

ABOUT CORSKIE MONITOR FARM

Farm Name **Corskie Farm, Garmouth, Fochabers, Moray, IV32 7NN**

Meeting Number **12- Recycling of plastics and Grassland management- (dry conditions and weed control)**

Meeting Date **Tuesday 7th May 2019**

Next Meeting **Tuesday 11th June 2019**

Corskie Farm is run by Iain Green in partnership with his mother and father. The family have been farming in the area for over 60 years. Over 1,440 hectares (3,560 acres) in total is currently farmed by the business.

Arable: The main arable enterprise consists of growing Spring Barley (535ha) for malting. Winter Wheat (86ha), Winter barley (70ha) and Spring Oats (11ha) are also grown, with the majority being used on-farm as livestock feed.

Cattle: The family run 380 cross cow suckler herd, alongside a 200 cow pedigree Simmental herd. Simmental and shorthorn bulls as well as AI is used to spread out calving across the year.

Sheep: There are 600 Mules and Mule cross Texel sheep which are lambled in April.

Pigs: At Corskie there is an indoor breeding herd of 380 sows, producing breeding gilts for Rattlerow.

"The different farm enterprises are fairly well integrated," Iain says, "as well as growing our own feed through the cereals side, we also use the manure from the livestock on the arable fields and pasture. We apply it differently in different areas, using our soil and yield maps to make sure we are controlling our inputs and maintaining good soil fertility and nutrient balance."

Management Group

Andrew Anderson (Chair), Hugh Thomson, Robbie Newlands, Martin Birse, Robert Manson, Charlie Gray, Cameron MacIver, Ian McHattie, Stewart Grant, Stewart Stronach and Stewart Rothenie.

Hugh Thomson chaired this community group meeting.

The line-up of guest speakers for the day included:

- Paddy Jack, DLF Seeds Ltd
- Samantha Stewart, SAC Consulting



KEY MESSAGES

- **Recycling Farm Plastics:**
 - Samantha Stewart discussed the new legislation regarding the recycling of farm wastes, concentrating on plastic in particular as well as reviewing the storage, transporting and recycling options.
 - Samantha asked the group if anyone had already arranged plastic recycling facilities, the replies showed that the majority of farm business were storing plastics until they knew more about the options available locally.
 - Waste hierarchy:
 - Recycle – recycle where possible;
 - Recover – send waste to an authorised ‘Energy from Waste’ facility (none locally);
 - Dispose of waste to landfill – only as a last resort.
 - New farm waste recycling rules are enforced by SEPA, licences etc. also issued by SEPA.
 - Transporting waste:
 - Transporting your **own** waste ONLY:
 - Register as a Professional Collector & Transporter of Waste - free and valid indefinitely (unless cancelled).
 - Transporting anyone else’s waste, other than your own:
 - Must be a Registered Waste Carrier (RWC) – cost is £210 and valid for 3 years.
 - Storage of plastic waste on-farm:
 - Not sustainable to store plastics on-farm indefinitely:
 - Quality assurance schemes will check that plastics are not stored on-farm for more than 2 years (keep receipts/certificates of waste recycling/disposal).
 - Storage of own plastics on-site prior to collection = No SEPA registration required;
 - Compact/Bale own plastics on-site prior to collection = SEPA registration required for a free Para. 27 exemption;
 - Setting up as a collection site for others to bring waste with you = speak with SEPA to determine whether registration is required.
 - There is a requirement to sort/separate plastic types prior to collection.
 - Locally available recycling/disposal options:
 - W & W Mackie, the Solway Recycling agent in North-East Scotland.
 - On-farm plastic waste collections and supplier of recycling bins and liners.
 - North East Recycling Services, operating from designated collection sites across the NE.
 - Drop off plastics for recycling at designated collection sites on specific dates.
 - Nearest current collection point in Cornhill, possible new location in Elgin soon.
 - J. Gordon Williamson Ltd., recycling and skip hire facilities based in Elgin.
 - Drop off plastics for recycling at JGW base in Elgin.
 - Moray Council Landfill (only available short term & should only be used as last resort)
 - Drop off plastics at Spey Bay landfill site for disposal (charges & tax apply).
 - Consider reducing the use of plastics on-farm where possible, resulting in less waste to recycle or dispose of.

- **Grassland Management:**

- Paddy Jack from DLF Seeds Ltd talked through several grassland management options and choosing the correct seed mixtures for different farming systems.
- **Grassland mixtures for sandy Soils/dry conditions**
 - At the meeting we visited the grassland mixture trials which were sown in late 2017 to see how they coped coming through the dry summer 2018. The field still looked healthy and the benefit of the inclusion of improved varieties of cocksfoot and festulolium was evident.
 - Iain had also followed advice to graze the field during winter with sheep to encourage the sward to tiller and thicken out, all agreed that this had worked and the sward had more density to it than the previous year.
 - Details of the grassland mixtures in a separate document and were also discussed in the May 2018 Meeting report.
- **Weed Management in Grassland**
 - High levels of weeds in grassland can significantly impact the performance of the sward and in turn relate to reduced performance in livestock through feed quality and quantity.
 - Low levels of weeds in grassland will have little impact and their removal may not be cost effective.
 - Where possible use physical or environmental control of weeds rather than using chemicals. Removing/reducing weeds without using chemical include options such as:
 - Improved drainage – discourages rushes, buttercup, moss etc.
 - Ensure soil is at optimum pH for grassland – ensures grassland is competitive and productive, reducing chance of unsown species (i.e. weeds) thriving.
 - Maintain soil fertility – this improves grassland competitiveness and helps to reduce docks and thistles getting a hold.
 - Use grazing livestock to remove weeds, where possible.
 - In newly established grasses annual weeds are generally not very persistent if removed before seeding in the year of establishment.
 - Sheep can be used to graze out ragwort when at rosette stage.
 - Grazing a sward hard, leaving the weed species standing taller can allow them to be topped selectively. However, consider growth stage of the weed plants, in case they already have viable seed heads which could be dispersed onto the field for next years weed crop.
 - If herbicides are required, speak to a BASIS qualified agronomist for advice tailored to your weed species, density and consider clover safe options where there is clover.
- **Over-Seeding**
 - Timing is essential for a successful over-seed;
 - Preferably don't fertilise the grass (this only feeds the older established grassland plants as the new plants do not have a large enough root system yet.)
 - BUT do ensure soil fertility and structure is good.
 - Over-seeding best done after the last cut of silage or after rotational hard grazing, so that seeds get best contact with the soil and access to light.

