus on this part of the silage making process at Nantglas to improve silage quality.

Figure 1. Iwan Francis and Nigel Howells assessing the grazing platform

Project Aims and Objectives:

All grazing and silage fields will be soil sampled and advice will be given by the consultants on the application of inorganic and organic fertiliser to improve utilisation and quality of grass on the whole farm over the next two years.

Nigel Howells will be leading on grazing management with the aim to increase milk yield from grass. He will be focusing on how the grazing platform is managed and the importance of measuring grass weekly for the best utilisation of grass. Currently, it is estimated that Nantglas is growing 10tDM/ha, but growing in excess of 13tDM/ha is possible in this area. Iwan has been using Agrinet to record and monitor grass growth on the grazing platform, but more work will be done on the grass budget to help define the average cover goals more clearly for the autumn and spring. Soil samples and fresh forage samples will be analysed for mineral contents to monitor what cows are receiving and what is available to them.

Dave Davies will be concentrating on improving the silage quality to increase milk from forage. The silage is currently averaging at 39%DM and during harvest the whole process is taking around 24 hours to complete. The high dry matter is making the silage difficult to consolidate and results in caramelisation. In order to reduce wilting time, Iwan will aim to reduce the cutting time from the sixth week after shutting the field to the fifth week. Soil samples will indicate any deficiencies in the silage platforms, but slurry samples will also be taken on the day of application to calculate the nitrogen (N) available in the slurry. The aim is to reduce the amount of N fertiliser used on farm, therefore, reducing costs as well as the impact on the environment.

KPIs:

- 4,000 litres from grass; currently ≈ 3,300 litres per cow
- 5,000 litres from forage; currently ≈ 4,200 litres per cow
- 85% utilisation of grass grown

Figure 2. Strip grazed field during summer 2020 at Nantglas

For more information on the work conducted at Nantglas demonstration site, please visit: gov.wales/farmingconnectourfarms

Cefngwilgy - Demonstration Site

Demonstration Site: Cefngwilgy, Llanidloes, Powys

Technical Officer: Lisa Roberts

Project Title: Addressing anthelmintic resistance at Cefngwilgy

Project Introduction:

Anthelmintic resistance is already an issue within Welsh sheep flocks. The WAARD (Wales Against Anthelmintic Resistance Development) project identified that wormer resistance was present on most Welsh farms, with 43% having some level of resistance to three, or all four of the wormers tested on those farms. Addressing the issue by finding out the wormer resistance status and acting upon it is very important on an individual basis and industry level.

Resistance has the potential to significantly reduce the flock productivity by:

- reducing growth rates (animals are on-farm for longer)
- increasing susceptibility to other diseases due to reduced immunity
- increasing the potential for fly strike due to scouring
- later sale dates which could impact on price per kg

Despite this, many farmers are still unaware if their wormers are fully effective. At Cefngwilgy demonstration site, farmers Edward and Kate Jones have carried out a comprehensive Faecal Egg Count Reduction Test (FECRT) on four different wormers to identify if there is any resistance present. Multiple resistance was found, but having tested, they are aware of which stage the resistance is at and are able to draw up a suitable worming strategy with their vet.

The development of resistance is an insidious process. Under field conditions this means that anthelmintics will apparently continue to give clinical efficacy, in sheep with a worm burden, even if the reduction in faecal egg count (FEC) is lower than 95%. Only when the reduction falls below 80% does it start to become clear that the worm burden has not been controlled effectively. Consequently, many sheep farmers remain unaware that resistance to an anthelmintic is present until resistance reaches a high prevalence.

To avoid anthelmintic resistance developing, sheep farmers can implement the SCOPS recommendations which are designed to reduce the selection pressure on the worm population. Recommendations can be found by visiting the SCOPS website: **www.scops.org.uk**

For more information on the work conducted at Cefngwilgy demonstration site, please visit: gov.wales/farmingconnectourfarms

Moelogan Fawr - Demonstration Site

Demonstration Site: Moelogan Fawr, Llanrwst, Conwy

Technical Officer: Non Williams

Project Title: Using technology to increase health monitoring – improving calving pattern, conception rates and reducing calving losses

Project Update: It is often difficult to visually detect heat in young heifers, which can lead to an extended calving pattern and additional veterinary costs for fertility and health treatments. In previous years, a CIDR (Controlled Internal Drug Release) system was used at Moelogan Fawr for heat synchronisation in the heifers.

