



FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

Graham Lofthouse – Data, Information and Decisions

Deeside Monitor Farm Open Meeting

Meikle Maldron, Torphins

8th July 2026



Decision Making in Farming

Borders' farmer Graham Lofthouse, Bankhouse Farm, a past AgriScot Scottish Sheep Farmer of the Year, was the Deeside Monitor Farm keynote speaker on the use of data and information in livestock management.

'Getting the essentials right is the root to high performance in farming.'

The key is **making informed decisions**.

- Collect data and information
- Use the information you've got at your fingertips
- Focus on the core basics – these bring success
- Build your own skill sets to recognise what's required for success.

Graham recommends **setting aims** for your farm. For Graham at Bankhouse these are:

- 1) To maximise the potential of the farm to grow as much grass as possible at least cost.
- 2) To produce 100% of ewes bodyweight in 100 days or less
- 3) To have the highest net margin possible per/ha at least cost
- 4) To have all lambs finished before November
- 5) To be profitable without Government support

Graham says, 'Decision making is about fundamentals'. These are:

- A) Grass management;
- B) Genetics;
- C) Nutrition and health.



Planning for the Future

The four speakers at the Open Meeting each advocate informed decisions: for example through worm counts, John's testing, management and strategic planning and grassland predictions.

Graham noted, 'Duncan and Claire are making some good decisions; they set goals (time related and measureable) several years ago that they're reaching now.

Recent expansion through acquiring a long lease on a neighbouring farm brings new challenges and goals; including increasing sheep and cattle numbers.

'It's important to be realistic about longer term plans and adapt to take these unexpected opportunities and changes into account.'

Graham highlighted the importance of his own physical health and nutrition and well-being and how these play a part being a manager of his own business.

'It begins with getting off the farm through a hobby or a sport; something outside of the farming situation which brings a farmer in contact with a different group of people.'

'It gives the mind a chance to rest from what might be a normal daily routine.'

'It's an opportunity to maintain physical and, even more importantly, mental health.'

Graham can be contacted at
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THE FUNDAMENTALS

A) Grass Management through planning, recording and setting targets

The decisions made at Bankhouse have resulted in:

- 70% reduction in N use
- Increased grass growth by 25%
- Reduced bought-in feed
- An average silage ME of greater than 11 MJ/kg DM
- Reduced wintering cattle time inside
- Earlier turnout
- 700kg/lwt/ha production



B) Genetics and Health Strategy

Comparing 20 years of genetics and selecting the right breed for Bankhouse

2006	2026
Texel ewe 100kg	UltiMate ewe 67kg
Scan 170%	Scan 186%
Housing Dec to April	BCS ewes 3 times year
Lambled indoors	Signet Recorded flock
High assistance levels	Triplest+singles housed March
Lamb mortality 15%+	Lambing outdoors April 6th
Lambs sold by Jan	Mortality <7%
20% lambs housed to finish	0.33kg/day 8wk wt.
	Lambs all finished by November

C) Graham's Health Strategy and Outcomes

Health	Outcomes
Health Screenings	Low mortality
Targeted Selective Treatment	Drug efficacy
FEC testing key points	Proactive vet involvement
Health plan with vet	Increased growth rates
Calving and Lambing Analysis	Higher fertility
Metabolic profile screening	Selection of Breeding stock requiring less treatments
	Reduced mastitis
	Reduced intervention and labour



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