

ABOUT MORAYSHIRE MONITOR FARM

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

Meeting Number **02 - Farming in Dry Conditions**

Meeting Date **Tuesday 30th May 2017**

Next Meeting **Tuesday 11th July 2017**

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 is 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

- **Benchmarking:** *“it will be the thing you least want to do but you will get the most out of it.”* Brian Matheson, Black Isle Monitor Farm.
 - The new 'FarmBench' programme which is now available has been developed by AHDB to help understand and compare full costs of production at both enterprise and farm level.
 - The Business Group for the Morayshire Monitor Farm is now looking for members. Please contact the facilitators if you would like to be included.
- **Grassland:**
 - Before re-seeding rectify any soil structure issues (compaction, panning etc.)
 - Get soil pH correct when establishing new grass; also check P & K soil levels.
 - Ensure adequate supply of Sulphur (elemental Sulphur not SO_3) to high yielding grass crops, in particular grass for silage, suggested 12:1 ratio; i.e. 12N to 1S.
 - Choose grass seed mix to suit intended use (e.g. cutting/grazing) and soil type.
 - To get a more ground coverage, graze the new ley, preferably with sheep.
- **Arable:**
 - Longer barley straw varieties do not always guarantee higher straw yields. It was suggested that having plants with more tillers in a shorter strawed variety may do better in yield returns than taller straw varieties.
 - Consider Winter Barley to help maximise yields and also spread out harvest window.
 - Hybrid varieties becoming more widely available; Sunningdale is specifically suited to the north area.
 - Spring Barley variety plots currently being carried out at Corskie, varieties include Fairing, Dioptric, Laureate, Concerto and Scholar. Grain maltsters and distillers are looking into improved varieties
- **Livestock:**
 - Iain Green urged attendees to semen test all bulls each season that they are used after some issues with bulls in the commercial herd.



AREAS OF DISCUSSION Expand on two of the key messages discussed and what were the key concerns or innovations

- Over 80 farmers enjoyed an interactive day discussing; grassland management, the use of bio stimulants on-farm, barley varieties, benchmarking and SWOT analysis of Farming in Morayshire.
- Derek Hanton welcomed everyone to Corskie before introducing Andrew Anderson, chair of the Management Group, who then took over and chaired the meeting.
- There were four stations where the attendees split into groups to visit:
- Paddy Jacks of DLF Seeds had a very enthused, charismatic talk in which he brought up the importance of improving soil and forage quality for silage and stock grazing.
- Mark O'Neill from Alltech was on hand to explain the UK-wide bio stimulant trial, of which Corskie has become part of. Results from the trial will be presented later in the year, after harvest.
- The attendees studied the Winter and Spring Barley trial plots, which allowed comparison between the different varieties in the same field.
 - Iain Lindsay from Syngenta talked about the benefits of growing Winter Barley in the crop rotation.
 - Kate Cobbold, also Syngenta, talked through the properties of each of the varieties within the Spring Barley plots and discussed what they could bring to the Scottish market.
- Overall the meeting was very positive with good interaction from the community group who were keen to ask questions and engage in the topics within the meeting. There was plenty of technical information that the attendees would be able to take away and put into practice on their own farms.



FARMERS UPDATE

- The Management Group has been selected and the chairperson (Andrew Anderson) elected.
- Calving almost finished, with only 1 spring calver left.
- The heifers to be retained (commercial & pedigree) have all been pelvic measured before going to the bull – results will follow at calving in 2018.
- Three different grass seed mixtures have been sown in one field last week, we will be able to see how the different mixtures perform under the same conditions.
- The first cut of silage has begun, with all of the silage grass grown at Corskie now in the pit.
- The bio stimulant trial is a working progress with the Soil-Set Aid having been applied pre-drilling and the Impro Grain foliar application to be applied very soon.
- Eldest daughter, Laura, has now completed her degree at SRUC Craibstone and has come home to work on the family farm.

OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES

- Opportunity to look into new malting varieties of Spring Barley, particularly since the announcement of Laureate being accepted now by maltsters.
- Consider hybrid Winter Barley varieties designed for the North area, the newer varieties look to offer several advantages over others, such as; increased disease resistance, more resilience to severe weather conditions with higher grain and straw yields.
- Straw yield is always a concern with crops, particularly this past winter as straw price was high. Potential to consider varieties with shorter straw length, but generally have more tillers which can result in a higher straw yield than the longer strawed varieties.
- A challenge all year round is having enough grass and managing grass to full potential. This is something that is important to most farms within Morayshire and will be looked at during the Morayshire Monitor Farm programme.

ACTIONS FROM MEETING

- Gather financial and performance data and feed into FarmBench
- Monitor newly sown grass seed mixes
- Herbage test new sown grass mixtures
- Semen test bulls

FACILITATOR CONTACT DETAILS

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