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News release

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*For immediate use*

**Are EWE ready for lambing? Find out at the Dumfries Monitor Farm winter meeting**

Preparing for lambing and ensuring it goes well is the focus of the Dumfries Monitor Farm winter meeting.

All sheep producers are invited to the afternoon meeting ‘Are EWE ready for lambing?’ which will look at pre-lambing preparation and best practice at lambing for a successful season.

Graham Lofthouse, who runs the Bankhouse Flock near Galashiels, will talk about ‘Best practice at lambing for a successful outcome’. His session will cover nutrition, target body condition scores, what data to capture that makes a difference, health, hygiene and post-lambing management, as well as talking about where your time is best spent.

Graham has moved his system over the past 13 years from a high-input flock of Texel ewes to a flock of lightweight Easycare composite ewes, which are lambed outdoors in April. The farm has achieved performances which now include an average scanning percentage of 171%, barren rates below 3%, and a rearing percentage of 157%. Over a number of years, the farm has averaged lamb losses from lambing to sale of 8% or less; the industry average for Scotland is 15%.

Following on, vet Ali Haggerty from Stewartry Veterinary Centre will discuss lambing losses and a new project on the topic which will be undertaken through the Monitor Farm programme at Barnbackle.

Monitor Farmer Richard McCornick and his family run the 500-acre beef and sheep unit at Barnbackle, which includes 700 Texel x Mule ewes. The farm’s Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP), produced by SAC as part of the Monitor Farm programme, highlighted lambing losses as an area for focus. Ali will be explaining what the project will involve and the impact it aims to have.

Barnbackle is one of nine Monitor Farms across Scotland taking part in the programme run by Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and AHDB, and funded by Scottish Government. This aims to help to 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 family assess farm performance, explore opportunities, and develop solutions to their challenges.

Monitor Farm south cluster adviser Maura Wilson said: “The aims of this afternoon are to help producers prepare for a successful lambing, and to talk about some of the key areas which can help boost flock and farm performance. It will be great to hear from two very practical speakers about what can be done to make lambing season a success.”

The meeting is on Thursday 7 December at 2pm at Wallets Marts, Castle Douglas, and booking is essential. Book via this link: <https://areEWEreadyforlambing.eventbrite.co.uk>

* For further information on each Monitor Farm, see [www.monitorfarms.co.uk](http://www.monitorfarms.co.uk) or contact Monitor Farm regional adviser Maura Wilson on 07721 677556 or email monitorfarm@qmscotland.co.uk

**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.