

Business Development Groups

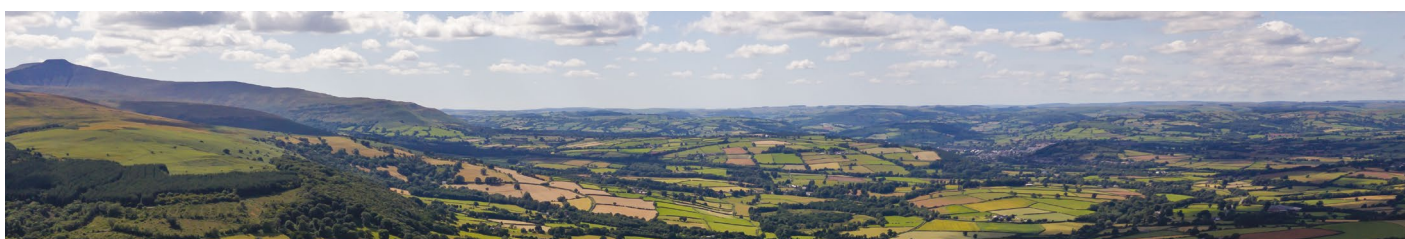
Chat

Developing knowledge and skills
by working together

February 2021

Special Edition: **Benchmarking**

Benchmarking is vital to measuring and improving enterprise performance and sustainable management of resources.



Business Development Groups on journey to success

The Business Development Groups scheme (BDGs), introduced by CAFRE in 2016, will run until 2023 but already there are signs that the Scheme is achieving success. BDG members are benchmarking their business performance, identifying areas for improvement, completing a business development plan and then adopting the latest knowledge and technology to improve business performance.

The BDG scheme is independently evaluated by the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI). Initial results show that being in a BDG has a positive effect across the main enterprise groups. This is especially evident for average dairy farm gross margin which was found in the evaluation to have increased by 8% (£90 per cow) when compared to dairy farms that were not in a BDG. This indicates the potential significant benefits that can be achieved from full engagement with the BDG programme, including benchmarking.

To support the BDG scheme, CAFRE provides a whole farm financial benchmarking service available to all BDG members and is also piloting carbon footprint benchmarking in the Environmental Farming groups. Benchmarking is vital to measuring and improving enterprise performance and sustainable management of resources.



DON'T MISS OUT!

CAFRE Benchmarking is available to you within the BDG scheme.

To 'switch on' CAFRE Benchmarking, contact your group **Support Assistant** or your **CAFRE Adviser today**.



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'The European Agricultural Fund
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BENCHMARKING Roadmap to Success

Benchmarking is part of a 'roadmap' to help you navigate the journey to better performance. It shows where you are on your journey. Your Adviser can then help you to set targets to help you get to your destination!

As a BDG member, you will be able to get help from your Support Assistant to gather the data you need to benchmark. CAFRE will then provide you with your benchmark report and your Adviser will be in touch to help you plan the way ahead to improved performance. With this support available, for BDG members, the CAFRE Benchmarking Service is like having a Sat Nav! However, even with Sat Nav, you have to start by switching it on!

To 'switch on' benchmarking and start the journey to improved technical efficiency and profitability, contact your CAFRE Adviser or your BDG Support Assistant.



What BDG members say about Benchmarking



Mixed Cropping and Livestock Farm, Magilligan

Jonathan Kelly runs a mixed cropping and livestock farm at Magilligan in the North-West.

He is a member of a Cereals BDG.

Informed by his CAFRE Benchmarking reports, Jonathan has been able to more confidently make future-proofing decisions about the direction of his business.

Jonathan says:

"I have been benchmarking for five years. With proper benchmarking you can really see where you are making and losing money. It helps you set your goals and lets you see if you meet them."



Cereal farmer, Jonathan Kelly, uses CAFRE Benchmarking to set business goals

Beef and Sheep Farm, Annalong

Gerard Donnan and his wife Jo-Ann run a beef and sheep farm outside Annalong. They sell forward stores from their suckler herd and lambs from their January lambing texel x suffolk flock. Gerard is a member of a Suckler BDG and Sheep BDG. Both enterprises are financially benchmarked each year. Gerard says,

"Financial benchmarking has been very beneficial. Going forward I will be using it to see how my new calf rearing enterprise is performing. The service will assist me to make changes and improvements in my business."

Speaking more generally on BDG membership, Gerard says,

"Being a member of the BDG group has helped me to improve progeny, reduce the calving period and utilise grass more efficiently. This has resulted in heavier calves sold as forward stores with less meal fed. Developing a one-day paddock system for the suckler cows has facilitated more accurate estimation of grass supply against demand using the 'grazing days ahead' method."



Beef and sheep farmer, Gerard Donnan, uses CAFRE Benchmarking and sees the benefits of better breeding and grazing management

Dairy Farm, Loughmuck, Omagh

Brothers Matthew and James Alcorn run a dairy farm at Loughmuck, Omagh. The farm business has availed of the CAFRE Benchmarking Service for several years. The farm has undergone considerable development over this period. Benchmarking data has provided the brothers with a clear view of the costs of each litre of milk production on their farm and this has enabled them to develop the farm with more confidence. Having several years of benchmarking data to hand can also support a case to finance farm development.

Speaking of whole farm financial benchmarking, Matthew says,

"The main benefit of benchmarking for this farm is that your benchmarking report enables you to compare your farm business performance to other dairy farms and to identify aspects of the farm that could be improved."



Dairy farming brothers, Matthew and James Alcorn have used the CAFRE Benchmarking Service to support development of their farm business

Benchmarking is available to all BDG members

CAFRE whole farm financial benchmarking is available to all BDG members and you are encouraged to use this service. Your BDG Support Assistant will make an appointment with you to collect the information necessary to benchmark your farm business.

This data collection is normally done by visiting your farm but, when required, can be carried out remotely, by telephone and online. CAFRE will receive your benchmarking data and will process this to produce a benchmarking report for your farm.

When you receive your farm report, your CAFRE Adviser will be in touch to discuss the report with you and to help you take account of the results when preparing your annual farm development plan.



| CAFRE Benchmarking Service Annual Reports



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