

THE MAGAZINE FOR FARMING & FORESTRY IN WALES

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What is appropriate
antibiotic use?

Listening...learning...
taking ideas forward



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar
gyfer Datblygu Cwledig
Ewrop yn Datblygu'r Fferm a'r Cwledydd Cymdeith
European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development
European Investing in Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

ISSUE 18 – November/December 2018 | www.gov.wales/farmingconnect

RICHARD TUDOR

Llysun, Llanerfyl,
Farming Connect
Demonstration Site



INTRODUCTION

It has been a challenging year in terms of weather, and certainly not a typical year for growing grass! Silage was cut later this year at Llysun and yields were down, with 70 acres of second cut only yielding around 90 tonnes. The third cut has certainly saved us with around 100 tonnes harvested from 40 acres, which is good quality forage and high in DM.

We aerated all the silage fields this year and used a sward lifter on other deeper compacted fields. Following observation, we can certainly see deeper grass rooting which will help to improve soil structure and ability to uptake nutrients. We hope to aerate fields again before the winter.

To maximise the productivity of soils it's important to understand its chemical,

physical and biological properties. Soil analysis is the starting point and foundation to delivering the correct balance of both major and minor nutrients.

We are currently running a project to demonstrate the importance of more complete soils analysis and the targeting of nutrition to enhance the quality and

productivity of grassland. The project is linked to the supply of calcium in the form of both calcium carbonate (lime) and calcium sulphate, and from previous soil analysis it is known that the farm is deficient in both boron and zinc. These two elements are linked to the transport of calcium into the plant and ultimately cell strength and quality of crops and grassland.

Four treatments were applied on grassland at Llysun in the form of:

- Granulated lime
- Granulated lime plus boron & zinc
- Calcium sulphate
- Calcium sulphate plus boron & zinc

Due to the year, project data has been limited as grass growth has been slow. We will monitor grass growth into next year on the plots and soil and root development.

Soil is every farm's greatest asset, and most farmers believe that they are passing their land onto the next generation in a better state than they received it. Defining 'better state' is not easy, but we can only judge this belief if we understand the fundamentals of what constitutes a healthy soil.

However, grass is not 'just grass' as I learnt in Finland 'grass is king', and therefore learning the fundamentals of growing grass became the basis of my Nuffield study; to focus on soil health and fertility in upland grassland.

My study focussed on two main areas;

1. Understanding what constitutes a healthy fertile soil and key indicators involved.
2. Management practices best suited to achieving healthier soils.

We are applying fertiliser on many parts of the country on low pH soils as correcting pH is 'too expensive'. But without correcting

these initially, the fertiliser applied is a waste of valuable time and resources.

Recognising the importance of the secondary essential plant nutrients such as calcium, magnesium and sulphur, along with trace elements is essential when attempting to create a healthy balanced soil, and for this to occur our basic soil test needs to become less basic. Visual assessment of soil is also just as important, if not more than a chemical analysis to identify soil health.

The damaging effect of compaction is apparently detected over 30 years later, and with machinery becoming heavier the damage inflicted today will affect the next generation's soil. The great hope is that the use of technology will result in machinery becoming smaller and lighter; but in the meantime, we can explore ways to alleviate damage and how to reduce weight load.

In conclusion, soils, the greatest asset on our upland grassland farms, deserves our attention:

1. A chemical soil analysis needs to consider more than just N, P and K
2. A soil assessment that considers all key indicators of a healthy soil needs to be promoted
3. Compaction needs to be taken seriously
4. Rest periods are key to grassland productivity
5. Species diversity needs to be encouraged in grassland leys

Sustainable use of Antibiotics in Agriculture

Mike John, Fenton Vets, Haverfordwest

There has been increasing pressure on farming and veterinary businesses to be more responsible with antibiotic use in animals and with good reason. Over recent years, increased demand to feed our rapidly growing population has led to an even more rapid intensification of agricultural businesses. This has led to both an increase in antibiotic use as well as the widespread use of modern antibiotics, such as 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins and fluoroquinolones in cattle.

These modern antibiotics are referred to as Critically Important Antibiotics (CIAs). New farm assurance guidelines have now all but banned their use on farms that have signed up to the Red Tractor scheme. Unfortunately the only nil milk withdrawal antibiotics currently available to dairy farmers are CIAs. This also clearly illustrates the need to reduce antibiotic use on economic grounds.

The emergence of antibiotic resistance in human medicine has prompted reasonable questions about the role of animal antibiotic use in this serious problem. It is possible that resistance may be transferred through food products or through environmental contamination.

The Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) has created guidelines for farmers regarding the use of antibiotics on farms whilst still safeguarding the health of their animals.

- Reduce the risk of disease through health planning.
- All antibiotics are prescription medicines and therefore treatment should only be initiated with formal veterinary approval.

- Farmers should work with their vet to take appropriate samples to ensure the correct antibiotic is chosen.
- Comprehensive records should be made and withdrawal periods always followed.
- All cattle farmers and stock people should have an appropriate level of training for what they do. For those involved in the administration of medicines, this should involve some formal medicines training.

Given the severe consequences of antibiotic use failures in human medicine it is crucial that farmers and vets work together to ensure antibiotic use is limited to where it is really needed and never used as a substitute for poor management.