- After drilling graze some low production stock (e.g. dry ewes) for up to 10 days;
- Remove stock once the new seedling shoots begin to grow to about 2cm above ground to allow grassland to grow and the new grasses to establish.
- Choose an appropriate grassland variety/mixture, look for fast germinating grasses.
- Increased success has been noted with disc/slot drills, particularly on older/denser swards.
- Cross drilling may be beneficial, especially when the drill spacing is wider. This helps to increase ground coverage.
- Rolling after drilling (Cambridge roller, if possible) increases the seed contact directly to the soil, aiding faster establishment of the new grass plants.

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

- Over 30 farmers attended the meeting discussing the main topics of plastic recycling and grassland management.
- Everyone met in the grain shed at Corskie, where Hugh Thomson (management group) welcomed everyone to the meeting before handing over to Iain Green for the farm update – details below.
- Samantha Stewart highlighted plastic recycling rules and options available in the local area.
- The group travelled onto the fields at Ferniefield and Corskie to look at and discuss grassland management, mixtures and varieties, weed management and over-seeding with Paddy Jack.

FARMERS UPDATE

Iain updated the group on what was happening on the farm, as follows:

Arable

- Spring barley (1,848acres) all sown between 18th March and 24th April 2019.
- Four SB varieties sown as main crop this year including Fairing, Laureate, Diablo and Asteroid (C1 seed from France).
- SB trial plots (0.5ha each) have also been sown, malting and feed varieties sown. We will see these at the July meeting on-farm.
- Winter Wheat & Winter Barley are looking lush, anticipated that more growth regulator will be required this year to keep crop standing.
- EFA options selected this year include fallow, catch crop and green cover.
- Plans to sow turnips after fallow period to increase winter forage supplies. Forage crops will also be sown after Winter Barley harvest.
- Rainfall 2019 to date = 226mm, of which 168mm fell within the month of April.
- Changed the main drilling tractor this year to a Fendt, where the tyre pressure can be altered from the cab (after seeing work done at previous MF meeting).
 - Tractor running at under 10psi in the field to reduce soil compaction.
 - Cost of renewing the tractor has been calculated at £14.97/working hour.
 - However additional benefits also include a longer warranty of 7,000 hours.

Cattle

- Spring calving almost complete:
 - 14 commercials to calf,
 - 18 pedigrees to calf.
- 17 sets of twins so far this year.
- Laura continues to pelvic measure heifers.
- Batching commercial cows for bulling SHX to SIM bull & SIMX to SH bull; smaller cow size – but would like to look further into effects on calf size/growth weights/gross price/profit margins.
- Winter forage supplies update – just managed to get through winter with enough forage, due to rationing work completed as part of MF project.
- Preparation has begun for the Royal Highland Show (first show of the season).
- The bull sales in 2019, so far, have averages £4,740/bull. Down £1,500 on 2018 at the moment.
 - Plenty of young, promising bulls coming through.
- 70 store cattle sold in 2019, to date, averaging £1,001/head. More to sell.
- The next batch of finishing bulls have just been moved onto the Beef Monitor.
- No autumn born calves weaned yet.
- Scanned a batch of 38 commercial heifers, 2 not in calf.

Sheep

- 2019 commercial lambing was a success, compared to 2018.
 - In 2018 4% of ewes/gimmers were lost pre/post lambing.
 - Carried out blood tests, have added minerals into their diet and using Vitality buckets, resulting in only 6 ewes lost in total pre/post lambing 2019.
 - Part of the success put down to managing the gimmers along with the ewes since tupping time, rather than as a separate group. Encouraged the gimmers to come in for feed and less occurrences of twin lamb in the flock.
- Pedigree Texel flock produced 107 Texel lambs in 2019.
 - Plus the spare recipient gimmers were served naturally, resulting in some strong commercial lambs.
 - All lambs treated with 'Ovivac'.
- A few of the 2018 lamb crop left to sell, they have been moved onto concentrate feed in a hopper to finish them quickly.

OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES

- Possibility of another dry summer?
- Forage stock on-farm at all-time low. Provisions in place for 2019 to try and increase silage/forage on-farm for 2019/20 winter.
- Lush winter crops, need to keep an eye on them for disease pressure and timings for growth regulator application.

ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

- Examine cattle on Beef Monitor system and track weight gains.
- Choose a plastic recycling method for waste farm plastics for W J & J Green.
- **Next meeting:** Tuesday 11th June 2019, 1.30pm, Corskie, Garmouth, IV32 7NN, also travelling to Innes Estate. Everyone is welcome.

FACILITATOR CONTACT DETAILS

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