

Agriculture

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NEWSLETTER

2013

IBERS Institute of Biological,
Environmental and Rural Sciences



Learning by doing – despite the weather

Despite the atrocious wet weather during September 2012, student cereal plots

were drilled 18 days later than target on 9th October. Cold soil temperatures and the waterlogged ground further extended germination to 12 days, consequently crop growth was significantly behind previous years. However, it gave students an opportunity to study the effect of the profuse number of slugs affecting the crop as well as the weeds prevalent in wetter conditions. Lecturer Dr Malcolm Leitch demonstrates how to keep a watchful eye on these beasts! It is now a matter of anticipation and waiting to see if the wheat and barley catch up in more favourable conditions during 2013 or whether the poor sowing conditions will affect final yield. These plots provide students with a microcosm of the decisions required with a cereal crop and often reflect what is happening in the industry itself. It remains to be seen whether the poor sowing conditions in 2012 will affect yield and quality in 2013 and further affect the quality of seed put in the ground for the 2014 harvest. One poor harvest year can affect 2 or even 3 years' worth of harvests down the line.



List of Courses

BSc

Agriculture
Agriculture with Animal Science
Agriculture with Countryside Management
Agriculture with Business Studies

Foundation Degree

Agriculture (2 year D402 / 3 year D403)
Agriculture with Countryside Management
(2 year D400 / 3 year D4D0)

Interested?

Phone: **Penri James** on **01970 621630**
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Twitter account



IBERS now has a Twitter account that provides information on matters agricultural at IBERS. Follow us on [@ibersagri](https://twitter.com/ibersagri)

ABER agriculture students go head-to-head for FUW bursary

Two Aberystwyth University first-year agriculture students who also attended Coleg Llysfasi at Ruthin went head-to-head in the final interviews for the top awards in the Farmers' Union of Wales higher education bursary scheme. 18 year olds Bleddyn James Pugh, of Doliago, Llanwrthwl, Llandrindod Wells, and Aled Pugh Jones, of Bryn Ibod, Waen, Llanelwy, Denbighshire, were shortlisted for interview by a panel of judges during this week's Royal Welsh Winter Fair.

Both submitted 1,000-word essays on the topic "What do you think are the main barriers facing young people entering the land-based industries today?" Bleddyn was chosen as the winner of the £1,000 bursary by a three-man judges' panel and Aled was awarded £500 as the runner-up. Praising the entries of the

two finalists, FUW agricultural education and training committee chairman Alun Edwards said the judges were very, very impressed with the maturity of the essays they submitted and we are inviting them to take part in a meeting of the FUW's new younger voice for farming committee."

Bleddyn lives on a mixed hill and upland family farm and has been interested in farming from an early age. "In recent years I have begun to take a more active role in the running of our farm and also work for two contracting companies. I spend the first part of the summer working for a local shearing contractor and the second working for a large agricultural contractor in



BURSARY FINALISTS: Winner Bleddyn James Pugh (centre) receives a £1,000 cheque from Alun Edwards while runner-up Aled Pugh Jones is presented with his £500 cheque by FUW deputy president Glyn Roberts.

Herefordshire," he said. "Winning the bursary will enable me to make best use of the nine-month work placement to New Zealand I wish to complete as part of my degree."

During the Winter Fair the union launched its bursary scheme for further education students which will also have a £1,000 award for the winner and £500 for the runner-up.

Agri graduate wins Farmers Weekly photo competition

IBERS graduate Freddie Lawder has recently won the B&W category prize in the prestigious Farmers Weekly photo competition 2012. This is an annual competition run by the magazine for a cash prize of £100 for each category winner. Freddie's photo of steaming dairy cows following a quad bike in the early morning New Zealand air attracted the attention of the judges. Congratulations!

After graduating Freddie travelled to New Zealand to work on a livestock farm in Waitaki, North Otago. On his experiences at Aberystwyth Freddie said "Although New Zealand is obviously a long way from mid Wales, I find that what I learnt at Aberystwyth is relevant to my job on a day to day basis. The degree scheme at Aberystwyth has given me a solid foundation to keep on learning as I advance through my career. The skills and knowledge I learnt will no doubt help in achieving my aim of becoming a prominent member of the agricultural industry. "I have found on my travels that when mentioning I am an Aberystwyth University/IBERS alumnus, others in the agricultural industry are impressed and full of praise for graduates they have previously

come across. Although only a relatively small place, the reputation particularly of rural sciences is huge."

