



Lothians Monitor Farm  
Preston Hall and Saughland Farms  
Pathhead



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## Monitor Farm Programme 2016-2020

The Lothians Monitor Farm is one of nine Monitor Farms recently established across Scotland in a joint initiative by AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds and Quality Meat Scotland (QMS). The aim of the programme is to help improve the productivity, profitability and sustainability of Scottish farm businesses. Over the next three years there will be eighteen meetings at Prestonhall and Saughhead where local farmers will be able to input into the future financial and technical management of the two businesses. There will also be the opportunity to investigate innovative new technologies in both the arable and livestock sectors.

The Monitor Farms Programme is now well established in Scotland. The concept was first developed in New Zealand (NZ) as a response to the removal of agricultural support and the recognition that technical and business improvement had stagnated. It quickly gained prominence and influenced NZ farmers to adopt best practice and improve their ability to farm successfully in a commercial environment. The concept was introduced into Scotland in 2003 and at present the Monitor Farms Programme extends to around 35 farms on a rolling programme, including arable, dairy, pigs, beef and sheep as well as tourism. The programme has become very popular amongst farmers as is farm based, has a focus on profitability, is driven and owned by participating farmers. That notwithstanding, farmers expectations from the project are now higher so the project needs to evolve and adapt to ensure that it makes a lasting impact.

### **The “Community Group”**

This is made up from farmers and trade who attend the monitor farm meetings. The line “Farmer Led, Farmer driven” is more than a slogan. The direction a monitor farm takes is almost entirely down to the interests of those who attend and the host farms. There is no set format for meetings, with times, locations and topics all planned to suit the group attending.

### **The “Management Group”**

Drawn from the community group the role of the management group is there to give direction to the project, represent the community group and support the host farmers. Anyone from the community group can put themselves forward to be part of the management group and it is this group who help to select topics, new ideas to try and where necessary external speakers. You can put yourself forward or nominate someone by speaking to one of the facilitators

### **The “Business Group”**

This is a smaller group again from the community group which holds closed meetings and uses financial and technical data to benchmark performance and look to improve their businesses. Again this is open to any members of the community group and will meet roughly 3 times per year. If you would like to join or for more information, please speak to the facilitators.

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## Prestonhall Farms

Farm Area: 650 Hectares  
Soil Types: Grade 3 & 4; Winton Series SCL; Darvel S&G; Macmerry SCL  
Elevation: 150m (500ft) rising to 290m (950ft) at top

### Cropping

- Winter Oilseed Rape 71ha
- 1<sup>st</sup> Winter Wheat 62ha
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Winter Wheat 76ha
- Spring Barley 114ha
- Winter Oats 40ha
- Winter Barley 78Ha

Remainder woodland and combination of silage grass and permanent pasture

### Contracting

Collaboration – Stubble to stubble Spring Barley on 55ha with Saughland

### Establishment Techniques

Min-till where applicable (approximately 60%) based on Knockerling Cultivator, including rape seeding kit. Ploughing followed by Simba Press and Vaderstad Drill



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## Application

Liquid and Solid Fertilising both with variable rate and 24m spraying, including contract liquid fertiliser and spraying

## Equipment

- Case 225 Puma CVX; Case Puma 160 CVX; Case MX135; Hire tractor for harvest
- JCB 536/70 Handler; Class Lexion Montana 760 combine
- Knockerling 4m Cultivator; Kuhn 6 furrow semi mounted plough
- Simba 5.5m Unipress; Vaderstad 4m disc drill
- KRM fertiliser Spreader with GPS capability
- Bateman RB 25 Sprayer with GPS capability

## GPS

- Yield Mapping since 1996
- Soil Mapping since 1999 (lime, soil scanning and P&K testing and variable rate)
- GPS steering on 2 tractors (so far)
- N sensing on crops via Soylsense

**Staff**            2 permanent staff and casual staff at harvest

## In Addition

- Biomass renewables; 2 plants; straw and wood batch boiler at farm for grain drier and cottages; woodchip boiler for Mansion House
- Grass let for sheep and horses
- 40 stable Livery Business
- Let shoot at Prestonhall
- House, cottage and commercial letting portfolio

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# Saughland Farm

Farm Area: 320 Hectares  
 Soil Types: Class 4.1 & 4.2 –  
 Salvandi & Tynehead Series, brown soils  
 Elevation: 225m (750ft) at  
 Steading rising to 270m (900ft) at top



## Cropping & Grassland

Temporary Grass (Reseeded 2015 & 2016)	30ha
Permanent Pasture (Old leys) 30ha cut for silage/haylage 15ha cut for hay sold to Livery yard	175ha
Swedes (strip grazed by ewes)	7ha
Plantain/Chicory Mix (sown 2016)	5ha
Spring Barley (contracted to Prestonhall Farms)	65ha
Potatoes (rented out for 2017)	5ha
Non effective/woodland/wetland	20Ha
Remainder Roads/Yards/Buildings	1ha
<b>Total</b>	<b>308ha</b>

