



FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

ROXBURGHSHIRE

1st Meeting Report

15th January 2023



Cowbog

Over 50 members of the farming community attended the meeting at Cowbog on the 13th of January 2023. We were lucky to have great weather on the day rescheduled from mid-December when the temperature was -16 degrees, a bit too cold for a farm tour.



Cowbog is a mixed tenanted farm just along the road from Morebattle in Roxburghshire. The farm is ran by Robert Wilson, alongside his parents Ron and Joan. Lucy runs the agritourism side of the business at Wilsons Farm and Kitchen.



Robert gave us an insight into the farming operations and discussed his outwintering strategy, the future of the farm and the arable enterprise.

Ron gave an overview of the cattle inside the shed and shared the history of the Hereford breed at Cowbog saying “ They’re easy to look after, suit a system with minimal help and good to work with. We’ve tried other breeds over the years but stuck with Herefords as they suited us best”

Farm Facts

- **182** hectares split across 2 units
- Additional **60** hectares of arable contract farmed
- Closed herd of **100** pure **Hereford** sucklers
- Producing pedigree stock, some finished cattle and some stores
- Crops grown include winter **wheat**, spring **barley**, Kale, stubble turnips and forage rye.



Robert Wilson discussing his outwintering strategy

Priorities going forward

KEY PRIORITIES

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



The project could also consider:

- Running more stock outside
- Does the pedigree suit the beef system?
- Focus on soil health to increase productivity of the land

The visit also included a brief overview of the agritourism venture, Wilsons Farm and Kitchen. The attendees praised the Wilsons for their enthusiasm and suggested to expand the agritourism side of the business if possible

PRIORITY: Tighten calving period

- Currently calving Autumn and Spring.
- Bull can be left in too long resulting in outlier calves.
- Reduce to 12 weeks approx.
- Will help with work life balance.

PRIORITY: Review grazing plan

- Possibility to incorporate more rotational grazing.
- Could outwinter on strip grazed kale.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the soil types on the farm and how these can be optimised.

PRIORITY: Work life balance

- This is something important for Robert and family so making the farm as efficient as possible is a main priority.



The Wilson Family (from left to right)- Ron, Joan, Lucy, Henry, Lottie, Robert.

NEXT STEPS

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



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.

@monitorfarmscotland
#monitorfarm26



To find out more or to sign up -
contact Regional Adviser
Maura Wilson

07721677556
mwilson@qmScotland.co.uk
monitorfarms.co.uk



The Management Group will meet in February where attendees will get a more in depth picture of all the farm enterprises. The group will also set meeting topics for the coming year.



MONITOR FARM

Scotland

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

Regional Adviser – Maura Wilson

07721 677556

mwilson@qm Scotland.co.uk

monitorfarms.co.uk

Initiative supported by:



Scottish Rural
Development
Programme



FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN.