

# Scottish Farm Advisory Service

## One-to-Many Delivery

### 2020 Business Plan



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## Introduction

This document describes how SAC Consulting and its sub-contractors will deliver the one-to-many component of Scotland's Farm Advisory Service (FAS) from April 2020 to December 2020 (the 2020 delivery 'year').

## Vision for the Farm Advisory Service

Scotland's Farm Advisory Service is a professional, modern advisory service that continues to facilitate step-changes in the economic and environmental performance of farmers and crofters throughout Scotland. It achieves this through provision of advice, collaboration with industry bodies, promotion and communication of the prevailing themes and policies for the relevant year.

## Outcomes specified in tender

The following outcomes were specified in the tender document. They guide the delivery of the FAS one-to-many service and aim to help achieve the wider priorities of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) as well as supporting the outcomes derived from the Future of Scottish Agriculture initiative:

- Knowledgeable, multi-skilled farmers and crofters capable of delivering business, societal and environmental benefits within a complex legislative and physical operating environment.
- Greater uptake of agricultural practises that deliver increased economic performance whilst mitigating against climate change and enhancing biodiversity status.
- Increasing numbers of dynamic young people successfully entering Scottish agriculture, thereby injecting vigour in the development of thriving farm and rural businesses.
- Easy access to up-to-date and relevant knowledge and information to all farmers and crofters through a network of advisory centres, on-line resources and a telephone advice facility.
- Land managers using key national performance metrics (benchmarks).
- Improved uptake of integrated methods of managing plant and animal health, including the safer use of and reduced reliance on pesticides and antibiotics.
- Improved water quality through a reduction in diffuse pollution and run-off.

## 2020 one-to-many programme

### Key features

1. Events, publications, videos, podcasts, and online tools that transfer knowledge, enhance understanding and promote uptake of practices that benefit Scottish agricultural businesses and the environment.
2. Reflects the priorities identified through extensive consultation with Scottish Government and key stakeholders, as well as feedback from previous beneficiaries.
3. Built around seven topics:
  - Animal Health and Welfare
  - Crofts and Small Farms
  - Crops and Soils
  - Developing People
  - Natural Capital
  - New Entrants
  - Thriving Through Change
4. Whilst co-ordinated and structured around an annual plan, also has the capacity to accommodate emerging issues (e.g. dealing with extreme weather or disease outbreaks), changes caused by Brexit, and new Scottish Government priorities.
5. Wherever possible and appropriate, and in addition to stand alone events on these subjects, messages about biodiversity, farm woodlands, Climate Change, water and air quality, innovation, business efficiency, and cross-compliance will be integrated into events on other subjects. Messages about the one-to-one element of the FAS will feature wherever appropriate in events and other outputs.
6. A discounted service providing general advice and one-to-one consultancy will be provided to crofters and small farmers. This service increases the opportunity for knowledge transfer to those who, because of their location and/or scale of operations, are economically disadvantaged.

7. A telephone advice line, open during normal office hours, will provide access to general information, signposting to other sources of information, and allow for registration for events.
8. A website, Facebook and twitter accounts, videos and podcasts will be available online at all times, providing farmers and crofters with access to detailed and wide-ranging advice on a range of subjects and an ability to register for events.
9. An on-going awareness raising campaign (e.g. via press releases, advertorials) to increase awareness of the FAS, communicate key messages, and encourage use of the one-to-one services.

## FAS and the Climate Emergency

Whilst the FAS has a track record of providing advice about both climate change mitigation and adaptation, the widespread declaration of a Climate Emergency warrants a response. During 2020 the FAS Natural Capital topic has two projects that will specifically help farmers and crofters adapt to Climate Change. Furthermore, across all topics, messages about Climate Change mitigation will continue to be mainstreamed into all relevant subject areas. The FAS website and social media will also be used to deliver key messages about adaptation and mitigation, and other opportunities will be explored.

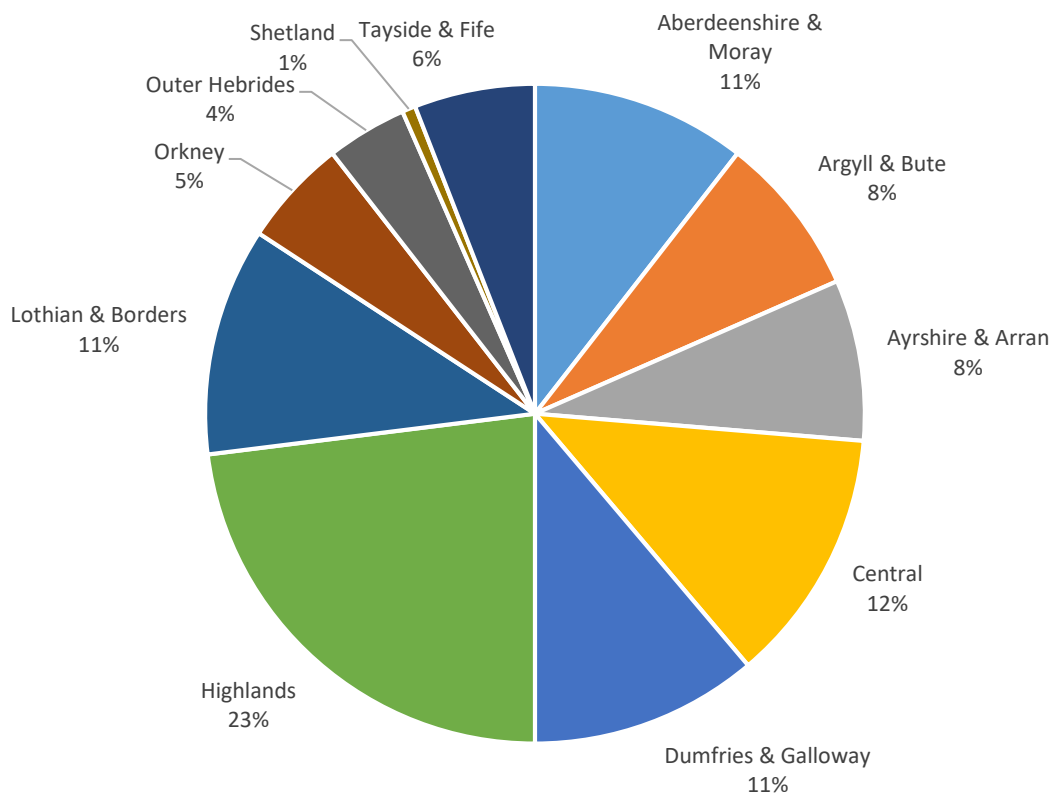
## FAS and Brexit

Brexit poses a particular challenge for the FAS, in that its effects on the agricultural sector are likely to be profound, but in the short-term there is a great deal of uncertainty about what its impacts will be. Based on experience thus far and given that the nine months this plan covers will all be within the transition period for the UK's exit from the EU, it is expected that there will continue to be a high degree of uncertainty. In response, the focus will be on producing and delivering guidance that assists farmers and crofters regardless of the political outcomes, rather than delivering specific guidance on how to deal with radical and imminent change. However, if during the nine months it becomes apparent that a radical and imminent change looks likely to occur, the service will – in consultation with Scottish Government and other stakeholders – adjust its delivery plans to meet the challenge.

## Summary of outputs by topic

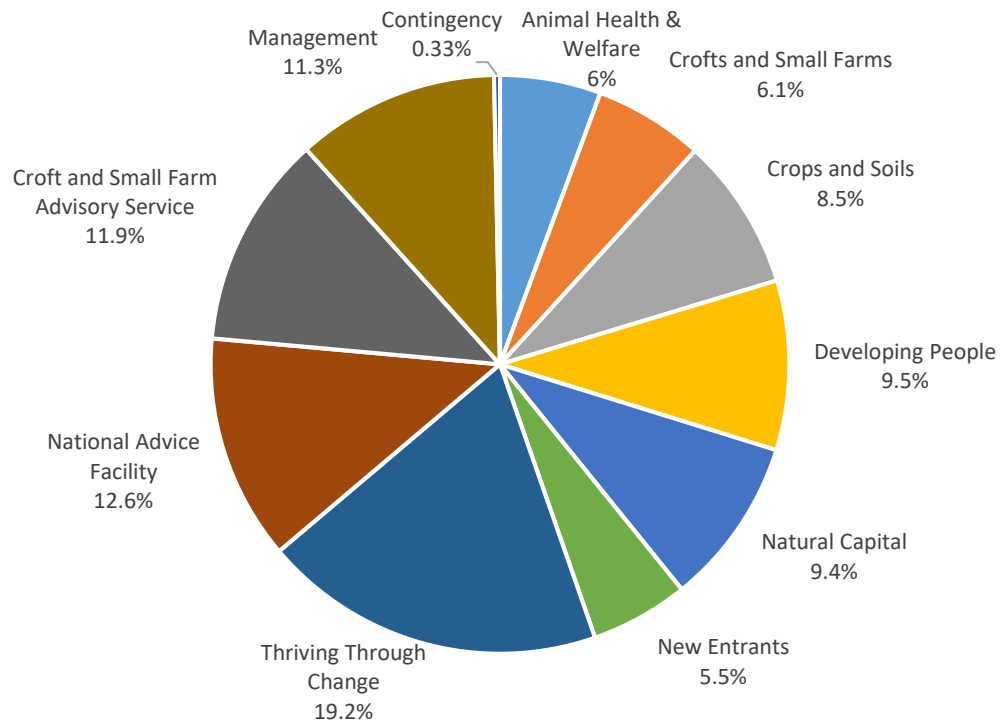
Topic	Events	Videos	Podcasts	Publications	Online tools	Total
Animal Health & Welfare	9	12	1	55	2	79
Crofts and Small Farms	23	4	2	4	5	38
Crops and Soils	23	4	0	39	1	67
Developing People	48	5	7	0	1	61
Natural Capital	13	12	9	23	0	57
New Entrants	20	2	7	9	0	38
Thriving Through Change	41	9	9	81	2	142
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>482</b>

