



Who is the “typical” CALU farmer?

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A key feature of CALU’s activities from 2004 to 2006 was the provision of technical advice to farmers and growers across Wales.

Technical advice enabled farmers and growers to access up to two days of advice on a topic of their choice from an expert consultant.

The data collected as part of this service have enabled us to try and profile the “typical” CALU farmer—but it isn’t easy!

Size of holding—the average holding size was 69ha. However, sizes ranged from a modest 1.25ha to a sizeable 365ha.

Main activity
Most of the farmers had multi-

ple enterprises. The main primary enterprise was beef production (23%), closely followed by sheep farming (18%). If both primary and secondary enterprises are considered, sheep production accounts for a slightly larger proportion (41%) of CALU farmers’ activities than cattle (40%).

Advice sought
CALU’s customers sought advice across a wide range of subject areas.

Advice on horticulture was the most frequently requested (46%). A diverse range of horticultural topics was covered ranging from general advice on subjects such as field vegetable, soft fruit, wine grape and sea-

sonal bedding plant production to detailed technical advice on specific pest and disease problems.

The second most popular subject area that advice was requested on was pig production (28%) including several requests for advice on farming wild boar.

Other topics covered through the technical advice service included growing biomass for energy production, goat keeping, pheasant rearing and farmed deer production.

Slightly more farmers sought advice on diversifying into a totally new enterprise (58%) than those requesting advice about an existing enterprise (42%).

CALU’s subject areas:

- Horticulture
- Bio-energy
- Alternative crops
- Alternative livestock
- Farm woodlands

Henfaes horticultural demonstrations

CALU’s horticultural demonstration plots at the Henfaes Research Centre will be bigger than ever this year. Market research has clearly demonstrated that there is a huge interest in the production of field scale vegetables in Wales.

However, there is a lack of easily accessible information on the subject. CALU has been working hard to remedy this situation by publishing a range of leaflets and reports on vegetable production. This year, we will be demonstrating the production of a wide range of crops at CALU’s Head Office—Bangor University’s Henfaes Research Centre.



Drilling veg plots at Henfaes 2006

CALU at the Shows



CALU's tent at the Royal Welsh 2006

Preparations are well under way for this year's season of shows. The focal point of the year is the Royal Welsh Show. CALU will be on the same site as last year, in the Countryside Care Area. In keeping with tradition, CALU will be hosting a range of exhibits from around Wales.

Gwynedd's Council's Menterra project will be focusing on oil producing crops suitable for production in Wales. These includes camelina, crambe, flax and calendula. There will also be information available from Menterra on the production of shiitake mushrooms and salicornia.

The Sárvári Research Trust will be a newcomer to the CALU tent. Dr David Shaw and Simon White will be on hand to provide information and advice on their naturally blight resistant potatoes.

CALU partner, the Welsh College of Horticulture, will be exhibiting the latest produce from the CALU herb project.

The newly established Horticulture Network Wales' display will feature produce from the Pembrokeshire Growers Association—a horticultural producer group sponsored by CALU.

We will also be hosting an energy crop stand where potential growers can obtain information on the pros and cons of growing a range of crops for energy

Hands-on herb events

The CALU Herb Project at the Welsh College of Horticulture is now fully operational.

Two 5m x 12m polytunnels have been set up. One tunnel is being used for raising pot herbs from seed, in the other, herbs are being grown in beds.

Outside the polytunnels, a small area of outdoor raised beds has also been established.

The first of what will be a full year's events was held at the College in February. The event brought together existing growers and those interested in diversifying into herb production.

The event was very hands-on, with attendees delving deep into bags of different types of growing media to get a real feel for the subject! Dr Mark Simkin explained the key characteristics growers need to look for when selecting growing media for pot herb production.

Attendees also scrutinised potted herbs which had been brought in from a range of different retail outlets. Amy Dutton, the project's manager, explained that the retail price of the same herb variety in an 8cm pot can range from 79p to over £2.00 depending on where it is purchased. Close assessment of the samples on display at the herb event showed that a higher price did not necessarily represent a better quality plant.

The event at the Welsh College of Horticulture was replicated later in the month at Aberglasney gardens in Carmarthenshire.



