



FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

DEESIDE

1st Meeting Report
7th DECEMBER 2022



MEETING REPORT

LOW COSTS ARE KEY TO THE FUTURE OF FARMING

Over **60** members of the farming community attended the meeting, from Deeside and beyond. The bulls and in-calf cattle are outwintered at Meikle Maldron, where ease of feeding and handling is key to Duncan managing the livestock.

Attendees noted the good condition of the outwintered Stabiliser, Aberdeen Angus and cross cows and were impressed by the low capital costs on the farm, coupled with figures demonstrating low daily feeding costs.

Claire showed the cattle handling and data recording equipment at the farm, vital for making informed decisions on health management.

Duncan described his approach to outwintering with baled silage, with intake managed by electric fencing on an old pasture which will be disced and reseeded this spring.

A focus on bull and cow health has resulted in high calving percentages and tight calving intervals which help produce even sized beasts for the store and finished market.

FARM FACTS

Partners: Duncan and Claire Morrison

- **558ac** over **3** units
- **220** sucklers made up of **120** commercial and pedigree Aberdeen Angus cows and a leased herd of **100** Stabiliser cows.
- Most **Stabiliser** bull calves are finished
- **Breeding heifers** are sold at **12-14** months, the rest sold as stores.
- **37ac** of arable silage and **20ac** of kale.



Duncan and Claire Morrison at Meikle Maldron



PRIORITY: Using data

- Continue to maximise use of data for decision making
- Use a UHF tag system for faster and improved recording
- Have a good data recording system in place

PRIORITY: Soil fertility

- Find out the fertility of the soil
- Use soil testing to achieve good pH levels
- Focus on soil health for best performance at low fertiliser levels

PRIORITY: Bull choice and health

- Begin frequent semen testing
- Rotate bulls to maintain tight calving

PRIORITY: Forward planning

- Are sheep a benefit or a distraction?!

PRIORITIES

After looking round the livestock at Meikle Maldron, attendees were asked to list their first impressions. They listed over 60 positive practices at the farm and suggested several potential opportunities. In addition to the key priorities, other areas that were mentioned included:

- Marketing of low-cost and easy-care heifers
- Better establishment of forage crops
- Improving the infrastructure or use of the buildings at Meikle Maldron
- Highlighting the high-health status of the stock



Outside wintering on baled silage.



Cattle handling and health with Claire

NEXT STEPS

Over the next few months, the Monitor Farm project at Meikle Maldron 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 North cluster– Strathspey and Banff & Buchan
- Arranging a North Cluster meeting open to all before mid-March

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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Update: The **Management Group** met in mid-January to get a fuller picture of the enterprise including the store stirks and heifers at the home farm, Upper Ingliston at Inverurie and the contract cattle, bull-beef and smaller heifers at Womblehill, by Kintore.



Outwintered heifers at Upper Ingliston and bull-beef at Womblehill



SAC-Consulting have been awarded the contract to carry out an **Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP)** and up to two specialist plans with Duncan. This will help define the strategy for the business going forward.

SoilEssentials Ltd have been awarded the contract to sample the majority of the farm's fields, with the aim of establishing a baseline for decision making on soil health and fertility.



MONITOR FARM Scotland

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

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