## Cattle Enterprise

Suckler Herd	Number	Breed	Incalf to
Suckler Cows	30	AA X Lim	Hereford
Suckler Cows	10	AA X Lim	Limousin
In-Calf Heifers	13	Hereford X AA/Lim	Aberdeen Angus

- Calving Starts 28<sup>th</sup> March (10 weeks) Weaned September – left outside
- Housed November to April
- Feeding – Cows waste hay/silage or straw – Heifers Straw and 2.5kg/day/head Wheat Distillers Dark Grains
- Heifer calves retained for breeding
- Heifers calve down at 2 years old
- Bullocks – Finished off grass and forage from 16-20 Months

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## Sheep Enterprise

Sheep Flock	Number	Breed	In Lamb to
Ewes (Nucleus 'A' flock)	450	Aberfield x Romney (AberRoms) Aberfield x Lleyns (AberLleyns)	Aberfield
Ewes ('B' Flock)	150	AberRoms & AberLleyns	Texel X Beltex
Ewes	300	Scotch Mules	Texel X Beltex
Ewes	210	Tex X Llyen	NZ Suff & Primera
Ewes	110	Tex X Mules	NZ Suff & Primera
Ewes	140	Cheviot	Aberfield
Gimmers	110	¾ Aberfield	Aberfield
Hoggs	155	¾ Aberfield	Primera & Abermax
Hoggs	150	Aberfield X Tex/Mule/Lleyn	Primera & Abermax
Hoggs	130	NZ Suffolk X Mule	Abermax

- Sheep Flock doubled in last 3 years (950 to 1900 breeding sheep)
- Scanning 10<sup>th</sup> February
- Outside Lambing starts 16<sup>th</sup> April
- Nucleus Flock – Winter feeding rotational grazed 0.4ha paddock moved every 2 days
- All other Ewes – Sacrifice fields with ring feeders Jan to lambing
- Swedes available 3 hours per day
- Set stocked from lambing - Twins 10 ewes/ha , Singles 25 ewes/ha



### Machinery

NH T6155, JCB 531/70 Telehandler, 2 x Grain/muck trailers, Grass Topper, KV Taarup straw bedder, Sub Soiler, Sheep Trailer, Kawasaki Mule, 54J PEL Mains Energiser, Ritchie Combie Clamp, Calf creepers

### Management Systems

FarmPlan Sheep & Cattle Manager, Psion Workabout Pro, Tru test XR5000

**Staff** Working Farm Manager and 2 permanent staff plus casual staff in spring

### In Addition

- Business Centre – 18 Units, Farm storage – 3 Units, Cottages - 3 Occupied farm staff & 4 Let, Shooting Syndicate, Small scale forestry, Contract Shepherding

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## Facilitators

The role of the facilitator is to assist the monitor farmers and the management group to ensure the success of the project, this includes gathering information, where appropriate organising speakers and putting the meetings together. For this project there are 3 facilitators.

**Colin MacPhail** (C A MacPhail Consulting Ltd, 07747046461, colin@macphailconsulting.co.uk)

Colin combines practical farm knowledge of both his beef, sheep and diversified farming interests on Mull and farm business management positions, with a range of experience as an agricultural business consultant and facilitator. Having been involved in both the red meat and dairy sectors, Colin understands the challenges facing farming businesses. Allied to this, Colin has a wealth of experience of benchmarking and running monitor farm projects, having been the lead facilitator of the Forth Monitor farm based at Arnprior Farm. Colin has also served on various committees/boards and is currently a farmer member on the Kirkton and Auchtertyre, SRUC Hill and Mountain Research centre advisory committee.



**Stephen Young** (SAOS, 07502 339613, Stephen.young@saos.coop)

Stephen comes from a dairy and arable farming background having been brought up near Kinross. Stephen was the lead facilitator of the Fife Monitor farm and benchmarking groups, as well as being involved in delivering a number of farmer workshops such as Planning for Profit and Building Farm Resilience. Prior to joining SAOS Stephen worked for 9 years with the Borders Machinery Ring and has an interest in joint ventures and on farm collaboration particularly sharing machinery to reduce costs. Stephen was also a member of the community group at the QMS Borders Monitor Farm at Caverton Mill, Kelso.



**Fergus Younger** (SAOS, 07771 966 649, Fergus.younger@saos.coop )

Fergus has over 15 years' experience in leading and facilitating groups in the agricultural and rural sectors. This often includes working with supply chains to highlight the market opportunities are and where the margins can be made. Fergus practices what he preaches and runs a family farm in conjunction with his wife near Stirling, which has moved its entire production system to be closer to the market and therefore increase margin to the farm. He is a firm believer in challenging the norm and understanding what you are doing and why you are doing it.



Fergus was a member of the community group at both the Kintyre and Forth Monitor Farms.

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