



FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

ARGYLLSHIRE
Winter Open Meeting Report
5 November 2024



MEETING REPORT

'What to Expect from an Inspection.'

Winter Open Meeting 2024

35 members of the farming community attended the meeting, and we welcome a few new faces too which was great to see! This meeting was requested by the farming community on Islay.

MONITOR FARM UPDATE

By Craig Archibald

- Halfway through the 4-year Monitor Farm programme – it has gone very quickly!
- Still working away with the rotational grazing and at the last meeting in September it was decided to go ahead with another round on 3-day rotation as plenty grass still growing using 10-acre parks. This lasted until 1 November when calves were spained using nose clips again this year. Worked quite well.
- Calves were all dung sampled pre-housing. No worms were in the calves, but fluke found in the Craigens batch and have been treated. Cows will probably be fluke dosed before going back to Killinallan, so they don't transfer fluke.

- Scanning

Number	What	% empty
42	Heifers out for 9 weeks	15%
40	1 st Calvers	5%
83	Cows to Charolais bull	12%
82	Cows to Aberdeen Angus	1%
Total		8% with 8% twins

- Suckler Cow Project. Recording body condition and frame scores and cow and calf weights to tie in with feed efficiency to help select the best replacements. Wi-Fi in the cattle shed now along with a Toughbook to help the process. Now need to sort out all the data and what the Key Performance Indicators should be.
- 1st Calvers weaned 42% of their weight on average at Craigens. 640kg cow with a 249kg calf. Calculation though may have averaged out some calves which were twined on.
- Killinallan cows average at 760kg with calves at 274kg – 36% weaned. Should be a bit higher, cows are fat.
- Sheep –ewes given a bolus, some Black Face Tups purchased, and Niamh got a Cheviot tup and sold her first ewes lambs and 5 shearlings.
- Cover crops have been established in stubbles – all looking reasonable.

What to Expect from a Farm Inspection Assurance Assessment.



Scottish Government (SG)

- Ross Dunsmore and John MacAulay of SG Rural Payments & Inspections Division (Oban) talked through cattle and sheep inspections.
- It was stressed that they can assist with any queries you may have about inspections and provide information on what should be available for inspection and went through what they do on farm including the inspection report form.
- It is helpful to notify your local office as to when gather your sheep or bring cattle in for checking. This means that they can check if you are on the list for inspection and save you doing the job twice. Making SG aware of this information DOES NOT mean you will get an inspection.
- Ross and John capably answered all the questions from the attendees and further information can be found [HERE](#)



Quality Meat Scotland (QMS)



- Kathryn Kerr and Eilidh McCulloch from the QMS Brand Integrity Team came along to talk about QMS Farm Assurance assessments.
- The value of being a scheme member was discussed and that it was a voluntary option. Farm assessments are carried out by an independent company contracted by QMS.
- Members are encouraged to feed in their thoughts about scheme standards and QMS were always working to streamline the requirements.
- The team were there to help members and farmers should get in touch if they have any queries or concerns about their assessment or assessor.
- Click [HERE](#) for more information.

DIY Carbon and Biodiversity Audits



Jenny Love - SAC

- Many farmers and crofters in Islay have completed their Carbon Audits and have used agrecalc.
- Jenny explained that the system was now cloud based, and went through the information and steps that farmers would need to update their own carbon audits.
- From 2025 a carbon audit would count towards one of the requirements for a Whole Farm Plan requirement for support payments.
- Find out more about the Whole Farm Plan [HERE](#).
- Find information on agrecalc [HERE](#).



Our thanks were extended to all the team at Craigens, our guest speakers, Kilchoman Distillery, Stuart Lamont for chairing and everyone who supported the meeting.

Morven Laurie & Margaret Morris-NatureScot



- NatureScot have been trialling an app-based system which would allow farmers and crofters to undertake their own biodiversity audits.
- Some of the farmers on Islay were part of the pilot project and found the app easy and intuitive to use.
- Morven & Margaret talked through how the app works using the Monitor Farm information.
- The app logs the land type and has the function to add in species of flora and fauna (this is not essential but requested by those who trialled the system)
- It was hoped that the app would be launched in early 2025 and again a biodiversity Audit would count as Whole Farm Plan option.
- Morven and Margaret will keep us posted as to when the app will be available to download and will be able to support you with this at future Monitor Farm Meetings.



**MONITOR
FARM**
Scotland

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

Regional Adviser - Christine Cuthbertson

07769 366671

ccuthbertson@qmscotland.co.uk

monitorfarms.co.uk

Initiative supported by:

 **Scottish Government**
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

 **QMS**
Quality Meat Scotland

 **AHDB**

FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN.