

News from the Farm Advisory Service:



Utilising Cow Tracks to Improve your Dairy System

Incorporating cow tracks into a dairy system can have numerous benefits for a business, including boosting herd health, productivity and profitability.

If cattle are able to be moved across grazing ground efficiently via a cow track, grass offtake can be optimised, which will encourage regrowth. With the weather becoming more unpredictable, cow tracks can also help extend the grazing season by preventing poaching and damage to grazing paddocks.

A track free from sharp or loose stones and uneven surfaces can lower the prevalence of claw horn lesions such as white line disease, sole ulcers and sole haemorrhages sustained through injury. Having adequate drainage can help prevent mud and water softening the skin and hoof horn, which can lead to less digital dermatitis and inter-digital infections.

If cattle are walking on a clean track the risk of muck splashing onto udders is greatly reduced, which should help reduce cases of environmental mastitis and other bacterial infections within the herd.

Tips for installation

Under the General Binding Rules, no runoff from a cow track is allowed to enter the water environment. Track design needs to ensure that any water is directed to a swale for treatment or a field. SEPA guidance and advice should be sought prior to starting work if a cow track is to be constructed within 10m of, or if it is to cross a water course.

There are numerous materials available for constructing a cow track and they vary in cost. They range from solid surfaces such as concrete and concrete railway sleepers to softer options such as reclaimed astroturf and woodchip. Before deciding on a material, it is important to consider track gradient, disposal if it is no longer required and weather conditions. Avoid using material that can be trapped in between the claws e.g. gravel and use a membrane to prevent large stones and muck rising to the surface of the track.

The final piece of the puzzle is fencing the track off to stop cows straying when moving around the farm. A gap of 0.3m should be left between the edge of the track and the fence to allow the cows to utilise the full width of the track without encroaching on to the grass.

Find more information on cow track construction within this technical note:



Keira Sannachan, SAC Consulting



FAS TV: Developing a More Resilient Beef Finishing Enterprise

In this episode of FAS TV we're at the BeefTech 25 event, organised by the Royal Northern Agricultural Society and hosted by Noel and Joanna Gray at Home Farm, Kininmonth.

We hear about the farm's successful beef finishing enterprise and learn more about the other enterprises, including cereals, finishing lambs, plus Saplinbrae Hotel and Lodges.

Some of the event's key speakers give an insight into the challenges and opportunities currently facing the beef industry.

Watch the episode by scanning the QR code below, or visiting www.youtube.com/fasscot



Free Events

At the Farm Advisory Service we run a range of events both online and in-person.

Visit www.fas.scot/events to sign up or contact the advice line and we'll help you get booked on.

Biodiversity Audit Meeting
Lanark, 12th August, 10:00am - 1:00pm

Biodiversity Audit Meeting with NatureScot
North Skye, 12th August, 10:30am - 3:00pm

Grassland Roadshow
Lewis, 15th August, 11:00am - 1:30pm

NE Organics: Walk & Talk
Dufftown, 18th August, 12:30pm - 4:00pm

Thinking of Selling Your Farm?

If you're thinking of selling your farm, there's groundwork to do to make for as smooth a transaction as possible.

Solicitors and title deeds

Engaging a solicitor is essential. They can check if the title deeds are all in order, particularly if land has been bought at different times, or if it has been inherited. To undertake a conveyance solicitors require digital maps. If land underwent a transaction since 2000, there is a chance it may already be digitally mapped, and can be checked at <https://scotlis.ros.gov.uk>.

Taxes

Discuss with your accountant the taxes that may be incurred from a farm sale and how best to mitigate these. If you are buying a property to move on to then you should make them aware of this too to avoid second property taxes.

Engaging a sales agent

It is worth engaging with at least two agencies to compare the services that are offered and the fees. You should be asking them the following:

- An estimated value of your property.
- The local market performance.
- The fee from the agency and any extras.
- How viewings would be undertaken.

You should feel comfortable working with your preferred agency and have everything explained clearly prior to entering into a sales contract.

Once you pass 'Go!'

Initially there may be a flurry of interest or it may be a slower burner. Either way, regular contact with your sales agent, plus keeping your solicitor up to date helps keep the sale moving forward.

Jennifer Galloway, SAC Consulting

For further information, articles, videos and more visit our website at www.fas.scot

Scotland's Farm Advisory Service is funded by the Scottish Government. It is delivered by SAC Consulting, part of Scotland's Rural College, and Ricardo Energy and Environment.



National Advice Hub
T: 0300 323 0161
E: advice@fas.scot
W: www.fas.scot

If you need advice on any topic, the Farm Advisory Service can help

Advice line

For free telephone advice on a wide variety of topics, including the Whole Farm Plan, cross compliance, water framework directive, and other technical issues, call us on **0300 3232 0161** or email advice@fas.scot. The advice line operates between 9 am–5 pm Monday to Friday.

Funded advice and grants

Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMP). Up to £2,000 of funding is available for you to commission an adviser to undertake a confidential assessment of your business and develop a step-by-step action plan.

Specialist advice. Get support to take a deeper look at specific issues of concern or interest. You are eligible to receive specialist advice for two topics with £1,600 of funding per topic (see www.fas.scot/specialist-advice).

Mentoring for new entrants. If you are new to farming, you can receive up to **four days of FREE**, one-to-one Mentoring support from an experienced farmer or crofter.

Online

More information can be found at www.fas.scot/advice-grants/



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