The smaXtec bolus provides a constant live feed of body temperature and activity levels. This can aid with assessing the herd's health status and heat detection. The aims of introducing smaXtec boluses to Moelogan Fawr's suckler herd was to:

1. Reduce labour inputs by using the technology to improve heifer heat detection
2. Increase herd efficiency by tightening the calving pattern

39 Stabiliser heifers received a smaXtec bolus (March 2020). The scanning results have been analysed and related to bolus data, as well as visual observations.

95% of the heifers were in-calf, with 72% of those in-calf following first AI service. The first service AI pregnancy rates achieved has increased by 10% following bolus administration (Figure 1). This value exceeds one of the project's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of increasing the percentage of heifers that stand in the first serve from 57% to >65%.

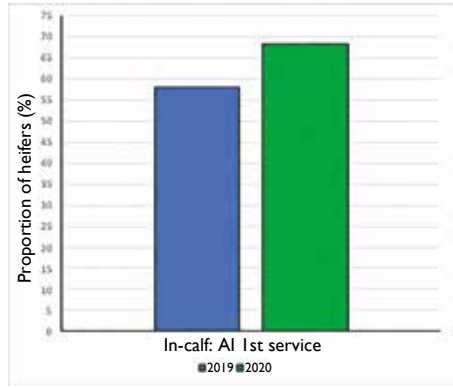


Figure 1. Conception rates following first AI service (pre- and post-bolus administration).

Other results include:

- A correlation between bolus and visual heat detection in 79% of cases
- Heat detection by bolus in 79% of the heifers
- Boluses gave an early indication of non-cycling heifers, allowing for prompt vet intervention where required (26%)

Next steps

The boluses will send calving alerts to demonstration farmers, Llion and Siân. This data will be analysed along with visual observations at calving and pelvic measurements taken by vet, Dr Iwan Parry to measure the degree (if any) of a correlation between these factors.

For more information and detailed analysis of the project results at Moelogan Fawr, please visit gov.wales/farmingconnectourfarms

PROSIECT PORFA CYMRU
WELSH PASTURE PROJECT

Four grazing experts join the Welsh Pasture Project for 2021

Wales has a huge competitive advantage in its ability to reliably grow large amounts of high-quality grass. When managed correctly grazed grass provides high value feed for animals, reduces use of nitrogen fertiliser, can sequester carbon in the soil and is linked to consistent higher profits on farm.

The Welsh Pasture Project aims to provide information and management advice based on regional grass growth trends, which have been carefully recorded by the dedicated project farmers. If you are interested in improving your grazing management **BUT** not currently measuring grass, this project is for you!

The information will help you make timely on-farm grassland management decisions such as:

- Should I turn my livestock out?
- Should I close fields for silage?
- Should I add buffer feed?
- Should I spread fertiliser this week?
- Should I wean my lambs?

Research has shown that farmers that manage grass well are more resilient to weather events and consistently more profitable.

MORE FARMS AND MORE GROWTH RATES FOR 2021!

For 2021, we have increased the number of farms to 49. There is a range of systems, land types and experience levels of farms and farmers where all will measure their grass growth every 7-14 days from March to November.

This year we have:

Number of beef and sheep farmers: **29**

Number of dairy farmers: **20**

If you see a farm within the same region as you, monitor their grass growth, as it is likely a similar growth trend is happening on your farm! This will help support proactive management decisions on your own farm.

Expert grass based farmers

New for 2021, we have four grazing experts!

These four farmers have been chosen based on their excellent grassland management skills and knowledge to provide an insight into their system and timely decision-making information over the year.

Ianto Pari
Beef and sheep farmer
Gwynedd

Rhys Williams
Dairy farmer
Gwynedd

Andrew Giles
Dairy farmer
Powys

Bleddyn Davies
Sheep farmer
Ceredigion

PROJECT LAUNCH: The first set of management notes were published on **11 March** on the Farming Connect website **gov.wales/farmingconnect**

Keep an eye out on Farming Connect's social media and website to make sure you don't miss them! Search online for **#Welshpastureproject**

The Farming Connect Knowledge Exchange Hub

The Farming Connect Knowledge Exchange Hub (KE Hub) is based at IBERS, Aberystwyth University. Our colleagues there are playing an important role in providing farmers with the latest information from scientific research.

