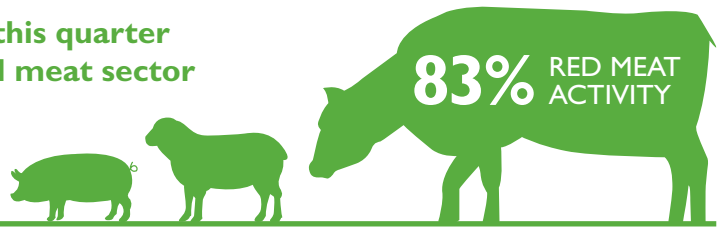
RED MEAT DASHBOARD
May 2020 – August 2020

FARMING connect
cyswllt FFERMIO

% of all activity in this quarter relevant to the red meat sector



Demonstration Network

Rhiwaedog: Improving efficiency from grass

A grazing trial was conducted during spring 2020 at Rhiwaedog that focused on the benefits of using standard versus protected urea. Protected and standard urea was applied to separate grass plots at a rate of 35kg per acre, therefore supplying 32 units of nitrogen per acre (40kgN/ha). The outcome of this trial concluded that using protected urea this spring led to an estimated 30% increase in grass growth (2,100kgDM/ha from standard urea versus 2,800kgDM/ha from protected urea).

4 weeks post urea application:

Protected urea
Sward height 31cm

Standard urea
Sward height 23cm

Another element of the project compared grass silage yields from plots treated with ammonium nitrate versus protected urea. 75kg per acre of protected urea was applied on one plot, as well as 100kg per acre of ammonium nitrate (69 unitsN/acre) on a separate plot.

Following a yield assessment it was determined that using protected urea on silage crops reduced grass growth by around 20%. This is most likely due to prolonged dry conditions (15+ dry days) breaking down the protective layer on the protected urea.

Bryn: Exploring beef enterprise performance

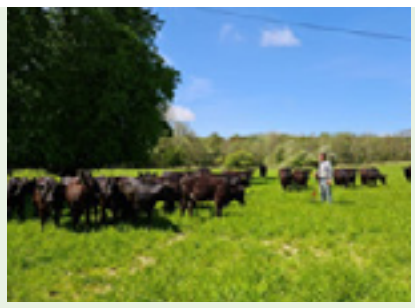
The main aim of the project at Bryn demonstration site is to determine the performance of the beef enterprise, focusing on the cost effectiveness of selling stores versus finishing cattle as bull beef.

At Bryn, bulls received 1.2t/head of feed compared to the industry target of 1.7t/head. This resulted in an average liveweight at slaughter of 620kg and an average carcass weight of 344kg, with a killing-out percentage of 55%. 93% of the carcasses met abattoir specifications. The project also discovered that bulls could be sold 21 days earlier than stores, resulting in a feed cost saving at housing of £1.50/head/day.

The project concluded that finishing bull calves as bull beef is a more cost effective option at Bryn. Compared to the £13,980 these animals would have totalled by selling them as store cattle, with the value of straw sold and feed consumed accounted for, the business captured an additional £1,600 by rearing them as bulls.

Of the 75 calves born at Bryn in spring 2020, 34 are bulls. They will shortly be introduced to a ration utilising homegrown grain. The financial worth of this additional grain to sell is £620, however, liveweight gain by utilising this grain is worth approximately £1,998.

