

## Planning For Profit – Redhouse Factsheet

<p><b>Key features of system</b></p>	<p>650 acres plus rented winter grazing for sheep. Unusual mix of cattle, sheep and soft fruit (Barra Berries). Reduced cereals 300 ac to 100 ac, increased livestock. Aim for max output of beef, sheepmeat and fruit to generate margin over fixed costs. Sizeable cattle and sheep enterprises justify 2 stockmen, and allows a balanced farming system and lifestyle. Two main farms – Redhouse and Barra. Part lowground, part LFA (Barra hill). Forage based systems – finish lambs off grass and swift/ redstart, ewes wintered on swedes/kale, silage based cattle rations, even bulls. Adding value through nucleus flocks for Innovis/ Focus Genetics Ltd. Looking for growth.</p>
<p><b>Beef enterprise</b></p>	<p>130 spring, 100 autumn calvers. Simm and Lim crosses. All calves finished, males as bulls. Spring calvers housed in bedded courts Redhouse. Autumn calvers in bedded shed with large outside feeding stance at Barra. Spring and autumn calving allows best use of different types of buildings, spreads single stockmans workload, reduces disease load. Autumn calvers cost £60/cow more to winter, but use third less grazing than spring calvers. Heifers calved 2.5 years, aim is longevity TMR is important part of system – vary straw content to manage cow Condition Score, forage based ration even for finishing bulls. Aim is uniformly good performance. Invested in buildings – aim is to allow one man (the biggest single cost) to handle more stock.</p>
<p><b>Sheep enterprise</b></p>	<p>1,100 Highlander ewes and hogs (300+) tugged annually. Put to Highlander tups for replacements, Primera tups for finished lambs. Also now Nucleus flocks of Highlander and Primera ewes for Innovis Focus Genetics. Lambing outdoors 100 ewes per 15 acres in April. Finish lambs off grass and forage crops (swift). Males entire. Lamb growth rate is critical measure. Ewes grazed off farm in autumn until scanning in Feb, then on to swedes/kale mix (2 row strips) until 10 days pre-lambing when set-stocked on grass across whole farm. 40 acres forage crops.</p>
<p><b>Soft Fruit</b></p>	<p>20 acres raspberries and strawberries in tunnels. More output value than rest of farm. Water and nutrients applied along drip irrigation lines. Soil probes in tunnels measure moisture content. Up to 60 Polish pickers. One FT employee, two for 9 months. Marketing and tech back-up through Angus Soft Fruit. Supermarket orders come night before required. Pick 7 days per week for 4 months mid May to mid Sept.</p>
<p><b>Records</b></p>	<p><u>Fruit</u>: Fruit is in blocks, measure output and costs of each block in detail including labour. Lessons for rest of farm. Pickers have bar code so can measure performance and pay accordingly. <u>Livestock</u>: Measure lambing %, lamb growth rate to weaning and kg produced per acre (and field). Track cattle breeding performance, detailed feed use by each group. Good handle on feed use and cost per head in relation to lwg. Compare simple cereal, sheep, cattle Net Margins per acre.</p>

**Table 1. Cattle Breeding Performance**

	<b>Buchan BIG Group Average</b>	<b>Redhouse</b>			
	<b>All calving periods</b>	<b>Autumn 2013 calving</b>	<b>Spring 2014 calving</b>	<b>Autumn 2012 calving</b>	<b>Spring 2013 calving</b>
Cows to bull	111	82	116	79	117
Heifers to bull	22	35	19	4	27
Calves live	117	109	131	78	122
Scanning/PD rate Cows	92%	92%	97%	95%	92%
Scanning/PD rate Heifers		94%	95%	100%	89%
<b>Simple calving %</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Proportion calving in 6 weeks</b>		<b>83%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>88%</b>

**Table 2. Example feed record – 62 spring born bulls wean to finish 2012/13**

<b>Mix constituent</b>	<b>tonnes/ head</b>
Barley	1.48
Draff	0.3
Sugar Beet Pulp	0.66
Dark Grains	0.276
Straw	0.06
Silage	1.33
Mins	0.05
Average DLWG	1.5 kg
Feed Conversion (kgDM fed per 1 kg lwg)	6.24
Feed cost per kg lwg	97p
Margin over feed per kg lwg (@ £2.11)	£1.14
Margin over feed per day	£1.72

**Table 3. Example Feed Record – Wintering 130 spring calving cows 2012**

	<b>Total kg used</b>	<b>£/t</b>	<b>£ total</b>
Draff	82,600	18	1487
Silage	544,950	25	13624
Minerals	3,509	400	1404
Straw	68,250	20	1365
Barley	7,800	160	1248
<b>Winter cost/ cow</b>			<b>£147 per cow</b>

**Table 4. Cattle Enterprise Comparisons 2012**

<b>£ per Cow</b>	<b>Redhouse 2014</b>	<b>Redhouse 2012</b>	<b>Buchan Group Rearer Finishers Average 2012</b>	<b>QMS Rearer Finishers Average 2012</b>
OUTPUT	1,254	1,010	959	891
Variable Costs	664	508	575	550
Gross Margin	590	502	384	341
Fixed Costs*	305	187	159	193
<b>Net Margin before employed Labour</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>148</b>
Net Margin after employed Labour	45	59	84	69

