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*For immediate use*

**Focusing on feet, feeding, fattening and Farming-strong at South Ayrshire’s Monitor Farm on 22nd of February**

John and David Andrew, the South Ayrshire Monitor Farmers are welcoming the Ayrshire farming community to an on-farm event, at their Rowantson Farm, on Thursday 22 February. The meeting will focus on managing sheep lameness, feeding root crops, and the benefits of electronic cattle weighing on farm.

The meeting offers the opportunity for attendees to have practical discussions on the Andrew’s livestock operations, before heading to the Carrick Centre in Maybole for lunch and a short *To Farm Well, You Need to Live Well* workshop with Farmstrong Scotland.

John and David will kick off the meeting with an update on their Monitor Farm journey, with one year now under their belts, and what their aims are for 2024. Attendees will benefit from on-farm discussions and demonstrations, with specialists on subject areas identified by the 20-farmer strong Monitor Farm Management Group.

In the sheep shed, SRUC’s Marion McMillan (BVMS CertAVP(Sheep) MRCVS) vet and local farmer, will share her experience on how you can manage and minimise sheep lameness on your farm, and in-turn increase productivity and profitability.

The ground quality, although not always the weather, allows the Andrews to manage a considerable arable rotation, which includes winter grazing of ground crops. Gavin Stewart, an adviser with Agrii, will discuss the benefits of such systems whilst looking over the fattening hoggs outwintered on a field of main crop swedes.

Along with the progeny from the 150-suckler head, the business buys in an additional 200-head of store cattle to finish at Rowanston; Alison Fergus of Datamars will demonstrate the electronic weighing system located in the fattening shed and go through the advantages of weighing your livestock to target both production and treatments.

Those coming along to the event will enjoy a tasty lunch at the nearby Carrick Centre and the day will conclude with a short interactive workshop with Alix Ritchie and Clare Dickson of Farmstrong Scotland.

Regional Adviser Christine Cuthbertson said: “This is a Monitor Farm meeting which encapsulates the programme’s ethos of being *Farmer Led, Farmer Driven*. The speakers are all part of the Monitor Farm Management Group, or have been identified by group members, and bring with them expertise and experience with livestock, systems and crops. They are each passionate about using information to drive decision-making on farms.”

Monitor Farmer David Andrew added: “This is an important time for us as we head into the main lambing and calving period, and we want to share what we do and what we are going to do with others alongside what we have learned so far as Monitor Farmers. I think it will be great to partake in the Farmstrong workshop too; as a rugby player we know that physical and mental resilience are critical to bring a great game to the pitch, and that same approach should probably be taken at home on the farm too.”

Farmstrong’s Programme Director, Alix Ritchie said: “Research shows many farmers and crofters are great at looking after their equipment and livestock, but, like many other sectors, they can neglect their own wellbeing. As an industry, we can’t afford to let these pressures reach the point where they damage productivity and affect the lives of families.”

Farmstrong Scotland will be attending the open meeting to encourage farmers to consider the importance of looking after themselves and investing in their own wellbeing in the run up to the busy Spring period.

“Clare Dickson, Community Engagement Specialist and I are looking forward to delivering an interactive workshop and sharing some practical tips to help attendees find something that works for them.”

To book for a meeting, visit <https://bit.ly/3w4fvj0> or contact Christine on ‘07769 366671’ or email monitorfarm@qmscotland.co.uk

**Ends**

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**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/>