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2014 Spring Visit Report–

Saturday 3rd May 2014

On the 3rd May a group of 20 Future Farmers were fortunate to visit Hafod Y Maidd, in Denbigshire. Farmers Iwan and Eleanor Davies gave us a very warm welcome and were eager to demonstrate the adaptability and hardiness of the Luing cattle breed. Following a welcome cup of tea and cakes, Iwan took us in his trusty trailer to see some of his SimLuing bulling heifers (a cross between a Simmental and Luing). The flesh they were carrying following a very wet Winter outdoors was very impressive, as was their temperament considering they had not seen many crowds before.

The SimLuing demonstrating their quiet temperament



Hafod Y Maidd take advantage of all environmental schemes that come their way, which Iwan insists is a must for the survival of farms on marginal hill land. The Luing and SimLuing fit into the environmental schemes and the harsh environment very well, with their ability to thrive in difficult conditions. Prior to the introduction of Luing cattle, Iwan had a commercial herd of

Limousin x cows, but found the housing costs and poor fertility uneconomical. The Luing with its low wintering costs, high fertility and growth rates have the ability to generate reasonable margins. When crossed

with a Simmental they produce a highly commercial animal with minimal cost. Iwan aims to increase his Luing herd and produce more SimLuings. In addition to the change of cattle breed, Iwan and Eleanor have turned to the South Wales Mountain ewe, again for their low cost of production, hardiness and high yield of meat. Iwan is currently comparing the margins of his Texel x lambs to the pure Welsh and is convinced the Welsh will outperform the Texels.



A Sim Luing heifer following a wet winter outside

Following lunch at the Foelas Arms, we travelled a short distance to see a 60Kw turgo hydro plant at Edward Richies of BlaenCoed. The farm is an excellent example of how using the natural resources available, allows a farm to generate additional income. The high head of water available, has allowed the farm to install the hydro plant, with very little disturbance to the environment. Although the plant has only been installed for a year, the return on investment is already apparent.

As well as the hydro plant, Edward has also installed 3Kwh solar panels on the roof of the sheep shed. As with most visits there is always more to see than planned and on this occasion it was the suckler cattle housing, with rubber lined slatted floor. Yet another example of reducing the expensive wintering costs associated with sucklers.

Members had a very informative day from two businesses that were not afraid to challenge the norm and venture into alternative enterprises.

The dam created to feed the turgo hydro plant



New and existing members following an informative day

