LIVESTOCK
April 2020 – July 2020

FARMING connect
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Advisory Service

Number of business who have received support through the Livestock Categories of the Advisory Service during this period:

3 individuals received one-to-one support through the Livestock Categories of the Advisory Service during this period.

2 groups received support through the Livestock Categories of the Advisory Service during this period.

Feedback from businesses on delivery of this Advisory service:

"Excellent advice given."

"Our adviser was excellent, knowledgeable and took time to understand our needs. We are extremely pleased with the results so far."

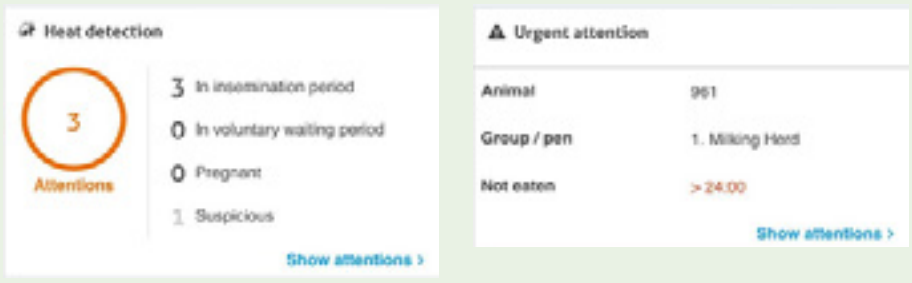
Demonstration Network

Improving fertility in a split block calving herd at Nantglas demonstration site

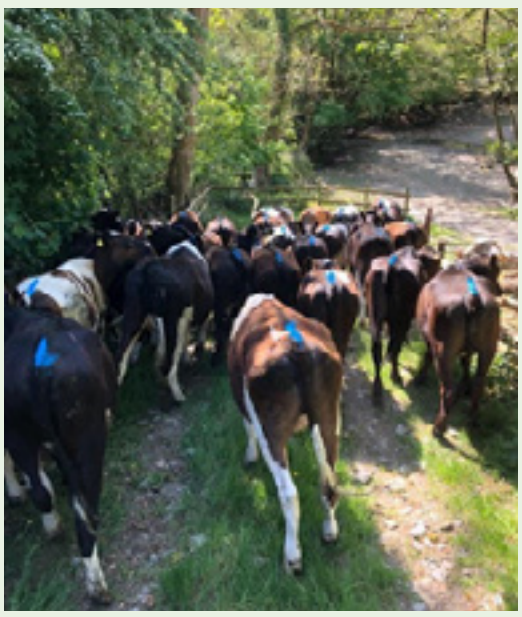
Spring calving commenced on 23 February 2020 and ended on 22 May 2020. 81% of the herd calved in the first eight weeks enabling eight of the later calvers to be sold to help tighten the calving period next year. Monitoring health has been a key element of the calving period:

- Pre calving blood samples showed trace element supplementation was correct for the herd
- Post caving 'Metricheck' identified low levels of the bacterial infection, endometritis

Following calving, the emphasis turned to heat detection to get cows back in calf. Nantglas have used Alta collars which pick up changes in activity and send alerts to a smart phone or tablet device. The dashboard below indicates how information is relayed to the farmer.



