

THE MAGAZINE FOR FARMING & FORESTRY IN WALES

# FARMING connect



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## **Winter Fair 2019**

Visit us at the Winter Fair to discuss opportunities for your business

## **Innovation & Diversification**

Find out what speakers had to say about this exciting event



On behalf of the Farming Connect technical team, and all the farmers that have either attended an event, or have gained knowledge, experience or ideas from the work undertaken on the demonstration sites - I would like to thank our demonstration farmers very much.

From October 2015 to September 2019, our network of 12 demonstration sites have hosted:



**193 events**



**4,000 attendees**



**38 projects**

The main role of a demonstration site is to showcase how new technology or a different management technique can improve productivity, or in some cases, how it does not improve. This is the risk our demonstration farmers were willing to take in agreeing to be a demonstration site and opening their farm gates to farmers all over Wales.

We have had the privilege to work with exceptional farmers who are committed to improving their business, embrace innovation and take advice from numerous individuals with the ultimate aim of increasing their business productivity and efficiency, whilst inspiring and allowing others to learn from their experiences.

During the last four years, we have focused on different farming systems on each of the sites, from improving soil health, grassland

production, animal health, genetics and business management. For more information on the projects undertaken on the demonstration sites please visit our website, or take a look at the Demonstration Site Review booklet.

I am also very proud of the national recognition our demonstration farmers have received, including Beef Farmer of the Year (*Farmers' Weekly Awards*), Silver Lapwing Award, and Young Farmer of the Year (*Farmers' Weekly Awards*), to name a few.

Being a demonstration farm can be exciting and challenging, and we have worked closely with the individual farms to ensure that we supported them to achieve their ambitions. Similar to every farm across Wales the scenarios and goals are different, whether it's to improve business productivity, increase stock numbers or just being able to spend more time with the family. I very much hope that we have helped in achieving these goals.

I also hope that farmers' experiences as demonstration site farmers has helped them individually in order to be able to adapt and thrive in the future.

**Farming Connect now has 18 new demonstration sites. Information about these new sites, projects and events is available on:**

**[www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect)**

*If you have not received a Demonstration Site Review booklet, contact your local development officer:*



**DEWI HUGHES**  
Farming Connect,  
Technical Development Manager



## Visit us at the Winter Fair to discuss opportunities for your business

Farming Connect support at the Winter Fair at the Royal Welsh Showground on 25-26 November will be better than ever. On the balcony overlooking the cattle ring, Farming Connect Development Officers and other Farming Connect representatives will be on hand ready to converse directly with farmers and foresters to share the latest opportunities, services and events available within the programme – all there to aid maximum efficiency and profitability.



We live in a digital age. The most progressive farm and forestry businesses are tapping into the benefits of technology - with the right Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills. Farming Connect's focus at this year's Winter Fair will be to showcase the support, guidance, training and mentoring that's available to farmers and foresters in Wales to develop their ICT skills. We will also be promoting the new look Farming Connect website and BOSS platform where you can find e-learning modules and the Storfa Sgiliau / Skills Store, the fully funded Continuous Professional Development (CPD) recording system, which captures all knowledge transfer and training activity undertaken by registered individuals during the current Farming Connect programme.

If you're interested in developing your ICT skills or your computer skills, even if you're not sure where to start with a computer or technology - Farming Connect staff will be on hand to help. A drop-in session and ICT hub will be available at the Lantra Building - where you can hear about details of upcoming computer workshops and beginners courses, as well as showcasing the variety of platforms used by Farming Connect and the services available on them. There will also be an exciting drone demonstration, used with Virtual Reality Goggles!

*The development officers on the first-floor balcony of the Livestock building will also be available to help with your ICT needs.*



Forestry Technical Officers will be sharing a stand with Coed Cymru and more Farming Connect representatives will be situated at the Welsh Government stand in South Glamorgan Hall.



So, come and see us at the Winter Fair – Farming Connect are here to support you to make the most of the services to develop your business. There has never been a more important time for the industry, especially business owners, to prepare for the future and achieve its potential across all areas of working.



## Innovation & Diversification show report

What will your farm or forestry business look like in 2030? If you were one of the thousand plus visitors who attended Farming Connect's Innovation & Diversification Wales event at the Royal Welsh showground on 26 September, you will already have a good idea!

Farming Connect brought together more than one hundred innovation, technology and diversification organisations and individuals together with thirty inspirational speakers from Wales, the UK and beyond. Their collective remit was to inspire, motivate and encourage the huge crowd of visitors to open their minds to innovation, technology and help them acquire the mindset, confidence and abilities you need to transform diversification ideas into a success story.

**Here are what different speakers, attendees, exhibitors and Farming Connect staff had to say about this exciting event that was held for the first time this year.**



Daniel Sumner, Microsoft's Seattle-based, Anglesey-born 'worldwide' director was a speaker at the event. He addressed his fascinated audience on the 'Internet of Things', the value of artificial intelligence and the Cloud, explaining how farming families and rural communities need to embrace these accessible new technologies to run more efficient businesses and compete in a global marketplace.

Campbell Mauchan, an AgriWebb representative and exhibitor at the event, said:

"We have been blown away by the response we've received at this event. We have had so many people wanting to speak to us, we haven't actually had a chance to speak to everyone. We thoroughly enjoyed the day and were surprised at how busy it was and the scale of the event."



Sophie Colquhoun from Category Insight, an experienced food marketer, category specialist and speaker at the event provided insight about customers of the future and 'conscious consumers' who want to change the way they live and eat.

"It's cool to be kind to the climate already" she said. "Anyone wanting to start up or develop a new enterprise needs to be aware of future trends before they invest their money and time."

Claire Jones, beef and sheep farmer from Garth near Builth Wells pictured speaking with Sophie said that her seminar was inspiring and extremely informative.

Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones, the charismatic Jamaican-born businessman and food entrepreneur known as The Black Farmer, charmed a rapt audience as he gave his advice, such as:

"You need to be passionate about whatever it is you are going to do, because passion defies reason and logic, and those two can hold you back!

"Be ruthlessly focused, don't listen to the doubters who haven't the courage or the audacity to try something new or different themselves."



