

ABOUT CORSKIE MONITOR FARM

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

Meeting Number **07 Pelvic Measure Measurement, N fertiliser sources and grassland mixtures**

Meeting Date **Monday 28th May 2018**

Next Meeting **Tuesday 10th July 2018**

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 lambed 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.

In addition, there are also three students from SRUC Craibstone campus, who have been selected to sit in on Management Group meetings and then to report back to their college class.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Pelvic Measuring Demo:**
 - Mark Pearson from Moray Coast Vets demonstrated how pelvic measuring is done and how it can be used as a management tool when selecting breeding heifers for the herd or for selling.
 - Pelvic measuring is done by measuring the internal vertical and horizontal dimensions of the heifer's pelvis. It is very difficult to measure this looking at the heifer externally as cows can have larger hips, but not necessarily have a larger internal pelvic size.

- Research has shown that the pelvic size is a highly heritable trait. Therefore, by selecting breeding animals by pelvic size it would be possible to create a herd of larger pelvis cows.
- The best time to pelvic measure the heifers is at 12-14 months old or around 1-2 months before bulling. Generally, to compare groups of cattle, the heifers should all be of similar age.
- Larger/heavier heifers do not always have the larger pelvic measurements.
- Pelvic measuring is only part of a selection tool when deciding which animals to keep as herd replacements.
- Some of the heifers were pelvic measured before going to the bull last year, these have now calved and their calving results are on the next page.

● Liquid N vs. Bagged N:

- There has been a lot of discussion regarding liquid fertiliser vs. bagged fertiliser within the Morayshire Monitor Farm meetings.
- This year a small trial was done at Corskie to see if there was any difference by looking at the crops between an area treated with liquid fertiliser versus bagged fertiliser.
 - Corskie currently apply most of their nitrogen as liquid nitrogen (Yara N35S).
 - Fertiliser application in the visual field trial were as follows:
 - 1st Application (Whole field): 175l/ha N35S = £38.50/ha (£15.58/ac)
 - 2nd Application (Majority of Field): 375kg/ha 22.4.14+S = £101.63/ha (£41.13/ac)
 - 2nd Application (Marked Strip): 214l/ha N35S + 126kg/ha MOP = £78.83/ha (£31.90/ac)
 - There was a slight difference in crop thickness, colour and assumed yield with the crop that had two liquid applications looking the slightly heavier crop.
- John Middleton from Yara discussed the options for liquid fertiliser products on-farm.
 - Liquid N can be applied very accurately and quickly, with large sprayer booms being able to cover a large expanse of ground in a relatively short period of time.
 - Reduced overlap of fertiliser applications, leading to a more even crop and less fertiliser wastage and improved profit margins.
 - Reduced storage space is required on-farm as liquid is delivered to a specially designed tank, rather than in bulk bags.

● Grass Trials at Ferniefield:

- Three grass mixtures were sown at Ferniefield in summer 2017:
 - Turbo Master, Scot Master and Corskie Special
 - Cocksfoot was added to all mixtures as the land at Ferniefield, where the soil is light and sandy, in an attempt to improve drought tolerance of the grass crop.
 - The field will predominantly be used for silage, but grazed through autumn/winter with sheep.
- Michael Mulgrew from DLF Seeds and Alan Henderson from Agrii talked the group through the different grass mixtures and improvements which are being made in grass seed varieties to boost yield and production throughout the year.
 - Included in all of the mixes sown within the field is cocksfoot, newer varieties have softer leaves which is more suitable for grazing than the older, more coarse varieties. The newer varieties are also less likely to become tussocky, especially in a silage/grazing field. Being deep rooting, cocksfoot can survive droughty conditions and is a very persistent through the summer.
 - Festulolium grasses are being developed by DLF seeds and are aimed at improving forage yield and quality over a wider range of climates/soil types. There are two main types of festulolium being developed including one based on ryegrass and one based on tall fescue. They are designed

to improve the overall performance of the grass sward but be persistent in challenging conditions. So far this crop of grass (Turbo Master) containing the festulolium is looking great, showing promising results for light soils in Morayshire.