## Geographical balance of events

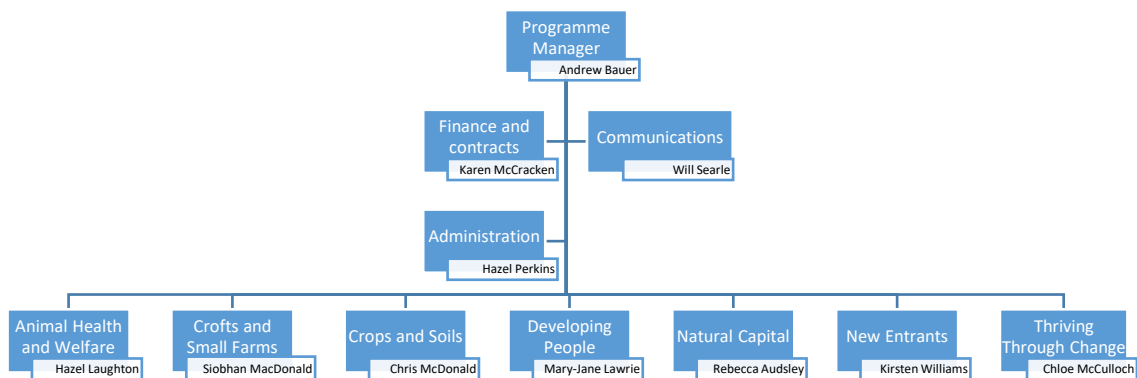


## Balance of resources

The chart below shows the high-level allocation of resources to the different parts of the FAS one-to-many delivery in 2020.



## SAC Consulting – contract key personnel



## Topic outlines

### Animal Health and Welfare

In 2020 this topic will promote best practice that supports higher farmed animal health and welfare standards; to enhance productivity and integrity of Scottish livestock production and its brands.

The objectives for this topic in 2020 are:

- Present relevant and appropriate messages for preventative measures and management practices that promote and improve animal health and welfare.
- Promote best practice for responsible use of medicines to ensure efficacy and reduce reliance and resistance.
- Demonstrate how management practices whilst benefitting animal health and welfare can serve to improve profitability, reduce labour and have a positive impact on the carbon footprint of a business.

In 2020 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Animal health and welfare timely communications – Mixed media content to include short, topical or responsive issues each month covering dairy, beef and sheep sectors; tackled via articles, press-releases, social media, fact sheet and short videos. This will also include a fact sheet and online tool covering minimising antibiotic use in the beef, sheep and dairy sector.
2. Ice-berg Diseases of Sheep – Creating a suite of online resources for farmers on control, management and prevention of the main “ice-berg” diseases of sheep including OPA, Maedi Visna and Johnes. These resources will complement existing materials pulling all information together in a purposely created section of the FAS website. Creating a “one-stop-shop” for farmers.
3. Technology for improved animal welfare – One event supported by a podcast, a video and a factsheet to create a suite of information which can be accessed in a variety of ways to show



how the latest technology can improve on farm management from easier checking of stock to monitoring calving and health problems.

4. Winter planning – A series of late autumn meetings across five locations throughout Scotland which will be based around the subject of winter planning, with local offices able to tailor the messages to suit their region. Topics will include rationing, alternative bedding, health topics such as pneumonia prevention. Where possible these meeting will utilise FAS materials and videos which are already available.
5. Sustainable dairy farming – The continuation of an existing dairy discussion group in the Wigtownshire area. At each meeting the group provide information from their own businesses and share this openly amongst the group to identify best practice which they can all learn from to improve the efficiency of their businesses. In the past year the group have looked at fertility, calving pattern and silage quality and how this will impact on their carbon footprint. Three further meetings will examine early lameness detection to improve animal welfare, reducing antibiotic use and transition cow management. Each meeting will be followed by a review of the comparative information gathered and advise on how to further improve.
6. Management of livestock on grazing systems – A series of videos and web and social media updates based on three focus farmers in different areas of Scotland showing how they successfully manage their stock on rotational grazing. This will include: considerations for starting such a system (including provision of water and getting animals used to fences); novel strategies such as forward creep grazing to minimise stress at weaning; and management of health conditions such as lameness and worm burdens which can be worsened by intensive grazing systems. Farm fact sheets will be created as well as six official videos. Regular social media and farmer updates will be integral to this, creating a campaign to drive involvement and traffic to the video. This will include regular updates on the progress and challenges faced by the farmers.

Further comments about this topic are that other topics such as managing reduced slaughter weight in cattle and EID regulations are being covered under other topics.

Topic leader: Hazel Laughton ([hazel.laughton@sac.co.uk](mailto:hazel.laughton@sac.co.uk))

## Croft and Small Farm

In 2020 this topic aims to support crofters' and smallholders' ability to increase biodiversity, protect natural resources and the crofting landscape, meet crofting regulatory requirements and enhance crofting businesses. In 2020, many of the planned activities have evolved from previous videos, online tools and events, but with several innovative knowledge transfer methods and with an increased emphasis on climate change mitigation.

The objectives for this topic in 2020 are:

- Public goods - Support High Nature Value (HNV) friendly crofting and small-scale farming and carbon sequestration
- Encourage efficiencies in production and coping methods for the transition from CAP brought about by Brexit
- Dovetail with the Crofting Commission and SG aspirations by providing clear and accessible information and guidance on Crofting law and encourage croft land and infrastructure development.
- Support businesses with small-scale livestock enterprises to improve production, reduce their carbon footprint and enhance welfare.

In 2020 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Enhancing underutilised crofts – Practical events that explain how to improve croft land, whether for traditional production, woodland or conservation - and help new entrants to gain confidence and plan the future management of their croft or smallholding. These events meet several objectives: they encourage new entrants; they dovetail with the Crofting Commission advice on purposeful uses of crofts; they promote High Nature Value Farming; and they promote woodland planting, soil management, habitat protection and creation.
2. Encouraging cropping and grassland utilisation – Arable cropping is less common and the benefits of arable rotation and rotational grazing less recognised in crofting counties and on smallholdings. Events will demonstrate benefits of and techniques to improve soil quality and health, carbon capture, biodiversity and profitability. With Brexit and likely market changes, the

benefits and challenges of finishing lambs on forage crops will be demonstrated providing crofters with more outlets for their lambs such as local box schemes. These events help address business resilience, carbon footprint, carbon sequestration, biodiversity and soil health. This project will deliver three events across the crofting area, a video and a podcast. The video and podcast will feature the experiences of crofters in growing crops and time lapse photography of the growing crops and growing lambs.

3. Poly-unit housing – These events will help crofters and smallholders to assess alternative options for small-scale animal housing and horticulture. These events will explore different forms of polytunnels and their application, explaining the practicalities and considerations for livestock housing, including animal health. The viability of growing vegetables as an additional enterprise will also be explored. This project will deliver three events in different locations, with a follow up guidance note. The events will look at how crofters and smallholders can improve business resilience against an unpredictable market and wet weather conditions.
4. VLOG new entrant to crofting – This video blog will cover the journey of a new entrant to crofting, including practical aspects of setting up the croft, legislation, paperwork etc. The blog will be recorded on a GoPro to give an interesting perspective of challenges and opportunities.
5. Crofting legislation and Purposeful Use – Following on from the videos on crofting legislation in 2019, such as decorating and deemed crofts, these videos and online tools will cover Regulatory Applications and Purposeful Use of crofts (e.g., bee-keeping, woodland management, conservation). These will complement the Crofting Commission 'crofting pack' and will help crofters navigate complex regulation, which in turn will help the Crofting Commission's processing time and encourage better use of croft land.
6. Pig-keeping events – These events will provide practical information on pig-keeping as an alternative enterprise for small units, increasing resilience of smallholders and crofters, providing alternative markets and increasing provision of local food. Topics will include animal husbandry and welfare and improving productivity.
7. A Season with Sheep – This series of events aims to improve productivity and animal welfare in sheep flocks. These events have been held in the past and have generated good attendance and engagement levels. They will cover all aspects of sheep keeping including new technology,

handling of stock, welfare issues, selection of breeding stock, record keeping, topping and feed rations. These events will incorporate key messages on welfare, biosecurity, building business resilience, biodiversity and climate change mitigation.

8. Q&A – To increase engagement, a series of Q&A on Facebook and twitter, similar to the campaign run by the Crofting Commission. This is a relatively inexpensive but effective way to engage a dispersed audience with key messages.

Topic leader: Siobhan MacDonald ([siobhan.macdonald@sac.co.uk](mailto:siobhan.macdonald@sac.co.uk))

## Crops and Soils

In 2020 this topic will promote efficient crop and soil management on farms whilst minimising environmental losses. Scotland's soils are a valuable resource that can create many benefits for the Scottish economy and environment for example, increased production, reduced pollution and increased sustainability. Pests, weeds and diseases are constant threats to the yield and quality of crops produced in Scotland, these risks are increasing and new risks are emerging due to a changing climate. Combined with the uncertainty facing the agricultural industry, the need for on farm advice to combat the effects of climate change and improve resource management remains greater than ever. This topic will promote the effective and efficient management of soils and crops, leading to a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, an increase in farm resilience and a reduction in diffuse pollution affecting surrounding water quality. A key delivery platform will be the Soil Nutrient Network (SNN) farms, with a further four new farms proposed alongside the continuing three farms. Delivery of advice will include events, large events, videos, webinars and written material.

The objectives for this topic in 2020 are:

- Increase farmers and crofters understanding of soils. Particularly soil structure, soil health, compaction, soil pH, nutrient planning – organic and inorganic, soil biodiversity – including organic matter and soil erosion through the current and new SNN farms.
- Promote key messages on crop health and integrated pest management (IPM) through delivering events, articles and technical notes.
- Endorse innovation, science and best practice at summer open events to raise the efficiency and sustainability of Scottish arable and grass production and organic farming.
- Promote up to date advice to farmers and key industry stakeholders on crops and soils through the production of key articles, technical notes and support to the industry.

