

LOCHABER MONITOR FARM– ANNUAL REPORT YEAR 2

Farm name **Strone Farm, Lochaber Monitor Farm, Banavie, Fort William, PH33 7PB**

Strone Farm is run by Chris and Malcolm Cameron as a family partnership and in total the business farms 1,788 hectares.

Cattle: 40 Limousin cows producing store calves. Cows are in-wintered.

Sheep: 500 Cheviot ewes, producing store lambs. Mainly Lleynt tups and hoggs kept as replacements. Ewes lambed away.

Management Group: James Colston (Chair) John MacAulay, Paolo Berardelli, Peter Kennedy, and Ewen Campbell

Vision and Aims of the Strone Farm Business

- Financially sustainable and provide a living for the family – a fair return on the time invested.
- To make enough net profit to allow for re-investment back into the business.
- Mixed farming is important to ensure all land is actively farmed.
- Chris takes more control of the management of the business, including bookwork and livestock records over the next five years.

MEETING TOPICS

The meeting topics were decided by a Management group made up of the Monitor Farmers, facilitators and five local farmers. They were designed to explore the main issues facing Lochaber farming, which is predominately cattle and sheep hill and mountain farming, producing store progeny.

Plans for Future Meetings	Proposed Topics
18 th March 2019	Succession Planning
13 th June 2019	Rotational Grazing How to improve utilisation of grass
Sept 2019	Alternative enterprises and diversification Or Livestock housing options (weather pushing stock inside, but straw costs rising)
Nov 2019	Farm Support Payments: the latest on the development of post Brexit support structures
Jan 2020	Nutrients in grassland, including Phosphate sorption capacity
Early March 2020	Open day - Sum up and conclusions from the project

YEAR TWO MEETINGS SUMMARY

Date	Attendance	Aims	Outcomes
Feb 2018	75	To explore different views on the future for hill and mountain land use – real views and opinions.	Good contact between local farmers and policy makers Definitions of public good explored Store lamb marketing policies challenged
March 2018	10	Explore the options for fattening lambs on the west coast	Lamb finishing trial set up Objectives for new land rented at Fassfern set
June 2018	20	Open day	Key messages and conclusions so far were reviewed Explore future plans for the project
Nov 2018	27	Explore best practice fluke management and Fluke resistance threat on West coast farms	Fluke testing from Stone and 4 other farms Fluke forecasting Resistance to treatments explored
Jan 2019	22	The value of cattle genetics. The future of cattle EID Lamb finishing trial results	EBV updates Raise awareness of cattle EID proposals Successful conclusion of lambs finishing trial
<p>The Business Group has been established and a total of 5 meetings have been held, mostly revolving around benchmarking, but also including 2 farm visits – one to the Angus MF and one to a local farm. Feedback from the Business Group is excellent. Future plans include a visit to Holyrood in March 2019</p>			

ATTENDANCE

Those attending the meetings at Stone travel for up to 2 hours, from Cowal in the south, Inverness-shire in the north and Mallaig in the west. With the spread-out nature of farming in this remote area, attendance are judged as being good

- Total attendance so far (year 1 and 2 combined) is 361. Average of 33 at each meeting
- Some attend all meetings, other will pick and choose by the topic.

Year 2 has allowed the project to develop and start producing results, highlights were the Vision for Hills meeting and the lamb finishing trial.

FACILITATOR CONTACT DETAILS

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