

ABOUT CORSKIE MONITOR FARM

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

Meeting Number **10 Succession Planning – Heather Wildman**

Meeting Date **Tuesday 4th December 2018**

Next Meeting **Tuesday 12th February 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 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 Rothnie.

Planning for the Future at Corskie

Iain said “We wanted to look at succession planning because I think it’s something quite important that possibly a lot of farming families tend to ignore, perhaps sadly until it’s too late or they haven’t done anything early enough”.

Iain counts himself lucky that his own father and grandfather involved him in the business from a young age, and he wants to do the same for his daughters.



Laura and Iain Green with the speaker Heather Wildman

KEY MESSAGES

Farm Business Succession:

- Succession is a sensitive and often ignored subject for many farming families in Scotland.
- Heather Wildman talked to the group regarding the benefits of planning for the future, including the importance of having a vision for yourself and your business.
- Heather encouraged people to note down and voice their personal and business goals, and to share these with the family/business partners. It is said that these goals are more likely to be achieved once it has been communicated.
- At the meeting Heather Wildman discussed in detail the need for planning the future for a farming business of any size.
- Looking at where you are at right now can help you prepare for your own future and for the business. Important questions to ask yourself are stated below. Once you have the answers to these, then you can start putting a plan into place.
 - Do you know what you want?
 - Are you ready to make the change?
 - Have you a time frame in mind?
 - Do you have an exit/retirement plan?
 - Have you done the numbers/what is the reality?
 - Do you know what your spouse/children want?
 - Have you discussed this with your family?
- Attendees were encouraged to write down their 5 and 10 - year goals and plans, along with what and who they required to help them make their plan successful. Small steps are an important part of starting the succession process, the list below suggests an outline of where to start:
 - Create a plan
 - Take advice and keep control
 - Communicate with the family/business partners
 - Use a facilitator (if required), useful to ensure meetings cover all points necessary
 - Update Wills/Power of Attorney
 - Know your numbers and options

Heather gave a 'Check List' of useful information for meetings with professional, legal and advisory teams.

- Legal Wills
- Power(s) of attorney
- Property deeds
- Mortgages and loan information
- Past and current tax records
- Past and current financial records and statements
- Past and current performance records
- Bank account information
- Savings and off farm investments
- Current debts and liabilities
- List of suppliers (lawyer, accountant, nutritionist etc)

Land Ownership

- Title references
- Acreages
- Relative location of properties
- Mortgagees
- Diversification projects/ownership

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

- Over 40 farmers attended the meeting discussing the main topic of farm business succession along with the shortage of winter forage and Iain's farm update.
- Everyone met in the main hall at the Fochabers Public Institute for lunch before kicking off with a lively farm update from Iain, with plenty of questions from the attendees.
- Samantha Stewart updated the attendees on the winter forage at Corskie.
 - Mild winter to date, all cattle have remained outside, the silage pit has not been opened yet, the forage crops have not been started and 180 heifers are away-wintered;
 - This has led to significant feed savings at Corskie, due to less cattle to feed and less days throughout the winter to feed the herd;
 - Although it was thought that forage stocks would fall short of requirements, recalculations suggest that Corskie will now just have enough feed.
 - However, this will require careful management and monitoring throughout the rest of the winter to ensure that they don't fall short before cattle can be turned out in the Spring.
- Heather Wildman from Savior Associates was the main speaker and focus of the meeting. She covered the importance of succession planning and how to begin putting a plan in place while also encouraging attendees to note down their goals and discuss them with others at the meeting.

FARMERS UPDATE

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

Arable

- Winter crops are looking well, sprays applied.
- 2019 fertiliser has been purchased, some already home. All nitrogen is liquid.
- 10% of the 2019 harvest has been booked on contract £159/t + premium.
 - Looking at 2020 harvest also, currently able to book at £158/t + premium.
- 600acres of the 2019 spring cropping area has been ploughed and lime applied as required.
- 2019 spring barley varieties to be grown are Laureate, Fairing and Diablo.

Cattle

- October Bull Sales: All 6 bulls sold to average £5,670, top of £7,350. Four went to repeat customers.
 - Laura's bull sold to £6,500.
- Spring calves being weaned today, they are weighing well.
- Spring herd have been scanned. 14% are empty. However, some were repeats from the Autumn herd, after deducting these from the group, the group scanned at 9% empty.
 - All cows are given one second chance to move once from Spring/Autumn herd, if they fail to hold in-calf after moving then they are culled.
- Beef Monitor Unit update: proving very useful on-farm.
 - Picked up changes in feed ration as animals stopped gaining weight when the barley in the ration was increased too much; able to alter ration and reduce barley %. It took the group 2 weeks to recover and begin putting on weight again after the change in diet.

- 16 finishing bulls left in the group to sell. Current average deadweight is 398kg, selected for slaughter at approx. 710kg LW, equating to a kill out of 56%.
- Heifers away-wintered in cubicle housing.
 - Costing 10.5p/day for sawdust bedding compared to 30-50p/day for straw bedding.

Sheep

- Rams are out with the flock.
- 30-35% of 2018 lambs left to sell. Finished lambs last sold 3 weeks ago @ £4.02/kg DW.
- Remaining lambs have been dosed for worms.
- Cull ewes have also been sold.

OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES

- Opportunity to set personal and business visions/goals and to make a plan to reach them.
- Chance to speak to family to begin succession conversations over the festive period.
- Challenge from lack of forage and bedding for straw. Look at what is in stock on-farm now and plan for remainder of the winter months.

ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

- Monitor feed stocks and tweak cattle rations as required to balance forage for the remaining winter months.
- **Next meeting:** Tuesday 12th February 2019 at Corskie Farm, Garmouth, IV32 7NN. Topics include cattle behaviour, cattle handling and EID. Everyone is welcome.

FACILITATOR CONTACT DETAILS

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