



## INFORMATION FOR FARMERS INTERESTED IN GRASSCHECKGB

Thank you for your interest in becoming a GrassCheckGB Pilot Farmer.

### Background

Grassland agriculture underpins the ruminant livestock sectors in the United Kingdom. The potential for high levels of grass production and utilisation give British agriculture a key competitive advantage against many other livestock production regions across the globe. However, there is significant scope to improve grassland productivity in the UK from the current estimated production levels of 7.5t DM/ha/yr and 4.7t DM/ha/yr on dairy and beef farms, respectively.

Improving grassland management efficiency is a key driver of profitability on beef, sheep and dairy farms across the UK, with each additional 1 tonne DM utilised per hectare worth £334 and £204 per annum to dairy and beef farms, respectively. To assist farmers in making the most of this valuable feedstuff, levy bodies AHDB, HCC and QMS are working with industry organisation CIEL and researchers at AFBI and Rothamsted Research to establish a network of up to 50 grass pilot farms across England, Scotland and Wales.

The project aims to assist farmers in improving both grass growth and utilisation by providing information on grass growth, grass quality and weather conditions from 50 locations across GB to assist farmers in making grassland management decisions and increase output from grass.

### What are we looking for?

The project partners are seeking to recruit up to 50 farms (25 dairy, 25 beef or sheep) from across GB to participate in the study. We are particularly seeking farmers which have an active interest in grassland management and will be

Farmers will be expected to measure their grazing platform on a weekly basis throughout the grazing season. Grass measurements will be fed into an online management platform (AgriNet) along with stock numbers, milk/meat sales and details of meal and silage fed.

Every fortnight each farm will submit grass samples for analysis. This will be done on a rotating basis with half the farms submitting samples one week and the other half submitting on the following week.

Each farm will be equipped with an automatic weather station which will record temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction, solar radiation and soil moisture. Information will be transmitted wirelessly from the monitoring equipment to a IP logger which will need to be plugged into the farm's broadband router.

From time to time, farms will be featured in press and media activity. Pilot farmers will be encouraged to use social media to promote their involvement in the study and their experiences measuring and managing grass. Some of the pilot farmers may be asked to host a farm walk during the year. There will also be the opportunity for the pilot farms to engage with new research activity on grassland management practices.

We will give preference to farmers who are in a discussion group and would encourage pilot farms to host a meeting of their local discussion group during the year.

It is anticipated the project will run for a minimum of three years but the aspiration is for this to evolve into a long-term programme.

### **What you will get from participating in the project?**

Pilot farms involved in the process will have:

- Access to the following equipment:
  - Automatic weather stations recording detailed data every 30 minutes
  - Soil moisture and temperature probes
  - Electronic Plate-meters
  - Animal weighing platforms (beef farms only)
- AgriNet annual subscription
- Fortnightly grass analysis
- Farm specific information on grassland productivity and utilisation, nutrient efficiency, performance of livestock from grass
- Opportunity to discuss grass management challenges with farmers and researchers on a regular basis
- Be part of developing a new model to better predict grass growth for farmers
- Contribute ideas to a farmer focused R&D programme

### **Next Steps**

If you wish to apply, download an application form from the CIEL website and return via email to [Enquiries@CIELivestock.co.uk](mailto:Enquiries@CIELivestock.co.uk) or by post to:

*In compliance with GDPR principles, data provided will be used to select pilot farms who will provide further data for research purposes.*

### **Enquiries**

CIELivestock Ltd  
York Science Park  
Heslington  
York  
YO10 5NP

### **Deadline**

Applications forms should arrive by midnight on Friday 30 November.

### **Further Information**

If you have any specific queries then contact one of the following people

- AFBI          Debbie McConnell          028920681530
- CIEL          Mark Young                      07866799161