In 2020 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Existing SNN Farms – The final meetings of three SNN farms will take place in summer 2019 in Angus, Easter Ross and Aberdeenshire, followed by a final case study for each of the farms published and promoted on the FAS website.

2. New SNN farms – Four new farms will be created in Orkney, Lanarkshire, Fife and Scottish Borders. Each farm will hold three meetings this financial. Meetings will be structured around the chemical, physical and biological nature of soils.
3. Technical notes – Update key nutrient management technical notes including TN650 “Optimising the application of bulky organic fertilisers” and TN655 “Fertiliser recommendations for soft fruit and rhubarb crops” and update and promote nutrient app where appropriate. TN650 will require analysis of certain bulky organic manures and will use information gained from the SNN farms to inform changes to figures.
4. Key arable events – Promoting key messages on crop health, IPM and soils at five events tailored for local situations. This will include events at Arable Scotland, Lothians, Stirling, Lanarkshire and Aberdeen. A sixth event will be a webinar.
5. Articles – Topical plant health and crop agronomy articles will be published on the FAS website and in the farming press. These will include IPM and the active promotion of changes to pesticide regulation and awareness. 15 press articles will be produced on key issues and threats to Scottish arable productivity plus a further nine articles on the FAS website.
6. Organic farming and soil health – One meeting will be held on an organic farm in North East Scotland promoting soil health on organic farms. A video will be produced to ensure wider spread of knowledge.
7. Grass alternative grazing / making a success of reseeding / rejuvenating reseeds – Two on-farm events with practical demonstrations focussed on soil management as well as reseeding, which will encompass techniques for reseeding, nutrients required, options for regenerating to avoid the need for ploughing and demonstrating areas of conservation value that should not be reseeded.
8. Soil pH case studies demonstrating the benefits of liming on grassland. Case studies will also highlight areas of conservation value whereby liming could have a detrimental effect on the habitat.

Topic leader: Chris McDonald ([chris.mcdonald@sac.co.uk](mailto:chris.mcdonald@sac.co.uk))

## Developing People

In 2020 this topic will continue to run Women in Agriculture (WIA) groups across Scotland, and events focussing on farmer resilience and personal development. The topic aims to develop personal skills that empower farmers and crofters to make confident decisions, communicate effectively, and understand their skills and business to drive it forward. The WIA topic continues the work done after the "Women in Farming and the Agriculture Sector" 2017 report commissioned by the Scottish Government, and the recently published "Final Report of the Women in Agriculture Taskforce", by providing women only workshops and networking events across Scotland. These events will be designed to complement the Scottish Government's "Be your best self" and "women in agriculture development programme". The resilience topic has been developed further following the five resilience workshops which were run in 2018/19. Work with the crofting communities will build on successful events and materials developed last year, continuing to work with the Crofting Commission to meet the demand for these events. Finally, there will be some new workshops and resources developed to help employers effectively manage staff and continue their development.

The objectives for this topic in 2020 are:

- Build the confidence of women in agriculture and create opportunities to develop and learn new skills in a women-only environment.
- Continue to facilitate the WIA Facebook group which has been a successful online forum for open discussion, networking and education.
- Help farmers prepare for the future, build resilience and overcome challenges.
- Celebrate success and highlight innovation in crofting.
- Develop leadership and cooperation in crofting.
- Help farmer and crofters more effectively manage employees.

In 2020 this topic will deliver the following:

1. WIA discussion groups – 14 groups will be run, each holding up to three meetings. Topics to include marketing, business planning, social media, personal resilience, biodiversity and climate change and other locally chosen topics. Continue to facilitate the WIA Facebook group for women to join in with discussion, keep up to date with events across the country and share information.

2. Conversations about farming – Three podcasts, along the lines of the WIA podcasts delivered in 2019-20, with the aim of building confidence by sharing ideas and offering different perspectives of farmers across the country.
3. Resilience – Four on-farm meetings with case-study farmers who have demonstrated adaptability in the face of challenge. These will be followed by a further four meetings that will give farmers and crofters an opportunity to hear from industry experts (e.g. vets, banks, accountants) on the topics of productivity, negotiation, digital skills etc. The technical advice will be accompanied by advice on the traits of successful businesses, the people involved in them, and how farmers and crofters can take steps to improve their own resilience.
4. Developing crofting – A series of meetings and develop materials for crofters including two events and a webinar on leadership and cooperative groups, and three meetings with one group on personal development. In addition, a meeting on social media for crofters will be run, with a follow up podcast.
5. Crofting success – Two podcasts will be recorded with crofters who are making a success of their business. These will focus on key parts of the business that show good practice or might be that bit different. They will be upbeat with positive messages, especially important in a time of uncertainty.
6. Managing people – Six meetings to equip employers with the skills to effectively manage employees. These workshops will help them to understand their role as employer and show them ways to boost productivity whilst supporting their employees. The workshops will be supported by online resources delivered under the “Thriving Through Change” topic.

