July – December 2024

Protect & Enhance The Farm Ecosystem

FARMING connect
cyswllt FFERMIO

Accredited Training

5 Individuals Supported

5 Businesses Supported

106 Hours of Training

SLM Outcome	Individuals Supported
Safe Use of Sheep Dip	3
BASIS Foundation in Agronomy (Agriculture)	1
Peatland Restoration for Practitioners	1

E-learning

45 Individuals Supported

29 Businesses Supported

Modules Included	Individuals Supported
An Introduction to Sustainable Farming	8
Horticulture: Due Diligence for Small Growers	7
Diversification and Adding Value	4
Benefits to People Animals and Places	3

New modules available on BOSS included:

- Efficient Water Use (Including Harvesting and Storage)
- Building Soil Carbon
- Soil Sampling and Analysis
- Soil Health
- Managing Peatland
- Mixed Farming
- Natural Flood Management
- The Benefits of Using Rare and Native Breeds

Horticulture Training

Key themes relating to protecting and enhancing the ecosystem are embedded into training and often covered in horticulture business support sessions

Primary themes:

- Water use and harvesting
- Soil Health – including how to monitor soil moisture,
- Rich on farm diversity – Integrated Pest and Disease Management to reduce chemical use and increase biodiversity,
- Crop performance and evaluating yields to determine inputs such as fertilisers

Advisory Service

Instances of advice delivered against SLM Outcomes include:

- **769** Protect and enhance the farm ecosystem – Efficient water use (including harvesting and storage)
- **821** Protect and enhance the farm ecosystem – Lowering the risk of diffuse pollution (water quality)
- **44** Protect and enhance the farm ecosystem – Managing and creating in-field and semi-natural habitats)
- **906** Protect and enhance the farm ecosystem – Mixed farming
- **524** Protect and enhance the farm ecosystem – Natural flood management
- **1375** Protect and enhance the farm ecosystem – Soil health

Feedback: Good report outlining the crop requirements for the farm and recommendations for how to better use our own FYM.

Strategic Awareness Events

9 Events **140** Attendees

Topics included:

- Grow your own protein
- Healthy Soil
- Agri-Pollution

Clinics

105 Clinics completed

Topics included: Soils | Grassland | Nutrition

Surgeries

70 Surgeries completed

Topics included: Infrastructure

Podcast

Episode 105: Fferm Glascoed – Improving Efficiency

Discussion Groups

Protect and enhance the farm ecosystem

57 Meetings held

369 Attendees

134 hours of CPD

	Number of meetings
Soil Health	33
Mixed farming	22
Benefits of using rare and native breeds	17
Managing and creating in-field and semi-natural habitats	3
Lowering the risk of diffuse pollution (water quality)	8
Efficient water use (including harvesting and storage)	4
Natural flood management	3

Key words: Grass based, Run-off prevention, Home grown fodder, Direct drilling, Reducing Nitrogen use.

Mentoring

620 hours of mentoring have taken place

- Lowering the risk of diffuse pollution (water quality) **156**
- Managing and creating in-field and semi-natural habitats **50**
- Soil health **16**
- Efficient water use (including harvesting and storage) **8**
- Mixed farming **5**
- Benefits of using rare and native breeds **4**

Extracts from mentoring diaries include:

1) Since the last mentoring session, the mentee has managed to input all his fields but wanted some help with section 3.1 of the Agri Pollution Workbook.

2. Ellie and Mike run a small 52 acres farm, with working horses. We discussed their plans to diversify and develop the business to include the sale of meat and vegetable boxes, accommodation to guests, as well as running more courses

3. We walked the land identifying various plants and trees and talking about what they indicated about soil conditions etc. We discussed the management of the unimproved 'rhos' type fields in the wetter areas.

Agrisgôp

14 Agrisgôp meetings have taken place

- Soil health **11**
- Lowering the risk of diffuse pollution (water quality) **4**
- Managing and creating in-field and semi-natural habitats **2**
- Efficient water use (including harvesting and storage) **2**

Groups that met during this period focussed on:

1. The seaweed group met to reflect on the information shared at the Our Farms Walk at Tanygraig and discussed the progress they had seen whilst using the Seaweed Biostimulant on their own farms. It was encouraging to have learnt the results of the initial trial at Tanygraig which has shown an 18% increase in yield in the silage cut from the area where Biostimulant was used in comparison to where it was not used.
2. The biological livestock systems group had a discussion about detailed soil biological analysis and how to do this with an objective to balance the microbes and fungi for harmony above and below ground. They also discussed: how livestock grazing willow can reduce worm burden in the flock, diversity of plants in the sword and reducing the stocking density, and not grazing so hard to allow cover over the soil. Ensuring more grass cover can reduce soil runoff into watercourses. Improving soil health can also reduce the need to apply artificial fertilisers which reduces leaching of nitrogen and phosphorus into watercourses.
3. Another meeting for the biological livestock systems group discussed the integration of agroforestry and solvopasture into grazing systems which can help retain more water by improving soil infiltration and water retention. Trees and shrubs enhance soil's ability to absorb and hold water, reducing runoff and improving water quality. Additionally, agroforestry can mitigate the impact of flooding by increasing the land's capacity to retain water.

Our Farms Network

Our Farms – Farm Walks: A showcase of agricultural Excellence – during the events the following projects were highlighted and discussed with attendees:

- Biodiversity Baselines
- Common Habitats Found On Our Farms
- Breeding Bird Surveys Across Our Farms
- Earthworms On Our Farms
- Habitats For Pollinators

www.gov.wales/farmingconnect

Ariennir gan **Lywodraeth Cymru**

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