Eirwen Williams, director of rural programmes with Menter a Busnes rounded up the event saying, "This has been the largest sector-specific event Farming Connect has held, and in many ways, it has been one of our most rewarding.

"To attract more than one thousand visitors for what was the first event of its type and scale ever held in Wales, demonstrates that despite the current economic uncertainties throughout our industry, there is a dynamic and progressive workforce out there, all determined to ensure that every element of their business reaches its full potential."

A full round-up of the event and an opportunity to hear all of the speaker presentations, will be available soon on Farming Connect's YouTube channel. Visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search for Farming Connect and subscribe to watch various Farming Connect videos.

# Protein feeding and fertility

Dr Delana Davies - Farming Connect, Knowledge Exchange Executive

A review carried out by Cornell University of studies relating to high protein rations and fertility in dairy cows noted that although high dietary protein stimulates milk production, high protein has often been associated with decreased reproductive performance.

The biological value of dietary protein for the lactating dairy cow is directly related to the energy status of the cow and the balance of absorbed amino acids relative to their requirements. In lactating cows, dietary crude protein comprises RDP (Rumen Degradable Protein) and RUP (Rumen Undegradable Protein) fractions. Through normal ruminal fermentation, RDP provides a source of ammonia for microbial protein synthesis. Some of the ammonia escapes incorporation by the microorganisms, diffuses out of the rumen into portal blood, and is detoxified in the liver by conversion to urea. The quantity of rumen ammonia produced and the amount that escapes for conversion to urea directly reflects both dietary RDP and the availability of fermentable carbohydrates in the rumen to support microbial growth and protein synthesis.

A second source of urea produced by the liver is from deamination and metabolism of amino acids. Circulating amino acids originate from RUP, microbial protein, and body protein stores. Amino acids not taken up for utilisation in milk protein synthesis are deaminated by the liver to yield energy substrates and urea. Although the production of ammonia and urea can be minimised by balancing RDP and RUP, high dietary intake to support milk production and variation in rumen microbial protein yield make accurate prediction of

the availability of amino acids very difficult. Consequently, **most high producing cows consume protein in excess of requirements, and blood urea concentrations are increased.**

Urea circulating in the bloodstream is measured and referred to as blood urea nitrogen (BUN). Urea passes easily from blood into the milk within the mammary gland. Milk urea nitrogen (MUN) provides a rapid, non-invasive, and less expensive means of assessing BUN and of monitoring overall protein metabolism in lactating cows. Measurements of BUN or MUN have provided a useful index for studying the association between metabolism of dietary protein and reproductive efficiency.

**Across many studies increased BUN or MUN concentrations were correlated with decreased fertility in dairy cows both in confinement and grazing herds.**

Cows at Pensarnau farm near Llandysul are housed for most of the year and fed a TMR ration based on three cuts of grass silages. The farmer has noticed that when cows are moved to pasture or silages of higher crude protein levels, milk urea levels become higher and there is an associated drop in fertility with regard to cows holding to service at this time.

**The aims of this Focus Site project are:**

- To gather information on milk urea levels, blood urea levels, ration crude protein levels and fertility records
- To analyse this information to see if any associations are exhibited
- To provide guidance on reformulating cow rations on the farm to provide a better outcome for conception rates

Initial project work has focused on reviewing bulk tank milk urea levels over time (Fig 1).

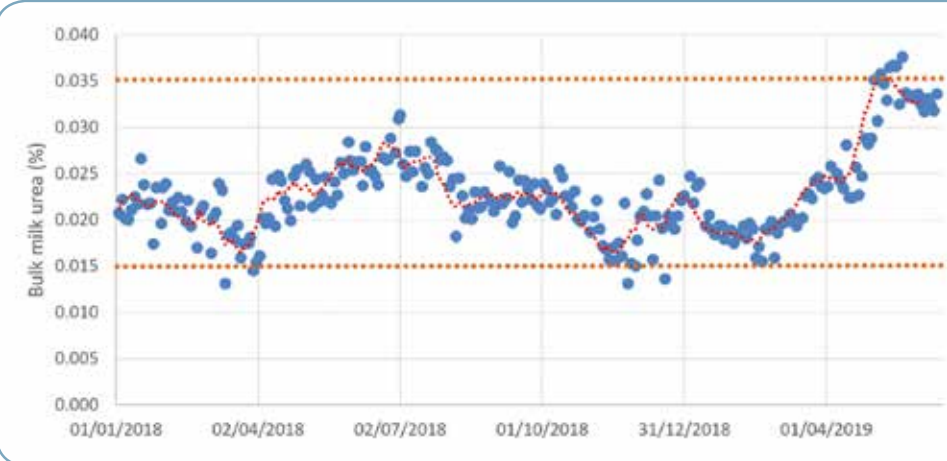


Figure 1: Bulk urea as reported by NMR from January 2018 to August 2019

Bulk milk urea represents a volume weighted average for all animals contributing to the tank on the day of testing, but ongoing work will examine in more detail the MUN and BUN of individual cows in early lactation around the time of service. The increase

in MUN in summer 2019 coincides with the feeding of 2018 third cut silage which includes high crude protein and ammonia levels (Table 1). Fertility records will be analysed together with the blood metabolic profiles over the next few months.

Analysing Technique			
	Wet NIR (% DM)	Dry NIR (% DM)	Wet chemistry (% DM)
Dry matter	25.4	23.7	24.9
Crude protein	<b>19.7</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>18.04</b>
Ammonia (% of total nitrogen)	15.5	22.4	n/a
Neutral detergent fibre	49.2	50.2	n/a
Sugar	4.7	2.4	n/a
Oil	4.6	5.7	n/a
Ash	15.6	13.4	n/a
pH	4.7	4.7	n/a

Table 1: Results from samples taken of Pensarnau third cut silage and analysed using three different techniques.



# FOCUS SITE PROJECT:

## Tackling lameness in beef cattle

Since taking over Trapps Farm, Simpsons Cross five years ago, Richard Dalton has moved from a dairy herd to a Stabiliser suckler beef herd. He has improved the grazing quality of the pasture available and is part of the Farming Connect Prosper from Pasture programme. The herd is spring calving and 82% of the herd calved in 5 weeks during the 2018 season. In the last few years he has had issues with lameness within his herd and is keen to get on top of this issue so he can maximise his efficiency of finishing cattle as quickly as possible using home grown feed where possible.

