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CALU's subject areas:

- Horticulture
- Bio-energy
- Arable crops
- Non-food crops
- Alternative livestock

Parsley, sage rosemary and thyme

Most of the herbs that we eat in Wales are grown overseas. But many of these herbs could be grown here. CALU wants to assess the viability—both practical and economic—of herb production.

In order to do this we are running demonstration trials of a range of herbs this year.

For the perennials, we bought in micro-module plants of two mint varieties, two varieties of sage, rosemary and thyme. These were potted into 9cm pots and grown on in an unheated glasshouse through the winter. They were planted out into the field during April.

For the shorter lift species, we are directly sowing into the field site. The seeds have been supplied by Elsoms and were drilled in early June using a brush drill. The species sown included: coriander, parsley chives, dill and basil.

In addition to the field herbs, we are looking at the economics of pot herb production and have a di-

verse range of species in pot sizes from 9cm to 2 litre.

The demonstration plots will be open to the public on 18th August and our advisor, Chris Creed, will be on hand to explain the methods we have used, problems we've encountered and how we've tried to solve them.

To complement the herb production, there will also be a demonstration of micro-salad production, including information on production techniques, suppliers, etc.

Micro-salads (also known as living lettuce, windowsill salads, etc.) are a relative newcomer to the market, but they are proving extremely popular. One of their attractions is that they result in less waste than cut salad leaves. Recent research has shown that salads are one of the main products thrown away in domestic kitchens because they have such a short shelf life.

North Wales Winners at the Chelsea Flower Show

Think of north Wales and what do you picture—mountains, sheep, forests, castles? The first thing that came to your mind probably wasn't outstanding horticulture. But growers from north Wales have taken the two top prizes in the pavilion at the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show this year.

Dibleys Nurseries of Ruthin took the prize for the

RHS Plant of the Year with their 'Harlequin Blue' *Streptocarpus* and Medwyn Williams of Anglesey won the President's Award for his outstanding vegetable display.

Dibleys have won gold at every Chelsea Flower Show they have exhibited in—15 so far. Medwyn now has a staggering 11 Chelsea Golds.

Bee Benefits

On Thursday 10th June, we will be holding our first one day bee workshop. The workshop aims to take a 360° view of all things to do with bees. We will be looking at the benefits bees bring to agriculture and horticulture; the management of bees for honey and other products; and the way that land managers can make subtle changes to their practices to benefit all types of bees and other insects.

The workshop will take place at the Henfaes Research Centre, where a small apiary has been established.

DID YOU KNOW...

The colour of red wine comes entirely from the skin. The juice of most wine grapes is clear, and red wines must be fermented with their skins in order to extract colour.

Red Band Needle Blight

Red band needle blight is a fungal disease which is causing great concern in Britain's coniferous forests. The disease has been in the UK for decades, but recent years have seen an exponential growth in its occurrence. The problem is so bad that the Forestry Commission has a temporary moratorium on planting Corsican pines – one of the species most susceptible to the disease.

Cause

The disease is caused by the pathogen *Dothistroma septosporum*.

How is the disease spread

Spores are spread by air movement and probably also by rain and animals. Movement of infected material has probably been instrumental in the rapid and extensive spread of the disease.

Treatment

Good stand / nursery hygiene is important – particularly ensuring adequate air flows. In forests, thinning is recommended. Research is ongoing into possible treatments and resistant varieties of trees.

Which species of trees are affected?

It is mainly a disease of pines (*Pinus* spp) but it has also infected various spruces (*Picea* spp) and some larches (*Larix* spp) but infection of these species has to date been less serious.

DID YOU KNOW...

The Welsh Assembly Government aims to have 100,000ha of new woodlands created over the next 20 years?

Asparagus production up

British asparagus farmers have almost doubled their total growing area since 2004 to meet rising domestic demand, new figures show.

The area grown with asparagus in the UK had risen 84% to 1,480ha by 2009, according to the British Asparagus Growers' Association.

In the same period, total asparagus consumption went up by 3,620 tonnes to 7,410 tonnes.

Electronic Recording of Pig Movements

Electronic recording of pig movements

In April, Andrew Knowles of BPEX attended three of our pig producer meetings across Wales. Andrew is working on the project that will see the introduction of **compulsory** electronic recording of pig movements next year (2011). This is **not** the same as Electronic Identification (EID) in the sheep sector.

In general, although there is some apprehension about the new system, attendees at the meetings seemed quite willing to give the new technologies for recording movements a try.

BPEX is keen to engage with producers (and slaughterhouses, shows, etc.) about the development and implementation of the systems. If you have any particular concerns about the new processes, you can contact Andrew on 0247 6478810

UK wine production doubles

More than three million bottles of wines were produced in the UK in 2009. Of these just under 2.5 million were white wines and 700,000 reds.

