

DEMONSTRATING INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION THROUGH MONITOR FARMS



COUNTRY/REGION

SCOTLAND

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Social innovation and breaking down traditional barriers in farming are of the essence at Lothians Monitor Farm (LMF) in Scotland. Building on the established format of regular community group meetings to explore topics selected from within that community, a key learning outcome at LMF is expected of the real-time experiment in collaboration between the two neighbouring farmers acting as hosts. Supported by key industry organisations and advisors, these farms represent the prevailing arable and livestock sectors in the region and also present an alternative approach to the reintroduction of mixed farming systems. Key lessons identified through observation and engagement in this case study include: **the importance of effective facilitation for successful demonstration; the value of openness by demonstration host farmers;** the significance of innovation in the way agricultural businesses are managed, as well as innovation in agricultural practices on the ground; **the importance of how information is shared to encourage learning through engagement in demonstration activities and processes;** and the value of bringing different farmer groups together, **resulting new opportunities for exchange, improved access, and enhanced clarity in information shared.** This case study exemplifies the inherent value of time being offered in the Monitor Farms programme, whereby farming communities can witness and contribute towards identifying the benefits of working together in pursuit of more sustainable farming futures. Time for trust to be built, time to identify and trial new and alternative solutions, and potentially time to see results in order that changes may also be implemented more widely by community group members.

ABOUT PLAID

The project has been designed to encourage farmers and farm employees to embrace innovations in agriculture by accessing high quality demonstration activities on commercial farms. Demonstration activities may also contribute to network building in agriculture communities, leading to longer term sustainability and economic development in rural areas. However little has been documented on agriculture demonstration activities in European countries and the lack of an inventory or on-line resources have been identified.

All practice abstracts developed by PLAID H2020 project are available in EPI-AGRI official website:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/peer-peer-learning-accessing-innovation-through>



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