Looking to learn more? Why not try our "Mastering Medicines" Training Course? For more information, visit our website: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/skills-and-mentoring>



Events



Farming Connect are holding meetings for livestock farmers in conjunction with local vet practices, discussing the different types of medicines used and how these relate to the common diseases relevant to your farms.

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	CONTACT
03/12/18 11:00-14:00	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Carmarthen Livestock Market, Nantyci, Llysonnen Rd, Carmarthen, SA33 5DR	Sarah Hughes – 07399 600146 sarah.hughes@menterabusnes.co.uk
04/12/18 19:00-21:00	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Whitehall, Stryd y Moch, Pwllheli, LL53 5RG	Gwion Parry – 07960 261266 gwion.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
05/12/18 12:00-14:30	What is appropriate antibiotic use? (Dairy)	White Hart Inn, 36 Carmarthen Rd, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6RS	Sarah Hughes – 07399 600146 sarah.hughes@menterabusnes.co.uk
05/12/18 16:00-18:30	What is appropriate antibiotic use? (Beef and Sheep)	White Hart Inn, 36 Carmarthen Rd, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6RS	Sarah Hughes – 07399 600146 sarah.hughes@menterabusnes.co.uk
05/12/18 19:00-21:30	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Glynneath Golf Club, Penygraig, Pontneddfechan, Glynneath, SA11 5UH	Elan Davies – 07985 379890 elan.davies@menterabusnes.co.uk
10/12/18 18:00-21:00	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Raglan Golf Club, Beaufort, Raglan, NP15 2DY	Imogen Ward – 07985 379819 imogen.ward@menterabusnes.co.uk
12/12/18 19:00-21:30	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5DY	Elan Davies – 07985 379890 elan.davies@menterabusnes.co.uk
13/12/18 11:00-14:00	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Llandovery RFC, Church Bank Playing Fields, Llandovery, Carmarthenshire, SA20 0DT	Sarah Hughes – 07399 600146 sarah.hughes@menterabusnes.co.uk
09/01/19 18:30-20:30	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Priory Vets, unit 11, Parc Teifi, Cardigan, SA43 1EW	Abby James – 07399 970988 abigailjames@menterabusnes.co.uk
15/01/19 19:00-21:30	What is appropriate antibiotic use? (Poultry)	The Royal Oak, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DG	Catherine Price – 07792 316529 cath.price@menterabusnes.co.uk
17/01/19 19:30-21:30	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Lampeter RFC, North Rd, Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 7JA	Sarah Hughes – 07399 600146 sarah.hughes@menterabusnes.co.uk
22/01/19 19:00-21:00	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	The Royal Oak, Welshpool, Powys, SY22 7DG	Catherine Price – 07792 316529 cath.price@menterabusnes.co.uk
22/01/19 19:00-21:30	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Dolgellau Rugby Club, Dolgellau, Gwynedd, LL40 1UU	Lisa Roberts – 07399 849148 lisa.roberts@menterabusnes.co.uk
29/01/19 19:00-21:30	What is appropriate antibiotic use?	Riverside Hotel, Pennal, Machynlleth, SY20 9DW	Lisa Roberts – 07399 849148 lisa.roberts@menterabusnes.co.uk

Autumn
update 2018

Welsh Pasture Project



Although grass growth recovered well during September with the welcome spells of heavy rain, unfortunately starting covers in certain parts of Wales have been too low for any meaningful resurrection of the 2018 grass growing season.

