

# Farming for a Better Climate



## Auchmore

Auchmore Farm is a family run business by Stephen, Sheena, and Donald Mackenzie.

The farm covers approx. 290 hectares, 170Ha of that being hill ground, with the remaining being in-bye. Auchmore Farm have 82 cows and 260 ewes and gimmers. Along with 1,000 purchased store lambs each year.

The Mackenzie's volunteered to work with SRUC as a *Climate Change Focus Farm*. Over the three year initiative they will consider ways to improve farm efficiency whilst reducing the farm carbon footprint.

|           |                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Name      | Stephen, Sheena & Donald Mackenzie, |
| Farm      | Auchmore                            |
| Locality  | Ross shire                          |
| Farm type | Beef and Sheep                      |



Stephen said *"We decided to be a part of this program to learn and also help others learn - It's a 2 way road. It will allow us the opportunity to start asking different questions."*

## How might climate change affect Auchmore?

This Climate Change Focus Farm Program will allow the Mackenzie's the chance to look at different options and ways they could change many aspects of their business. The idea to improve their livestock structure for better farm efficiency is one priority through better grassland management. A key question here being what is sustainable? They have a keen interest in renewables due to Stephens engineering background therefore they are keen to look and any and all sources of renewable energy to utilise the resources within the farm. With the current enterprises in place, fuel efficiency is another aspect that could be improved.

## Case Study

Find out what other farmers are doing to improve profitability and adapt to a changing climate in our series of case studies.

There are five sets of Practical Guides covering :

Use energy and fuels efficiently

Develop renewable energy

Lock carbon into soils and vegetation

Optimise the application of fertilisers and manures

Optimise livestock management and the storage of manure and slurry

Find further information, including links to other Practical Guides and Case Studies, at



[www.farmingforabetterclimate.org](http://www.farmingforabetterclimate.org)

Funded by the Scottish Government as part of their Climate Change Advisory Activity

## Websites

[www.farmingforabetterclimate.org](http://www.farmingforabetterclimate.org)

[www.adaptationscotland.org.uk](http://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk)

[www.agrecalc.com](http://www.agrecalc.com)



# Auchmore

## Grassland Management

---

The grass growth is currently monitored however the Mackenzie's would like to do this in more detail due to the excess of grass from the summer months. The soil is relatively thin and due to rock and stones sub soiling can not take place. an alternative is required due to compaction issues. With better utilisation of grass the aim is to minimise the use of purchased concentrate feed. Currently a 1000 bales of silage are made but the idea is to decrease this substantially in an attempt to reduce costs and in turn improve fuel efficiency.



## Livestock efficiency

---

Currently cows calve at the end of August. Due to health issues caused by flies and a wish to have larger calves to sell in March, the idea is to bull the cows earlier and bring calving forward to the start of August. To minimise the weaning check there is a plan to start soft weaning the calves and sell direct to a finisher farmer.

The current lamb enterprise is 1000 store bought lambs which are then wintered on seasonal stubbles. This enterprise is proving costly as a round trip is over 100 miles a day. There is a desire to improve the current lamb fattening enterprise to reduce costs and improve overall efficiency both business wise and environmentally.

## Can you benefit from the activities at Auchmore?

---

Reducing the farm carbon footprint can save you money. A series of on-farm meetings to consider practical ways to improve profitability are underway at Corrimony, Auchmore and Clynelish farms who are working together as a 'Highland Farming Efficiency Network'. Meetings are free to attend and all farmers are welcome.

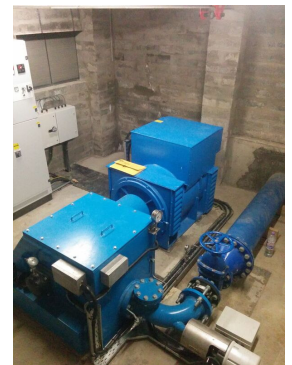
For more information on the meetings, practical ideas to improve efficiency and the farms taking part in the project, visit the website at [www.farmingforabetterclimate.org](http://www.farmingforabetterclimate.org), follow us on Twitter @SACFarm4Climate or find Farming for a Better Climate on Facebook.

## Renewables

---

The Mackenzie's decided to take advantage of the farms location as it is a Class 2 Wind Site and had the first of two wind turbines installed in 2013/14. The second wind turbine on farm is currently being installed. The wind turbines are a 50% joint venture with one other party.

Conscious of making use of the farm's environmental assets Stephen made the decision to go ahead with plans for a 100kW Hydro scheme. This will result in another significant source of income for the farm as well as being another environmentally conscious venture.



Solar PV panels are under consideration however the initial thought on this is that financially it wouldn't make sense. This assumption is due to the farm being 1000 feet above sea level and the exposure giving high risk to wind damage.