Topic leader: Mary-Jane Lawrie ([mary-jane.lawrie@sac.co.uk](mailto:mary-jane.lawrie@sac.co.uk))



## Natural capital

In 2020 this topic to help farmers and land managers protect and enhance natural capital resources, increasing the sustainability of their business and contributing to environmental and climate change goals. This topic focuses on water resource management, woodlands, biodiversity and climate change adaptation.

The objectives for this topic in 2020 are:

- Provide a range of outputs to help farmers and land managers consider woodland and hedge management on their holdings and the positive impact these actions could have on their business, ranging from biodiversity and carbon sequestration to biosecurity and pollution reduction.
- Help farmers and land managers protect and enhance water quality. This could be through steps such as better slurry application or riparian management. These measures have added benefits in terms of reduced emissions and biodiversity improvement respectively.
- Highlight measures farmers can consider to adapt to a changing climate and provide various resources such as video and podcast content, showing how other farmers have addressed these issues.
- Promote practical measures farmers and land managers can consider improving biodiversity on their holding. This could be from creating multi species swards to supporting pollinators.
- Provide information in various formats ranging from web content, written case studies, technical notes, newsletters and press advertorials, video and downloadable podcasts. Various formats allow a range of access points to different FAS material.
- Support attendance of a FAS speaker on woodlands or water resource management at appropriate partner and industry events.
- Supply content for FAS social media posts, signposting back to FAS pages as appropriate.

In 2020 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Focus on farm woodlands – This includes on-farm meetings to show how land managers have integrated trees into their business and web-based information (video, podcast) looking at management of existing woodlands to creation of new planting, agroforestry and information on

hedge laying. Advice will include the multiple benefits planting can bring for climate change mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity.

2. Newsletters and publications – The Farm Woodland News and Farming for a Better Climate Newsletter, along with a regular column in Farming Scotland Magazine, cover a range of key topics in this topic, signposting back to the FAS website and social media channels.
3. Combined meeting slots – These fund a FAS representative to attend a FAS, industry or partner event to specifically cover woodlands (4) or represent FAS via Farming and Water Scotland (FWS) (16). Woodland combined slots will be dictated by other events in the programme or requests from external organisations. For FWS events, these will include FAS representation at nine major national industry shows across Scotland (e.g. ScotGrass, HighlandSheep, AgriScot), plus FAS Water Margin Management and Slurry Management events across Scotland.
4. Slurry Management and application – Linked meetings helping farmers make best use of nutrients on the farm focusing on slurry, demonstrating targeted application techniques plus associated resources (video, FAS topic page and press advertorial). These outputs will help farmers consider application methods, improved nutrient use and reduce the impacts from aerial emissions or risk of runoff affecting water quality.
5. Pesticide storage and handling – Following on from a successful meeting on biobeds and biofilters, a technical note focusing on pesticide handling facilities will be produced along with a press article and video looking at key issues around pesticide use and handling to ensure efficient use and environmental protection. Additional content will be created for a bespoke topic page on the FAS website, which will also feature information on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques and work by The Voluntary Initiative (VI).
6. Adapting to a changing climate – A series of meetings looking at watercourse management in a changing climate along with supporting information, plus a range of podcasts and videos about what other farmers have done to make their business more resilient in the face of climate change.
7. Promoting biodiversity on farms – Videos, publications and podcasts are planned, ranging from information on the National Mountain Hare monitoring scheme, to what we might see in future

outcome based agri-environment schemes and how we can prepare, to more current issues such as Rhododendron control.

8. Promoting pollinators – Using video and podcasts, several farmers will showcase the measures they have taken to promote pollinators on their farm and suggest steps others can consider increasing habitat and food sources for pollinating insects and how this can benefit the farm. This output will link with hedgerow creation and IPM methods, highlighting the benefit of increasing beneficial insects, not just pollinators, across the farm. Additional supporting information will be created for the web pages and social media.
9. Managing uplands for livestock and biodiversity – These videos and podcasts will examine managing upland for a range of mixed objectives including heather management, upland cattle grazing and biodiversity (e.g. Hen Harriers) and will share farmers' experiences. Additional supporting information will be held on the FAS webpages, with promotion via social media, highlighting this subject to farmers and land managers across Scotland.
10. Multi-Species Swards for biodiversity and productivity – How to establish multi-species swards and the benefits to this approach for both the farm business, carbon footprint and biodiversity.

Topic leader: Rebecca Audsley ([rebecca.audsley@sac.co.uk](mailto:rebecca.audsley@sac.co.uk))

## New Entrants

In 2020 this topic aims to equip the next generation in to Scottish agriculture with the skills and knowledge to ensure viable agri-businesses are created. These businesses will be encouraged to be innovative and dynamically run by the next generation. Various activities will be delivered to inform and inspire the next generation while also allowing for networking with other new entrants and professionals.

