

Building Up a Successful HM Support Group — 29 March 2021

Aims

1. Support the transition from learning into action after HM training.
2. Provide a social network and further education for HM farmers.
3. Allow participants to be heard, encouraged and positively challenged.

Starting Up

- Reach out to geographic circles of perhaps 100 km radius.
- Seek a diversity of age, experience, enterprises, people who trained together.
- Keep to a manageably sized group of 15-20 people, including partners.
- Try for majority of participants to have a similar level of HM education.
- Get email list, address, phone numbers, in order and distributed.

First Meeting

- Send out agenda to all participants and partners.
- Get people to bring own lunch, host to provide morning tea.
- Set definite times: e.g 9.30 morning tea, 10.00 start, 12.30 lunch, end 2.30-3.00.
- Nominate a chair, secretary and whip – time keeper (at each meeting, or for the year).
- Establish a future format that suits the majority.
- WIFL - what I feel like expressing. 2 mins per person, no interruptions or questions.
- Start conversation about name for group and Holistic Context.
- Agree on places, dates, e.g. places by surname, meet 6 to 8 weeks.
- Start a What's App group or Facebook page to share ideas and photos.

Future Meeting Suggestions

- Briefly go through minutes from last meeting.
- WIFL. 2 mins per person, no interruptions or questions
- Issues arising from WIFL. Limit time on each subject say to 5 mins.
- Create Statement of Purpose and Holistic Context for the group. Revisit regularly
- Read a chapter of HM book, or report on a field day, workshop or conference.
- Discuss book or event, list recommended books in the minutes.
- Use 7 Decision Checks for decisions. Write out on worksheet for person involved.
- Do an exercise, e.g. monitoring, fencing, water, feed estimates, grazing charts.
- Do a farm tour: visit areas of concern or show developments or achievements.

Keeping a Support Group Together for the Long Term

Admin:

- Keep structure at meetings and start on time. Make every meeting worthwhile.
- Set up bank account with small contributions from members for speakers or events.

Activities:

- Have projects focused on local or national issues related to Holistic thinking.
- Do community work, be involved with conferences, workshops.
- Regularly visit farms or businesses in other regions.
- Get together with other groups and share guest speakers.

Support:

- Celebrate achievements, have a Christmas party or annual social gathering.
- Have occasional off-farm meeting at cafés or parks for social bonding.
- Build trust so people can comfortably express issues and get value from the group.