

Scotland

Mossgiel Organic Farm



WORK PACKAGE 4  
DAIRY SECTOR ANALYSIS

MOSSGIEL FARM

Mossgiel’s **approach** to dairying and the **innovations** they employ on farm **increases the price they receive for their milk** in comparison to milk produced in a conventional manner.

Innovations on farm include:

- A cow-with-calf system
- Organic
- Self-processing
- No single-use plastic on farm
- Non-standardised milk
- Self-bottling in glass bottles
- Sales through vending machines, local cafes/shops and doorstep deliveries
- Coffee shop selling Mossgiel and local artisan products

Mossgiel see their system as a **holistic approach with no one innovation being their USP.**



Mossgiel produces **bottled milk and double cream.**

The milk can be split into **Mossgiel Organic Gold Standard** milk, which comes only from the Mossgiel cow-with-calf system, and other organic milk, which comes from a combination of **Mossgiel and 5 local organic farms.**



NO SINGLE USE PLASTIC

There has been no single use plastic on farm since 2019. Milk is bottled in glass bottles and sold through vending machines, or in reusable containers to trade customers. This, plus the cow-with-calf and organic systems employed on farm, is looked favourably upon by environmentally conscious consumers, improving public perception.



Mossgiel Farm was set up in 2016, after Bryce Cunningham returned to the family farm from a job outside agriculture. The global milk-price crash dropped their milk price to 9.6p/L, leading to losses of £10,000/month. This income loss led to a need to rethink the business, allowing them to keep the farm, get more money for their milk and farm in way which suits Bryce’s beliefs. The original business went into bankruptcy and many of the cows were sold, the funds created being used to change the farming system; going back to what Bryce viewed as a simpler, more environmentally friendly style of farming.

The farm moved from all year round to spring block calving, reducing cow numbers from 137 to 53 and moving from 3x daily milking to a cow-with-calf system with once daily milking. This reduction in milking and reliance on cows rearing their own calves reduced labour requirements and associated costs. Cow breeds were changed from a mix of Red Holstein and Ayrshire to all Ayrshire, taking advantage of their smaller, more traditional frame and ability to thrive in a grass-based system. Yields dropped from 9600L to 2200L/lactation with the introduction of the cow-with-calf system. This led to the farm buying in milk from other local farms and selling their cow-with-calf milk as a standalone product. The farm hope to increase yields by 10-15% through management over the next 2-3 years, reducing losses to the calves.

## SWOT ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of running a system like Mossgiel, with many different innovations employed in one holistic approach to dairying in a non-conventional manner?

01

### STRENGTHS

- Unique – no other Scottish farm produces cow-with-calf milk on this scale or employs the same innovations on one farm.
- Strong marketing background and marketing opportunities
- Good vision
- Drive and ambition
- Resilient - bounced back from bankruptcy



02

### WEAKNESSES

- Lack of ability to get finance due to bankruptcy
- Capital needed to start self-processing
- Old machinery – small scale bottling machines often very old
- Lack of support from conventional farms
- Young business with new staff



03

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Change in diets – people more conscious of food production
- Environmental focus in media
- Environmental government policies
- Animal welfare - Change from consumption of conventional dairy products as public more informed on production



04

### THREATS

- Companies using “vegan” as a brand to produce things cheaper at a higher price
- Veganism is “cool”
- Creditors and debt stopping farms moving forward
- Lack of investment capability
- Weather in Scotland



## TESTIMONY



**Bryce Cunningham**  
Owner  
Mossgiel Organic Farm

Currently Mossgiel is a private approach, run by Bryce Cunningham, although the farm now buys in milk from 5 local organic farms. All milk is processed at Mossgiel and all farms involved are organic.

In the future Bryce would like Mossgiel to become a collective; teaching people to produce milk the “Mossgiel” way and creating a supply of added value milk from farms which incorporate many of Mossgiel’s innovations. The aim would be for farms to follow one or several of the added value innovations which Mossgiel employ and in turn receive more money for their products.

\* \* \*

In 2019, the farm saw a good turnover but ultimately made a loss, due to equipment costs. In 2020 the farm made a profit, but by upgrading the farm to allow them to process more litres, increased staffing and increased partnerships, the farm is set to increase this profit 10-fold in 2021.

In supporting other farms to move to incorporating one or many of the innovations in the Mossgiel system, Bryce is keen to point out that the background Mossgiel came from plays a big part in their profit/turnover.

Initially Mossgiel focused on processing a large number of litres per year, but bankruptcy constraints and lack of cash flow severely limited what they could do.

Someone looking to adopt their innovations and coming into it from a different financial background could get support from a bank, focus on marketing and focus on growing their processing capacity. Coming into this type of system without limitations of creditors means farms could expand in an easier, more natural way.



### For more information

- <https://mossgielfarm.co.uk/>

## CONTACT

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