"It was a privilege in many cases, to have my lectures given by nationally and indeed internationally renowned experts in their respective fields. There is a huge amount to be learnt from the members of IBERS who are on the whole, down to earth, very approachable and will go well out of their way to maximise a student's success. The constructive criticism and readily available feedback vastly developed my academic skills. From a scientific perspective, the subject matter of the lectures could not be more up to date and relevant to modern agriculture. The research that IBERS does



The stunning winning photograph

is often ground breaking and is very quickly included in the degree schemes. A scientific way of looking at farming is now more important than ever."

His experiences in New Zealand are documented in his blog 'Freddie Lawder - On The Udder Side Of The World' <http://flinnz.blogspot.co.uk/> Read all about it!

Cambridge Study Tour

Students in Year 1 Agriculture visit East Anglia in the first week of May to study large scale arable farming and other lowland farming systems. The tour is based in Cambridge and includes 10 visits to farms in the vicinity. Beforehand students prepare an innovative series of linked Wiki pages that contain written work entitled 'Farming in the East of England'. These pages contain images, maps and other material in a style synonymous with Wikipedia covering the geography of the region, climate, soil types, crops and cropping systems, animal systems, agriculture and the environment, the agricultural economy and markets, and the supply chain. On their return the students reflect on the visits in a further piece of assessed work comparing perceptions beforehand with what they saw on actual farms.

Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences
Agriculture Study Tour 2012
Cambridge



Resurrecting the art of debating – in front of Royalty!

Two Aber agriculture students recently took part in a debate on agriculture in front of HRH the Princess Royal! It was part of a Young Advocates for Agriculture initiative, the brainchild of The National Farm Research Unit, and is supported by The Worshipful Company of Farmers and leading industry figures. This annual debating competition offers young agriculturalists the opportunity to gain invaluable experience by putting their views to industry leaders and the wider world, develop their communication skills and win an impressive prize.

An audience of industry leaders, farmers and agricultural students was clearly entertained by

the lively debates and speeches from the floor. The judges listened carefully as motions focusing on animal welfare in intensive farming systems, the family farm, genetically modified crops and Single Farm Payment were debated. Speaking on behalf of the Judges, Tom Heap, a presenter from the BBC Countryfile programme, noted both the oratory skills and the ability of the young agriculturalists to take on complex industry issues and present persuasive arguments.

Aberystwyth representatives Manod Williams (completing an MSc in Livestock Science) and Owen Ashton (a final year undergraduate in Agriculture

who had just returned from a work placement year spent in New Zealand and North Wales), neither of whom are farmers' sons, presented a compelling argument that the traditional family farm was not necessarily going to be the future of British agriculture.

Presenting the prizes, HRH The Princess Royal, expressed her admiration for all the young agriculturalists taking part in the debates and encouraged them to continue their interest in current farming issues and the development of their public speaking skills.

Dilwyn Owen – ex-student is 2012 Fferm Ffactor Champion

One of Aberystwyth university's ex-students was named the winner of the popular S4C (Channel 4 Wales) programme 'Fferm Ffactor' – a sort of 'X-Factor' with an agricultural flavour where competitors fight it out for the prestigious title and a brand new pick-up. Over 8 weeks of undertaking a wide range of practical and theoretical agricultural tasks, Dilwyn came out the clear winner, emulating the achievements of another ex-student, Malcolm Davies, in the previous year's competition.

"I'm still pinching myself! Things like this don't happen to me!" says Dilwyn. He returns to the farm in Llanedwen pleased to be driving the prize, the Isuzu D-Max 4x4 Yukon, to Anglesey for the first time. Dilwyn also came out on top in a special Facebook vote for viewers where following the business plan task in the penultimate programme, viewers were asked to choose their favourite viral video advert produced by each of the finalists. The final programme was more serious in nature. Each of the finalists addressed the National Assembly's Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Alun Davies. The topic Dilwyn chose to discuss with the Minister was the impact of bureaucracy on farmers.

Professor Wynne Jones, one of the judges stated about Dilwyn "He has a good understanding of the agricultural industry and a lot of experience. He has good practical skills and plenty of knowledge of the business world and markets to carry him through the tasks.