



FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

DUMFRIESSHIRE

1st Meeting Report

15 December 2022



Barnbackle Farm

An overview

Over **60** members of the farming community attended the meeting at Barnbackle on the 15th of December 2022. We were lucky to have beautiful sunshine on the day but still a brisk -6 °C.

Barnbackle is farmed by Richard McCornick and partner Hayley alongside Richards parents, Andrew and Janice.

FARM FACTS

- **500** hectares
- **600** ewes
- **150** suckler cows
- **40** hectares of crops
- **20** store cattle
- **1** herd of pedigree Charolais cattle

Craig gave us an insight into their data collection system Farm Matters which utilises a handheld attachment for a mobile phone. They currently collect a wide variety of data but don't always use it in their decision-making process. This is something attendees noted as a possible focus for the Monitor Farm going forward.



Richard explained that they currently use body condition scoring to select fit and leaner cattle. This influences their decision on whether the beast should be wintered on kale or housed.

We also gained an insight into the strict culling policy at Barnbackle which ensures not just the health of the heard but also the safety of those working with the cattle and the family around them. It was evident on the day that all housed cattle were in a fit and healthy condition.



Craig McCornick demonstrating his hand held mobile data collection device.

 **farmmatters** £225 pa + VAT

Priorities going forward

KEY PRIORITIES

After visiting the farm, attendees took part in a workshop to look at the priorities for the cattle enterprise.



The project could also consider:

- Changing the **balance between Autumn and Spring calving**, move more to Spring.
- Running **more stock outside**

The visit also included a brief overview of the sheep enterprises, the attendees identified the following opportunities

- **Lamb outside**
- Record **more data with sheep** and use for decision making
- Reduce ewe size

PRIORITY: Target Nutrition

- Target using smaller batches in sheds
- Soil fertility and minerals
- Add a cereal crop to rotation to increase ME

PRIORITY: Utilisation of data

- Currently have great data collection
- Need to find ways to apply the data to decision making

PRIORITY: Soil health

- Currently soil sampling
- Possibility for more rotational grazing
- Gain a deeper understanding of the soil types on the farm and how these can be optimised



NEXT STEPS

Over the next few months, the Monitor Farm project at Barnbackle 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 South cluster– Cowbog in Roxburghshire and Castleton in East Lothian.
- Arranging a South Cluster meeting open to all.



The Management Group will meet in February where attendees will get a fuller picture of all the farm enterprises including the sheep enterprises. The group will also set meeting topics for the coming 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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**MONITOR
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