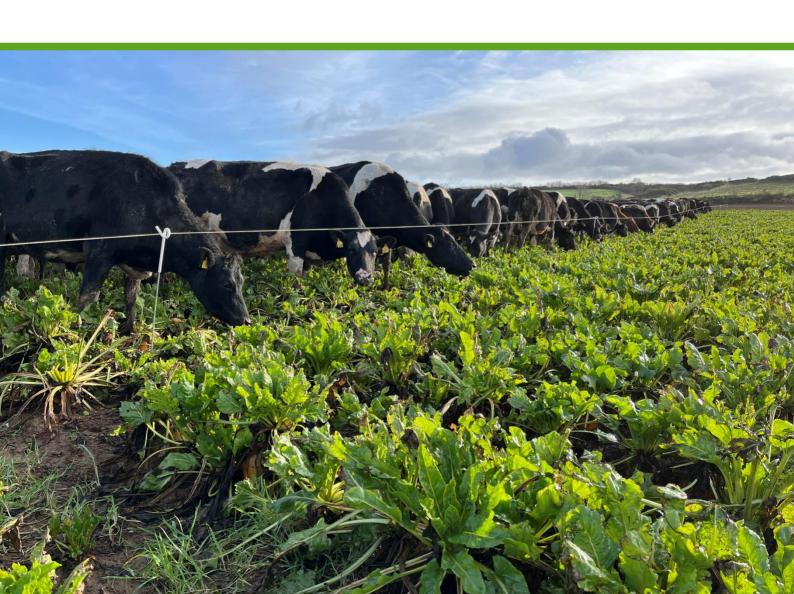


FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

SOUTH AYRSHIRE

Fodder Beet Visit Report 7 February 2024





MEETING REPORT

WINTER FEEDING DRY COWS ON FODDER BEET

Members of the South Ayrshire
Management Group visited Craigenton
Farm, Turnberry on 7 February. Monitor
Farmers John and David Andrew grow
fodder beet to winter their ewes and
were keen to see cows on the system.

Tom has a 340 head dairy herd on a low input/low output system. For 4 years he has been outwintering with cows going to the beet on 31 December after drying off for 6-7 weeks until mid February, when it is all eaten up.

A suitable field is rented from the local estate and the cows are **transitioned** in sheds on harvested beet for **two weeks** prior to turnout.

Tom started the system after going to a meeting with New Zealand fodder beet expert Dr Jim Gibbs. The first year or two the agronomy of growing the crop needed refining, but now he gets a good leafy crop and bulb. The cows are moved forward each day and get two bales of silage in addition to the beet.

Tom grows **12 acres** and lifts 50 tonnes to transition the cows over 16-17 days. **130 dry cows** are running on the beet, and it will last them 6 weeks along with **90 bales of si**lage.

You need to put a lot into growing the crop but if you get it right, it really reduces winter feeding costs.

The variety being used is **Geronimo** but Tom is going to trial **Brigadier in 2024.** The cows eat beet in a different way from sheep. They knock the bulb over and eat it first and then come back to eat the leaves, which is a consideration when choosing the variety.

The right cow is important, and Tom has a smaller and hairier cross bred Friesian suitable for outwintering.



Tom Shearlaw with Monitor Farmer David Andrew

THE FIGURES



Inputs Per Acre

Rent £90

Ploughing £25

Cultivator £10

Roll £5

Drill £26 (Sown on 26 April 2023)

Seed £110 (Geronimo)

Spray 1 £29 (Pre-emergence)

Spray 2 £26 (2nd weeds plus foliar feed)

Fert 1 £77 (Sown with seed 21-8-11) 3cwt

Fert 2 £147 (5-6-20+S+B+Na) 5cwt

Fert 3 £45 24-0-13 +7.5 S) 2 cwt

Fert 4 £64 (Urea) 1.5 cwt

Fert 5 £24 (Urea) 1cwt

TOTAL COST £678/acre or £1675/ha.

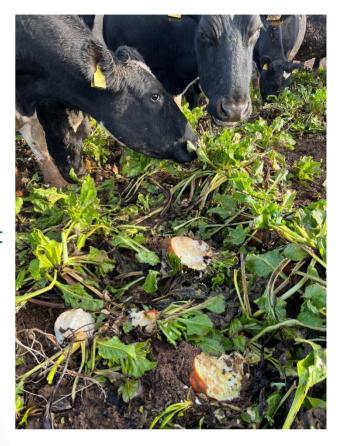


Benefits for Tom

- Halves cost of winter feeding of dry cows.
- Labour saving of feeding housed cattle and machinery costs.
- Heifers transition well and early onto grass in the spring as used to being outside.

Further Information

Outwintering livestock on brassica and forage crops
Fodder beet in sustainable livestock systems Webinar





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

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