Cefnllan: Managing the change – sucklers to dairy

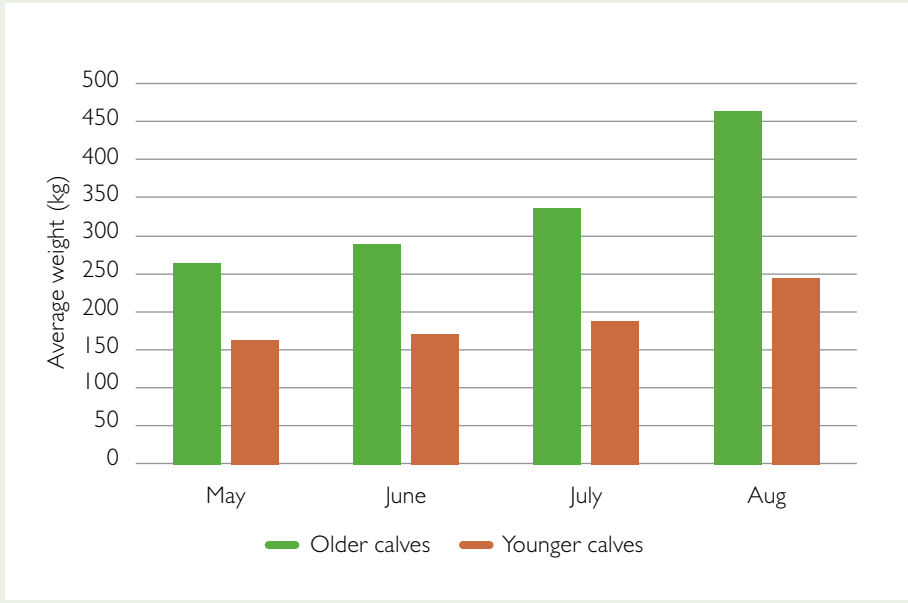


The aim of this project is to investigate the feasibility of changing from a traditional suckler cow enterprise to rearing, growing and finishing bought-in Angus cross dairy calves, with the aim to do this on a low-cost grass and forage-based system.

100 weanling Angus cross dairy calves arrived at Cefnllan at the end of April 2020, weighing an average of 140kg. The calves have all been electronically tagged on arrival at the farm, ensuring precision monitoring of each individual calf when weighing monthly.

Calves have been performing well off grass, with average daily liveweight gain (DLWG) at the end of August at 1.2kg for the older calves, and 0.8-0.9kg for the younger calves which are approximately 7-8 months of age.

Figure 1: Average weight (kg) for older and younger calves at Cefnllan



Glanmynys: Focusing on sheep health and performance

Following a successful lambing, lambs were weaned at an average weight of 27kg at 12 weeks of age. On average, ewe body condition score post weaning was at 2, the same score recorded pre-lambing. Although animals were vaccinated against orf, it has still been an issue within the 2020 lamb crop. Lambs were also vaccinated against clostridial diseases with Bravoxin, however losses due to pneumonia are still occuring. During weaning, 105 ewes were selected for culling due to age, mastitis or prolapse mainly.

Smart Shot was given to the lambs in the spring and results in August show that they all have satisfactory trace element levels with vitamin B12 in particular improved since the Smart Shot was given.

A post-weaning/ pre-tupping investigation involving blood sampling ewes for trace elements was performed during August. Ewes were blood sampled to monitor copper, selenium, cobalt and zinc levels. Results showed that no copper supplementation was required, however supplementation with selenium in bolus form would be beneficial if administered pre-tupping. The addition of cobalt and zinc could also be beneficial, however the difference is likely to be marginal.

Animal Health & Welfare Workshops

5 WORKSHOPS held with **41** ATTENDEES

Workshops held:

- Antibiotic Resistance
- Understanding Johne's Disease

KE Hub

Technical articles produced by the KE HUB;

- THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGIES FOR CATTLE FERTILITY AND CALF HEALTH
- THE USE OF WOOL IN COMPOST AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE APPLICATIONS
- BEEF FINISHING USING HOMEGROWN CROPS
- FACTORS AFFECTING SHEEP FLOCK PRODUCTIVITY
- BREEDING EWE LAMBS

Webinars

38 RED MEAT THEMED WEBINARS held with **1,891** ATTENDEES

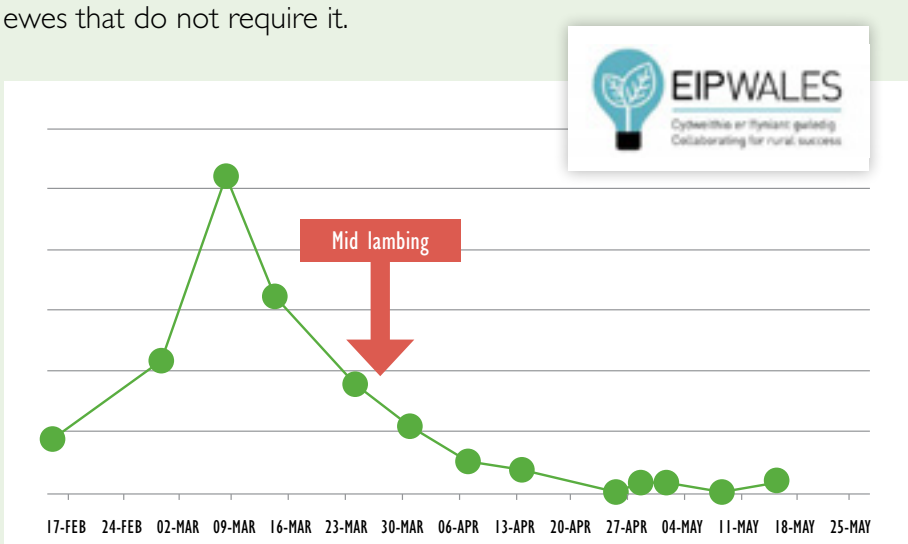
Examples of webinars held include:

