



FEDERATION OF WELSH GRASSLAND SOCIETIES
Secretary: Mr Charlie Morgan

Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research
Plas Gogerddan
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3EB

Tel No: 01970 823058/01874 636480
Fax No: 01970 828357
Email: Charlie.morgan@bbsrc.ac.uk

PRESS RELEASE

ALL WALES GRASSLAND FARMING COMPETITION 2007

This year's winner of the Grassland Farming Competition jointly run by the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society and the Federation of Welsh Grassland Societies and sponsored by HSBC Bank is **Mr Arthur Owen, Bodysgaw Isa, Llanefydd, Denbigh**. Mr Owen is a member of Betws-yn-Rhos Grassland Society and will now go on to represent Wales in the British Grassland Societies UK competition.

Bodysgaw Isa is a business totalling 115 Hectares. It has a rainfall of 91cm (36 inches) and the soil is a loam over limestone. It carries 225 Holstein Friesians plus home reared followers. It is an all grass farm, but wholecrop wheat is purchased as a standing crop and the stocking density is 2.4 LU/ha including the wholecrop area.

The fertilizer policy is to maintain P and K indexes at 2+. Nitrogen at 300Kg/ha is applied plus slurry and 95% of the farm can be covered with an umbilical. Applications vary according to weather/growing conditions. No sheep are used on the farm and all the autumn and early winter sward grazing management is done by youngstock and dry cows. Cow tracks and water troughs are an essential feature in the grazing plan.

Mr Owen has focused on reducing costs and one that impressed the judges was the reduced dependence on silage. The farm has increased cow numbers from 120 to 225 without having to make anymore silage. This has been achieved by utilizing grass more efficiently and extending the grazing season. Currently the turnout date is early February and housing will not occur until maybe Christmas. This has reduced the winter housing period by 3 months on average compared to the previous system.

Milk yield is now 7,200 litres/cow, with 3,600 litres coming from forage. Butterfat and protein are 4.01% and 3.21% respectively and Margin over purchased feed stands at 14.08p/litre. As a member of a discussion group Mr Owen said that he had the confidence and support to make these changes and by measuring his grass yield he had been able to make greater use of grazed grass.

Lead judge, Mr Arthur Davies (IGER) was impressed with the sward quality of the permanent pastures as the reseeding policy at Bodysgaw Isa is one of long-term. The comment from Mr Owen was that "if leys are not down for ten years then there has been poor grassland management."

Mr Bryn Edmunds, judge (HSBC) commented that "the business had seriously examined it's costs and more reliance on grazed grass had made significant savings". All judges agreed that not only was there reduced silage costs, but also reduced bedding and manure management costs and these voted well for the environmental section of the competition especially when the slurry was used strategically.



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Runner-up in the Competition this year was **Mr John Morgan, Whitehouse Farm, Clytha, Raglan, Mons** a member of the Monmouthshire Grassland Society. The farm carries a herd of 100 Friesian dairy cows plus all stock born on the farm. All beef cross calves are sold as Stores or Finished. Farm size is 117 hectares with medium to long-term pastures plus maize, cereals and turnips. Herd yield is 7,500–8,000l/cow with 4.48% butterfat and 3.60% protein. The farm shows a very clear business objective and well developed dairy system. Running through the farm is a dual-carriageway and much of the land is heavy ground. These problems reduce the farm's ability for extended grazing and ewes and lambs are used for sward management until cows are turned out mid-April. The farm uses white clover very effectively and the sward conditions were very good. Judges highly commended Mr Morgan for having developed a high quality business through very effective grassland and dairy cow management.

The other finalists in a competition, strongly supported throughout Wales, were Mr C.H. James, Home Farm, Stackpole, Pembroke, (Cleddau Grassland Society) Mr Berwyn Lloyd, Pencwm, Moylegrove, Cardigan (Cardigan and District Society) and Mr Richard Evans, Cynfal, Brynchrug, Tywyn, Gwynedd (Meirionydd Grassland Society). The five farms represented a real cross-section of farming conditions across Wales and grassmanship of the very highest order

For further information:

Charlie Morgan

Secretary

Federation of Welsh Grassland Societies

IGER

Aberystwyth

Ceredigion

Tel: 01970 823058/07786 397673