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

- Over 50 farmers attended the meeting to see and discuss new beef technology, barley trails and the current weather situation;
- Ian McHattie chaired the meeting, welcoming everyone to Corskie on behalf of the Monitor Farm.

HEIFER DOB	MGMT. TAG	BREED	PELVIC MEASUREMENTS			CALVING EASE*	CALF SIZE**
			1	2	TOTAL		
22/11/2015	581	SMX	14	18	252	1	2
03/11/2015	580	BSHX	15	17.5	262.5	1	2
02/11/2015	579	SMX	14	19	266	2	1
24/10/2015	575	BSHX	13	15	195	4	2
09/10/2015	573	SMX	14	17	238	3	2
03/10/2015	571	SMX	14	18	252	1	2
01/10/2015	570	SMX	14.5	17	246.5	1	2
30/09/2015	568	BSHX	14	17	238	3	2
30/09/2015	569	BSHX	15	18	270	2	1
27/09/2015	567	SMX	14.5	17	246.5	2	1
16/09/2015	564	BSHX	15	17	255	2	1
15/09/2015	562	SMX	15	19	285	2	3
12/09/2015	561	BSHX	15	18	270	1	2
10/09/2015	557	SMX	13.5	18	243	1	3
10/09/2015	558	BSHX	14	18.5	259	1	3
06/09/2015	556	SMX	16	20	320	2	3
04/09/2015	555	SMX	14	18	252	1	2
01/09/2015	554	SMX	14	18	252	4	3
31/08/2015	552	SMX	14	18	252	1	3
30/08/2015	550	SMX	14	19	266	1	3
29/08/2015	547	SMX	14.5	17	246.5	2	2
29/08/2015	548	SMX	15	18	270	1	2
28/08/2015	545	SMX	13.5	17	229.5	1	2
25/08/2015	543	SMX	16	19	304	2	3
23/08/2015	540	SMX	14	17	238	1	2
23/08/2015	542	SMX	15	17	255	2	3
22/08/2015	538	BSHX	14.5	18	261	2	3
22/08/2015	539	BSHX	14.5	18	261	2	3
21/08/2015	534	SMX	16	17	272	3	3 DEADCALF
21/08/2015	536	SMX	15	18	270	1	2
20/08/2015	533	BSHX	14.5	19	275.5	2	3

* - Calving Score: 1=Easy, 2=Big Push, 3=Help, 4=Caesarean

** - Calf Size: 1=Normal, 2=Good Big Calf, 4=Very Big Calf

- Everyone met at Corskie, before being split into 3 groups touring the stations discussed in the previous section of this report.
- The group split into smaller groups to discuss the pelvic measuring results from the group of heifers measured in 2017 and calving in 2018, the pros/cons and use in practice was also discussed.
- The group discussions concluded that:
 - Pelvic measuring was a useful selection tool to use alongside other selection factors.
 - Does not always ensure an easy calving, but helps detect potential problem cows.
 - More heifers to be measured in future batches of replacement heifers in the cross and pedigree cows at the Monitor Farm.

FARMERS UPDATE

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

- First cut of silage almost complete – yields looking variable at the moment.
- Grass growth slowing up after hot dry spell of weather.
- Crops are looking well, motoring through the growth stages.
- Crops are showing very little disease pressure at the moment.
- No further barley has been forward sold due to the ever increasing futures price.
- All cattle now out at grass, except some finishing cattle which will be sold soon.
- Iain is planning some more IVF flushing with cows to boost genetics.

OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES

- If the dry weather continues it may have a detrimental effect on grass/crop growth.
- This year's lambing saw a high number of mastitis cases – something to look into further to improve on before next year's lambing.
- Forward sales of malting barley possible for 2018 & 2019 at present.

ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

- **Next meeting:** Tuesday 10th July – Open Meeting followed by BBQ

FACILITATOR CONTACT DETAILS

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