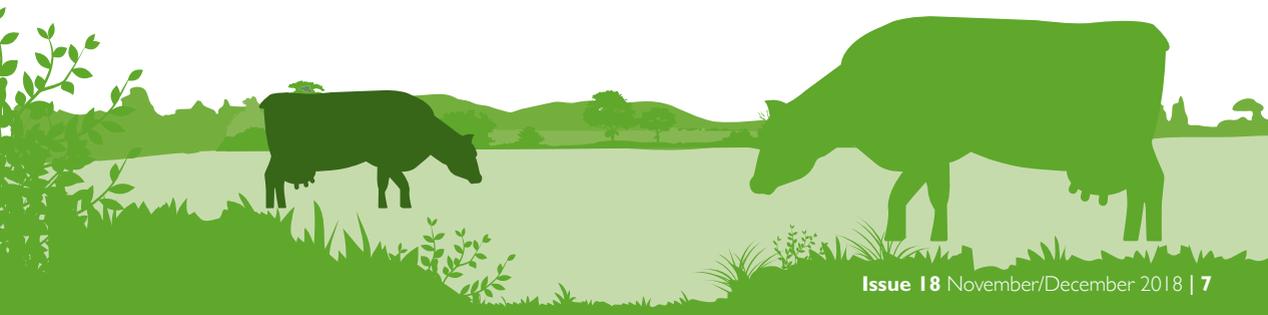
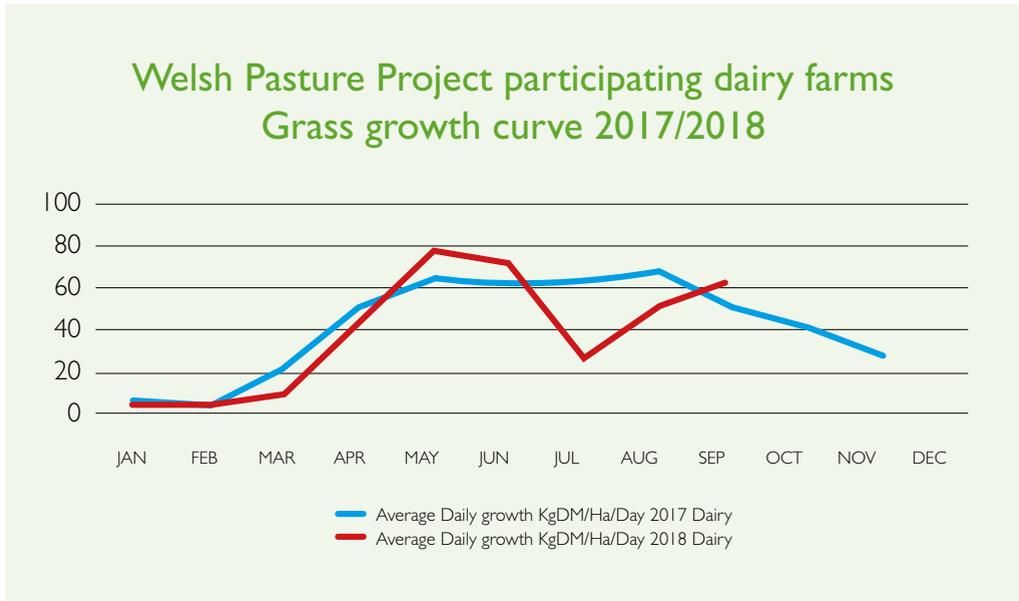
Many farmers have been busy grazing off this valuable re-growth to help put the brakes on the large amounts of silage and concentrate that has been fed throughout July and August. The sudden return to lush 'spring like' grass will also have caught a few cattle farmers out with issues such as grass-staggers and even bloat.

The average farm covers on many farms especially in the east is well below that of last year, but a silver lining for 2018 is the fact drier than normal ground conditions in October still allow for stock to be kept out comfortably. There is a risk that cows who have been heavily buffered or are still being so will have become lazy and will not graze down to adequate residuals which is not being helped through rejection patches caused by dried out dung pats from the hot dry summer.



Lighter and lower productive livestock classes should be utilised to graze these areas tightly if possible well into November to reduce the burden on any forage stocks.

To add to all the important decision making above we must be reminded that planning for turnout 2019 also begins during the autumn period. Combined with low silage stocks, it could be easy to fall into the trap of scalping your farm during these favourable grazing conditions ahead of a potential cold winter. Therefore planning when and where the last round of grazing begins will protect your grass wedge for the spring, this could also be achieved by drying off, culling or selling stock according to back end grass growth. Finally by looking at the average monthly grass growth curves for 2017/2018 in the graph below, gives a clear indication of the extremes and random conditions facing grassland managers that now seems to be just normal.



Kappa Casein – Clawdd Offa

Rhys Davies, Dairy Technical Officer, Farming Connect

Farming Connect Focus site Clawdd Offa Farm, near Mold has been looking at the Kappa Casein (KC) status of their herd to see which animals have the favoured BB gene which can have an effect on the cheese making quality of milk.

The herd comprises of 270 spring calved cows made up of mainly New Zealand Friesian and Jersey crossbreeds which are milked once a day and therefore have milk that is already well suited for efficient manufacturing. By identifying individual animals for high solids and KC status it is possible to breed cows which are better suited for cheese manufacturing allowing co-operatives to produce more cheese quicker and potentially achieve

an improved farmgate price. Hair follicle samples were taken from 60 milking cows according to their sire stack and known breeding to ensure enough cows in each Kappa Casein group were available for the project. As the herd is recorded monthly with NMR, cows with high cell counts or varying fat and protein % were not put forward for the trial.

Kappa Casein

Date: 31-08-18

TAG ID	LAB ID	RESULT
A48689	2671	B/B
A48690	3077	B/B
A48691	2698	A/B
A48692	2861	B/B
A48693	3378	A/B
A48694	2802	A/A
A48695	3218	A/A
A48696	2723	B/B

Table 1. Results of some of the animals tested

Past research in the USA has shown that cheese made with milk from KCBB cows form 25% quicker and yield 10% more than from KCAA cows. Most pure Jerseys carry the BB gene whilst Water Buffalo are 100% carriers hence the quality and quantity of Mozzarella cheese produced from their milk. Around 15-23% of black and white dairy cattle in Europe carry the homozygous BB gene whilst the remainder are made up of either homozygous AA or heterozygous BA.



