



FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

ARGYLLSHIRE

Summer Open Meeting Report
25 July 2024



MEETING REPORT

CHEWING THE CUD OVER GRAZING AND MANAGING OUR TIME

Around **30** members of the farming community attended the meeting. Our guest was farmer, grass specialist and host of the Pasture Pod, Michael Blanche.

MONITOR FARM UPDATE

By Craig Archibald

- Dung sampling of ewes showed the ones on the shore had worms, but the field ewes were clear. Treated accordingly.
- Gimmers to be weighed and split off.
- Sway-back has been reoccurring., think it's a timing of the bolusing. Needs to be discussed with nutritionist Lorna Shaw.
- Silage was put in the pit dry which was unusual!
- Rape and turnips have been planted. Needs limed which may bring it on.
- 3 lots of 43 cows to the bulls. Have bigger lots to fit in with newly established rotational grazing. Bulls working hard and being changed every 3 weeks at Killinallan.

FARM FACTS

- Farmers: The Archibald Family – Craig, Petra, Kieran, Niamh & Innes
- **2012** Hectares farmed – **1493ha** rough/**479ha** pasture/**19ha** barley/**22ha** wood – Tenanted/rented
- **1050** Hill ewes on and finished lambs
- **225** Angus cows selling yearling stores
- Barley grown for distillery
- Oyster farm and café

- Bulling - week per field at Craigens with 90 cows to a Charolais bull.
- Cows have been bolused to line up copper levels rather than buckets this year.
- Dung sampled cattle and they didn't need wormed, so a saving on treatment.



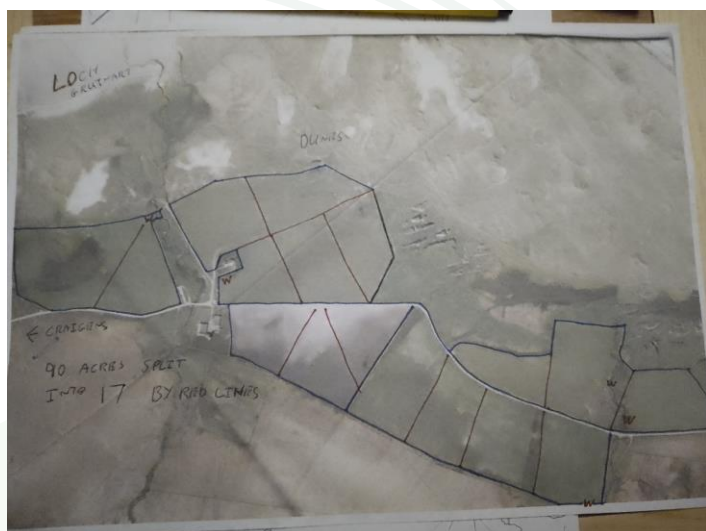
GIVING ROTATIONAL GRAZING A GO!

Following on from the May Management Group meeting, team Archibald have commenced rotational grazing of the fields at Killinallan.

This has been supported by Michale Blanche and use of WhatsApp to share videos and ideas.

What has been done

Using electric fencing and tape gates, 90 acres of fields at Killinallan have been split into 12 x 5-acre paddocks with operating on a 3-day rotation.



Set up Costs (estimated)

- Water pipe £1200
- Electric fencing £2150
- Solar energiser £350
- Batteries £500
- Water troughs (3) £900
- Labour – 4 Days

Benefits

- Easier to check on stock as they are in a smaller area. Can walk around 5-acre paddocks rather than driving around 20 acres.
- Cows look well and are contented.
- Long term benefits could be more grass from same or less fertiliser, heavier calves and more in calf cows.
- Potential to benefit Chough population through rotational grazing.

Challenges

- Costs to set up. Requires electric fencing system plus water troughs and piping.
- Cows a bit picky around tainted grass and less palatable grass growing on peaty soils.
- Getting watering right. Naughty cows and water pressure have been challenging.
- Steep learning curve and you have to compromise sometimes.



MANAGING OUR TIME!

We made very good use of our time with Michael Blanche who has dedicated 6 episodes of his podcast on this fascinating subject which you can listen at your podcast provider – search It's About Time.

You can follow Michale at his Pasture Pod →



Michael also enjoyed the opportunity to visit Monitor Farm group members Scott & Neil McLellan and Eion & Joan Brown and to learn more about their farming systems on Islay!

Thank you to The Archibald Family and Team, Michael and everyone for coming along and supporting another great gathering.





MONITOR FARM Scotland

To find out more or to sign up, please contact:

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