Alta hear collars' dashboard

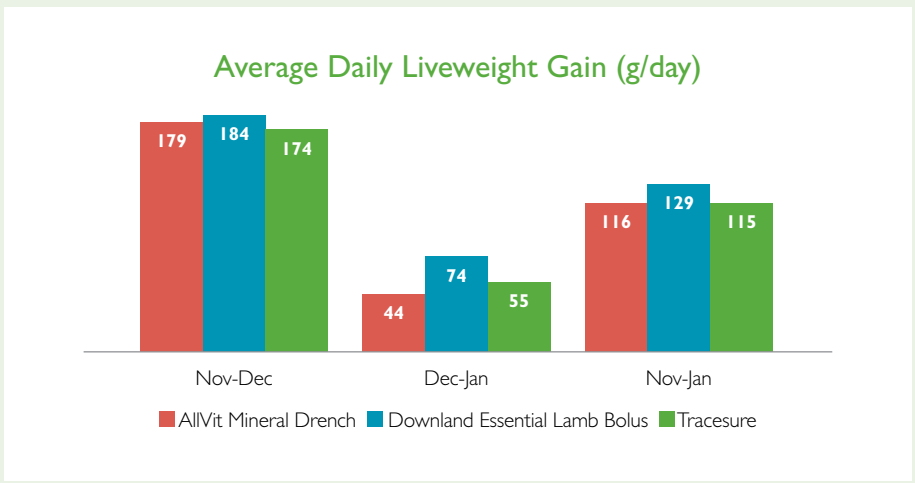


Nantglas' milking herd with tail paint to assist with heat detection

With guidance and advice from the vet, a breeding plan was established to ensure the calving pattern stays as compact as possible. Heifers were synchronised with prostaglandin injections and tail painted to assist with heat detection. The service period commenced on 20 May and 92% of animals were served in the first three weeks. Scanning will determine the success rate.

Trace element supplementation in growing lambs at Pentre Farm focus site

The project, run at Pentre Farm, Llansoy, Usk explored the effectiveness and cost efficiency of three different methods of trace element supplementation which were a mineral drench, and two different boluses from different manufacturers.



Average daily liveweight gain (grams/day) for each supplementation method at Pentre Farm

Interestingly, the growth rates significantly dropped in the second part of the project (bear in mind that there were no apparent trace element deficiencies). We would presume this is due to the drop in grass quality.

Across the project, the Downland bolus group (blue bar) did consistently better than the other groups, with an overall average DLWG of 130g/d. By the end of the project, lambs from this group were on average 1.2kg heavier than lambs in the other groups. Based on the average price of 220.4p/kg for finished old-season lambs (OSL) at the end of Jan 2019, they were worth £2.64/head extra.

	Method of supplementation		
	AllVit Mineral Drench	Downland Essential Lamb Bolus	Tracesure Bolus
Technology	Absorbtion	Erosion (2)	Leaching
Price per lamb for entire project	7.2p	53p	85p
Overall DLWG (g/day)	116	129	115
Deaths during project	1	4	2

Discussion Groups

This was the first discussion group meeting held digitally for the Honddu Veterinary group with Rosie Gibson from Honddu Veterinary Practice as the speaker, who talked about ram fertility and faecal egg counting (FEC).

Rosie discussed:

- Teaser rams – the use of teaser rams shortens the lambing period in a natural way.
- FEC testing – this is important to identify if you have a high enough egg count to warrant treatment, and then to find out if the wormer worked or if the flock have resistance.
- Lamb growth rates – this is a good indication if the lambs have any burdens that would impact on weight gain e.g. worm burdens, stresses such as weaning and handling, changes to feed.
- Weaning management – weaning can be stressful, therefore, Rosie encouraged the members not to do anything else to the lambs the same day and instead, return them to the same field as this will reduce their stress levels. She also promoted weaning into weight groups for ease of management.

Following on from the meeting the members were offered the animal health clinic to test for issues that may impact flock performance.

Improving conception rates in ewe lambs at Halghton Hall demonstration site

The main aim of the project at Halghton Hall was to improve conception rates within ewe lambs from 57% to >75%. The scanning results in January anticipated 126 singles, 36 twins and 2 triplets. The overall performance of the ewe lambs during the lambing period was excellent, with no major issues reported.

As common in all lambing systems, losses were recorded. 4 ewe lambs (3 singles and 1 twin) reabsorbed their lambs and did not lamb. 2 singles lost their lambs at birth but both had plenty of milk therefore reared replacements. 1 single lost a lamb and had no milk.

In terms of health, 3 ewe lambs prolapsed after lambing. They were treated accordingly following veterinary advice, however, they will ultimately be culled from the flock to avoid further issues in future.

