

# Maximising calf quality and size

Linda Grove

Penmaen Gower, Swansea



**Linda and her husband Stuart have been farming Parc Le Breos Farm, Penmaen Gower, Swansea since 2001. Their aim is to maximise outputs in terms of calf quality and size, without needing expensive concentrate feed for them prior to sale. A bull was purchased through the Welsh Beef Quality Improvement Project (WBQIP) and Lowerfrydd Bright Lights is already helping them to achieve this.**

Linda has seen the benefit of using performance recorded bulls in their herd over the years. Calving ease is of particular importance to them as it is imperative to have a live calf and a mother able to get to her feet afterwards. Size and growth is also important with steer calves being sold straight off their mothers having had nothing but milk and grass.

Linda said: "It's easy to give them creep feed to put on weight but at this stage it is important for buyers to see the growth potential of an animal."

Heifer calves are usually housed at weaning and finished off grass the following year at 16-18 months old.

Encouraged by the successes of breeding from bulls with good figures, Linda joined the WBQIP in 2006. The project funds 40% of the purchase price of a bull in the top 10% of the breed and contributes £500 a year towards recording.

## Fact File

- 130 acre lowland farm
- 80 Black Limousin x commercial herd
- 6 Pedigree Charolais

Linda and Stuart bought Lowerfrydd Bright Lights at the Charolais Society sale at Carlisle in May 2007 for 8,000gns. He was selected because of his breeding and performance figures as well as his looks and his half brothers are producing the right sort of calves for their particular system. Lowerfrydd Bright Lights is in the top 1% for calving ease, top 5% for muscle and beef value and top 1% for muscle points, which meet the schemes criteria of buying bulls in the top 10% of their breed.

Linda commented: 'The WBQIP has enabled us to stretch to buy a bull of this quality, which previously might have been beyond our financial limits. For us, the money towards recording has also been important so that we can quantify the benefits that we are getting in his young stock.'

The crop of calves from their recorded bull this year have shown superior growth rates with the steer calves being approx 18-20kg heavier than those by the other two unrecorded bulls when sold at weaning. Heifer calves were even better at 20 – 22kgs heavier than calves from non-recorded bulls.

'This year we have also achieved 100% live calves born with no calving difficulties and fit and the cows were fit and healthy healthy' adds Linda. Linda and Stuart are now confident that they will achieve the same results with Lowerfrydd Bright Lights.

# Cynhyrchu lloi o'r ansawdd a'r maint gorau posibl

Linda Grove

Penmaen Gŵyr, Abertawe



**Mae Linda a'i gŵr Stuart wedi bod yn ffermio fferm Parc Le Breos, Penmaen Gŵyr, Abertawe ers 2001. Eu nod yw cael y cynnyrch gorau posibl o ran ansawdd a maint y lloi, a gallu eu gwerthu heb orfod prynu dwysfwydydd drud. Prynwyd y tarw Lowerffrydd Bright Lights trwy Brosiect Gwella Ansawdd Cig Eidion Cymru (WBQIP) ac mae hwnnw eisoes yn eu helpu i gyrraedd y nod.**

Mae Linda wedi gweld manteision defnyddio teirw â chofnodion perfformiad yn eu buches dros y blynyddoedd. Mae rhwyddineb lloia'n arbennig o bwysig iddynt oherwydd mae'n hollbwysig cael llo byw a mam sy'n gallu codi'n syth wedyn. Mae maint a thwf hefyd yn bwysig. Caiff y lloi stôr eu gwerthu ar ôl cael dim ond llaeth a glaswellt.

Dyweddodd Linda: "Byddai'n rhwydd rhoi didolborthiant iddyn nhw i ennill pwysau, ond yn y cyfnod hwn mae'n bwysig i brynwyr weld potensial twf anifail."

Fel arfer, caiff lloi benyw eu rhoi o dan do ar ôl eu diddyfnu a'u pesgi ar laswellt y flwyddyn ganlynol, pan fyddant rhwng 16 a 18 mis oed.

Ar ôl cael ei chalonogi gan lwyddiannau bridio o deirw â ffigurau da, ymunodd Linda â WBQIP yn 2006. Mae'r prosiect yn talu 40% o bris prynu tarw yn 10% uchaf ei frid ac yn cyfrannu £500 y flwyddyn tuag at gofnodi.

## Ffeil Ffeithiau

- Fferm tir isel 130 erw
- Buches fasnachol yn cynnwys 80 o groesiadau Limousin Du
- 6 Charolais pedigri

Talodd Linda a Stuart 8,000 gini am Lowerffrydd Bright Lights yn arwerthiant y Gymdeithas Charolais yng Nghaerliwelydd ym mis Mai 2007. Cafodd ei ddewis ar sail ei ffigurau bridio a pherfformiad yn ogystal â'i olwg a'r ffaith fod ei hanner brodyr yn cynhyrchu'r union fath o loi sydd eu hangen ar eu system. Mae Lowerffrydd Bright Lights yn y 1% uchaf ar gyfer rhwyddineb lloia, y 5% uchaf ar gyfer cyhyrau a gwerth cig eidion a'r 1% uchaf ar gyfer pwyntiau cyhyrau, sy'n bodloni meini prawf y cynllun ar gyfer prynu teirw yn y 10% uchaf ar gyfer eu brid.

Meddai Linda: Mae WBQIP wedi golygu ein bod wedi gallu fforddio prynu tarw o'r ansawdd hwn; heb y prosiect fe fyddai wedi bod yn amhosibl. I ni, mae'r arian tuag at gofnodi hefyd wedi bod yn bwysig er mwyn i ni allu mesur y manteision rydyn ni'n eu cael o'i epil ifanc."

Mae'r lloi o'u tarw cofnodedig eleni wedi dangos cyfraddau twf uwchraddol – roedd y lloi bustach oddeutu 18-20kg yn drymach na'r rhai o'r ddau darw heb gofnodion pan gawsant eu gwerthu adeg diddyfnu. Roedd y lloi benyw hyd yn oed yn well, sef 20 - 22kg yn drymach na lloi o deirw heb gofnodion.

Hefyd, cafodd pob un o'r lloi eu geni'n fyw heb unrhyw anawsterau lloia ac roedd y buchod a'r lloi yn hollach eleni, ychwanegodd Linda. Bellach, mae Linda a Stuart yn hyderus y byddant yn cael canlyniadau tebyg gyda Lowerffrydd Bright Lights.