



## Farming Connect—an update

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The CALU partnership is very pleased to report its success in retaining the contract to deliver knowledge transfer through the Farming Connect Land Management Knowledge Transfer Development Programme.

The funding secures our service for the next three years and we look forward to working with producers, growers and researchers across our subject areas of horticulture, bio-energy, arable, non-food crops and alternative livestock.

CALU's delivery forms only a small part of the new Farming Connect service, which was officially launched by the Minister for Rural Affairs, Elin Jones, on 10th July. Other elements

of the service include:

- Knowledge Transfer Development Programmes for the Organic, Red Meat and Dairy sectors;
- Planning seminars;
- Diversification seminars;
- Agrisgôp;
- Agri-environment training.

Later in the year, additional services including training and one-to-one mentoring will also come on stream.

CALU has two full-time project officers working on the Land Management Programme, along with support from our partner organisations: ADAS, Bangor

University, Coed Cymru, Coleg Llysfasi and the Welsh College of Horticulture.

“Securing the funding to deliver this Programme offers us an unprecedented opportunity to put together a comprehensive programme of activities,” said CALU Manager, Kerrin Buckler. “The partnership is currently drawing up plans for an exciting and informative series of events and publications. We welcome any suggestions that farmers and growers have for topics that we should be covering in our demonstration events, articles and factsheets.”

For more information on CALU's activities, please visit the website:

### CALU's subject areas:

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

## CALU development farms

As part of the new Farming Connect service, CALU has nominated three centres as Development Farms. These are:

**Plas Gogerddan** - for bio-energy and arable  
**Welsh College of Horticulture** – for horticulture  
**Henfaes Research Centre** – all sectors

All the Development Farm are attached to leading centres for research and education in the sectors. This provides an ideal opportunity to share the findings of research and new technology with the land using communities.

The first Development Farm event will take place at Henfaes

Research Centre on 6th August. The event, “Soils and Cereals” will look at the wide range of cereal crops suitable for production in Wales, particularly in relation to soils, sites and markets. We will then focus on more novel cereals that are being developed as value-added crops for Wales.

Events planned for later in the year include a renewable energy event at Plas Gogerddan in October and a sustainable horticulture event at Welsh College.

## CALU at the shows

As the show season kicks off, CALU will be travelling far and wide to promote the diversity of enterprises suitable for Welsh land. Our focus is on: horticulture; alternative livestock, non food crops, arable crops, and bio-energy.

The first and biggest show of the year will be the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show at the Llanelwedd show ground in Builth Wells. Running from Monday 21st until Thursday 24th July CALU will have a full tent of information to educate and interest.

CALU will also be at the Anglesey show, on the 12th and 13th August. You are very welcome to join us at our ringside pitch where we will be displaying a range of products from CALU's work. This year, we also have the benefit of a display from Organic Centre Wales within the tent., whilst outside, our bee hive, willow bed and herbs will be on display.

The Vale of Glamorgan on the 20th August will be a first

for CALU. This South Wales show is held on the site of Fonmon Castle Park, close to Cardiff Airport. We are hoping for a busy day with lots of interest from Welsh growers and producers.

Later that week (23rd August) we will be at the Talybont & North Ceredigion Agricultural Show, on the Black Lion Fields, Talybont. This is also a first for CALU.

This year's Meirionnydd show will be held in Bala, on the 27th August. This show was a wonderful day last year and we hope to repeat the success this year, especially with the weather!

Visiting us at the shows is one of the easiest ways to let us know what you would like us to be doing for your sector. Wherever you are in Wales there is plenty of opportunity for you to visit a CALU stand and we look forward to meeting you.

### DID YOU KNOW...

There are 16 species of earthworms in Britain. They all play a role in soil processes.

(Source: RHS)

## Harvest at Henfaes

CALU grows a range of crops at Henfaes for both demonstration and show purposes. Harvesting the crops is always a popular activity at Henfaes.

June saw the first produce ready for picking. The earliest were the globe artichokes, closely followed by field grown green courgettes.

Artichokes are a member of the thistle family, they are closely related to the cardoon. Artichokes are an excellent source of potassium and magnesium and a good source of folic acid. They are a perennial plant, and can crop for up to ten years.

The disadvantage of them is that they require a considerable amount of space (appx 1m<sup>2</sup> per plant). They are not completely hardy, and would need protection from frosts in inland areas. They are usually quite free from pests and diseases, with the exception of slugs which relish young artichoke plants.

The small green fingers of field grown courgettes (Tempra F1) proved very popular and soon disappeared. The first field harvested courgettes were closely followed by indoor yellow Floridor F1 courgettes. These highly vigorous plants produce attractive round, golden-yellow fruits with a buttery texture.

The fruits require harvesting regularly as they are best eaten young (although older courgettes are excellent for stuffing.



Freshly harvested artichokes

In the glasshouse sunflowers have provided a colourful backdrop for the purple and yellow beans. The chosen varieties have thrived in the special pea and bean compost donated by Humax and all have produced a bountiful first harvest.