The objectives for this topic in 2020 are:

- Increase skills and knowledge through tailored training workshops
- Promote joint ventures
- Increasing awareness of opportunities
- Promote good environmental and business sustainability

In 2020 this topic will deliver the following:

1. New entrant groups – These will be local workshops in the following locations: Caithness, Morayshire, North East, Lanarkshire, Ayr, Inverness, Orkney and Angus. These groups will run two meetings over the year. One will be business orientated, the other will be technical. Ensuring environmental sustainability will be a focus point at all meetings.
2. Joint Venture Roadshow – With the Scottish Land Matching Service launched in 2019, we will raise awareness of Joint Ventures. Highlighting the opportunities for both the retiring generation and new people to agriculture. We plan to run two events, one in the North and the other in the South. We will collaborate with other key stakeholders such as NFU Scotland, Scottish Land and Estates, etc. These events will allow attendees to hear from experts as well as people who have been involved in joint venture agreements.
3. Fact sheets – Four additional fact sheets will be added to the current suite. Topics will be chosen based on feedback from the regional groups as well as what is most relevant (e.g. where there are gaps of knowledge in the network).
4. Case Studies – Four further case studies will be created, to inspire new entrants and demonstrate that there are routes into the industry and how different individuals have

overcome barriers to entry and finance. These will also show best environmental practice on the chosen farms.

5. Newsletter – One newsletter will be produced, highlighting opportunities that have become available, good news, news from the groups, and key updates.
6. Podcasts focusing on pigs – There has been a real interest for new entrants into pig farming, following on from case studies carried out through FAS and ongoing industry development. We will develop this further through a series of pig-orientated podcasts. These will also highlight the environmental effects of pigs and offer mitigation advice.
7. Brand development for new entrants – We will run a series of webinars to aid brand development in the next generation of Scottish farmers, as this delivers multiple benefits – especially that of promoting people and honest authentic businesses.
8. Positive PR of Scottish agriculture to attract the next generation – A series of podcasts highlighting how to handle print journalist queries, posting videos and how to create positive stories for Scottish agriculture on various forms of media.

Topic leader: Kirsten Williams ([kirsten.williams@sac.co.uk](mailto:kirsten.williams@sac.co.uk))

## Thriving through change

In 2020 this topic aims to be an important means through which Scotland's agricultural industry is supported in the face of new and ongoing economic, social, environmental and political challenges. Sustainable, resilient farming businesses are a key part of Scotland's economy – not just for their economic output but in terms of both social and natural capital. As the Brexit discussion developed in the past year it has become increasingly clear that there will be ongoing but unpredictable change – ranging from the economic impact of trade policy to the rapidly increasing recognition of 'public good' as a key feature of future support policy.

The objectives for this topic in 2020 are:

- Provide advice and resources on key business management topics including managing people, using data, and resource efficient farming.
- Provide timely farmer-oriented responses to specific business challenges and developments, including Brexit, post-Brexit trade, cattle EID and carbon neutral farming.
- Provide important Scottish-oriented market information for farm businesses and the wider agricultural industry in Scotland.
- Support farm businesses at all stages of their lifecycle – inception, operation, growth and – if necessary – exit.
- Support farmer-to-farmer learning, sustaining successful existing groups and priming new ones.

In 2020 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Topical national campaigns which will feature events, articles, podcasts or videos in key farm business operational areas not otherwise well served. Includes:
  - a. Farming Safely – Aimed at the whole family to promote safe practices on farm including use of Virtual Reality. This will complement the work of the Scottish Farm Safety Partnership;
  - b. Making Cattle EID Work For You as a Management Tool – A programme of events and activity aimed at supporting farmers to make the most of the management opportunities provided by cattle EID, with a roadshow of events featuring information about the practicalities, the potential uses of the data gathered through EID to increase efficiency, and demonstration of associated equipment;

- c. Livestock Marketing and Supply Chain – A programme of events and resources aimed at helping farmers to identify what the market wants, and tailor their system to meet that demand.
2. Brexit & Post Brexit Trade – Continuation of the resource bank commenced in 2019/20 but with a forward facing 'life after Brexit' theme. During the lifetime of this business plan it is expected that the pattern of the last year will continue, i.e. there will be great uncertainty about whether a trade agreement will be secured with the EU and the prospect of a no-deal Brexit will continue to loom. However, there is unlikely to be a definitive answer during the year, therefore FAS Brexit-related activity will involve supporting information and resources and is not expected to need to address radical change.
3. Local initiatives aimed at meeting a specific need, including:
  - a. Sheep Management in a Coastal Areas: Changing markets and Climate – An exciting package (event, video and publications) looking at the issues around sheep farming on Skye, covering everything from managing grass in coastal affected areas, to potential for marketing of premium 'seaweed-fed' lamb;
  - b. Marketing Produce Ayrshire: Arran & Argyll – A series of meetings aimed at helping smaller producers identify and capitalise on their own story.
4. Tuning the System: Saving Energy – Resources (webinar and practical guide) for farmers and growers which will help them to fine tune their systems to reduce energy consumption.
5. Farmer-to-farmer learning groups – A mixture of existing highly successful groups (including Stranraer Forage for Profit, North East Organic Discussion Group, and the Mull Farmers' Group) and new groups in Campbeltown, Islay and Aberdeenshire. Group locations selected to complement and fill gaps between monitor farms/existing groups.
6. Business Tools & Resources – A selection of topical resources aimed at helping businesses with practical challenges ranging from bookkeeping to benchmarking and AgRE Calc. Includes a "Managing People Toolkit" (resources and advice, for instance about important employer policies such as performance management, absence management, etc).