Herb Project Manager, Amy, one of the herb production polytunnels and the newly dug field beds



Visitors to the herb event inspecting potted herbs from a range of retailers

DID YOU KNOW...

That horticulture accounts for only 3% of Europe's land area, but 17% of the monetary value of farm output.

CALU helps improve energy efficiency

Energy production and usage have never been far from the news headlines in the last few years. As oil prices have soared and concerns about the impact of carbon dioxide emissions have increased many farmers and growers have been seeking advice on energy production and energy usage reduction.

CALU, in conjunction with their partner ADAS, has published two information packed booklets to help farmers and growers evaluate their energy options.

The first booklet, "Energy efficiency and energy generation on farm—a guide", was published in the au-

turn of 2006. It provides basic information on a range of renewable energy generation techniques along with advice on growing biomass energy crops. The booklet also presents case studies showing how the technologies have been implemented on farms across Wales.

The second booklet, "Managing Energy and Carbon: the farmer's guide to energy audits", provides practical advice on reducing your energy consumption. The booklet contains calculation tables and detailed enterprise information data-sheets to enable farmers and grow-

ers to conduct an energy audit on their own. Users can also compare their energy usage to "average" data for a range of enterprises.

The booklet presents practical advice on how to address energy issues on your farm. Useful information is provided on the cost of taking action, the financial saving in energy costs that will result and the approximate length of time it will take to recoup the costs.

Both of the booklets are available in portable document format (pdf) for free download from the CALU website (www.calu.bangor.ac.uk/energybooklet).



Putting woodlands to work

Throughout 2006 CALU ran a series of training events to raise awareness of the potential benefits of farm woodlands.

The events took participants right through the process of woodland management from establishment, through harvest, to processing and adding value to the end product.

To accompany the events, a series of information notes has been produced covering:

- **Growing trees from seed**
- **Basic tree planting**
- **Woodlands and the single payment scheme**
- **Sawing timber on the farm**

All the leaflets are available on the CALU website.



A Wood-mizer portable saw in action at CALU's Conwy Valley timber processing event, February 2007

DID YOU KNOW...
 There are 123,000ha of broadleaved woodlands in Wales.

Outstanding orchard event

Did you know that many areas of Wales provide ideal conditions for growing apples?

Sadly previous agricultural policies have meant that many orchards have fallen into a state of neglect, or have been grubbed up entirely.

Happily this negative trend now seems to have changed and there is increasing interest in restoring neglected orchards and establishing

new ones.

To help support this positive shift in attitudes, CALU teamed up with Planed (Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development) and held an Orchard Awareness event.

Attendees at the event were treated to practical demonstrations of apple tree and orchard management; talks by leading top fruit

specialists; and a visit to Park Orchard at St Brides.

The event was hugely popular—in fact it was over-subscribed and not all applicants were successful in securing a place.

CALU has also published useful information leaflets on establishing orchards and making cider—visit the website to download them for free.



Pembrokeshire Orchard event

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Supporting sustainable land use in Wales



The impacts of horticulture in Wales

Late in 2006, work started on an Assembly funded project to “Scope the environmental and social footprint of horticultural food production in Wales”.

Dr Katharina Plassmann from the University of Wales, Bangor (UWB), was the lead investigator for the project, supported by David Frost, ADAS Horticultural specialist; Dr Mark Simkin, Principal of the Welsh College of Horticulture; and Professor Gareth Edwards-Jones, also of UWB.

The final report was completed in March 2007 and submitted to the Assembly. The report concluded that horticultural food production in Wales is likely to increase in the short to medium term. Consequently, there is a need to investigate, publicise and implement the best possible practices for sustainable horticultural production.

About CALU

CALU is the Farming Connect Development Centre for alternative land uses. CALU exists to transfer information and technology within the areas of:

- Horticulture
- Biomass
- Alternative Livestock
- Alternative Crops
- Farm Woodlands

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
- Technical leaflets
- Training days
- Press articles
- Crop information sheets
- Project reports
- Talks
- Producer groups
- Agricultural shows
- Information booklets

CALU PARTNERS:

- University of Wales, Bangor
- Welsh College of Horticulture
- ADAS
- Coed Cymru
- Coleg Llysfasi

