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DECEMBER 2006

WOODCHIP
for Livestock Bedding Project

Arwyn & Wyn Jones
Blaencwm, Llanuwchllyn, Bala

The Woodchip for Livestock Bedding Project was initiated to investigate the potential of using woodchip as an alternative to straw as indoor bedding for sheep and cattle. From January to March 2006 cattle and sheep were housed on woodchip at three development sites, ADAS Pwllpeiran, IGER Aberystwyth and Glynllifon College. During this housing period similar groups were also housed on straw and comparisons were made of their feed intakes, growth rates, cleanliness and health. Assessments were also made of the time and labour requirements for using woodchip in comparison to straw.

An additional part to the project is to determine how best to utilise the woodchip after animals have been bedded on it. Composting studies are being carried out by Bangor University to investigate how the woodchip breaks down and the nutrient value of the end product. The project will also investigate the potential to reuse the woodchip as bedding after it has been composted. Glynllifon College will demonstrate this in February 2007.

Eleven demonstration farms have been set up across Wales to allow farmers to view the project on a local basis. Either cattle or sheep will be housed on these farms for an 8-10 week period on both woodchip and straw. Assessments will be made of the health, welfare, growth and cleanliness of the animals as well as the labour required for the two systems. Full costings will be given, as the economies of using woodchip will be an important consideration for farmers. Arwyn and Wyn Jones are part of this demonstration farm network and below is a description of their farm enterprises and how woodchip fits into this.

Farm Facts

- 700 acres - mainly hill land
- 18 Welsh Black Suckler cows
- 750 Welsh Mountain ewes
- Sawmill enterprise

Cattle

There are 18 Welsh Black suckler cows at Blaencwm that are all mated to a Welsh Black bull. The calves are born in March and April and then sold as stores at 14-15 months old. The cattle provide a useful grazing management tool and are kept on the hill until they are housed in early November. Traditionally the cattle have been bedded on straw but the possibility of using woodchip is being investigated because there is a supply of off-cuts and low-grade wood from the sawmill and softwood plantation.

Sheep

The flock of Welsh Mountain ewes are lambed outdoors in April. A proportion of the ewes are mated to a Welsh Mountain ram for replacements and the rest are put to a Texel ram. Historically, surplus replacements have been bred and then sold as breeding stock but the intention is to change this policy and put more ewes to the Texel ram to produce lambs for finishing. The lambs are all finished off grass between August and December.

Sawmill Enterprise

The sawmill was set up in 1990 and then in 2003 Arwyn and Wyn received a diversification grant from Farming Connect for the shed and wood processing machinery. Fencing stakes are made for their own requirements and they also have a kiln for drying high quality timber for joinery, flooring and furniture making. They have a small softwood plantation, which could provide wood for producing woodchip bedding.

Woodchip

As for many farmers in Wales, straw is a major financial burden. With the development of the sawmill enterprise Arwyn recognised the potential for producing woodchip both for bedding the animals and for fuelling the heating system in the house. As they have their own source of wood the cost of chipping will determine whether woodchip is a viable option for bedding, together with how the cattle perform on it.

The Woodchip for Livestock Bedding Project delivered by Hybu Cig Cymru, is match funded by the Forestry Commission, Environment Agency Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government as part of Farming Connect.

For further information, please contact:
Lynfa Davies, Project Co-ordinator
Hybu Cig Cymru, PO Box 176, Aberystwyth SY23 2YA
01970 625050 enquiries@hccmpw.org.uk www.hccmpw.org.uk

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RHAGFYR 2006

Prosiect NADDION PREN ar gyfer Gwasarn Da Byw

Arwyn a Wyn Jones
Blaencwm, Llanuwchllyn, y Bala

Cychwynnwyd y Prosiect Naddion Pren ar gyfer Gwasarn Da Byw er mwyn ymchwilio i botensial defnyddio naddion pren yn lle gwellt yn wasarn dan do i ddefaid a gwartheg. O fis Ionawr tan fis Mawrth 2006 cadwyd gwartheg a defaid dan do ar naddion pren mewn tri safle datblygu, sef ADAS Pwllpeiran, IGER Aberystwyth a Choleg Glynllifon. Yn ystod y cyfnod hwn cadwyd grwpiau cyffelyb dan do hefyd ar wellt a gwnaed cymariaethau â'u cymeriant bwyd, cyfraddau twf, glendid ac iechyd. Yn ogystal, aseswyd y gofynion amser a llafur wrth ddefnyddio naddion pren mewn cymhariaeth â gwellt.

Rhan arall o'r prosiect yw penderfynu sut orau i ddefnyddio'r naddion pren ar ôl eu defnyddio'n wasarn. Mae astudiaethau gwrteithio'n cael eu cynnal gan Brifysgol Bangor er mwyn darganfod sut mae naddion pren yn dadelfennu a darganfod gwerth maethol y cynnyrch terfynol. Bydd y prosiect hefyd yn ymchwilio i'r potensial o ailddefnyddio'r naddion pren yn wasarn ar ôl iddyn nhw gael eu gwrteithio. Bydd Coleg Glynllifon yn arddangos hyn ym mis Chwefror 2007.