- PIG DISEASE PREVENTION AND MAXIMISING PERFORMANCE
- USING BODY CONDITION SCORING TO MANAGE FLOCK HEALTH ANDPERFORMANCE

EIP

Reducing reliance on anthelmintics for ewes around lambing through more targeted treatments

Worming ewes at lambing time is still common practice but this project is investigating whether it is possible to identify the ewes that really need it to reduce the unnecessary use of anthelmintic treatments. This EIP project involves a group of six farmers who are already engaged in SCOPS management techniques and body condition scoring. Building on this expertise they are now looking at ewe faecal egg counts around the peri-parturient period and matching that with antibody levels in their saliva. Results from the first lambing period to be monitored in 2020 showed significant variation between farms in terms of the extent, timing and duration of the peri-parturient rise (the rise in faecal egg counts around the lambing period). The results from one mob of ewes are illustrated in the graph below. The project will continue to gather information to see if it is possible to develop bespoke advice to reduce worm egg loadings on pasture while reducing anthelmintic usage in ewes that do not require it.



Example: FEC counts from one of the project farms for the monitired mob of ewes scanned with twins. Only ewes in BCS <3 were drenched around the time of lambing.

Mentoring Programme

19 NEW RED MEAT FARMERS ACCESSING THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

433 RED MEAT FARMERS currently being mentored

83% OF ALL MENTEES ARE RED MEAT FARMERS

8 OF THESE ARE PIG FARMERS

New mentees sought advice on various topics including:

- Sustainable land management
- Benchmarking

Discussion Groups

68 RED MEAT DISCUSSION GROUP MEETINGS held with **523** ATTENDEES

Number of Red Meat Discussion Groups: 33

Case Study

Severn Valley Sheep Discussion Group

This digital meeting discussed the role of trace elements/minerals in a viable lamb production unit with Fiona Lovatt from Flock Health.

75% of the group agreed that there is confusion about which (if any) minerals to give lambs.

Points of discussion included:

- Management
- Energy
- Water
- Disease
- Forage
- Protein
- Soil

Asked from where and in which form do sheep get trace elements/ minerals, the group suggested:

- Forage
- Bought in feed/ buckets/blocks
- The environment
- Drenches/boluses/ injectables
- Water

Fiona explained that there is a relationship between many different minerals and showed the mineral antagonist wheel. Care must be taken when supplementing one mineral that it does not negatively affect uptake or absorption of another mineral.

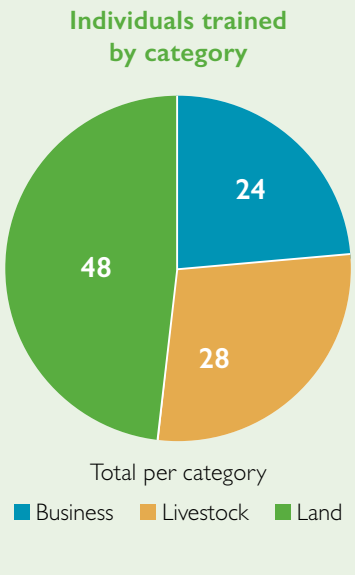
When discussing forms of supplementation, Fiona warned that not all boluses are of the same quality and even if they do contain the minerals that they advertise, it does not necessarily mean that those minerals are released into the rumen.

71% of the group members said they would be interested in doing a mineral audit, which will help identify mineral levels on farms and provide the business with knowledge of their farm's status and whether they have deficiencies they need to correct.

Training

During this period, **100** instances of face to face training were delivered to the Red Meat sector.

The chart below shows the breakdown of individuals trained by category during this period.



The most popular courses in each category were:

	Claims
ROUGH TERRAIN TELESCOPIC LIFT TRUCK	18
SAFE USE OF SHEEP DIP	13
EMERGENCY FIRST AID AT WORK	12
SAFE USE OF VET & MED	11

E-learning

Some of the e-learning courses completed within this period

- NEMATODE INFESTATIONS IN SHEEP
- BLUE TONGUE IN CATTLE AND SHEEP

Click here to visit the website.

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

www.gov.wales/farmingconnect