Richard worked with lameness specialist vet, Sara Pederson, and the farms' own vet to create an integrated herd health plan to control lameness in the beef cattle with a long term aim to reduce the reliance on antibiotics. Lame cattle have reduced weight gains, take longer to finish and add to the cost of production due to increased labour, feed and pen space requirements. After a visit from Sara there were two main causes of lameness identified in the herd which were foul and digital dermatitis. In this project at Trapps Farm, she focused on digital dermatitis. *(Advice was also given on how to control foul).*

Digital Dermatitis (DD) is estimated to be present on more than 95% of UK farms. New understanding has shown that it has short longevity (less than 24hrs) in the environment but will spread in liquid such as slurry, mud and dirty water. Slurry is a particular issue as the acidity irritates the skin making it less effective as a physical barrier and therefore allowing infection to enter the foot. It is thought that infected cattle are the main source of infection, and control within the herd either by culling or by robust lesion control can manage sources of re-infection.

After looking at the environment and the sheds that the cattle were housed in Sara recommended an integrated 2-point plan to tackle digital dermatitis and keep it out.

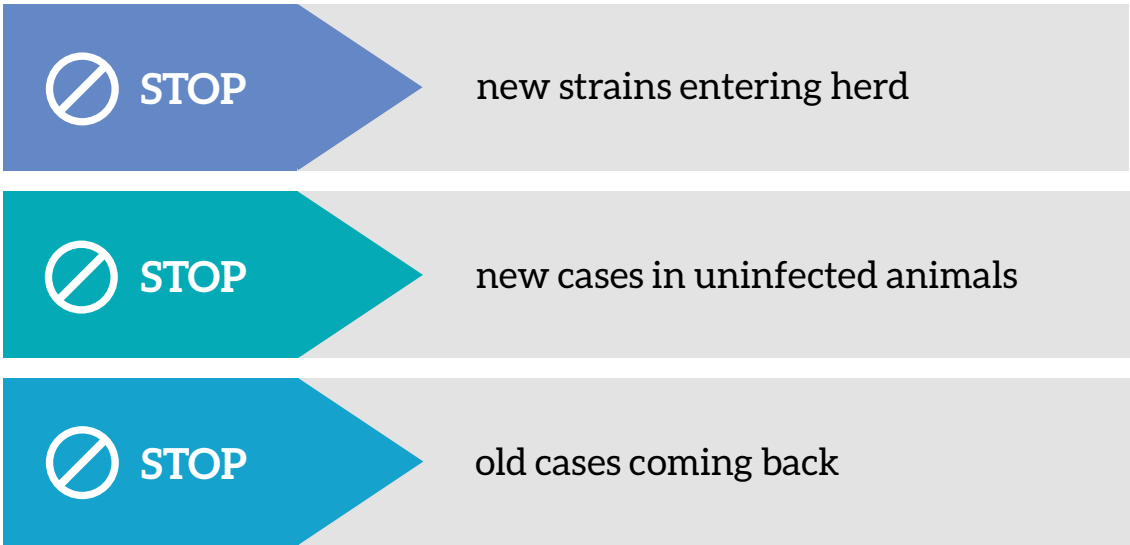
### 1. REDUCE THE DISEASE RESERVOIR:

**'Blitz' treat:** Treat all lesions at the same time to reduce infection levels within the herd and environment.

Best practice treatment of active digital dermatitis

	a) LIFT affected foot in crush
	b) WASH lesion with clean water (including interdigital space)
	c) DRY lesion gently using clean paper/swab
	d) SPRAY with licensed topical antibiotic e.g. Engemycin
	e) Leave to dry for 30 seconds
	f) SPRAY AGAIN and lower foot – no need to bandage
	g) Return cow to clean, dry yard
	h) Record cow as treated and visibly mark to ensure follow-up treatments for 3-4 days

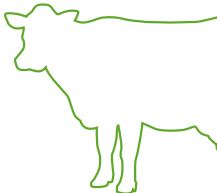
### 2. PREVENT FUTURE CASES:



- Prevent future cases with **BIOSECURITY**
- Avoid buying cattle with DD lesions. Footbath cattle as they come on to the farm and **KEEP THEM SEPARATE**
- HYGIENE:** Manage slurry correctly. Slurry transports DD between cattle and also causes the skin damage needed for DD to take hold.
- FOOTBATH:** Footbath regularly and correctly. It is an essential preventive measure - it does not treat lesions. Design it correctly (>3m long) and use regularly, not just in the face of an outbreak.

Through a combination of removing identified DD carriers, regular foot bathing, better slurry management and implementing the 2-point plan Richard felt that he was able to significantly reduce the levels of digital dermatitis this year and will be continuing this approach during this winter.

**Sarah Hughes** - Farming Connect, Red Meat Technical Officer



# Prosper from Pasture Overview

Welsh farmers are fortunate to be farming in a country with suitable soils and a climate to grow high volumes of quality grass. It is widely accepted that generally, producers in Wales are not currently utilising this valuable resource to strengthen the sustainability of their livestock enterprises to its full potential. The imminent changes to farm support systems and the potential of increased product price volatility has heightened the need to look at ways of cutting costs by efficiently utilising our most cost-effective livestock feed.

Farming Connect launched Prosper from Pasture last spring, a fully funded enhanced programme which includes 3 levels, Entry level, Intermediate – also known as Master Grass, and Advanced.

Expression of interest are individually assessed and individuals choose what level is the right one for them.

## PROSPER FROM PASTURE - Entry Level

### ENTRY

The Prosper from Pasture entry level is a series of five one-day events, each targeted at a specific introductory aspect of grassland utilisation:

- 1) Understanding your business
- 2) Soil and sustainable systems
- 3) Grass, herbs and forage crops
- 4) Grazing management for a profitable business
- 5) Animal health and genetics.