7. Turning Data into Information – A set of practical guides, webinar and podcasts which, for the three most popular livestock recording programmes, shows users how to get key information back out, and puts this into context including target KPIs and links to helpful sources of information about improvement.
  
8. Industry-leading publications:
  - a. AgriBusiness News – Essential independent monthly e-publication on outlook and business issues for key commodity and enterprises tailored to the needs of Scottish agriculture;
  
  - b. Farm Management Handbook – Annual industry budgeting handbook carefully tailored to match Scottish conditions and made available online;
  
  - c. Milk Managers News – A set of resources specifically designed to support dairy farmers and published bi-monthly.

Other comments about this topic are that although ScotEID are in the process of touring a cattle EID event, the proposed FAS event will go much further than the rules/basic compliance and will help farmers to understand how they could use EID to improve their cattle enterprise, from whichever level they start from.

Topic leader: Chloe McCulloch ([chloe.mcculloch@sac.co.uk](mailto:chloe.mcculloch@sac.co.uk))



## National Advice Facility

As the reputation and awareness of the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) has grown, so has the use and importance of the National Advice Facility (NAF). Incorporating the Advice Line, the website, social media (Facebook and twitter), press articles (advertorials), attendance at key agricultural shows, and the monthly newsletter, the NAF is a growing area of activity.

In 2019/20 it became apparent that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) had severely impacted on the ability of the analytical tools used to measure traffic on the FAS website, leading to a significant under-reporting of use of the website. Now that an alternative approach has been found that provides accurate data whilst remaining compliant with GDPR, the true potential of the FAS website has been revealed.

In order to build on the popularity of the website, and also in light of the need to create a true 'legacy' resource that will persist beyond the end of the FAS, during 2020 there will be a significant increase in the resources expended on the website and other elements of the NAF. This will include:

- A refresh to the website design – reflecting the fact that in October 2020 the website will be two years old – to ensure it remains attractive and dynamic.
- An increase in the amount of interactive content on the website – to make both existing and new content more engaging and impactful.
- A concerted effort to identify and address any areas of relative weakness on the website – to ensure the website is as comprehensive as possible.
- A review to all existing content and action to rectify content that is not fit for purpose – to ensure the website is accurate and giving relevant advice.
- Greater segmentation of advice through the website and newsletter – to ensure that messages are more precisely targeted so they can have greatest impact.
- Case studies of a small but diverse group of users of the FAS explaining how it had helped them, and promotion of these case studies – to help increase awareness of and use of the FAS.
- Further increasing the use of the webinars and Facebook live – to help broaden access to FAS and create more lasting resources.
- Completing the full mobile optimisation of the FAS website – to increase the usability and use of the website.
- FAS user surveys via newsletter and website – to inform service improvement and future policy.

## Key performance indicators

The one-to-any programme will have following key performance indicators (KPIs) in 2020 (below each KPI is the equivalent 2019-20 KPI):

1. At least 3,363 attendees at 177 events (an average of 19 per event).
  - At least 5,400 attendees at 240 events (an average of 22.5 per event).
2. Attendance exceeds 75 percent of the predicted number.
  - Attendance exceeds 75 percent of the predicted number.
3. More than 95 percent of those completing a post-event feedback form rate the overall quality of the event as “excellent” or “very satisfactory”.
  - More than 93 percent of those completing a post-event feedback form rate the overall quality of the event as “excellent” or “very satisfactory”.
4. More than 95 percent of those completing a post-event feedback form rate the relevance of the event as “excellent” or “very satisfactory”.
  - More than 90 percent of those completing a post-event feedback form rate the relevance of the event as “excellent” or “very satisfactory”.
5. More than 80 percent of those completing a post-event feedback form say they will implement changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event.
  - More than 80 percent of those completing a post-event feedback form say they will implement changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event.
6. The bounce rate (the percentage of people visiting the homepage and then leaving without going to another page on the site) is below 50 percent.
  - The bounce rate (the percentage of people visiting the homepage and then leaving without going to another page on the site) is below 50 percent.
7. The website is available for at least 99 percent of the time.
  - The website is available for at least 99 percent of the time.

8. 95 percent of call-backs are done within six working hours.
  - 95 percent of call-backs are done within six working hours.
  
9. 95 percent of routine queries are responded to within one working day.
  - 95 percent of routine queries are responded to within one working day.
  
10. 95 percent of detailed queries are responded to within two working days.
  - 90 percent of detailed queries are responded to within two working days.
  
11. 95 percent of complex queries are responded to within five working days.
  - 100 percent of complex queries are responded to within five working days.
  
12. 95 percent of e-mail enquiries are responded to within one working day.
  - 100 percent of e-mail enquiries are responded to within one working day.