The area producing wine in the UK is now 946ha with around 250ha of young vines which have yet to start production.

We estimate that there are around 20ha of vineyards in Wales.

New projects

Through funding from the Rural Development Plan for Wales, a plethora of new projects are getting up and running throughout Wales. These projects represent substantial investment into the rural economy and the benefits from this should soon become apparent.

Projects which might be of particular interest include:

The Welsh Perry and Cider Society has received funding to support the development of that sector throughout Wales.

Glyndwr University, in partnership with ADAS, Organic Centre Wales and CALU, has received funding to improve the supply chains within the Welsh horticultural sector.

The Pedigree Welsh Pig Society has received funding to increase knowledge of the Welsh breed (in Wales and further afield)

The Sárvári Research Trust is being funded to develop the seed potato industry in Wales.

Better Organic Business Links (BOBL) is an Organic Centre Wales project to work with organic producers in all sectors throughout the whole of Wales.

New assurance scheme for solid biomass

HETAS has launched a new solid biomass assurance scheme (SBAS) which will enable biomass producers to market their products with the HETAS SBAS quality assured logo.

The Scheme has four categories for wood fuel products: logs, woodchips, wood pellets, and briquettes. By and large, these are structured to take into account the European Standards for these fuel types.

Increasing consumer confidence in wood fuel products and their supply is seen as a key driver to improve the reputation and profitability of the sector. This new scheme aims to support that.

Biomass suppliers interested in joining the scheme can find full information on the HETAS website—www.hetas.co.uk.

DID YOU KNOW...

The number of pigs produced in Wales declined steeply from 2000 to 2008, with the total number of pigs falling from nearly 70,000 to just over 20,000. Recent figures suggest this downward trend is now reversing.

Grafting and budding

CALU's annual fruit tree grafting workshops this year were held at Henfaes in north Wales and at Libanus, Brecon. The workshops were yet again a roaring success.

Led by Paul Davies of Dolau-Hirion Fruit Tree Nursery, the workshops provided all attendees with hands-on experience of grafting fruit trees. Everyone who came along went home with one or more fruit trees that they had personally grafted from Paul's selection of root stocks and apple varieties.

Some attendees also brought scion material from their own orchards to propagate old varieties which might otherwise die

out.

The purpose of grafting is to combine one plant's qualities of flowering or fruiting with the roots of another to control vigour.

Grafting rootstock onto scion material is an invaluable skill for those looking to produce their own fruit trees, it is a difficult skill and requires lots of patience.

Following on from the grafting workshops, CALU is planning two budding workshops for August 2010.

Budding is similar to grafting in that it allows the combination of fruiting and vigour to be just

right. Some say it is an easier technique, and it is certainly more widely used in commercial nurseries. Grafting is done in the late winter before buds break dormancy. By contrast, budding has to be done during the summer whilst the buds are active.

The main difference between the two techniques is that budding uses only one bud from the scion material. This means that more plants can be propagated from the same mother plant.

For more information on CALU's budding workshops or any other event, please contact us.

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Supporting sustainable land use in Wales



Forthcoming CALU Events

For more information about any of CALU's events, please contact us. More events are on our website—www.calu.bangor.ac.uk. These events are funded through Farming Connect.

Always double check that the event is going ahead before travelling.

7th June—Pembrokeshire Arable Group, carbon footprinting meeting

8th June—North Wales Vineyards: wine marketing & tasting, Henfaes

10th June—Bee Benefits: a one day practical workshop to provide an introduction to beekeeping. Henfaes Research Centre, Abergwyngregyn LL33 0LB

14th June—North Wales Poultry Producers—control of internal & external parasites. The Eagles, Llanrwst, LL26 0LG

19th—22nd July—Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, Builth Wells. Visit CALU in the Countryside Care area

28th July—Cardigan Show

3rd August—Fruit tree budding workshop, Primrose Farm, Felindre, Powys

10th—11th August—Anglesey Show

12th August—Potato event: fungicides, varieties and late blight, Cilcennin, nr Aberaeron

18th August—Henfaes Herbs: open day looking at field scale herb production, pot herbs and micro-salads

25th August—Meirionnydd Show, Harlech

26th August—Monmouthshire Show, Monmouth

About CALU

CALU delivers the Farming Connect Knowledge Transfer Development Programme for Land Management. The programme provides information to any business in Wales that is interested in:

- Horticulture
- Bio-energy
- Alternative Livestock
- Arable Crops
- Non-food Crops

CALU has three dedicated members of staff and a network of associate specialists covering all the topics within CALU's remit.

CALU ACTIVITIES:

Open days
Demonstration events
Factsheets
Training days
Press articles
Crop information sheets
Project reports
Talks
Producer groups
Agricultural shows
Information booklets

CALU PARTNERS:

Bangor University
Glyndŵr University
ADAS
Coed Cymru
Coleg Llysfasi

