

ABOUT BORDERS MONITOR FARM

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| Farm name | Whitriggs, Denholm, TD9 8QR |
| Meeting Number | 12 Visit to Moredun Research Institute and AK Stoddart |
| Meeting Date | Wednesday 26th September |
| Next Meeting | Wednesday 7th November |

Whitriggs Farm, near Denholm, is run by Robert and Lesley Mitchell and their son Stuart, with support from Stuart's brother, Alistair, during busy periods.

The Mitchells currently farm 442 hectares of mainly semi-permanent and permanent grassland.

Cattle; 140 Shorthorn X and AAX, with all calves not required as replacements finished on the farm.

Sheep; In transition following MV issues.

Arable; 28ha of Wheat & Oats fed to cattle.

Deer; 160 Young hinds, due to have first calf in 2019

Management Team; Andrew Tullie (Chair), Robert Catlin, Scott Girvan, Giles Henry, Megan Mabon, Andrew Robinson (Vet) and Jonny Williams.



A small group travelled off farm to visit both the Moredun Research Institute at Roslin and the AK Stoddart cutting plant in Broxburn.

KEY MESSAGES

- Moredun have world class facilities and should be used more by the industry
- Funding is tight for all areas of the industry but it is important to retain these valuable assets to meet future challenges.
- Carcase specification is important, not only to the uniformity of the final product but to the efficiency and smooth running of the processors.
- Take time to make sure you understand the specification of buyers, does your product meet it and give you maximum return?
- Do we all fully understand what research is happening which will affect us in the future? If not are we doing enough to influence what type of research is happening?

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

Moredun Institute

First stop was to the Moredun Institute where the group were given an informative introduction by chair Iain Duncan Millar and Beth Wells. The group met with a number of scientists. They were given presentation on the latest research on Johnes disease in sheep flocks from Craig Watkins. Phil Skuce showed the Moredun 'fight the fluke' animation



<https://www.moredun.org.uk/foundation/outreach/animation-series> and discussed fluke and round worms. The group had a great opportunity to ask lots of questions and get involved in discussions. Farm Manager Manus Graham took the group on an extensive tour of the farm research centre and demonstrated where various trials and research were taking place. The group agreed it was important to work closely with the Moredun for the remainder of the project.

AK Stoddarts

Next stop was a visit to AK Stoddarts meat processing site at Broxburn. Jim Ford coordinated a full tour for the group where they were able to visit all processes of the cutting hall and chills. The group also learned about the current labour shortages in the meat trade and the measures that Stoddarts were taking to overcome them. Also the new product development work Stoddarts were doing with the dry aged beef.



OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES

- Opportunity to learn more from Moredun Researchers and in particular bring some of their expertise to larger meetings in the Borders to share learning.
- As Whitriggs now sell store there are opportunities to work with buyers to ensure cattle are of the quality and type required to enable maximum price to be gained through meeting the needs of the market.

FACILITATOR CONTACT DETAILS

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