A digital divide and agriculture

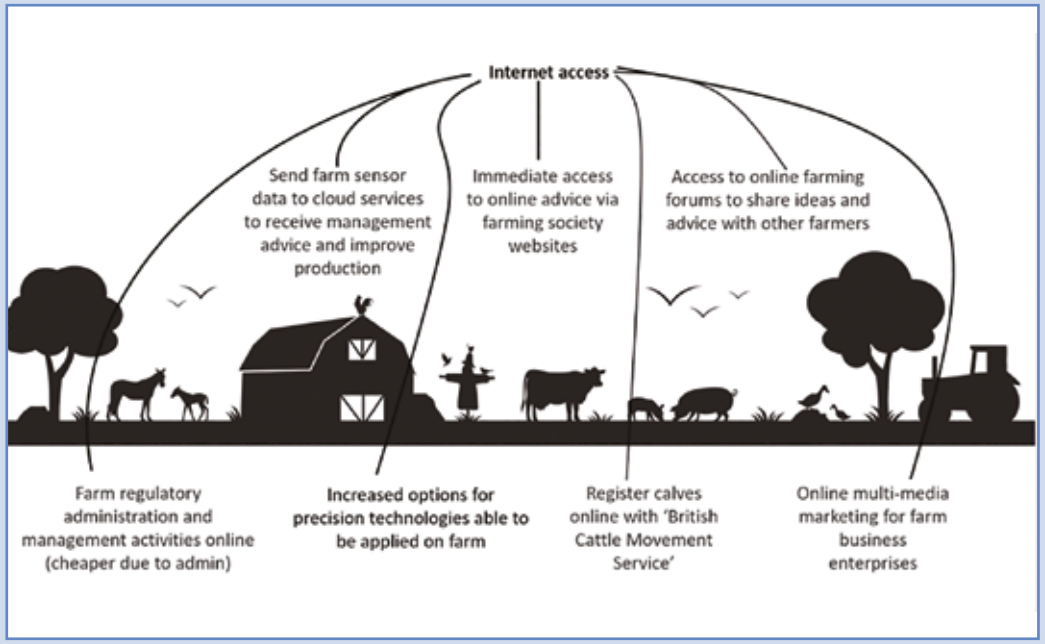
Dr David Cutress from the Farming Connect Knowledge Exchange Hub highlights why internet connectivity is increasingly important in the agricultural sector and alternative options that are now being investigated on the Farming Connect demonstration network.

Whilst schemes within the UK have pushed towards providing internet access (in one form or another) to all individuals, in many cases, a clear divide between rural and non-rural access remains. In some instances, this is simply the presence of lower data transfer speeds in rural areas, however, figures suggest that around 1.1 million households still completely lack internet access. So why is this a problem for farming?

Agriculture is a sector that is progressively shifting towards increased digitisation. Farm forms and paperwork are being encouraged to be accessed online alongside farm advice and legislation documents. Furthermore, the current age of "Agri 4.0" is moving us towards internet enabled devices on our farms, on our farm-vehicles and on our phones to improve efficiencies. Not to mention the observed resilience online options have demonstrated during the COVID pandemic, whereby many livestock sales and produce sales have been more reliant on online platforms to avoid close contact. This increases on the trend being observed in online 'farm fresh food boxes' and direct to consumer sales schemes. Whether we like it or not, digitisation is the current trend for the sector, and in order to have an equal footing, rural regions require better infrastructure. Without such considerations we could see network dead zones struggling to keep up with technological productivity advances available to others, excluding entire regions from economically feasible farming.

One area that could act as a promising alternative to wired/optical broadband coverage and mobile data coverage is the use of specific 'Wide Area Networks' (WANs). Whilst many of these technologies only facilitate low level data transfers, they act over much wider areas. Strategic investment in such systems could help to bridge connectivity dead zones and be utilised not only by agriculture but also by local councils and emergency services to improve overall coverages. Farming Connect is directly involved in projects to trial the setup and running of such networks Wales-wide and more information on the demonstration network projects can be found at **gov.wales/farmingconnectourfarms**.