Fig 1. Cows being milked at Clawdd Offa



Fig 2. Texture analyser assessing firmness and coagulation

Working with Julia Skinner, a dairy produce specialist at the Food Technology Centre in Llangefni, 3 different types of milk were taken from Clawdd Offa and made into soft cheese to assess the rate of formation and rennet coagulation along with the total cheese yield. Milk from the favoured KCBB animals was compared to cows with KCAB and the less favoured KCAA. Initial results from the trial suggest that % of fat and protein is key for the total yield of cheese regardless of the type of Kappa Casein and producers should breed for high % milk protein in the first instance. However it was evident that milk from KCBB cows coagulated quicker and was firmer than milk from KCAA cows. This small scale trial into a relatively quick forming cheese could be replicated for harder cheeses to investigate the cumulative effect of KCBB on longer term formation. The project has also highlighted the potential use of affordable commercial genotyping for KC status of a herd of cows that produce to a manufacturing contract. For further information and to view the full report on cheese yield and formation please see the Farming Connect website – <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/clawddoffa-farm>

Under sowing maize using a specially modified drill

Dr Delana Davies, Knowledge Exchange Executive – Farming Connect



Winter monitoring of water quality in the Trothy river catchment in Monmouthshire has revealed spikes in river phosphate levels following a high rainfall incidence. This could be in part due to soil run off from bare maize stubbles in an area where increased areas of maize are being planted to supply bio-digesters. Establishing a crop or cover after maize harvest is often not realistic because of autumn soil conditions and problems associated with late autumn sowing.

Following experience in Denmark where thousands of hectares of maize are now under-sown a new technique designed to protect maize stubbles from soil erosion and leaching over winter has been developed and is currently being trialled at Pant Farm Focus Site near Abergavenny.

The target period for sowing grass seed into maize is from one week after the last herbicide is applied through to the stage when the crop is about knee-high in early July. Danish trials suggest that establishment can be greatly enhanced by drilling the seed and consolidating behind the drill rather than broadcasting grass seed or broadcasting and harrowing, both of which require rain to be effective. Drilling improves reliability of establishment and allows lower seed rates.

Italian rye grass provides the most vigorous option and has the potential to produce optimum biomass yield after the maize has been harvested. Being less vigorous, perennial rye grass is potentially better suited to earlier sowing and because of the higher number of seeds/kg it can be sown at very low seed rates.

At Pant Farm, a grass seed mix of Italian and perennial rye grass was sown on 30 June when the maize plants were about 0.5 metre high. Carrying out cultivations in growing maize crops with inter-row drilling equipment is a job for experienced operators. A specially modified drill has been developed by the Wye and Usk Foundation and Field Options.

The drill is set up for 6 row or 12 row drill format with standard row spacing of 75 cm (30 inch), but tolerances have been built in to the drill to allow under-sowing in crops sown with an 8 row drill. All maize drilled at 75 cm with GPS guidance should be suitable.

This technique could help growers comply with greening rules, meet the requirements of cross-compliance and potentially cut the pollution of water courses with leached nitrogen, other minerals and silt. In addition, trials have shown the under-sown crop has the potential to produce up to three tonnes of dry matter per hectare. This can then be grazed or ploughed in as green manure, which will aid soil organic matter, structure and fertility. All this has also been achieved without significant impact on maize yields.

Harvesting the cover crop for silage the following spring may be problematical as the soil surface can be uneven following maize harvesting operations creating the risk of soil contamination. The field will also have significant quantities of maize stalks, unless these are flailed off immediately after harvest. Grazing with sheep or young cattle is probably most appropriate, and even in late harvesting seasons, Italian rye grass has produced 3 t/ha dry matter by the end of March at about 12 ME and 12% CP. This has the potential to produce >1,500 ewe grazing days or 300 heifer grazing days per hectare. Utilisation of the sward will be explored at Pant Farm over the winter.

Feeding the pregnant ewe

Gwawr Hughes, Red Meat Technical Officer, Farming Connect

Nutrition is a vital factor to ensure good flock performance. Ewe nutritional requirements vary throughout different stages of production. Poor ewe nutrition can lead to various issues including; reduced fertility, poor lamb survival and poor growth rates.

Energy is a fundamental nutrient which can be provided in three forms, including fibre, sugar and starch. However, there is normally a shortfall of energy provided in ewe diets.

Daily energy requirements can usually be met by grazing alone, however, in some instances, e.g. during late pregnancy or lactation, additional feeding may be required. Maintenance requirements vary according to ewe and litter size, with energy requirements (MJ) increasing significantly in late lambing through to lactation.

Body condition scoring is a useful tool which determines the effectiveness of feeding regimes. Ensuring that 90% of the flock are at the correct BCS score during key points of the year will reduce variation and simplify feeding. Scanning ewes 40-90 days after tugging can allow diets to be tailored to the number of lambs they are carrying.

During the first month of pregnancy, energy and protein requirements don't increase, but ensuring a stable diet during this period is important.

During the mid-pregnancy stage the embryo is implanted and the placenta is formed. Ewes tugged at the correct BCS are allowed to lose up to 5% of bodyweight, and any ewes below correct BCS at tugging should be allowed to gain weight, however, both must be achieved gradually.

During late pregnancy, ewe energy and protein requirements double, however, her appetite drops due to pressure on the rumen from the growing lamb. In order to meet her nutritional requirements, the nutrient density of the diet must increase.