The entry level is delivered to regional groups through a combination of interactive discussions, group work, practical activity and the inclusion of valuable presentations from internationally renowned speakers. Previous speakers have included New Zealand sheep specialist, Murray Rohloff; Australian soils educator, Joel Williams; respected consultants, Marc Jones and Liz Genever; and successful grassland management practitioners, Richard Tudor, Eilir Evans, Rhys Williams and Matthew Jackson.

**Successful participants of the entry level can progress to intermediate level of the programme, which is also called Master Grass.**

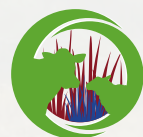
## PROSPER FROM PASTURE - Intermediate Level - Master Grass

### INTERMEDIATE MASTER GRASS

The intermediate level, **MASTER GRASS** is a residential two-day programme for beef, sheep or dairy farmers who are keen to develop their understanding of grassland management and learn about the latest knowledge and techniques available. The level also offers a chance for likeminded farmers to meet and share ideas on developing their businesses.

The focus on the **first day** is on soil fertility and health, where participants learn how to inspect their own fields, from identifying soil structure to testing and improving fertility. The **second day** focuses on measuring and managing pasture, including the use of a plate meter, grass management software and a review of livestock nutrition to encourage best performance.

**Successful participants of the Master Grass level who apply the knowledge gained to their own business can progress to apply to be a member of a Prosper from Pasture advanced level.**



RHAGORI AR BORI  
PROSPER FROM PASTURE



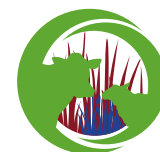
## PROSPER FROM PASTURE - Advanced Discussion Group

Seven regional groups ran throughout Wales, five beef and sheep groups and two dairy groups each containing ten members, which were facilitated and chaired by Precision Grazing consultants. Members had to demonstrate their experience of actively managing grazing rotations and grass measuring in order to apply for their place in the groups.

Meetings were held on the farms of members where the focus on key topics were seasonal and data driven, with each member required to provide their data on grass growth, average grass cover, grass demand and topic related data to the group in order to benchmark and to facilitate discussions on best practice.

Members of the dairy group accessed AgriNet grassland management software and a farm mapping service, while the beef and sheep members can access Farmax, farm planning software.

Group members are continuously supported in the process of inputting and analysing software data and in the implementation of key management practices. Short webinars and interactive social media groups were used by these groups to share best practice and strengthen the peer support available to them.



RHAGORI AR BORI  
PROSPER FROM PASTURE

Below are the thoughts of individuals who have participated in Prosper from Pasture during 2019...

“ This course has given me the confidence to identify soil quality and health, organise the grazing systems and manage my herd size, reduce costs on farm and has inspired me to research. ”

Cheryl Reeves  
Entry level member



“ The Prosper from Pasture entry level has given me a good foundation of practical and useful technical information as I explore ways of improving farm profitability. ”

Rhodri Jones  
Entry level member

“ The Prosper from Pasture programme has been an absolute eye opener. It has been well organised and very well run. The quality of the presentations and their delivery has been spot on, and the subject matter relevant and really interesting. ”

Patrick Loxdale  
Entry level member

“ The skills I have gained as part of the Prosper from Pasture programme and using Farmax have allowed me to grow 15tDM/ha of grass and increase stocking rate to 2,250kgLW/ha whilst reducing overhead costs. ”

Aled Evans  
Advanced level group member

“ Support provided through the Prosper from Pasture programme has given me the confidence to make critical business decisions on stocking rate and winter feed budgets that has had a positive impact on farm efficiency. ”

Rhidian Glyn  
Advanced level group member



The window is now **OPEN** – from **6 November** until **12pm 9 December**.  
**DON'T MISS OUT!** To express an interest, visit [www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect)





MEISTR PORFA CYMRU  
PORI AM ELW  
WALES MASTER GRASS  
GRAZING FOR PROFIT

## Master Grass strengthens herdsman's grassland decision-making

A herdsman at a Pembrokeshire dairy farm says knowledge gained on a Farming Connect Intermediate level Prosper from Pasture programme, which is also known as Master Grass, has given him the confidence to make important grassland management decisions.

Will Dawson is responsible for grassland management at the Home Farm Dairy at Stackpole.

He applied for a place on a two-day Master Grass level at Gelli Aur earlier this year as a means of gaining a better understanding of the measurement and utilisation of grazed grass for the unit's 550-cow spring-calving herd.

"The ability to be able to quantify what is in the field and to put figures on it is vital in our system," says Will, who measures grass weekly at the Home Farm.

"Guidance I had already received on the farm had given me a good understanding of this but it all clicked into place on the programme, everything I had learned made sense.

"It was also good to learn more about the biology of the plants themselves, to appreciate the different stages of grass growth."

"The programme content and the knowledge of the experts delivering it were excellent," says Will.

"The speakers were very knowledgeable and delivered that information in a nice relaxed atmosphere."

The programme was facilitated by Farming Connect South West Wales Dairy Technical Officer Abigail James.

"Abby did a really good job of keeping everything running and encouraging everyone to join in with the discussion," says Will.

The programme was also a good opportunity to network with like-minded people and to share information going forward, he adds.

"A couple of farmers I met on the programme are on AgriNet, one from north Wales and the other from Carmarthenshire, so different grass-growing regions to ours. I can see their results and compare them to ours."

Will had participated in a Master Soils previously and says understanding more about the soil was a good building block for Master Grass.



**"The ability to be able to quantify what is in the field and to put figures on it is vital in our system."**



# Iceberg Diseases in Sheep – Project Review

ELAN DAVIES, Farming Connect - Red Meat Technical Officer

Understanding the true health status of your flock is paramount to maintaining productive and efficient sheep, and is essential if your flock is to be profitable. However, livestock production efficiency can be constrained by animal health status, especially production-limiting diseases. These production-limiting diseases include Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma/Jaagsiekte (OPA), Maedi Visna (MV), Caseous Lymphadenitis (CLA), Johne's disease (OJD) and Border disease (BD). These diseases are termed 'iceberg diseases' as they are diseases in which a large percentage of the problem is subclinical, latent, in a carrier stage or simply hidden from view (i.e. only the tip of the iceberg is seen).