Other options to improve connectivity can be the use of satellite broadband packages through funding support from 'Access Broadband Cymru' (though eligibilities change based on other agricultural financial support received). Furthermore, £10 million of support is available through the Welsh Government 'Local Broadband Fund' which can be applied for by your local authority, many of whom have broadband engagement officers who can be contacted to discuss connectivity concerns.



Blood testing key to reducing stillborn calves in heifers

Identifying trace element deficiencies by blood testing helped Flintshire dairy farmer Tom Bletcher to reduce his stillborn rate from 8% to 2% in his replacement heifers, leading to significant cost savings.

Tom Bletcher and his father Roger manage their 400-cow, all-year-round calving herd at Argoed Hall Farm in Mold, Flintshire. The farm was enrolled onto the HerdAdvance project in spring 2019.

As part of HerdAdvance, the farm team had their first meeting to discuss overall herd health and identify priority areas with their farm vet and AHDB Animal Health Knowledge Exchange Manager, Ifan Owen. The farm records cattle health data into a herd management software programme, giving the team accurate data to hand when reviewing issues on farm.

Cases of stillborns within heifers was identified as an area of concern, with an average of 8% per month over the previous 12 months, peaking at 20% in the highest month.

The high stillborn rate was having a significant financial impact on the farm.

"We were short on heifer replacements coming into the herd, and we were losing some of our highest genetic merit animals that we had invested heavily into through the use of sexed semen," said Tom.

Losing calves, despite staff focusing their attention on calving heifers, was also having a negative impact on staff morale.

"There's nothing more demoralising than having a lot of stillborns after all the hard work involved in rearing the heifers" Tom commented.

Using the support available through Farming Connect's Animal Health Clinic, the vet took blood samples from in-calf heifers. This indicated heifers were suffering with trace element deficiency, in particular selenium, which can lead to early foetal abortions.

Following this discovery, the farm began giving in-calf heifers a bolus at turnout, providing them with sufficient trace elements until they calve. Heifers under 500kg are given one bolus, and those over 500kg are given two. This has had a significant positive impact over the last 12 months, with average stillborn cases dropping to just 2% compared to the previous 8% per month.

Lowering the stillborn rate has led to more high genetic merit heifers on farm, allowing the team to meet their replacement rate and be more selective when making breeding decisions. The farm now serves a higher proportion of the herd to beef, which provides an additional income stream.

Argoed Hall's average replacement cost is calculated at £1,231, with the heifer replacement value being £245 of this cost. Therefore, reducing the stillborn rate from 8% to 2% has an average cost saving of £1,470.

"We are extremely pleased with the improvements made. We knew we had an issue and being part of the HerdAdvance project highlighted that there was room for improvement, prompting us to take action and see great results," said Tom.

"Tom has demonstrated what is achievable by having access to accurate health records. By having that information to hand, the team have been able to make informed management decisions and continue to monitor the benefits. Bill Gates once said: 'How you gather, manage, and use information will determine whether you win or lose', and Argoed Hall Farm have identified a recording system that works for them," said Ifan.

Argoed Hall Farm is one of 500 farms selected by AHDB to take part in its HerdAdvance project, which aims to help Welsh dairy farmers lift profitability and performance by focusing on improved herd health management and disease control.

To find more information about the HerdAdvance project, visit the dedicated webpage at **ahdb.org.uk/herdadvance**.

HerdAdvance is part of the five-year Dairy Improvement Programme, which has received funding from the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

Fedw Arian Uchaf - Focus Site

Focus Site: Fedw Arian Uchaf, Bala, Gwynedd

Technical Officer: Geraint Jones

Project Title: Improving hedgerows to define rotational grazing boundaries

Geraint, Rachel and family run an organic beef and sheep hill farm on the outskirts of Bala. The objective of the focus site is to improve the overall environmental performance of the farm, which aims to improve the financial performance of the farm business. Several options are being explored and one option is to introduce a new, innovative rotational grazing system using traditional boundaries. To reduce the workload of continuously moving electric fence boundaries, the project will assess the current matrix of hedgerows by producing a hedgerow management plan. This will identify and prioritise existing hedgerows for restoration and establish new ones to define the areas of grazing needed for the suckler herd.

