Shantron Farm Visit – February 2020

About:

Shantron Farm is a tenant farm in family ownership. A daughter and son-in-law have recently become more involved in the family business helping to develop the tourism elements in particular. The farm has a Bed & Breakfast business, runs tours during lambing season (£12pp plus £2.50 for tea and cake), and is opening glamping pods. The family have been innovating since the 70’s particularly around monitoring and breeding choice systems. They are part of the Monitor Farms programme keeping them connected with others and up-to-date on innovations.

What made the family successful?

* Pragmatism and adaptability
* Open-mindedness to new ideas and initiatives
* Team-work
* Monitoring systems over a long time to see the impact of an initiative
* Understanding their economics to help make decisions; knowing the unit inputs/outputs
* Persistence and a willingness to wait and see
* Being forward-thinking and forward-planning; allocating time for this
* Finding what they could control to minimise the impact of external forces

Reflections:

* Resilience and willingness to adapt
* How do you value your own/family time?
* Impact of external circumstances can be significant
* If it doesn’t cost much to try it, do it!
* Openness to innovation – big and small
* Managing the future – being aware of the external context and managing the risk of changes e.g. Brexit, subsidies
* Not reliant on external subsidies
* Give and take relationship with the estate (even if difficult)
* Anticipating personal changes e.g. getting older, and managing these e.g. succession planning
* Focus on quality of product less than image; being aware of the cultural context in which they operate and the traditions, but making financial choices (choice of sheep)