Performance up to 14 May 2020:

- 164 ewe lambs scanned in-lamb
- 160 ewe lambs lambed
- 159 ewe lambs currently rearing a lamb (either their own lambs or replacements)
- Ewe lambs' average weight – 58kg (range 56-61kg)
- Ewe lambs' lamb average weight – 21kg (range 14-23kg)
- Average age in days on 14 May 2020 – 43 days
- Estimating a birth weight of 3.5kg, DLWG estimated at >0.4kg per day

Ewe lambs at Halghton Hall

EIP

22 APPROVED LIVESTOCK THEMED PROJECTS

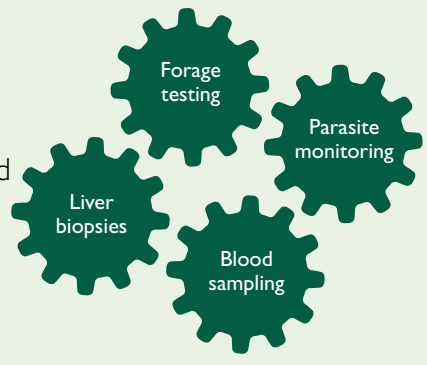
working with

133 FARMERS AND FORESTERS

EIPWALES

Implementing advanced nutritional management in the Welsh sheep industry

A new study with a group of farmers in north Wales focused on detailed monitoring to inform decision making around the nutrition of breeding ewes. Using the collected information allowed bespoke advice to be developed for each flock which also reacted to other factors including forage availability and weather conditions.



Lessons learned from this detailed approach:

- Body condition scoring is an effective way of monitoring ewe health.
- Scanning is an important tool for indicating the flock's potential lamb crop. If this lamb crop is not achieved then investigations as to why are required.
- Nutritional planning can be facilitated using blood sampling. The group found measuring energy and protein status towards the end of pregnancy particularly helpful to fine tune diets.
- Parasite control is fundamental to the health and productivity of the sheep flock.
- Trace elements have to be dealt with individually for each flock as investigations revealed huge variations between farms.

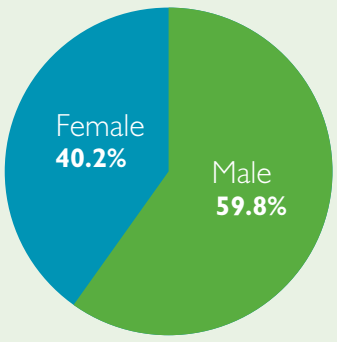
Webinars

Below are examples of webinars delivered during this period.

Managing the growing lamb – 05/05/2020

In this webinar, guest speaker Lesley Stubbings discussed lamb growth expectations up to weaning. As an independent sheep specialist, Lesley focused on areas such as the impact of worm control on growth and grass quality. 115 unique viewers were present at this webinar. Click here to watch.

The pie chart shows the gender split of the viewers of this webinar.



Milking efficiency: more milk less time – 24/06/2020

In this webinar, Tom Greenham from Advanced Milking explained how to assess initial milking efficiency levels, how to improve efficiency and also provided information on the findings of a recent research project undertaken by Advance Milking on what levels of milking efficiency are normal in Wales and the rest of the UK. This webinar was one of five in a series of lunchtime dairy webinars, and 17 unique viewers were present. Click here to watch.

Knowledge Exchange Hub

Technical articles published:

- LAMB PRODUCTION AND WALES: A HOLISTIC ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT
- STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES TOWARDS REDUCED LAMENESS IN CATTLE
- THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGIES FOR CATTLE FERTILITY AND CALF HEALTH
- BREEDING EWE LAMBS
- BEEF FINISHING USING HOMEGROWN CROPS
- TECHNOLOGICAL PROSPECTS FOR POULTRY LAYER PRODUCTIVITY
- IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO – GENOMIC TESTING OF FEMALE DAIRY CATTLE
- FACTORS AFFECTING SHEEP FLOCK PRODUCTIVITY
- RUMEN FILL SCORING FOR MONITORING HEALTH IN DAIRY COWS

E-learning

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

- DISBUDDING CALVES
- ANTHELMINTIC RESISTANCE ON SHEEP FARMS
- BLOWFLY STRIKE (CUTANEOUS MYIASIS, MAGGOTS)
- SHEEP SCAB

Click here to visit the website.

Training Courses

Course Name	Number of individuals trained during this period
DIY AI	19
Safe Use of Vet & Med	10
The Safe Use of Aluminium Phosphide for Vertebrate Control	9
Cattle Foot Trimming	9
Safe Use of Sheep Dip	7

Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas
Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government