**Table 5. Sheep Breeding and Growth Performance to Weaning**

Year	Ewes	Hoggs	Ewes scan %	Hoggs scan %	Tailing %	Total wt weaned kg	Av weaning wt kg	Av grams/day	Acres	Ewes/acre	Lambs/acre	Lamb kg/acre
<b>Commercial</b>												
2009	441	305	171	111		21299	33.5	285	68	6.5	9.35	376
2010	594	255	163	144	142	40738	35.25	276	120	7	9.78	339
2011	718	231	193	126	154	51030	35	304.3	168	5.3	8.68	303
2012	769	240	204	126	142	43398	30.7	277	130	7.06	10.88	334
2013	697	322	211	144	147	46597	32.3	303	160	5.79	9.01	291
2014	403	240	217	143	140	30482	33.1	276	103	6.23	8.92	295
<b>Pure Highlander</b>												
2012	40		210		195	2963	38	304	7	5.8	11.14	423
2013	35		273		200	2186	36.5	304	7	5	10	312
2014	376		216		155	19480	33.4	276	47	7.9	12.26	409
<b>Pure Primera</b>												
2012	39		169		143	2441	43.5	352	7	5.6	8	349
2013	27		214		148	1748	43.5	368	7	3.9	5.71	250
2014	38	17	192	129	139	2331	38.2	270	8	5.5	7.63	291

**Table 6. Enterprise Margin per Acre Comparison 2014**

	ARABLE 98 acres			SHEEP 250 acres			CATTLE 290 acres		
	£/acre	% of Output 2014	% of Output 2012	£/acre	% of Output 2014	% of Output 2012	£/acre	% of Output 2014	% of Output 2012
OUTPUT	340	100	100	498	100	100	865	100	100
SEED/FERT/SPRAYS	117	30	33	71	14	17	86	10	9
FEED				4	1	9	314	36	34
VET				26	5	10	37	4	4
EXP				80	16	18	21	2	3
<b>GROSS MARGIN</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>50%</b>
LABOUR	71	21	14	56	11	12	165	19	25
CONTRACT	94	28	16	8	2	3	69	8	7
REPAIRS	51	15	7	20	4	3	55	6	3
FUEL	61	18	8	24	5	7	65	8	8
FENCING				22	4	2	21	2	1
TOTAL COSTS	394	116	78	311	62	81	833	96	94
<b>"NET MARGIN"</b>	<b>(£54/ac)</b>	<b>(16%)</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>£187/ac</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>£32/ac</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>

## **QMS GRAZING FARM**

### **Who?**

Ahren and Louise Urquhart, Maryfield, Dess, Aboyne are the hosts. Young couple, recently took on this 100 ha tenancy. Built up to 500 ewes in first year plus small beef herd. They need a system which can generate cash with minimal capital input and low costs.

### **What's it about?**

The aim of the project is very clear; to increase the kg of liveweight gain produced per hectare from grazing. The Urquharts will be looking at grazing systems and all aspects of grass production and related livestock management. The group who come along to the meetings will be encouraged to try new systems and to record performance. Two meetings held so far, very interesting international grass specialists involved.

The programme runs for 3 years with 4 meetings per year.

### **What's the potential?**

Big! Generally accepted we could produce 25% more with the same inputs if we managed grazing correctly; graze when its put up three leaves, graze down and move on, allow to regrow, keep grass leafy and hence high digestibility.

Good lowground grass is producing 10t DM/ha, but best is doing 18t and is being used. Utilisation and the quality of the grass eaten is our problem rather than the quantity of grass.

Potential? The best are achieving lamb dlwg of 400g, cattle dlwg of 2kg on grazing alone and total lwg from grazing of over 1t/ha.

### **Interested?**

Contact Emily Grant at QMS on 07785973967 [egrant@qmscotland.co.uk](mailto:egrant@qmscotland.co.uk)

## DAIRY BEEF UPDATE

David Green of A J Duncan Farms gave a presentation on their newly established dairy beef enterprise at the first Planning for Profit event at Lochter in December 2013. Copies of his presentation are available.

### Update and General Points on Pure Dairy Beef

- Achieving decent Feed Conversion figures – better than expected
- Main KPIs are FCR, feed price, mortality, finished price.
- Need intensive enterprise mentality and systems.
- Current grain price will help economics.
- An overall problem is health, creating early losses, but maybe more general overall depression of performance. Big open air spaces may be well ventilated, but share the air.
- Need control along the whole chain from dairy onward to ensure delivered calves of sound health, not stressed. Travel and mixing stress is an issue.
- Keep in arrival groups or batch by size (they come from a rearer).
- Need more investigation of whole health issue – other intensive enterprises (pigs, poultry) put huge emphasis on this.
- Overall big variation in performance; final deadweights can vary from 220kg to 320kg.
- Need to make early decisions about performers and non performers. Need observation and weighing, but also need to avoid stress.
- Range of markets would help e.g. Rose veal for small
- Could do huge improvement with full cooperation of dairies (Sexed semen? Beef bulls? Embryos? Colostrum intake?), but to them it's a by-product and they have much bigger issues to deal with.
- Not getting a message from the market that they want a big expansion in numbers at the moment.

**See Clyde Monitor Farm reports on QMS website** – monitor farmer Andrew Baillie has increased scale of dairy bull enterprise and has long standing experience.