An investigation into general flock health and these production-limiting 'iceberg diseases' has been ongoing at a Farming Connect focus farm near Brecon over the past year. Peter and Nicola Drew of College Farm in Trefecca discovered they had OPA in their flock following a post mortem of a ewe that died suddenly in 2015. This ewe was in good condition when she died, showing that not all sheep that are carriers of these diseases are thin and showing clinical signs. By working closely with local vet, Rosie Gibson of Honddu

Vets, the main aim of this project was to fully understand the true health status of the flock at College Farm; identify which diseases (if any) were present, and develop effective control and prevention measures.

## What was done and what we found?

Blood samples were taken from a total of 18 cull ewes that were being sold due to poor condition, and were tested for Johne's diseases, CLA, Border disease and MV. The results came back negative for all these diseases. A mob worm egg count and coproantigen testing for fluke were also carried out, all of which came back negative.

4 post mortems were carried out during the year on ewes that died of unexplained and sudden deaths. From these 4 post mortems, tumour lesions were found in the lungs of 2 of the ewes, which was confirmed by histology to be OPA. In both cases, the cause of death was pneumonia, but as a secondary infection to OPA.

The flock health plan at College Farm was reviewed and updated to include the findings of the project.

Transthoracic/lung ultrasound scanning was carried out on around 250 of the breeding ewes to determine whether OPA was present.

From the 250 ewes scanned, 6 ewes were detected with tumour lesions on their lungs (which is a sure sign of OPA carriers). These 6 ewes were healthy looking ewes with a body condition score of around 3-4, showing no signs of illness. This shows that OPA can live within a flock undetected for a number of years before showing any visible signs. The size of the flock at College Farm is being reduced, therefore they were able to cull any suspects immediately rather than keeping them separate and consider re-scanning.

## What next for the flock at College Farm?

Looking to the future, the Drews at College Farm are aiming to have a flock that is as healthy and productive as possible. One way to ensure this is to maintain a close working relationship with their vet, and review and update the flock health plan continuously. They have also decided to transition from buying in all their replacements to keeping their own. This will reduce the number of bought in animals, which will inevitably reduce the number of bought in diseases, keeping the flock healthier. They aim to continue to screen their sheep for OPA (as tumour lesions can develop quite quickly once they start), and cull any carriers that are found.



**Pictures:**  
*Transthoracic scanning for OPA at College Farm*



## Storfa Sgiliau

...the secure, online data storage tool for continuous professional development

Farming Connect has developed a fully funded Continuous Professional Development (CPD) recording system to capture all knowledge transfer and training activity undertaken by registered individuals during the current programme.

**All the information you, your staff or any prospective employers or organisations may require can be a few clicks away, including:**

- 📄 training certificates
- 📅 a record of attendance at Farming Connect and other knowledge transfer events
- 🏆 scholarships, study visits and other personal development initiatives
- 👤 work experience

### Storfa Sgiliau will enable you to...

- ✓ have instant access to a downloadable or digital report setting out all your skills, training and relevant academic/professional achievements
- ✓ provide evidence of training undertaken for Farm Assurance Schemes and supply chain organisations including wholesalers, retailers etc.
- ✓ access the facts you may need for an up to date CV

**To access Storfa Sgiliau, you must be registered with Farming Connect, and log into your BOSS account via Sign on Cymru.**

**Find out how to store and update all your relevant records by visiting [www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect)**



## Computer courses available for complete beginners

The increasing use of technology is becoming more prominent across all industries. Farming Connect can provide a fully funded six-week computer training course for all registered individuals. The two-hour weekly sessions suitable for complete beginners will give insight into introductory modules such as Microsoft Word, Excel spreadsheets, managing e-mails, utilising the internet and a guide to the Welsh Government website.

These friendly and accessible sessions will be delivered throughout Wales by local land-based college tutors at a level and pace to suit everyone. Developing your IT skills can help you manage your business more efficiently. Saving time and money is key for any business and the use of technology can help you do this.

Courses are open to all eligible registered **Farming Connect** individuals and businesses.

To book your place or for more information contact the **Service Centre** on **08456 000 813**.

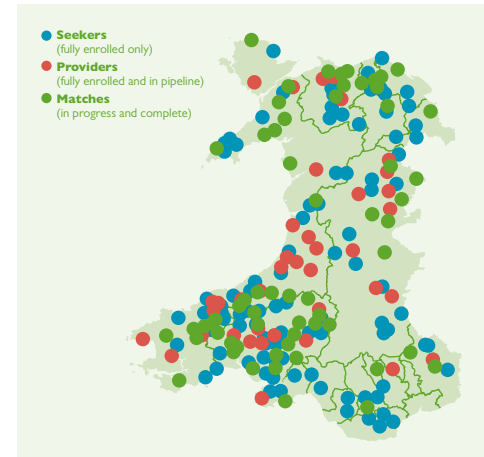
<b>NPTC, Media Resource Centre, Oxford Road, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6AH</b> 08/01, 15/01, 22/01, 29/01, 05/02, 12/02	18:00 - 20:00
<b>Coleg Sir Gar, Gelli Aur Campus, Carmarthen SA32 8NJ</b> 08/01, 15/01, 22/01, 29/01, 05/02, 12/02	18:00 - 20:00
<b>NPTC, Fronlas Farm, Mochdre Lane, Newtown, Powys SY16 4JA</b> 09/01, 16/01, 23/01, 30/01, 06/02, 13/02	19:00 - 21:00
<b>Coleg Sir Gar, Pibwrlwyd Campus, Carmarthen SA31 2NH</b> 09/01, 16/01, 23/01, 30/01, 06/02, 13/02	18:00 - 20:00
<b>NPTC, Brecon Beacons College, Penlan, Brecon, Powys LD3 9SR</b> 10/01, 17/01, 24/01, 31/01, 07/02, 14/02	18:00 - 20:00
<b>Coleg Cambria, Llysfas, Ruthin Road, Ruthin, Denbighshire LL15 2LB</b> 14/01, 21/01, 28/01, 04/02, 11/02, 25/02	16:30 - 18:30
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<b>Pembrokeshire College, Merlins Bridge, Haverfordwest SA61 1SZ</b> 22/01, 29/01, 05/02, 12/02, 19/02, 26/02	18:00 - 20:00
<b>Grwp Llandrillo Menai, Glynllifon Campus, Ffordd Clynog, Caernarfon LL54 5DU</b> 27/01, 03/02, 10/02, 24/02, 02/03, 09/03	18:00 - 20:00



**492**  
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST  
SUBMITTED SINCE THE  
START OF VENTURE

**201**  
ACTIVE  
PARTICIPANTS

**VENTURE**  
Numbers Involved



**41,000**  
ACRES  
OF LAND  
INVOLVED

**119**  
HAVE FOUND  
A MATCH

## A hugely successful joint venture arrangement for two Carmarthenshire farming families through Farming Connect's Venture Programme

Carmarthenshire dairy farmer Bryan Thomas and his wife Mary were originally tenants at Berllan Dywyll in Llangathen, a 270 acre holding, and have been owner occupiers since the early 1990s.

