



FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

Argyllshire
1st Meeting Report
17 January 2023



MEETING REPORT

NUTRITION AND HEALTH PLANNING FOR COST BENEFITS WILL DRIVE THE PROJECT

Around **55** members of the farming community attended the meeting.

As it was winter, and unusually for Islay, snowing, we looked at the housed cows on a cubicle system, store calves and lambs.

150 of the fattest cows are outwintered on deferred grazing. Bulling with Charolais for around **12** weeks, calving on straw from late **March** to end of **June**. Store calves are fed **1.5kg** barley and **0.25kg** soya with readily available draff and silage .

Attendees noted the livestock were looking well and **content** and liked the **good shed** utilisation and mixing of own feed.

Ewes are tupped on the hill and after scanning in February, single carriers remain on the hill with twins but to the shore. The sheep enterprise was challenged by **fluke resistance**, geese, tick and a variety of other problems!

FARM FACTS

Family: Craig and Petra Archibald, children, Kieran, Niamh and Innes and Craig's Father Tony.

- **2000** hectares tenanted
- **220** Aberdeen Angus cross suckler cows
- **1050** breeding ewes-mainly Blackface
- **20** hectares of barley for distillery
- **1200** fat lambs and **200** yearling calves sold
- **Diversification** farmed oysters and on-farm cafe



There was a fantastic turn out of farmers at the first meeting.

PRIORITY: Health and Nutrition

- Baseline soil and blood testing
- Health plan for fluke and worm management
- Investigate link between cow nutrition and high twin v's high barren rate
- Understand lamb losses between scanning to number sold

PRIORITY: Cow Fertility

- Tighten up calving period
- Regular body condition scoring

KEY PRIORITIES

After visiting the farm, attendees took part in a workshop to look at the priorities for the cattle and sheep enterprise. In addition to the afore mentioned, the project should consider:

- If sheep are multiplying fluke
- Labour utilisation
- Silage and feed analysis
- Setting out long term vision for the business and next generation
- Getting a mobile phone for Craig?

PRIORITY: Recording data and using it to

- Make record keeping easier
- Select replacements
- Help take a closer look at costings



NEXT STEPS

Over the next few months, the Monitor Farm project at Craigens will be:

- Collecting and collating data and information on the Monitor Farm
- Establishing the Management Group and wider Community Group who will provide support, gain knowledge, and meet like-minded people
- Working with the two other Monitor Farms in the West cluster—South Ayrshire and Stirlingshire
- Arranging a West Cluster meeting open to all before mid-March



The Management Group will meet before Mid-March where attendees will get a fuller picture of all the farm enterprises. The group will also set meeting topics for the year.

Farm businesses can sign up to be part of the Management Group. Participants should be willing to supply their own farm data, information, and ideas.

This should lead to change and better resilience for the Monitor Farmer and themselves. Individuals can also join the wider Community Group to keep in touch with the project and receive event invites.



**To find out more or to sign up -
contact Regional Adviser
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Scotland

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