Project Update:

The surveying work is well under way and will be completed in late spring with data analysis completed. The data will be used to formulate a long-term vision in line with management requirements focusing on water quality, shelter, biodiversity, carbon sequestration, biosecurity and contribution to public goods etc. This will be transferred into a programme of work over a period of years with specific priorities, whilst identifying funding opportunities for implementation.

Water resource:

Another specific area prioritised by Geraint was to secure the water resource for livestock on the farm. Current water supply is dependent on a natural resource, vulnerable to times of drought, and unlikely to support additional stocking levels. A Water Feasibility Report has been produced through the Farming Connect Advisory Service for Fedw Arian Uchaf. The current supply system was assessed and a range of options identified for, additional or alternative, cost effective water supply sources and delivery. This will provide a sustainable and robust water supply for the farm.

Figure 1. Geraint Davies, Fedw Arian Uchaf

For more information on the work conducted at Fedw Arian Uchaf focus site and to learn more about water resources for the farm, please visit: gov.wales/farmingconnectourfarms

What should be considered when planning to restore and establish hedgerows?

Geraint Jones, Technical Forestry Officer - Farming Connect

With the challenges that lie ahead of the farming industry and the emphasis on improving the environment, it's important to consider the role of hedgerows and trees and how their multifunction benefits can contribute to improving the environmental performance, hand in hand with food production, of the farm business. They are intrinsically linked to improving animal welfare, biosecurity, water quality, soil health, biodiversity and carbon sequestration and a major factor in contributing to public goods, now and in the future. It's therefore important to assess whether they're fit for purpose and working for the farm business.

Farming can bring its own set of challenges but strategically planting trees and hedgerows and improving existing green infrastructure can, in turn, result in improving animal welfare and increase productivity. This benefit has been influential in the growing popularity of outdoor lambing and the objective of reducing the cost of production.

Another example is in realising woodland and hedgerow solutions to water management. This can be done at farm and field level and, on a wider and more beneficial scale, by farmers working together through co-operational projects on a catchment level. Correct location, utilising existing and establishing new robust green infrastructure, can contribute to tackling diffuse pollution, providing barrier and intercepting functions, by trapping and retaining nutrients and sediment in polluted runoff from overland flow during extreme weather conditions. There is plenty of evidence that riparian buffers, strategically placed shelterbelts and woodland areas provide protection and improvement of the aquatic environment.

To achieve a targeted approach in mitigating potential longer-term issues such as water quality, measures to improve woodland and hedgerow infrastructure should be considered with relevant land management advice and guidance.

To facilitate this, Farming Connect can provide funding to produce specific management plans through the Advisory Service by accessing tailored support to help you meet your goals. For further details, please contact your local development officer or visit the Farming Connect website at ***gov.wales/farmingconnectadvice***

Welsh public's affinity with farming driving resurgence in pick-your-own

Debbie Handley, Horticulture Technical Officer – Farming Connect

Confidence has returned to Wales' pick-your-own (PYO) sector, with social media and the lure of nature driving growth, and farmers are well placed to tap into the pent-up demand for outdoor experiences.

Farming Connect has two new focus site projects in development this year, both looking to diversify into the PYO sector.

Cae Derw farm near Ruthin runs a sheep flock and recently decided to take on a small parcel of land nearby. This roadside field will grow fruit, vegetables, salad crops and flowers, and will include both a flower and pumpkin PYO. Produce will be sold directly to the local community through vegetable box collections, the village shop, the butcher and post office.

Figure 1. Cae Derw site

Horticulture expert Chris Creed said there are many examples of successful PYO enterprises across Wales, from soft fruit and flower growers to large scale pumpkin patches.

"Ten years ago, we thought traditional pick your own was dead in the water, but it is now a very popular form of farm tourism," he told people listening in to a recent Farming Connect webinar.

"People have an affinity with agriculture, they like a day out on the farm. It is about the farm experience, and so not necessarily production based."

For example, growing pumpkins for Halloween can potentially be a lucrative source of income. Pumpkins can be easily managed alongside routine farming activities and require limited additional labour input, with younger family members able to help over the half term PYO period.

It is an advantage to be social media savvy to both promote the venture and to provide information on opening hours and product availability, and in Wales there is training available through Farming Connect.