They have steadily built up a predominantly pedigree Holstein dairy herd over the years. Their milk is sold to Muller on an annual contract with the high yielding herd of 210 cows currently producing around 9,000 litres per cow annually.

When the couple started to plan for the future as both their sons had followed careers away from the farm, they commissioned John Crimes, a partner with agriculture consultancy CARA Wales, to help to plan the strategic direction of the farm. The future of the farm, as Bryan got older, was one of the aspects they discussed,

Bryan decided after consideration that he was open to bringing a new young farmer into the business as a joint venture.

"Both parties need to do thorough research and take sufficient time to consider whether a joint venture would work out, based on trust and complete transparency about future hopes and aspirations," said Bryan.

John Crimes, CARA Wales, was introduced to Dyfrig Davies. Impressed by Dyfrig's work ethic, commitment and interest in dairy farming, genetics, breeding and stock, John realised that Dyfrig, who was in his early twenties and living at home close to Berllan Dywyll at the time, was an able young herdsman who had the acquired knowledge and experience. The 'match' was made soon after.

Due to the support through Farming Connect's Venture programme, the partnership received fully funded business, financial and legal advice which enabled them to create a balanced formal agreement, working out how to share the rewards and risks of the joint venture.

"Thanks to the Venture programme, both parties received customised support which enabled them to address the technical and relationship-building aspects of creating a strong and successful business-to-business relationship so that they have a formal balanced agreement within an appropriate legal framework," says John.

Dyfrig now is a full-time farmer, with a personal stake in this successful farm and a family who live in a detached house, a few hundred yards from the main farmyard.

The arrangement means Bryan and Mary have been able to stay at their family farm knowing that the future direction of the farm will one day be in Dyfrig's competent and loyal hands. Dyfrig has a say in the breeding strategy and the partnership was able to commission John to produce an updated business plan, with a three year financial forecast, fully funded through Farming Connect's Advisory Service as part of the Venture process.

"Our partnership focuses as much on forward planning and strategic management practices as on the day to day business of farming and dairying. We both learn from each other and make full use of Farming Connect services," says Bryan.

Bryan, Mary and Dyfrig are equal business partners, major decisions are made democratically. Farm profits are shared equally after pre-agreed salaries have been deducted.

For more information, visit:

[www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect)

## Get in touch

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**Delyth Jones**

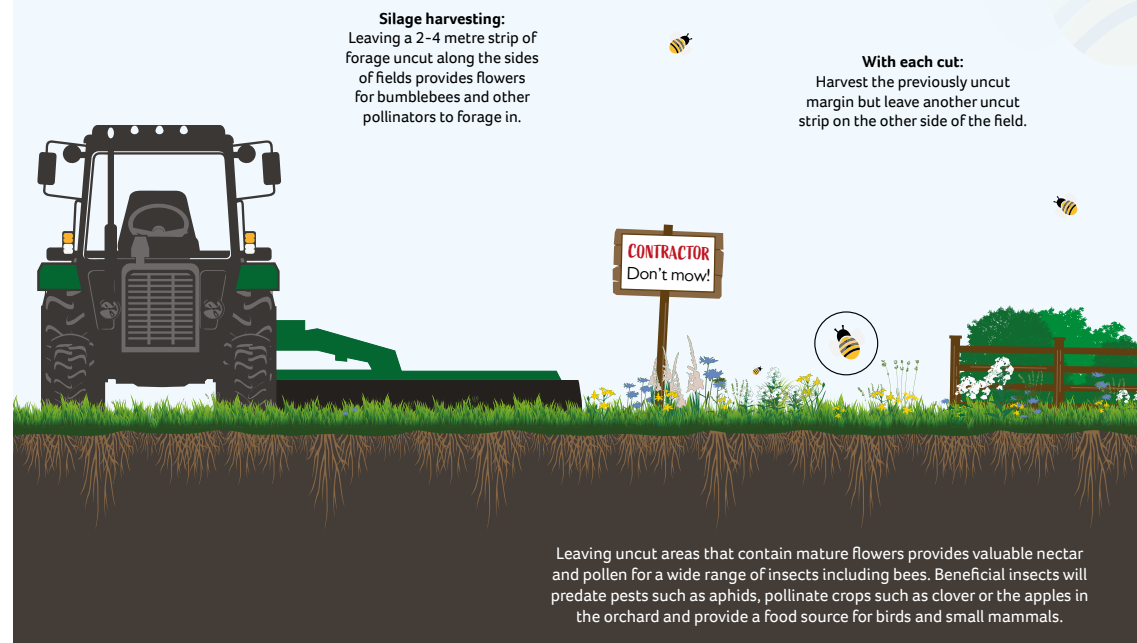
Venture Officer South Wales

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01970 661422

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## Bee friendly silage harvesting



## Early results of dairy farms' pollinator project confirm rise in bee numbers

Six organic milk producers from across Wales who supply Calon Wen have been growing multi species seed mixes including flowering herbs, legumes and grasses for a three-year European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Wales project.