This year we have grown two varieties of purple bean: 'Purple Teepee' and 'Royalty'. To accompany the two purple varieties we also grew two yellow beans: 'Mont d'Or Golden Butter' and 'Sungold'. All the varieties grown are available from good seed catalogues and garden centres.



Purple Teepee beans

## News in brief

### Take care with slug pellets

Farmers and growers are being reminded to treat slug pellets with the same care and caution they would any other pesticides.

Each year in the UK 10,000 tonnes of slug pellets are used. Because they are so convenient it is easy to forget how potent they are.

A single slug pellet can contaminate 10,000 litres of water, making it unsuitable for drinking.

The Metaldehyde Stewardship Group is working to raise awareness of the risks associated with improper slug pellet use, and to

promote best practice.



### Bendy bananas and curvy cucumbers

Usually, any announcement of plans to reduce Brussels bureaucracy is welcomed.

However, EU plans to relax the stringent regulations on fruit and vegetables have received a thumbs

down from many growers. The reason is that some growers fear it would lead to confusion in the markets.

At the moment the specifications mean all buyers know exactly what they should expect from Class I produce. The fear is that relaxation of the regulations would lead to lack of clarity and also the possibility of lower quality produce tarnishing the image of a whole sector.

### DID YOU KNOW...

*Only 10% of all bee colonies in England & Wales are inspected by bee inspectors*

*(Source: National Bee Unit)*

## CALU's busy bees

At the beginning of May, two bait hives were set up in a sheltered corner of Henfaes in the hope of attracting a swarming colony.

After one month of waiting, there was still no swarm in sight. But on June 19th, a bee colony finally arrived at Henfaes: A swarm which was caught by Pete Barrar from CBKA in his garden in the Conwy valley and safely transported to Henfaes.

After the arrival in the early morning, the three frame strong colony was fed with sugar and water solution and left alone to settle in.

After a phase of orientation for the worker bees, they started bringing pollen into the hive.

The first inspection one week after arrival showed frames with larvae, eggs and stores and we were even lucky to spot the queen. The tem-

per of the bees was as good as any beekeeper could wish. The feeder was refilled after the first inspection to make sure that there is sufficient food available.

With the FACE forest plots around, the Henfaes orchard nearby and lavender plants and plenty of other fruits and vegetables within forage distance we look forward to the honey harvesting season!



CALU bee hive at the arrival

## How to get involved

### CALU workshops and demonstration events

We will be continuing with our range of workshops and on-farm demonstration events. If there is an event or topic that you would particularly like CALU to address, please let us know. Similarly, if you feel there is something at your farm or business that would make an interesting subject for an event, let us know.

### Discussion Groups

CALU's discussion groups are an informal way to network with other people working in your sector. Over the past four years, we have supported a diverse range of interests through the discussion group service, including dairy goats, bee keeping, blueberry growing, potato growing and arable production.

There is a small budget for the discussion groups to fund specialist speakers, venue hire and refreshments. CALU staff will also help with arranging meetings, finding speakers, or liaising with training organisations. If you would like to set up a discussion group – please let us know.

## CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE LAND USE

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Supporting sustainable land use in Wales



## Forthcoming Events

**Thursday 10th July**—Workshop—Growing Seed Potatoes, Conwy

**21st —24th July** —Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, Builth Wells

**Wednesday, 6th August**—Workshop—Soils and Cereals, Henfaes Research Centre, Abergwyngregyn, Gwynedd.

**12th & 13th August**—Anglesey Show, Anglesey Show Ground

**Wednesday, 20th August**—Agricultural Show, Vale of Glamorgan

**Saturday 23rd August**—Agricultural Show, Tal-y-Bont, nr. Aberystwyth

**Wednesday 27th August**—Agricultural Show Merionnydd, Bala

**Thursday 28th August**—Agricultural Show, Monmouth

**October (date tba)** - Renewable Energies—Development Farm event, IBERS, Plas Gogerddan

**October (date tba)** - Sustainable Horticulture, Development Farm event, WCoH

**1st & 2nd December**—Royal Welsh Winter Fair, Builth Wells

**For more information about any of CALU's events, please contact us.**

## 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

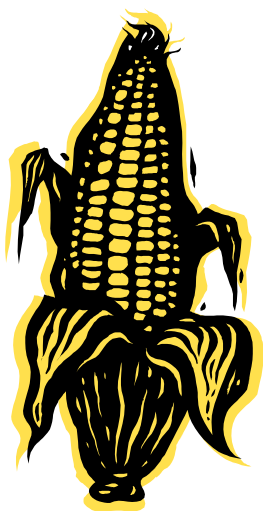
CALU has three dedicated members of staff and a network of associate specialists covering all the topics within CALU's remit.

### CALU ACTIVITIES:

- Open days
- Demonstration events
- 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



Cronfa Annrhyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig  
Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig  
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development  
Europe Investing in Rural Areas



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