

Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum – www.argyllagriculturalforum.com

Development Manager Update August 2009

Lime on Mull – Forum and NFUS have researched the possibility of bringing a 900 tonne boat load of lime from Fort William to Mull – has the potential to reduce cost of spread lime by a half. Forum currently surveying farmers to see how much, when and if sampling is required. Forum role to pull people together to create critical mass, if successful can be applied elsewhere.

Working Farm Woodlands project – successful inspirational evening meetings held in March. Funding secured from FCS, LLTNP and 2 Leader groups. Initial plan was to begin the facilitation project pre summer, but now pushed back to autumn with a September start. Successful in applying for an extension until December.

Argyll Hill Lamb Producers Working Group – lamb finishing trial 2008/09 with 250 blackface lambs from North Argyll and Mull put to finish in the borders. 190 through market, 54 wholesaler and 6 lost. Demonstrated that there was demand for a consistent high quality branded lamb product and highlighted the need to reduce costs of finishing. Strong interest, 80 Farmers to Mull meeting in May and 45 to Glen Feochan meeting in August. Proposal to run further trial this year with up to 1000 lambs. Calculating costs, members agreement potential funding through linking to EID trial.

Food From Argyll – the group of producers have now formed a co-operative called the Argyll Food Producers. Cooperative Development Scotland provided support for SAOS to write a feasibility report. Marketing Development Scheme Application for coordination/marketing role for 3 years – a very slow process. Still linking with ABC as a means of promoting the area/creating an umbrella brand and launched the website at the rugby sevens www.argyllandtheisles.com – but has been scaled back to a campaigning issue on councils corporate plan. Group won a “food oscar” Scotland of Food and Drink Excellence Award for partnership working, an Argyll and Bute council excellence award and a commendation from Enterprising Britain 2009. Events attended/attending in 2009 are Lochfyne food fair, Spirit of the West, International Rugby Sevens, Tin the Park, Lattitude, Belladrum, V – Festival, Cowal Highland Gathering, BBC proms in the Park and Camanacdh Cup. Market research undertaken this autumn.

Community Local food – working to support Islay, Bute and Kintyre projects and make private sector linkages where possible. Kintyre just recruited a coordinator/gardener.

Renewables- Bute Biogas – Glasgow Caledonian uni undertook second feasibility analysis – same conclusion – big plant only viable after 10 years - Expect it to revert to a one or two farm pilot. **On Farm Hydro** – speaking with farmers who are currently having difficulties getting micro hydro of the ground. Still plan to hold a meeting to bring potential community groups and funding interests and farmers together. Planning to hold an on farm small scale wind power day.

Climate Change - On Farm Energy Audits - working with Neil Donaldson and Malcolm Macmillan (climate challenge funded posts) to secure funds for undertaking a series of audits across Argyll – act as baseline info to identify target areas for action and highlight low carbon farming.

Rural Skills in Schools – held meeting in early February with school teachers responsible for rural skills across Argyll. Forum has undertaken research on level of involvement in Argyll and is researching the structures for a rural skills coordinator. Enthusiasm for taking on a rural skills

coordinator for Argyll (similar to highland model) – outline expression of funding from ABC and Argyll College.