Mostyn Kitchen Garden is a Victorian walled garden in Flintshire. The site adds value to its produce by manufacturing a range of preserves, and this year will also look to establish a pumpkin PYO enterprise alongside existing growing activities. Inviting the public to the site will help forge a better relationship with the local community and drive more sales for the preserves.

The price point of the produce is not an issue where the experience of visiting the farm is the main draw, and farmers must not underestimate the potential of a normal working farm in this respect. Cutting a maize maze or growing a field of sunflowers as a photo opportunity can simply provide a worthwhile visit to the countryside.

"Families can spend £200 on a day out at a theme park, so spending £20 on a farm experience is good value" suggested Mr Creed. Providing tea, coffee and cake is welcome and can be served from a converted shipping container with a temporary marquee and picnic tables.

Mr Creed advised farmers to plan carefully before undertaking any large investments.

Growing under polytunnels represents an investment of £150,000/hectare and requires planning permission but can offer a quick return - they can be erected in March and fruit harvested three months later.

"You can be in profit by year two, even at this level of investment," said Mr Creed.

"Livestock farmers often struggle with plant husbandry but there are many sources of advice in Wales that can help with agronomy and pest and disease control," said Mr Creed.

Pumpkin and sunflower patches are an "easy win", Mr Creed suggested, as they required very little investment. "Sunflowers cost £100/hectare in seed costs and you can charge people to go into the field as a photo opportunity, and you can easily grow 2,000 pumpkins per acre."

For more information on the work conducted at Cae Derw focus site, please visit: **gov.wales/farmingconnectourfarms**

The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Wales also has some projects that may be of interest to potential horticulturalists including managing pests in soft fruit enterprises and the nutrient requirements of pumpkins. Further details can be found on the Farming Connect website at **gov.wales/farmingconnect**

GIVE CALVES A GOOD START
– expect a better outcome

Dairy calves need to be given 'a good start' in life. Without receiving colostrum within the first few hours of life and good early calf management, they have less immunity against infection and may never catch up in terms of health and productivity.

Learn how to give youngstock the right care to reduce the need for costly antibiotics and the risk of antimicrobial resistance.

The result? Expect better outcomes and better returns!

Farming Connect has launched a new fully-funded training workshop, **'Rearing healthy calves and maximising profits'** targeted at dairy farmers. Eligible farmers registered with Farming Connect can either sign up for a two-hour online webinar or apply to join a three-hour face-to-face group workshop once Covid-19 restrictions permit this.

Delivered by approved participating farm vets, both types of training will examine every stage of calf rearing, from birth to weaning, identifying key areas where steps can be taken to improve calf health, increase productivity and maximise returns.

Rebecca Summons, who leads on the delivery of animal health and training on behalf of Farming Connect, says it's essential that farmers build consumer confidence in milk and dairy produce, by implementing best practice and maintaining the highest standards of animal health and welfare which today's consumers demand.

"This new training course will bring dairy farmers up to speed with the new GB-wide Dairy Calf Strategy 2020-2023 and will address the movement of calves from TB-restricted herds as well as offering advice on the economics of rearing bull calves.

Download the GB Dairy Calf Strategy 2020-2023 at ahdb.org.uk/GB-calf-strategy

"It will also cover health planning, biosecurity and the use of antibiotics, offering dairy farmers the opportunity to receive guidance from experts, to voice any questions they may have and to learn from the experience of other participating dairy farmers," says Ms Summons.

The training course content has been provided by the National Animal Disease Information Service (NADIS), approved by Lantra Awards and is aligned to current Welsh Government Animal Health and Welfare priorities.

All participants will be provided with a certificate of 'remote attendance' which will be added on their behalf to their online Storfa Sgiliau personal record.

For further information and to book a place, visit **gov.wales/farmingconnect**

Credit: *https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2017/Section1-The-Newborn-Calf.pdf*

Control of agricultural pollution regulations

The Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs has announced Regulations to tackle agricultural pollution in Wales. The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 will come into force on 1 April 2021 for initial requirements with transitional periods to phase in the remainder over a period of three and a half years.

Agricultural pollution is having a detrimental impact on Wales' environment and because of this, the Welsh Government is introducing regulations applying to the whole of Wales. Evidence of poor practice and pollution is not restricted to one area or farm type. The regulations are proportionate, focusing on those farms where the environmental risk from poor slurry and nutrient management is greatest, with farmers who already operate to recommended standards seeing a minimal impact to their practices.