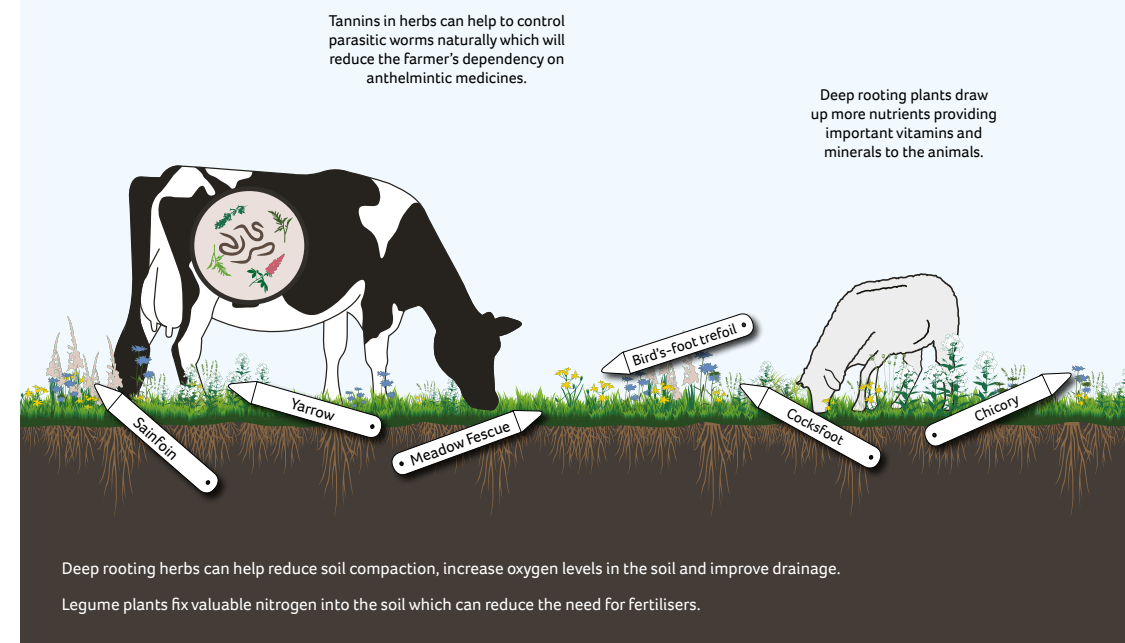
The project is examining the impact of growing and managing these species on pollinator numbers. Data from the first year has shown that providing a source of pollen and nectar for pollinators from March to October, and leaving four metre uncut strips in fields cut for silage significantly increased populations of bees and other pollinator insects.

At New Hall Farm, Chirk, where Alan and Heather Rogers milk 190 cows, a survey found

that leaving flowering plants uncut increased pollinator numbers. In one section of a field they rose from 5 to 102 and from 12 to 112 in another. Many of the bumblebees found in the survey were long-tongued species which have been disappearing at the fastest rate in the UK. Surveys from the other farms in the project showed similar results, says Sinead Lynch, Senior Conservation Officer at the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, a partner organisation in the project with responsibility for the technical and survey work.

Alan and Heather Rogers have been growing diverse leys for eight years as these species perform well in the dry conditions. The farm is in a rain shadow and, as a consequence, rainfall levels are low compared to other regions of Wales.

## Benefits of multi species leys



"The more traditional species that we have been growing, like cocksfoot, are deeper rooting so they perform better than ryegrass in dry conditions, especially on organic systems like ours which don't apply nitrogen," says Mr Rogers. These grass varieties also grow earlier in the season which has direct benefits to his spring-calving system.

Without pollinators, many crops like peas and beans would struggle so farmers involved in the project say it is in the interest of food producers to safeguard the future of these insects.

Each of the six farms is growing two fields of herbal leys and the strip of field left uncut is alternated with every silage harvest – the uncut strip from the first cut is harvested in the second crop and so on.

Although there is some impact on overall silage yield from not cutting the entire crop, when the strips are harvested at the next cut they add an important source of fibre

to the forage, said Lynfa Davies, EIP Wales programme manager. "By producing higher dry matter forage there could be a reduction in the volume of straw that is needed in the ration," she said.

Ms Davies said the project was a good example of a group of farmers who had recognised the wider benefits of pollinators on their farms, and who wanted to examine ways of supporting pollinator numbers without impacting on production in their businesses. Those involved in the 'Pasture for Pollinators' project hope that the findings could help to influence government policy on future agri-environment schemes.

### Learn more about EIP Wales

Email [eipwales@menterabusnes.co.uk](mailto:eipwales@menterabusnes.co.uk) or go to [www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect) for more information.



# Support and guidance for the red meat sector



**FARMING**  
connect  
cyswllt  
**FFERMIO**

Fully funded, bespoke one-to-one surgeries and clinics

Window open between **01/11/2019 - 31/01/2020**

**08456 000 813**

To be eligible for these two categories, businesses must have participated in the Red Meat Benchmarking programme with Hybu Cig Cymru / Farming Connect.

<b>One-to-one surgeries</b>		1-hour appointment with a consultant to discuss your individual benchmarking report.
<b>On-farm clinics</b>		An on-farm 2 hour consultation with a business advisor to discuss how you could increase outputs and improve efficiency.

Available to all red meat producers.

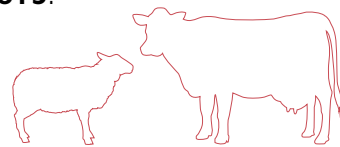
<b>Animal health testing clinics</b>		Sampling, testing and one-to-one feedback from local vets - £250 funding per business.
<b>Cutting your overhead costs on-farm clinics</b>		Specialist advice on energy, power and machinery and other overheads where possible savings are achievable.

Clinics and surgeries will be offered on a first come, first served basis.

To register for one or more of these clinics or surgeries, contact the **Farming Connect Service Centre** on **08456 000 813**.



