

Farming for a Better Climate



Clynelish

Clynelish Farm in Brora, is run by Jason and Victoria Ballantyne.

The farm covers 195 hectares of tenanted and seasonal let ground. Clynelish has 73 cows and 10 in calf heifers cattle and 699 ewes and 223 gimmers.

Jason and Victoria have volunteered to work with SRUC as a *Climate Change Focus Farm*. Over the three year initiative, Jason and Victoria will consider ways to improve farm efficiency whilst reducing the farm carbon footprint.



Victoria said "Meeting people who are thinking the same and then having the opportunity to learn new things from those people who have tried different things is always beneficial to business."



Name	Jason & Victoria Ballantyne
Farm	Clynelish
Locality	Brora
Farm type	Beef and Sheep

How might climate change affect Clynelish?

As with many farms in the Highlands, Clynelish is best suited to livestock production from a grass based system with forage crops being grown for additional supplementation at key times of the year. Along with improved grassland management and renewed swards, there is a real potential to reduce the costs of bought in concentrates. Jason and Victoria are very conscious of the impact of food production on the environment both in Scotland and Globally. They really feel that large amounts of grain to ruminant animals is a very inefficient method of production. With this in mind they have a real focus on using this programme as a way to minimise the use of concentrate feeds and maximise weight gain from grass and forage.

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

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

Websites

www.farmingforabetterclimate.org

www.adaptationscotland.org.uk

www.agrecalc.com



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Renewables

Jason and Victoria are looking in to the possibility of a Biomass Boiler. Other renewable options are unlikely to be feasible due to Clynelish being a tenanted farm.

Can you benefit from the activities at Clynelish?

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, follow us on Twitter @SACFarm4Climate or find Farming for a Better Climate on Facebook.



Grassland Management

Currently the grazing management at Clynelish is very traditional with most fields being set stock for the season and minimal use of rotational grazing. There is a renewed focus on looking at soils which includes pH and nutrients along with soil structure and any compaction issues due to large machinery and drain maintenance. This project will allow Clynelish to GPS soil test the fields and any variation will be rectified by variable application of lime to a target rate of 6.0 ph. Renewing old grass swards and rejuvenating some unploughable areas will be a focus to improve grass production. Another key area to consider will be rotational grazing and looking to split fields using both temporary and permanent fencing to better utilise grass growth and in turn increase weight gains.



Livestock Efficiency

Through good grassland management Clynelish has managed to stop feeding concentrates to in-lamb ewes pre lambing. This has been a huge saving and only in severe weather conditions is hay supplied to buffer feed. The plan is to look at this concept in the beef herd to try and minimise or even eliminate the feeding of concentrates pre weaning. The creep feeding will hopefully be replaced by forward grazing calves with good quality new grassland. They hope to increase live weight gains of the calves by this grazing regime and there is also a thought to minimise the check at weaning (by carrying out the practice of soft weaning) this should minimise the stress. There is also a plan to decrease the size of the cows as they are currently over 700 kilos and there is an opportunity to increase kilos of calf produced per kilo of cow.