Mae un ar ddeg o ffermydd arddangos wedi cael eu sefydlu ledled Cymru fel bod gan ffermwyr gyfle i weld y prosiect yn lleol. Bydd naill ai gwartheg neu ddefaid yn cael eu cadw dan do ar y ffermydd hyn am gyfnod o rhwng wyth a deng wythnos ar naddion pren ac ar wellt. Asesir iechyd, lles, twf a glendid yr anifeiliaid yn ogystal â'r gwaith sydd ynghlwm â'r naill system a'r llall. Darperir y costau llawn, oherwydd bydd y gost o ddefnyddio naddion pren yn ystyriaeth bwysig i ffermwyr. Mae Arwyn ac Wyn Jones yn rhan o'r rhwydwaith o ffermydd arddangos ac isod gwelir disgrifiad o'r mentrau fferm a sut mae naddion pren yn rhan o hyn.

FFEITHIAU AM Y FFERM

- 700 erw - tir mynydd yn bennaf
- 18 o fuchod sugno Duon Cymreig
- 750 o famogiaid Mynydd Cymreig
- Busnes melin lifio

Gwartheg

Mae yna 18 o fuchod Duon Cymreig ym Mlaencwm, ac mae'r rhain i gyd yn cael tarw Du Cymreig. Mae'r lloi'n cael eu geni yn ystod misoedd Mawrth ac Ebrill ac yna'n cael eu gwerthu'n stôr yn 14-15 mis oed. Mae'r gwartheg yn ddefnyddiol ar gyfer rheoli'r pori ac yn cael eu cadw ar y mynydd hyd nes cael eu rhoi dan do ddechrau Tachwedd. Yn y gorffennol cafodd y gwartheg wasarn o wellt, ond mae'r posibilrwydd o ddefnyddio naddion pren yn cael ei ystyried oherwydd mae yna gyflenwad o dorion a phren israddol ar gael o'r felin lifio a'r blanhigfa coed meddal.

Defaid

Mae'r ddiadell o famogiaid Mynydd Cymreig yn wyna yn yr awyr agored ym mis Ebrill. Bydd cyfran o'r mamogiaid yn cael hwrdd Mynydd Cymreig er mwyn cynhyrchu anifeiliaid cyfnewid a bydd y gweddill yn cael hwrdd Texel. Yn y gorffennol, cafodd anifeiliaid cyfnewid nad oedd eu hangen eu bridio a'u gwerthu wedyn yn anifeiliaid bridio, ond y bwriad yw newid y polisi hwn a rhoi'r hwrdd Texel i ragor o famogiaid er mwyn cynhyrchu ŵyn i'w pesgi. Mae'r ŵyn i gyd yn cael eu pesgi ar borfa rhwng mis Awst a mis Rhagfyr.

Y Busnes Melin Lifio

Sefydlwyd y felin lifio yn 1990, ac yn 2003 cafodd Arwyn a Wyn gymhorthdal arallgyfeirio gan Gyswllt Ffermio ar gyfer y sied a'r peiriannau prosesu pren. Mae'r polion ffensio'n cael eu gwneud ar gyfer eu gofynion eu hunain ac mae ganddynt odyn i sychu pren o ansawdd uchel ar gyfer gwaith asiedydd, lloriau a dodrefn. Fe allai'r blanhigfa fach o goed meddal sydd ganddynt ddarparu pren i gynhyrchu gwasarn naddion pren.

Naddion Pren

Yn debyg i lawer o ffermwyr yng Nghymru, mae gwellt yn faich ariannol drom arnynt. Gyda datblygiad y busnes melin lifio, sylweddolodd Arwyn fod yna botensial i gynhyrchu naddion pren ar gyfer gwasarn i'r anifeiliaid a thanwydd i'r system wresogi yn y tŷ. Am fod ganddynt ffynhonnell bren eu hunain, bydd y gost o'i naddu'n allweddol wrth benderfynu a yw naddion pren yn ymarferol fel gwasarn, ynghyd â'r effaith ar y gwartheg.

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Prosiect Naddion Pren ar gyfer Gwasarn Da Byw a gyflenwir gan Hybu Cig Cymru yn derbyn arian cyfatebol gan y Comisiwn Coedwigaeth, Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd Cymru a Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru fel rhan o Cyswllt Ffermio.

I gael rhagor o wybodaeth, cysylltwch â:
Lynfa Davies, y Cydlynydd Prosiect
Hybu Cig Cymru, Blwch SP 176, Aberystwyth SY23 2YA
01970 625050 enquiries@hccmpw.org.uk www.hccmpw.org.uk