[www.gov.wales/farmingconnect](http://www.gov.wales/farmingconnect)



## Events Timetable

### Sheep Parasite Control - Part 2: Sheep scab, lice and liver fluke

**19/11/19**  
**18:30 - 21:30** Lampeter Rugby Club,  
Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 7JA

ProStock Vets: 01267 233 266

### Measure to Manage Workshop

**20/11/19**  
**14:00 - 17:00** Media Resource Centre,  
Llandrindod Wells,  
Powys, LD1 6AH

Service Centre: 08456 000 813  
farmingconnect@menterabusnes.co.uk

### Social Media Workshop

**20/11/19**  
**16:00 - 18:00** The Castle of Brecon Hotel,  
Brecon, Powys, LD3 9DB

Service Centre: 08456 000 813  
farmingconnect@menterabusnes.co.uk

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

**20/11/19**  
**19:30 - 21:30** Hotel Mariners, Haverfordwest,  
Pembrokeshire, SA61 2DU

Delyth Jones - 01970 631 422  
delyth.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk

**09/12/19**  
**19:30 - 21:30** Welshpool Livestock Market,  
Welshpool, Powys, SY21 8SR

Gwydion Owen - 01745 770 039  
gwydion.owen@menterabusnes.co.uk

**10/12/19**  
**19:30 - 21:30** The Manor, Crickhowell,  
Powys, NP8 1SE

Delyth Jones - 01970 631 422  
delyth.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk

### Winter Fair 2019

**25-26/11/19** Royal Welsh Showground,  
Llanelwedd, Builth Wells,  
Powys, LD2 3SY

### Lambing Losses - Part 1: Abortion and Nutrition

**20/11/19**  
**11:30 - 14:30** The Crooked Horn, Brynford,  
Holywell, Flintshire, CH8 8AX

Wern Vets: 01824 703 066

**10/12/19**  
**18:30 - 21:30** Lampeter Rugby Club, Lampeter,  
Ceredigion, SA48 7JA

ProStock Vets: 01267 233 266

**18/12/19**  
**14:00 - 17:00** COBRA Rugby Club, Meifod,  
Powys, SY22 6DA

Camlas Farm Vets LLP: 01938 553 124

### Lambing Losses - Part 2: Post-Lambing losses from birth to weaning

**26/11/19**  
**19:30 - 22:30** Llanarth Village Hall, Llanarth,  
Monmouthshire, NP15 2AU

Farm First Veterinary Services: 01873 840 167

**05/12/19**  
**19:30 - 22:30** Llanarth Village Hall, Usk,  
Monmouthshire, NP15 2AU

Farm First Veterinary Services: 01873 840 167

### Creating a website

**25/11/19**  
**14:00 - 16:00** Kings Arms Hotel, Abergavenny,  
Monmouthshire, NP7 5AA

**27/11/19**  
**14:00 - 16:00** Glasdir, Plas yn Dre,  
Llanrwst, Conwy, LL26 0DF

**04/12/19**  
**13:30 - 15:30** Bloomfield House Community  
Centre, Narberth, Pembrokeshire,  
SA67 7ES

Service Centre: 08456 000 813  
farmingconnect@menterabusnes.co.uk

### Farm Diversification - Are pigs an option on your farm?

**27/11/19**  
**19:00 - 21:00** Nant-y-Ffin Hotel & Motel,  
Llandissilio, Pembrokeshire,  
SA66 7SU

**28/11/19**  
**19:00 - 21:00** Three Salmons Hotel, Usk,  
Monmouthshire, NP15 1RY

Dafydd Owen - 07985 379 903  
dafydd.owen@menterabusnes.co.uk

# Events Timetable

Understanding Johne's Disease Workshop	
28/11/19 19:00 - 22:00	Mainstone Village Hall, Bishops Castle, SY9 5LQ
Bishops Castle Vets: 01588 638 356	

Preparing for lambing	
02/12/19 19:30 - 21:30	The Kings Head, Llanrhaeadr, Dinbych, Denbighshire, LL16 4NL
03/12/19 19:30 - 21:30	Llanina Arms Hotel, Llanarth, Ceredigion, SA47 0NP
05/12/19 19:30 - 21:30	The Purple Badger, Llanrhidian Holiday Park, Swansea, SA3 1EU
Service Centre: 08456 000 813 farmingconnect@menterabusnes.co.uk	

Tenant Farmers Forum	
03/12/19 19:30 - 21:30	The Pavilion, Pembrokeshire County Showground, Haverfordwest, SA62 4BW
04/12/19 19:30 - 21:30	The Beaufort, Raglan, Usk, Monmouthshire, NP15 2DY
Del Evans - 01970 600 176 delyth.evans@menterabusnes.co.uk	

WLBP Farm Records Facility Workshop	
04/12/19 14:00 - 16:00	M-SParc, Gaerwen, Anglesey, LL60 6AG
05/12/19 18:00 - 20:00	Pant Du Vineyard and Cafe, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL54 6HE
09/12/19 14:00 - 16:00	Coleg Cambria Llysfasi, Ruthin, Denbighshire, LL15 2LB
10/12/19 14:00 - 16:00	Beaufort Park Hotel, Mold, Flintshire, CH7 6RQ
11/12/19 14:00 - 16:00	Glasdir, Plas yn Dre, Llanrwst, Conwy, LL26 0DF
Service Centre: 08456 000 813 farmingconnect@menterabusnes.co.uk	

Is wholecrop an economic alternative to grass silage?	
04/12/19 14:00 - 16:00	Cothi Vale, Crugybar, Carmarthenshire SA19 8SD
Sarah Hughes - 07399 600 146 sarah.hughes@menterabusnes.co.uk	

Reducing Dairy Cattle Lameness Workshop	
04/12/19 10:30 - 13:30	Holt Lodge Hotel, Wrexham, LL13 9SW
Daleside Vets: 01978 311 444	

SURGERIES (09:00 - 17:00)		
Planning Surgery	19/11/19	Rhayader
Marketing and Diversification Surgery	21/11/19	Pwllheli
Planning Surgery	28/11/19	Cowbridge
Planning Surgery	03/12/19	Llanrwst
Tenant Farmers Surgery	03/12/19	Haverfordwest
Tenant Farmers Surgery	04/12/19	Raglan
Bradley Lewis - 01970 600 174 bradley.lewis@menterabusnes.co.uk		
Planning Surgery	10/12/19	Carmarthen
Marketing and Diversification Surgery	12/12/19	Newtown
Marketing and Diversification Surgery	17/12/19	Wrexham
Helen Lewis - 01970 631 425 helen.lewis@menterabusnes.co.uk		