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## Digester Performance

Current productivity for the last quarter from Jul 2019 to Sept 2019 is running at

**63%**

The overall output on the meter reading this quarter is **281,848 kWh** of renewable electricity.

Overall value of green electricity produced this quarter is **approximately £45,111**

(NB This is the approximate gross income before running costs)

## Chairman's Report



As reported in the last issue of the Digest, the mechanical breakdown in the middle of June, has resulted in a reduction of 30% of the digester's performance this quarter.

This in income terms is a reduction of just less than 40k. Although this is a substantial loss of revenue, there is sufficient contingency in the bank for it not to effect your interest payments this month and the capital repayments next May.

Since the repair, the digester has been running well. We fitted a second loading pump in September, reducing the time it takes to load the digester. Also, it has given us much needed reserve should one of the loading pumps fail. Unfortunately, the 'unloading' pump did fail in early October leaving us to unload the digester directly into the lagoon using gravity. We had to wait three days for an engineer to source the parts and carry out the repair.

It has been agreed by the Board that it is necessary to purchase a second unloading pump as a reserve. (The pump is made in Germany and it is on a twelve-week lead time.)

## Directors' report

It was strawberry time when the last Directors Report was written. Close links with farming and food do accurately illustrate the changes of the seasons – and cutting up a pumpkin (what a task!) once a year marks a clear transition into the winter season.

Since the AGM in early September the Board received a resignation from the previous Secretary, Fran Hill who is now spending more time on his other interests. At the October meeting there was a unanimous vote to appoint Susie Hoesli as the new Secretary. Susie has been actively involved in both the financial management and secretarial requirements linked to the business of the Board of Directors and was the obvious choice. Also, Alex Mcnamara was formally appointed as the Finance Director. These changes result in updates to the Co-operative bank mandate being put into place and ensure the all-important interest repayments will be sent out to all qualifying members of the Co-operative. The Board also agreed that roles and procedures, particularly for the Executive members, would benefit from a more formal approach in several areas; they are being progressed and documented over the remainder of 2019. Many routine tasks are now shared out to provide an equitable approach to the workload between Board members.

The Chairman will report on the issues related to the plant, but the general view of the Board is that a financial 'set aside' to replace crucial items in the longer time was a prudent action in the earlier days of the Co-op.

A nomination has been received from a Co-operative member to join the Board and an invitation has been issued for a formal introduction and subsequent approval at the November meeting.

We have a second home for some of our Board meetings, at the premises of BBS in Farndon, courtesy of Board member Curtis Morgan; this is the location of the photograph of the current Board. Curtis was keen to experiment with new photographic equipment; Jan delayed the process as she re-applied her all-important lipstick and only three takes were required to produce a satisfactory snap!





Myself and Sadie struggle each issue to make the farm report more about the farm and less about the weather. Unfortunately we can't ignore the massive influence that the weather has on the performance of the farm.

After the flood in June we were very encouraged that the under-sown grass seemed to have survived and was looking like a very reasonable crop for silage in September. Low and behold just when we were about to go and mow the grass, the rain started again and the river flooded for a second time, making what was a very good crop impossible to harvest.

On a positive note our silage pits are full of grass silage. Grass growth this year is up about 40% on last year's dry summer. We should have enough forage to last the winter.

Our eldest son George has now returned home from university and has settled into full time work on the farm. He has a keen interest in the dairy herd and young stock and is already proving to be a very valuable asset. Our youngest son Will is also studying Agriculture at

Newcastle University. He also intends to come home to farm in two year's time.

Having had an advert running for over a month to try and find a Tractor driver/ general farm worker to replace an employee that left for a better paid job with less hours outside of farming. It would seem that the only way the get new blood into agriculture these days, 'is to breed it yourself!'

"How are the donkeys?" I hear you ask. Six have been reduced to two. Four have been sold to farming friends' daughter. They have settled into their new home extremely well and are very happy.

Our TB situation is not improving. We lost a total of 39 cows out of 1200 tested. (37 were inconclusive only two tested positive for TB) Seven of the 39 cows had to be shot on farm as they were too heavily pregnant to travel to the abattoir. This was especially upsetting for George, who is very attached to the cows and had not seen this 'bovine cleansing' before first hand.

The badger cull over the border in England is starting to show very good results with over 50% reduction in farm TB breakdowns in the culling areas. This is no surprise as it has worked in every other European country that has dealt with TB infection in the wildlife with a controlled cull. Let's hope that the Welsh Assembly eventually accepts the overwhelming evidence and adopts the same policy to end this perpetual nightmare that Welsh dairy and beef farmers have suffered for so long.

## Financial update - next interest payment

LPF Co-op is going to make its **second interest payment** to our members at the end of November. You will all be receiving a cheque in the post so **if you have moved house** since purchasing your shares, please ensure that we have your new address asap by email. The board have opted to send out hand written cheques as this option transpired to be the least complicated and costly method of making the payment. We will continue to make annual payments, the interest payment in November and a capital repayment in May.

## Meet your Board - Curtis Morgan

The board have decided that as part of the digest we should introduce our board members who represent you the members of the co-op.

Starting the process off is **Curtis Morgan**.

Curtis is responsible for the communications and as such edits The Digest and also looks after the website and helps with the overall communications. He also looks after the data protection issues for the co-op, which has been re-visited since the introduction of GDPR. As a board member he also helps to scrutinise the running of the co-op and decisions made at the regular board meetings.

Curtis lives in Parkside, Rossett and so is within walking distance of the digester and so is on hand to take some interesting photos should the opportunity arise.

As you can see on the front page, a hot air balloon landed very close to the digester and Curtis hot footed it to the top of the digester and got some great pictures and then realised it's a long way down on a ladder! He has also been known to fly his drone around the digester, very carefully to get some interesting shots from a different perspective.

Curtis is a director of BBS, based in Farndon, who are a specialist database management company and also a mailing house and so is able to bring his communication skills to the co-op and also host the board meetings at their offices which are a tad more comfortable than the farm especially in the winter months.



## Additional Member Benefits

As members of the co-operative you are also entitled to the following extra benefits

### Free Digestate\* 10% off Calon-Wen produce\*\*

- For the free digestate contact Sadie Tomlinson on 07811 960254 to arrange collection from Lower Park Farm.
- Please bring your own containers / bags to carry the digestate.

\*\* for the 10% off Calon-Wen claim a refund or order on-line @ <https://calonwen-cymru.com>

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