

Jane Craigie



Danish vision leads the way for farming

As I write this, I'm sitting in rural Denmark at the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists' Congress.

In many ways the Danish landscape is similar to much of Scotland - farmers are predominantly growing spring barley, oats as well as lots of grass and clover and there are a lot of natural features, like hedges and pockets of woodland, field margins and riverside tree planting.

However, as you drive through Jutland, you start to see the differences in our nations' approach to farming, such as the lack of outdoor grazed livestock and dairy cows.

The agricultural buildings are spatially distant and those that we've visited are highly specialised, intensively managed, pig or dairy units.

And the domes, spheres and wigwam-shaped infrastructure of biogas plants are prevalent in all rural landscapes.

Like anyone interested in agriculture, looking over hedges informs you about how people farm, where they earn their income and what their restrictions are.

Denmark is firmly on the path to green food and energy production and the country's farmers and food companies operate in one of the world's most stringent climate-conscious economies.

Pesticide taxes have existed since 1996 - fungicides are charged at 25% and insecticides at 35% - and there are uncultivated, unfertilised and non-spray buffer

margin restrictions on land of 10m for watercourses and 25m around drinking water wells.

In a controversial move last week, the Danish Government announced the introduction of a carbon tax of 750 Danish Krone(DDK)/tonne of carbon emitted (£87/tonne) by 2025. New Zealand has already made the same move, but their taxation level is far less punitive for farming at £2/tonne.

Denmark's countryside reflects this drive towards net zero, as does the research its universities and private sectors undertake. Importantly, the Danes' ability to co-operate and co-invest has been important in building the infrastructure to reduce the country's reliance on carbon and synthetic inputs.

Denmark's food and energy organisations are predominantly co-ops - Danish Crown is owned by its farmer suppliers and it slaughters 30 million pigs a year, while Arla has 8,956 farmer members responsible for 1.5m cows in seven countries, including the UK, and it processes 13.6 billion litres of milk a year.

Both of these businesses are investing heavily in

“Denmark's countryside reflects this drive towards net zero

reaching net zero by between 2030 and 2050.

Biogas plants are aplenty and closely linked to farming communities, with many run by co-ops.

The biogas network now produces close to 30% of Denmark's natural gas supply, much-needed natural fertiliser for the burgeoning ecological and organic acres and carbon dioxide for the food and drink sector.

One plant we visited processes 600,000 tonnes of biomass annually comprising farmyard manure and litter, food and municipal waste.

When natural gas prices are low, the Danish Government subsidises the biogas sector, although current prices of 10-12DDK/m³ (£1.16-1.39/m³) mean it is a prosperous time for these businesses.

At Aarhus University, there are trials on many systems and crops, and farm bio refinery which extracts base ingredients from plants - for example, protein is being extracted from grass to feed - in powdered form - to pigs, poultry and humans.

Travelling to Denmark's farms makes me feel like I am seeing a true picture of the future of farming - highly specialised, highly efficient, wholly co-operative and integrated with the nation's energy and food infrastructure.

■ Jane Craigie runs a marketing and communications business based near Turriff. Clients include BASF, SAC Consulting, the Oxford Farming Conference and Turriff Show.



WHOLESOME: Arla is investing heavily in reaching net zero between 2030 and 2050.

Peter Allison Agriservices Ltd

Farm Waste Recycling

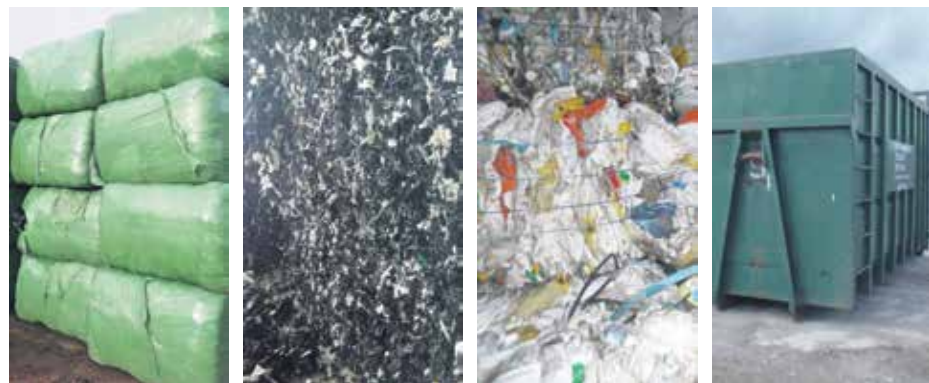
We are a farm waste management company, based near Dundee and have been trading for 12 years.

Our services include:

- Collection of waste from farm
- Waste drop off directly to our yard

The types of waste we accept includes: **Silage Wrap, Crop Cover, Fertiliser Bags, Chemical Drums, Cardboard, Feed Buckets and Scrap Metal.** Mixed loads of waste are accepted to make it as easy and affordable as possible for farmers to dispose of their waste. Only the metal cannot be mixed.

Give us a call to discuss your requirements.



Tel 07713 631995

www.farmwasterecycling.co.uk