When formulating a ration for supplementary feeding, producers should consider:

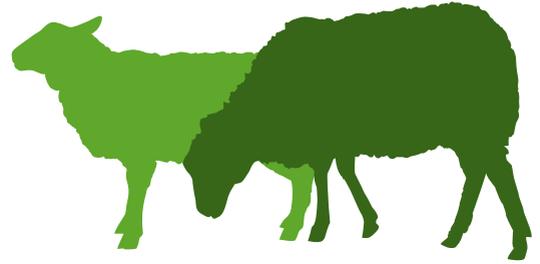
- Ewe weight and litter size
- How much forage they will eat (DMI)
- ME and dry matter of the forage and additional feed options available
- Stage of pregnancy





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Implementing advanced nutritional management in the Welsh sheep industry

Grass alone may not provide all the nutritional elements required by ewes and sometimes nutritional supplementation is required to improve productivity. Traditionally in the UK this has been carried out by taking blood samples from a sample of sheep. However, **the only way to assess whether the sheep are supported nutritionally is to investigate the nutrient concentrations within the sheep** and compare them to established norms. Blood concentrations can respond to diet changes within days and may also be influenced by other disease processes.

Live animal liver biopsies provide different information to blood in that it provides a much longer-term historical estimation of trace element status. The technique is proven to be quick, safe and reliable. Blood analysis is still useful in conjunction with this as it can provide short term information indicative of current supply and response, as well as information regarding element competition. Blood and liver samples taken in parallel provide the most comprehensive indication of historic and current trace element status and the best information to formulate management advice for future dietary adjustments.

In this project twelve farms from across North Wales are using this dual sample approach in the Welsh sheep context, together with an analysis of the available forage. The project aims to utilise an intelligent and progressive approach to nutritional planning in breeding ewes.

- Liver and blood samples will be taken from 8 ewes from the 12 flocks before the breeding season commences in 2018 to assess trace element levels.
- The available forage will be analysed on each farm. Nutritional planning advice will then be formulated using the results of the liver/blood and forage tests.
- At scanning time blood samples will be taken to determine energy, protein and copper status. Adjustments to the diet will be made if necessary.
- Liver and blood samples will be taken after weaning to monitor the success/failure of the nutritional advice.



More Information

For more information on EIP Wales please visit www.gov.wales/farmingconnect or contact us on eipwales@menterabusnes.co.uk



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Comparison of the relative environmental benefits of low impact machinery in small scale farm woodlands

Small woodlands, scattered over the countryside are a feature of the Welsh agricultural landscape. Many of these woodlands are under-managed due to their size as the high cost of larger forest machinery make it uneconomical to manage or harvest. This also has implications for biodiversity as single age structures of trees are less diverse than varied age structures. Areas choked by brambles restrict natural regeneration of trees and structural diversity. Another disadvantage of larger forest machinery is the challenge of minimising environmental disturbance. Timber harvesting can leave deep ruts where heavy machinery sink, leading to poor regeneration because of soil compaction and sedimentation in waterways because of soil surface runoff.

The use of low impact machinery has the potential to offer great benefits to the small woodland owner in Wales. These are small light weight machines such as tracked skid steers and articulated alpine tractors that have less impact on the topsoil and can also be used in less favourable weather conditions. Michael Lewis and Andrew Thomas are both farmers near Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan who are facing problems accessing their

farm woodlands. Through this project they are investigating the benefits of low impact machinery to identify the most appropriate methods of minimising environmental disturbance.

Project Design

- The woodlands were surveyed earlier this year and four representative study areas in both woods were identified based on their uniformity in soil type, slope, and soil density.
- During September the 4 treatments were carried out in both woodlands. These included a control (no harvesting), conventional harvesting (county tractor), and two low-impact forestry methods using an alpine tractor and a tracked Bobcat.
- The project will seek to quantify the volume of water and sediment concentration losses from the four treatment areas over the winter months.

Agri-pollution

SLURRY storage and management is a major issue facing farmers during the winter period, but thanks to a series of meetings held by Farming Connect, farmers have been finding out how to mitigate the situation and reduce the threat of water pollution.

Meetings aimed at tackling pollution from agriculture are being held in 28 areas across Wales where the waterbodies are failing to meet required standards due to agricultural inputs.

A lack of slurry storage capacity is often perceived to be the cause of management issues on-farm, forcing farmers to spread slurry during the winter period when land conditions are not ideal.

However, consultant Keith Owen, says lack of slurry storage is not always the cause of these problems, with 90% of farms having issues with water entering the slurry system. In this case, there are a variety of lower-cost improvements that can be made to reduce the volume of clean water that is contaminated and then ends up in the slurry system without having to build a new slurry store.

“Cost effective solutions such as roofing dirty yards, reducing silage clamp run-off and separating parlour washings can often reduce the volume of slurry that enters the slurry store by enough to achieve compliance and continue to use the existing slurry store,” says Mr Owen.

“The cost of roofing, repairing and installing guttering and downpipes and diverting silage clamp run-off is often cheaper than building a new store and you don’t have the continued costs of emptying the slurry store for the next 20 years. It’s free to divert clean water, but it’s expensive to pump slurry.”

This advice has been invaluable to one young farmer, who was facing the prospect of a major

investment in a new slurry store on his farm in the Longford Brook catchment area on the Pembrokeshire/Carmarthenshire border. William Ratcliffe is hoping to double cow numbers at his dairy farm in Llanddewi Velfrey and thought that to maintain compliance with statutory regulations a new slurry store would be needed.

