



## FARM ACTION GROUP

### Turning Discussion into Progress!

#### AIM

To form a small group of progressive farmers with comparable systems who will support each other to adopt best practice with the purpose of developing profitable farming enterprises which provide a great lifestyle and enhance the environment.

#### BACKGROUND

Making changes to a farming business can be challenging without the support of likeminded people. By joining the group progress on farm will be accelerated as members learn from each other and industry experts to avoiding repeating mistakes, fast tracking their personal and business success.

#### KEY REQUIREMENTS

##### Members must be:

- Breeding/Finishing Sheep &/or Beef
- Farming Full time or Deriving >50% income from farm.
- Willing to contribute; share ideas, knowledge and experience.
- Recording key data; have facilities on farm to weigh stock, scanning & weaning %, etc.
- Accountable; commit to making the changes they say they will.
- Ambitious and Motivated; striving to develop their business and personal skills.

#### HOW TO APPLY

Register your interest by contacting James at Precision Grazing by phone, email or twitter:

07534930484

[james@precisiongrazing.com](mailto:james@precisiongrazing.com)

@PrecisionGraze

All Applicants will be sent a form to complete to be submitted by 15<sup>th</sup> October. Successful farms will be notified by the 20<sup>th</sup> October with first meeting taking place in November.

To ensure there is equal opportunity to contribute group size will be limited to 12 Farms.

## **FACILITATION**

Precision Grazing will facilitate the group, they will collect the farm data required to generate the FARMAX models, plan the meetings, ensure everyone's opinion is heard and discussion stays on track! They will help to source and organise the expert speakers. They will take an independent view, contributing where they have experience in the subject, providing the facts and figures but letting the group take the lead on decisions.

## **COST**

**£839+ VAT/Farm/year\***

### **Includes:**

- 2 Places per Farm (required that one person always attends to ensure consistency).
- 12 months FARMAX Analysis Subscription (£115) & production of farm model based on 2018 year\*.
- 4 meetings/year
- Minimum 2 Expert Industry Speakers.
- T-shirt with group name!

*\*where the farm already has a FARMAX subscription and relevant farm model the annual cost will be £450.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Where will the groups be held?**

We will initially be forming 5 Regional Groups with the aim that most members should be within 2 hours drive of each other: South West England, East and Midlands, North England, South Wales and North Wales.

### **How big will the groups be?**

Between 8 and 12 farms per group, with up to 2 members from each farm able to attend, one member must remain consistent. Each member will take in-turns to host the group on their farm. The small size ensures everyone gets chance to know each to know each well and chance to contribute.

### **What information do I need to share?**

Members agree they are willing to share and discuss their farm production data confidentially within the group, for example; stock numbers, animal weights, quantity of forage made and quantity of inputs purchased. The data shared will be used for benchmarking purposes and to create a FARMAX Analysis model for the farm.

### **What is Farmax?**

FARMAX is a software program which allows grazing livestock enterprises to be modelled to determine current farm production. Rather cleverly it can calculate important information like pasture grown and utilisation rate on a kgDM/Ha basis even if the farm is not currently measuring. This makes it an invaluable benchmarking tool for comparing farms and it can also show the impact that different management decisions will have.

### **What are the meetings about?**

The group members will lead the groups, they will identify common areas of interest and choose some priority topics for the year. This might be a particular part of the production cycle such as lamb finishing, or a technical topic such as soil health or time management. Subsequent meetings will then link to these priorities, visiting the group members who are already making progress in those areas (as identified from the benchmarking) and incorporating expert speakers to help answer questions.

### **Is it only about Grazing?**

No, the focus is improving on business profitability in a way which enhances the environment and affords a great lifestyle, The use of pasture is definitely going to feature highly in breeding livestock systems but the benchmarking will allow the groups to decide on their primary areas of focus for each year. In year one this might be marketing and animal health for instance.

## Who are the Groups for?

The groups are for Sheep and Beef Farmers with breeding, rearing or finishing enterprises. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Actively farming, deriving minimum of 50% of income from the farm.
- Have the authority to make and implement changes to the business.
- Open minded to new ideas, listens to others.
- Can contribute to discussion with their own experiences of different farming systems, breeds, crops and techniques.
- Have stock weighing facilities on farm and already recording production data (scanning %, bales of silage made etc).
- Agree to share their accurately recorded production data, host group visit (minimum once every 3 years).

## How much will it cost?

The First meetings will be free to attend and will take place in each of the regions in November. Those that choose to join the group will pay a £300 fee up-front followed by 11 monthly payments of £49 (total £839+VAT/farm business/year).

## What do you get for your Money?

2 places/farm at each of the quarterly meetings, £1200 worth of industry experts or guest speakers , 12 months FARMAX Analysis Subscription (worth £115) and a Farm Model built in FARMAX based on 2018 production year (worth £350).

## Why should I pay to join?

1. As the group is self-funded it has no bias towards a particular breed, feed or system as long as it is profitable and sustainable.
2. The groups will offer a network advice and support focused on business improvement unlike anything else available in England and Wales.
3. Members will have the advantage of learning from the experience of fellow farmers as well as accessing the technical knowledge of the Expert Speakers chosen by the group to contribute.
4. The benchmarking service, directly comparing similar, ambitious businesses will provide motivation and help members identify areas for improvement in their own businesses.
5. Small group size, with consistent members means over time everyone will get an intimate knowledge of each other's businesses, helping to trouble shoot and contribute to its development.
6. Group funds means £1200/year of industry experts or guest speakers can be invited to attend.