What has been announced?

Regulatory measures to address agricultural pollution will be introduced and will apply to all farms across Wales.

In summary, the regulations include the following requirements:

- Nutrient management planning;
- Sustainable fertiliser applications linked to the requirement of the crop;
- Protection of water from pollution related to when, where and how fertilisers are spread; and
- Manure and silage storage standards

The pre-1991 SAFFO exemption for store construction standards will remain in place and provided farms meet the requirements of the storage period it may not be necessary to build new storage.

When will the regulations apply?

- The measures will be phased-in over the next three and a half years. Initial measures will apply to farms from 1 April 2021 with remaining measures being introduced from 1 January 2023 and from 1 August 2024.
- The initial measures are associated with best practice, with greater time provided for the introduction of those measures which, for some, may require more significant change.
- The phased approach will provide farmers with time to gain an understanding of the requirements and to seek advice before the rules apply.
- The requirements of the new regulations will be included within Cross Compliance but only from the date from which they first apply.
- Farms within existing Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs). The new regulations will replace the existing NVZ regulations but there will be minimal changes to requirements and practices. The transitional periods will not generally apply to farms within NVZs. Further information will be provided in the guidance documents.

Guidance and Support

- There will be a range of advice and training available through Farming Connect during the transition periods looking at different aspects of the regulations in detail.
- Detailed guidance documents will be published on the Welsh Government website providing a step-by-step approach to the implementation of the regulations. The latest information can be found on the following pages: **gov.wales/land-management**
- A new Farm Business Grant – Yard Coverings (FBG-YC) scheme was recently launched to support farm businesses to improve nutrient management and water quality by separating rainwater from slurry. Expression of Interest for the first window closed on 18 December 2020 and contracts worth £1.5m have been issued.
- A second window of FBG-YC with a further £2.0m available for farmers will open on 18 May 2021.

E-LEARNING

Complete one or more of the following e-learning modules from the comfort of your own home, at a time convenient to you:

- Farm Nutrient Management
- Farmyard Composting
- Grassland Species
- Grazing Management
- Grazing Systems
- Improving Soil Health
- Precision Technology in Agriculture
- Reducing Agri-Pollution
- Slurry Management
- Weed Control

Test your knowledge and self-assess what you've learnt via a short multiple-choice quiz. For further module information and how to access e-learning, visit the Farming Connect website - **gov.wales/farmingconnectskillsandtraining**

PARTNERIAETH DIOGELWCH FFERM CYMRU
WALES FARM SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Sit-Astride ATV

Overturning an 'all terrain vehicle' can cause death or serious injury

TRAINING:
All riders must be trained and competent

HELMETS:
Always wear a helmet

PASSENGERS:
Never carry passengers

CHILDREN:
Children under 13 years old are prohibited from using an ATV at work. Over-13s should only ride ATVs – of an appropriate size and power – after formal training on a low-power ATV

SAFETY CHECKS:
Carry out routine, regular maintenance and safety checks

SECURE LOADS:
Ensure all loads are secure and evenly balanced

STICK TO PLANNED ROUTES:
Don't take risks on uneven or sloping ground

Do you want to improve your Microsoft Excel spreadsheet skills?

Learn how simple it is to set up and input data into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet or 'workbook' to store the information you need.

If you are registered with Farming Connect, why not apply for a three-hour fully funded Microsoft Excel training course, at a time and date you can select?

We can help you decide which level of training you need or you can register for both.

- Basic Microsoft Excel skills – for complete beginners
- Intermediate Microsoft Excel skills – for those who already understand the basics

Learn how to use Microsoft Excel and the tools it provides to help you with speedy and accurate record-keeping. Examples could include…

✓ Business and financial management

VAT records
Tax records
Income and expenditure
Contact databases

✓ Animal health management

Herd and flock data
Animal identification records
Animal movement records
Health records such as administration of medicines/feeding regimes/productivity rates

✓ Land management

Measure and record land and environmental data
Soil sampling records
Fertiliser inputs/grassland growth levels
Forestry and woodland records

For further information or to register your interest, call the Farming Connect Service Centre on **08456 000 813** or visit **gov.wales/farmingconnect**