“I thought if the number of cows doubled, I’d have twice the amount of slurry and would have to spend about £200,000 on a new slurry store to remain compliant with regulations,” said Mr Ratcliffe. “However, I found out that by roofing some of the yard areas and improving guttering so the rainfall is diverted elsewhere, I can increase cow numbers and the farm will still be compliant.

“Doing this will also save us contracting costs in the long-run and we will also have better quality slurry, so it will be better for the land.”

The Farming Connect Advisory Service offers up to 80% funding on a one-to-one basis for expert, independent, confidential and bespoke advice on farm infrastructure, slurry and farmyard manure management and storage, and soil and nutrient management planning. Eligible businesses registered with Farming Connect can also access 100% funding (up to a maximum of €1500) as part of a group of 3 or more.

For further information on the support available from Farming Connect to tackle this important issue, visit www.gov.wales/farmingconnect or contact the Farming Connect Service Centre on 08456 000 813.



Listening... learning... taking ideas forward

How often do you feel people *‘really listen’* to what you are saying? If you’re part of a Farming Connect Agrisgôp group, you’ll know they are listening. They have joined your group because they want to hear your ideas and opinions and equally important, you’ll want to hear theirs too.

Agrisgôp changes mindsets and attitudes as well as boosting the confidence and capability of the hundreds of forward-thinking, like-minded farmers and foresters who join. From exciting tourism enterprises to poultry production and from added value projects to on-farm efficiency – they’re working together and turning dreams into reality.

Each of our experienced leaders will give you the opportunity to learn from other group members as well as the experts you meet or visit. At your own pace and with confidentiality assured, you will develop new ideas for yourself, your family and your business just like the three groups under the spotlight in this newsletter.



Creating a buzz in Bala

Despite the best efforts of many environmentally minded farmers, bees and other pollinators are in trouble due to factors such as habitat loss, pesticide use and climate change. But for one North Wales Agrisgôp group, the future's looking golden!

The group of seven individuals, led by Lowri Rees Roberts, have been learning the rudiments of beekeeping from theory through to practical hands-on sessions. Toggled up in bee suits kindly loaned by Meirionnydd Beekeepers and supported by numerous experts, including Farming Connect's award-winning bee mentor Carys Edwards, most members have now bought the necessary hives and equipment, enabling the queen bee and her colony to get down to business. Some members have

already harvested their first honey and are delighted with the results!

"Although some group members had experimented with bee keeping, most were novices. It has been hugely rewarding to see everyone involved gaining so much confidence and armed with their new found knowledge and skills, I'm delighted that nearly all of them are now successful bee keepers."

Leader: Lowri Rees Roberts
07880 728273



Harnessing the power of social media in Llŷn

This group of farmers who all run businesses in Llŷn are already involved in tourism enterprises, ranging from caravan and camping sites to self-catering accommodation and glamping.

Now, thanks to coming together in an Agrisgôp group led by Geraint Hughes, they are working collaboratively, using social media channels to promote what they hope will be holidays of a lifetime and boost bookings in this beautiful region of Wales. They've even come up with their own group hashtag, #CroesoWelcomeLlŷn

Members are now less reliant on booking agencies and have taken more control of their own marketing. Others have successfully attracted new bookings directly

through social media marketing for the first time.

“Although most of the group were already using social media, they have now moved it up a gear and have a more strategic and business-like approach to this hugely important and cost-effective marketing tool which will enable them to compete more effectively with other tourist areas in the UK.”

Leader: Geraint Hughes
07740 721109



Going glamping in the Welsh hills

This Agrisgôp group is on a mission to find out whether an investment in ‘posh camping’ or alternative accommodation in spectacular surroundings could lead to a lucrative new stream of income on their farms.

All beef and sheep farmers, and some already involved with tourism enterprises and others starting from new, the members have gained confidence and trust in each other, and no longer fear they're giving away valuable 'trade secrets'!

It's early days, but group leader Jessica has introduced the group to representatives from the local planning authority and Visit Wales, so that they base any future business plans on facts. Jessica also accompanied them on a fully-funded visit to one of the UK's major glamping shows in Stoneleigh.

She said that they came back inspired by the wide range of accommodation which they are now considering, as well as solutions on how best to tackle the issues of power and waste management in remote rural locations.

“Every member supports the others in so many ways which will save them money and time longer term. Trust and co-operation is benefiting them all, and I'm optimistic that many will make their dream happen!”

Leader: Jessica Williams
07739 354148

Animal Health clinics

Farming Connect is working with vets across Wales to provide an opportunity for farmers to carry out animal health sampling and testing with their local vet.

The clinics will provide farmers with an opportunity to access support to investigate and test for relevant animal health topics within their business such as blood testing for trace elements or metabolic profiling as well as ram or bull fertility and genetic disorders screening.

The suggested list of animal health clinics will provide farmers with subsidised analysis and consultation on specific topics relating to animal health.

- Blood testing – Review trace elements, metabolic profiling
- Faecal Egg Counting – Monitoring on-farm worm populations
- Ram or bull fertility
- Leptospirosis
- IBR
- Ecto parasites (Scab)
- Screening for genetic disorders
- Bacteriology – culture and sensitivity
- Johne's Disease

Farmers must confirm their interest with Farming Connect before any sampling/testing takes place. Limited funding available which will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

To register your interest in any of the above, please contact:

Gwenan Jones 01970 636296 / gwenan.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk



How can E-learning benefit you?

