



Wines from Wales

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CALU's subject areas:

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

You may be surprised to learn that there are more than 20 vineyards in Wales. Admittedly, some of them are quite tiny, but more than a dozen are actively producing wine for sale.

One of the rising starts in the industry here is Ancre Hill vineyard, near Monmouth. The vineyards was planted five years ago. This year Ancre Hill scooped a silver award in the annual Decanter World Wine Awards and a bronze in the International Spirit and Wine Competition earlier this year with their Welsh White Regional Wine.

How is it possible that Wales is producing such good wines? A lot of it is down to improved varieties of both rootstocks and scion material (the fruiting vine). A range of rootstocks and grape varieties are now available that can cope with the relatively cool, relatively damp Welsh climate. At a recent vineyard workshop, CALU's advisor, Simon Day of Vine and Wine Ltd, explained that there are some physical and climatic limitations that restrict where grapes can successfully be grown. In general, the closer to sea level the site is, the better, with 150m above sea level-

really being the top limit to production, and lower than 50m above sea level being ideal.

The site needs to be well drained and, ideally, have a slight slope with a southerly aspect to maximise the sun (when the sun shine!). The strong winds we're prone to in Wales can also cause problems, but clever planting of trees to provide shelter-belts can, to quite a large extent overcome this problem.

So, given the right site, the right varieties, the right advice and a bit of help from the weather, there is every chance that a vineyard in Wales can be a great success.

In a way, producing wine in Wales is nothing new. It is thought that the Romans grew grape vines in some areas of Wales and produced their own wine here. Old places names also indicate the past presence of vineyards. And, interesting but apparently true, the only commercial production of wine in the UK at the end of the 19th century, was in Wales. So, today's viticulturalists are reviving a long tradition of wine production in Wales. We can all raise a glass to that!

Fig 1: CALU's first vineyard workshop was held at Ty Croes Vineyard, Dwyran, Anglesey, by kind permission of Harry Dean and his family. Ty Croes produce both white and red wines.



Autumn workshops

We all know how little time producers have, but it is well worth trying to make the time to attend one of CALU's practical workshop sessions this autumn.

We are now in our seventh year of delivering workshops across Wales, and we know from the feedback attendees provide that the workshops are of real value to them.

Whatever your line of business, we hope there will be something in our programme that will appeal to you. For example, how about a workshop on cider making and orchard management; or winter formative pruning of grapevines. If livestock is more your area of interest we will be having workshops on farrowing pigs and general pig husbandry. With winter drawing in, it's an appropriate time for our woodland management workshops where there is a focus on managing woods for a sustainable supply of fuel. We'll also be looking at pruning and grafting fruit trees, as well as the role of woodlands in environmental management.

For more information on any of the workshops, or to book your place, please see the CALU website or contact us at calu@bangor.ac.uk or 01248 680450.

DID YOU KNOW...

Chives grow from their base, rather than from their tips.

*This type of growth is called **intercalary** and is common in grasses. It is why chopped chives always retain their chopped edge but are able to continue growing.*

DID YOU KNOW...

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

New CALU Staff

At the start of July, just in time for the summer seasons of shows and events, two new members of staff joined the CALU team: Lesley Thomas and Laura Pritchard.

Lesley has a degree in Environmental Biology and a Masters in Countryside Land Management, both from Bangor University.

Laura has a degree in Tourism and Management from Manchester University. Over the summer, Laura's focus has been on our exhibits for shows and events. She has also been helping with the practical management of the herb and salad trials at Henfaes Research Centre. As we move into the autumn, Laura's focus will be on organising meetings for discussion groups and workshops for producers throughout Wales.

Lesley has been working with grower groups through the summer and is now putting together the autumn and winter programmes for discussion groups and workshops. Lesley has also enrolled on the beekeeping course at Henfaes, and will be helping with the management of the apiary here.



The two new CALU team members: Laura (above) and Lesley (below)



Do you fancy joining a discussion group?

CALU's discussion groups will be getting into full swing as autumn draws in. Discussion groups are a great way to meet up with people who have similar interests to you.

Our discussion groups cover a wide range of topics and the whole of Wales. From tree nurseries in Snowdonia to goat producers in Pembrokeshire; poultry producers in Conwy to pig producers in south Powys.

Some of the groups are long established and hold regularly meetings, on a monthly or quarterly basis. Others are more informal and meet up as and when a topic of interest arises to the group. All of the groups welcome new members.

If there is a topic that you would like to form a group around, and if we don't already have a suitable group in your area, we're always happy to discuss new possibilities.

Examples of the types of topics the groups will be discussing this autumn are:

- Pig health & welfare
- Soil structure & fertility
- Goats in land management
- Free range egg production
- Tree species: selecting for potential changes in climate
- Bee keeping
- Herb production
- Vineyards: sustainable wine production
- Poultry: breed characteristics—which breed would be best for your business

Meetings are usually held in the early evenings, sometimes in the afternoons. The atmosphere is friendly and informal—all are welcome to attend.

New CALU factsheets

CALU's technical specialists have been busy over the summer months producing a range of new factsheets.

The first—a factsheet providing advice and guidance for people new to land ownership—was written in response to the vast numbers of enquiries we get on this topic. If you have recently bought or inherited some land, or if you are contemplating buying land, this factsheet, written by ADAS, is an excellent starting point. It covers legal considerations as well as practical issues you should be looking into.

We also have a new factsheet for people who are new to keeping pigs. Again, this has

been written by experts at ADAS in response to the increased number of enquiries we have had from new and prospective pig keepers. It covers all the basic points that any pig keeper needs to consider and also provides pointers to further information.

With free range egg production in Wales having increased markedly in recent years, we knew there was a need for a basic factsheet on this topic. Once again we turned to colleagues in ADAS who have extensive experience in this sector, to provide us with an easy to read introductory factsheet that covers all the essential practical

and legal considerations prospective egg producers will need to consider.

In addition to the topic specific factsheets, we have also been busy writing up the reports and factsheets from workshops that we held over the past few months. New additions in this section include: foot trimming & lameness prevention in goats; water harvesting in horticulture; various sheets on soil assessment; and factsheets on the orchards and herb production areas at CALU's base, the Henfaes Research Centre. All of the factsheets are available to download free of charge from the CALU website.

DID YOU KNOW...

*Short term emergency funding has been made available to help woodland owners with young (up to 25yrs) Japanese Larch stands affected by *Phytophthora ramorum*. Funding is strictly limited—for more information call 0300 068 0300 (Forestry Commission Wales).*

CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE LAND USE

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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. All events are FREE OF CHARGE.

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

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

24th August—Budding Workshop, Tal Goed Nurseries

25th August—Meirionnydd Show, Harlech

26th August—Monmouthshire Show, Monmouth

12th October—Cider Making Workshop, Llanrhystud

13th October—Weed Management Workshop, Glyndwr University, Northop Campus

19th October—Horticulture Masterclass, Llanerchaeron. A range of experts and suppliers covering everything from plant pots to poly-tunnels and seed supply to soil testing will be available.

21st October—Organic Centre Wales Annual Conference, Builth Wells

Dates to be confirmed

Cider Making & Orchard Management—north Wales

Winter Pruning of Fruit Trees, with Ian Sturrock —north Wales

Formative Pruning of Grape Vines, with Simon Day—north Wales

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
- Glyndwr University
- ADAS
- Coed Cymru
- Coleg Llysfasi

