

# **News Release**

**Farmers flock to Monitor Farm Scotland meeting to get hands-on with tech**

More than 75 farmers attended day of discussions and practical demonstrations at United Auctions in Stirling to find out what farm management software and technology is right for their farming business.

Organised by Monitor Farm Scotland in partnership with the EU-funded Sm@RT project and led by SRUC (Scotland’s Rural College) with contributions from SAC Consulting and Moredun, the event brought a variety of farm software and innovative farm equipment providers under one roof, alongside experts who guided the audience through the decision-making process. Farmers were able to see and try different software and technologies before deciding which ones would suit their system.

Matt Blyth, an experienced innovator in the sheep and beef industry specialising in data recording and software, stressed the significance of a structured approach. According to Matt: "The first step is to sit down with pen and paper and draw three areas that you would like to focus on in your herd or flock. Next, determine what data points you need to capture, and finally, consider what resources are available to assist you. One of the biggest challenges farmers encounter is dealing with software and pieces of equipment that are not compatible. I urge farmers to take this into account before making an investment."

Ross Robertson Head of Agri-Tech (Mixed) with the Agri-EPI Centre added: “Compatibility, price, and ease of use would be my top three criteria to consider if looking to invest in software or equipment. Make sure to speak to your peers, try a demonstration yourself or see the product in practice at a demonstration day, Monitor Farm event or on another farm. This can be a large investment for your business so ensuring you find the product easy to use can enhance the return on investment.”

Technology is widely acknowledged to hold a myriad of benefits from informing decision-making and increasing efficiencies to lowering costs and carbon footprints.

Christine Cuthbertson, Monitor Farm West region advisor said: “The first year of the Monitor Farm Scotland programme highlighted the opportunities for using farm software to assist with on-farm recording to make business decisions easier and the feedback from those who attend has been that it has increased their knowledge on what questions they need to ask themselves and providers in order to get the right solutions for their own situation on farm.”

Crawford Mclaren, a beef farmer from Crieff attended the Monitor Farm Scotland event commented: “One of the challenges we are facing is incorporating the data from weight recording and medicine use into our current management programme. The event has highlighted the importance of compatibility of software programmes, and we can see some options that are now available,” he said.

Claire Morgan-Davies (SRUC), coordinator of Sm@RT said: *“*The event has been very successful and a great opportunity for sharing information and farmers’ needs between our international project and the work done by Monitor Farm Scotland. I think the discussions and interactions between the farmers and the companies present have been invaluable, and hopefully helped farmers with their farm management decisions when it comes to technology uptake”.

# Further information about the EU-funded project can be found at: [www.smartplatform.network](http://www.smartplatform.network)

**Notes to editors:**

Our thanks go to all the software and technology companies and organisations that attended the event:

* FarmIT
* Herdwatch
* Agriwebb
* iLivestock
* Shearwell
* Datamars
* Ritchie
* Te Pari
* 5 Agri

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.