There are currently **61 fully funded E-learning modules** available on the Business Wales (BOSS) website covering a broad range of topics relating to:



Our bite-size courses created and endorsed by industry experts are packed with information. Each course can be downloaded, completed in around 30 minutes and include a multiple-choice quiz to find out what you've learnt. So, whether you are a smallholder brushing up your knowledge on poultry or a large-scale farmer looking for the latest information on dairy herd nutrition, then E-learning is for you.

Once completed, the course will automatically be added to your learning history on the Farming Connect CPD page, providing a record of achievement often useful as evidence for future employers or for Farm Assurance Scheme visits.

Courses that have recently become available include:

- Poultry Parasites
- Reducing Agri-Pollution
- Ram Health
- Colostrum and Calves
- Cattle Pneumonia
- Calf Scours
- Agri-Pollution – Livestock and Climate Change

Keep an eye out for the next tranche of e-learning courses which will be linked to Knowledge Transfer events and will help **maximise your learning**.

Modules coming soon include:

- Estimated breeding values
- Genetic improvement of livestock
- Respiratory disease in poultry
- Trace elements in sheep
- Gilt infertility
- Soil compaction
- Soil tillage
- Soil health
- Farmyard composting

Anyone intending to apply for funding to complete a training course from Category 3 – Machinery and Equipment Use, must complete the Health and Safety E-learning course before submitting an application.

If you are still unsure on how E-Learning can benefit you, follow this link for further information <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/e-learning> and click on the "High Sugar Grasses" taster course to see what you can expect.

New Opportunities to improve Animal Health and Welfare Standards

Launching at the Winter Fair on the 26th of November is a new fully funded programme for animal health and welfare accredited training.

Delivered through the existing Farming Connect Lifelong Learning and Development Programme, registered clients will have the opportunity to attend short training courses linking to the Welsh Government animal health and welfare priorities:

- Improving Farm Bio-Security
- Countering Antimicrobial and Anthelmintic Resistance
- The importance of Animal Health Planning
- Bovine TB eradication
- Parasite Control in sheep
- BVD Eradication
- Johnes Disease Eradication
- Lameness reduction
- How to reduce mastitis
- How to reduce lambing losses

Each course will cover an introduction to animal health diseases, disease transmission, clinical signs, diagnosis, treatment, control, eradication and look at the economic impact that a disease can have on a business.

Farming Connect are currently working with the National Animal Disease Information Service (NADIS) to develop the training courses and will start

delivering in early 2019. The courses will be rolled out pan Wales and will be delivered by local veterinary practices.

Kevin Thomas Director of Lantra Wales said "understanding the impact that diseases can have on your farm animals is so important, these fully funded courses delivered by your local vet can be the first step in understanding how to identify, control and eradicate disease to improve animal health and welfare standards and to improve economic resilience of a business".

Farmers will have to be registered with Farming Connect if they want to attend the training courses and all courses completed will be automatically recorded into clients' CPD records on the Business Wales BOSS website, including a Lantra certificate of attendance.

For more information on the new animal health and welfare training visit the website <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/> or call the Farming Connect Service Centre on 08456 000813 to register an interest in the courses.

Need to improve your computer skills?



In 2019 Farming Connect will be offering a range of fully funded computer training courses to suit all skill levels.

We are offering complete beginners the opportunity to complete a 6 week course (2 hours per week) at a local land-based college, IT Suite or a Village Hall that will be delivered by the local Land-based Colleges. This course targets beginners with the aim of giving confidence to the learner to have a go at computer-based activities that are relevant to their agricultural and forestry business.

By attending this 6 week course, registered clients will learn:

- Basic Word – introduction and managing documents
- Excel – introduction and basics
- Email and File Management
- Websites and use of browsers to access information
- Welsh Government ICT applications, including how to access Government Gateway, Rural Payments Wales online, Personal Development Plans
- Social media introduction

Clients will also have the option of receiving up to two home visits with an IT Tutor to help clients develop their skills further. Home visits will be available for a range of topics to low

and medium IT skilled users, focusing on problems and weaknesses that have been identified in advance through a short telephone assessment.

For clients with more advanced IT skills, Farming Connect will be running training workshops pan Wales to help clients use IT to develop their businesses with topics such as:

- Using Social Media to enhance your business
- Internet security
- Apps and their place in agriculture and business management
- Online Benchmarking Tools
- On-line banking
- Tax and VAT online
- Drone technology
- GPS and Precision Farming (Hands Free Hectare)

For more information on the new ICT programme visit the website <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/> or call the Farming Connect Service Centre on 08456 000813 to register an interest in the courses.

The Farming Connect Funded Skills and Training Programme

– on course to improve your business.

Available to all registered Farming Connect businesses and individuals. If you are not registered contact the Farming Connect Service Centre on 08456 000813 or register online: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/farming-connect-registration>

If you own or are employed by a farm or forestry business within Wales it is more important than ever to ensure you and your employees have the right skills and training to help reduce costs, carry out tasks competently and safely and to improve productivity.

With up to 80% funding support available across 62 accredited courses, delivered through a network of 25 approved providers why not take a look at the training pages on the Farming Connect website to see what courses you could access.

