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News release

Date: 3/10/23

*For immediate use*

**Farmers invited to Stirlingshire Monitor Farm to hear about iceberg diseases and their impact on flocks**

Sheep farmers are invited to the Stirlingshire Monitor Farm next week to hear about managing OPA (Jaagsiekte), the benefits of blood-testing pre-tupping for mineral status and iceberg diseases, plus new business funding opportunities.

The evening meeting at the Duncan family’s Lands of Drumhead, Balfron Station, will see Dr Chris Cousens from Moredun join forces with the farm’s vet, Endrick Veterinary Practice, to talk about key sheep issues.

Ovine pulmonary adenocarcinoma (OPA), which is also known as Jaagsiekte, is a contagious lung tumour of sheep. There is no vaccine or treatment, but recent advances in ultrasound detection can help with proactive flock management decisions.

Endrick Vets have screened the Duncans’ flocks and will share their experiences of the screening process. This will be demonstrated by vets Ally and Ishbel, followed by a full discussion with OPA researcher Dr Cousens.

The vets and the Duncan family will discuss the results of recent flock blood testing, covering what the test results show and how to act on the results, what iceberg diseases to consider testing for, and the economic value of blood testing.

Visitors will also hear from SAC Consulting’s Daniel Stout about latest opportunities for funding to help move farm businesses forward.

Car parking at the farm is extremely limited, so please car share if possible. For biosecurity, please ensure vehicles, footwear and clothing are clean, and wear suitable outdoor clothing and sturdy/waterproof footwear. No children under 16 or dogs are allowed.

Lands of Drumhead is farmed by the Duncan family. Three of Bruce and Shona Duncan’s children - Sally, Rebecca, and Gregor - are becoming increasingly involved in running the farms and the family’s diversified agri-tourism enterprises, which include glamping pods and selling home-grown lamb, hogget and mutton direct from the farm.

Situated on the boundary of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, the farm runs over 540ha (1,335 acres), with 165 suckler cows and 1,100 ewes with most progeny sold store.

It is one of nine Monitor Farm across Scotland taking part in the programme run by Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and AHDB, and funded by the Scottish Government. This aims to help farms reach full economic, social, and environmental sustainability by optimising production. Over the next four years, other farmers and experts will be brought together to help the Duncans assess farm performance, explore opportunities, and develop solutions to the challenges they face.

The event takes place on Wednesday 11 October from 6pm-8.30pm.

Booking is essential, and can be done via www.monitorfarms.co.uk/events or by calling regional adviser Christine Cuthbertson on 07769 366 671.

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

About Monitor Farm Scotland:

· The Monitor Farm Scotland programme is managed by Quality Meat Scotland with support from AHDB.

· The programme is fully funded by the Scottish Government Knowledge Transfer Innovation Fund.

· The nine farms chosen to take part in this four-year programme reflect the diverse tapestry of livestock and mixed farming across Scotland.

· The aim of the programme is to help to farms reach full economic, social, and environmental sustainability by optimising production.

· The programme is farmer led and farmer driven with support from specialists and experts to assess farm performance, explore opportunities, and develop solutions to the challenges faced.

· Each Monitor Farm will be steered by a management group of 10 to 12 farming businesses with support from the local community group.

· The learnings and the example set by Monitor farms aims to benefit farmers across the whole of Scotland.

· The programme is managed by an in-house delivery team, who are funded through the programme and managed by QMS.

· For more information visit: https://www.monitorfarms.co.uk/

About QMS:

QMS is the public body responsible for promoting the PGI labelled Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb brands in the UK and abroad and also promoting Scottish pork products under the Specially Selected Pork logo.

Please note that the use of the word Scotch in the Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI brands is correct and should not be substituted for an alternative such as Scots or Scottish. The history of the use of the word Scotch in this way, traces back to the 18th century.

QMS also helps the Scottish red meat sector improve its sustainability, efficiency and profitability and maximise its contribution to Scotland's economy.

The quality assurance schemes run by QMS cover more than 90% of livestock farmed for red meat in Scotland. They offer consumers in the UK and overseas the legal guarantee that the meat they buy has come from animals that have spent their whole lives being raised to some of the world’s strictest welfare standards.

Scotland’s beef, lamb and pork producers make an important contribution to the country’s economic, social and environmental sustainability, contributing over £2 billion to the annual GDP of Scotland and supporting around 50,000 jobs (many in fragile rural areas) in the farming, agricultural supply and processing sectors.

For more information visit www.qmscotland.co.uk or follow QMS on Facebook or Twitter.