

Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum – www.argyllagriculturalforum.com

Development Manager Update February 2009

Working Farm Woodlands project-facilitation project to assess the potential for 2 groups of farmers to work together utilising their farm woodlands. Initial evening meetings 11th and 12th of March (details on website). Funding secured from FCS and LLTNP – application submitted to Argyll and to Lomond Leader.

Kintyre Red Meat Feasibility –report produced as part of the research work into supply and demand for local food in Kintyre. This funded as an off shoot of the Bute produce project. Report can be used by farmers as a directory of options for red meat processing. (full details on website)

Argyll Hill Lamb Producers Working Group –lamb finishing project with 250 blackface lambs from North Argyll and Mull put to finish in the borders. Measuring all costs on store farm and finishing farm. Over half the lambs are being sold through the auction ring others maybe sold through and Argyll wholesaler. There is potential for this lamb also to be part of a SG trial to assess the potential for local products for public procurement contracts. Attempting to generate wider publicity for working group as farmers who are looking for local solutions.

Food From Argyll –working with the group of producers to secure funds for a coordination role for 2009-2010 to continue attending large scale events events. Feasibility draft complete – looking at cooperative processing and marketing – SRDP funds. Continuing to link this with ABC as a means of promoting the area – but has been scaled back to a campaigning issue on their corporate plan.

Bute Biogas – still winding along. Possibilities of a large central plant appear uneconomical – Glasgow Caledonian uni currently carrying out feasibility on local food waste. Expect it to revert to a one or two farm pilot. Also working with farmers and rejig on islay to look at potential of draff , pot ale and spent lease plant. questions over supply of draff for farmers and use of digestate.

On Farm Hydro –speaking with 7 farmers who are currently having difficulties getting micro hydro of the ground. Will hold a meeting in March to bring potential community groups and funding interests and farmers together.

Farm Diversification case studies – 4 now complete to draft stage – 2 hydro, 1 wind and one waste. One other waste and 2 woodland studies associated with the working farm wood land project. Will be added to the website once complete

Rural Skills in Schools – held meeting in early February with school teachers responsible for rural skills across Argyll. Forum to carry out research on level of involvement in Argyll and report back in March. Enthusiasm for taking on a rural skills coordinator for Argyll (similar to highland model) – outline expression of funding from ABC and Argyll College.

Planting 2 Plate –project potential in Argyll crofting areas. Growing project for primary children.