How to apply: *There are 2 parts to the application process:*

1. The PDP – Personal Development Plan

An online self – assessment tool

This can be completed at any time by yourself, if you need assistance you can contact your local provider or attend one of a number of PDP workshop events which will be running across Wales throughout an application window: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/personal-development-plan>

2. Apply for the required training course/s – only open during an application window.

An online application form.

This is a quick and straightforward process, just make sure the course title

and cost are correct – speak to your chosen provider first.

Following the end of a window applications are assessed and you will be notified of the outcome. You will need to complete the training course within 9 months.

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The next funding application window will be open from

**Monday 7th January 2019 –
Friday 1st March 2019.**

To find out more contact Farming Connect 08456 000813 or visit <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/skills-and-mentoring>

Farming Connect Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Online Recording

Farming Connect is developing an online CPD recording tool for all activity that clients complete through the current programme, including training courses, events and meetings attended.

Registered clients can view their individual records through the Business Wales BOSS website.

The CPD recording system also has the capability of capturing non Farming Connect CPD activity so that individuals can store all records within one online system. This can include training or meetings organised by Supermarkets, Supply Chains, Levy Boards, Buyer Groups, Unions, Colleges and YFC.

By working with organisations Farming Connect is giving the agricultural and forestry sectors the opportunity to have one overarching CPD recording system for Wales.



What can the record be used for?

- Evidence for future employers who may want to see valid certification for training undertaken
- Farm Assurance Scheme may want evidence of training courses completed or knowledge transfer events attended
- Supermarkets or Supply Chains who require a record of CPD activity to maintain supplier contracts
- The CPD record can easily be downloaded into a report and used as evidence.

For more information please visit the website <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/> or call Farming Connect on 08456 000 813.

Events Timetable

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	CONTACT
29/11/18 10:30-15:00	Faecal worm egg count workshop – towards sustainable roundworm control in sheep	Welshpool Livestock Market, Powys, SY21 8SR	Meinir Parry – 01248 660376 meinir.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
05/12/18 9:00-17:00	Social Media Surgery	Builth Wells (Location to be confirmed)	Helen Lewis – 01970 631425 helen.lewis@menterabusnes.co.uk
05/12/18 13:30-16:00	Beef finishing – hitting targets and spec	Ferm Gadlys Farm, Llansadwm, Anglesey, LL59 5SE	Gethin Prys Davies – 07772 694941 gethin.prys.davies@menterabusnes.co.uk
10/12/18 19:30-21:30	Pre-lambing ewe nutrition with Lesley Stubbings	Black Lion, Llanfair Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 0RR	Lisa Roberts – 07399 849148 lisa.roberts@menterabusnes.co.uk
11/12/18 19:00-21:00	Social Media Surgery	Newtown (Location to be confirmed)	Helen Lewis – 01970 631425 helen.lewis@menterabusnes.co.uk
14/12/18 11:00-15:00	EDEN project Sustainable Management Scheme	Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Blaenau Ffestiniog, LL41 3YU	Geraint Jones – 07398 178698 geraint.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk
04/01/19 19:30-21:30	Tenant Farmers Forum	Gwesty'r Ivy Bush, Carmarthen, SA31 1LG	Meinir Parry – 01248 660376 meinir.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
10/01/19 11:00-15:00	Hedge laying best practice techniques	Plas Y Cerdin, St Clears, SA33 4LE	Geraint Jones – 07398 178698 geraint.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk
10/01/19 19:30-21:30	Tenant Farmers Forum	Llanddewi Village Hall, Llanddewi, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 6SE	Meinir Parry – 01248 660376 meinir.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
15/01/19 11:00-15:00	Hedge laying best practice techniques	Coleg Cambria LLysfasi, Ruthin, LL15 2LB	Geraint Jones – 07398 178698 geraint.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk
16/01/19 11:00-15:00	Hedge laying best practice techniques	Coleg Glynllifon College, Caernarfon, LL54 5DU	Geraint Jones – 07398 178698 geraint.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk
21/01/19 19:30-21:30	Succession Workshop – Start the Conversation	Ruthin (Location to be confirmed)	Meinir Parry – 01248 660376 meinir.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
22/01/19 19:30-21:30	Succession Workshop – Start the Conversation	Caernarfon (Location to be confirmed)	Meinir Parry – 01248 660376 meinir.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
29/01/19 14:00-16:00	Succession Workshop – Start the Conversation	Tregaron (Location to be confirmed)	Meinir Parry – 01248 660376 meinir.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
29/01/19 19:30-21:30	Succession Workshop – Start the Conversation	Narberth (Location to be confirmed)	Meinir Parry – 01248 660376 meinir.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
30/01/19 14:00-16:00	Succession Workshop – Start the Conversation	Abergavenny (Location to be confirmed)	Meinir Parry – 01248 660376 meinir.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
30/01/19 19:30-21:30	Succession Workshop – Start the Conversation	Pencoed (Location to be confirmed)	Meinir Parry – 01248 660376 meinir.parry@menterabusnes.co.uk
31/01/19 11:00-15:00	Hedge laying best practice techniques	Cardiff (Location to be confirmed)	Geraint Jones – 07398 178698 geraint.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk