

Scottish Farm Advisory Service

One-to-Many Delivery

2021 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 January to December 2021 (the 2021 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.

Key external challenges

FAS and COVID-19

In 2020 FAS pivoted to 100 percent online delivery in a relatively short period of time and sustained this throughout the year. Engagement remained high during the year and feedback was very positive. There was also positive service user and stakeholder feedback about the resources provided to support the sector through this difficult time. In 2021 the programme has been planned as 100 percent digital and will only revert to blended delivery once it is safe and feasible to do so. It will also remain very focussed on ensuring it provides supporting advice in a rapid and accurate manner – most especially with the ‘Timely Responses to Topical Challenges in Farming’ project within Thriving Through Change

FAS and the Climate Emergency

During 2020 there were several key policy developments – not to mention indicators of Climate Change impacting Scottish agriculture – that mean it is imperative that the programme continues to prioritise providing advice on Climate Change mitigation across all its topics. This mainstreaming ensures that wherever appropriate, key messages are delivered in a context and manner that makes their importance and value clear. Alongside this, there is a wide range of projects in the Natural Capital topic that explicitly address Climate Change mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity. Finally, all elements of the National Advice Facility will be used to deliver key messages, advice and inspiration to action.

FAS and Brexit

From the start of the delivery year, Brexit will be a vitally important issue. Given the political uncertainty about key aspects of it, flexibility has been built into the programme – most especially with the ‘Timely Responses to Topical Challenges in Farming’ project within Thriving Through Change. If during the year it becomes apparent that profound negative impacts are occurring or are at risk of occurring, the programme will – in consultation with Scottish Government and other stakeholders – adjust its delivery plans to meet the challenge. The programme’s response to COVID-19 has shown that with flexibility from Scottish Government, it is able to make significant changes in delivery at short notice.

2021 one-to-many programme

Key features

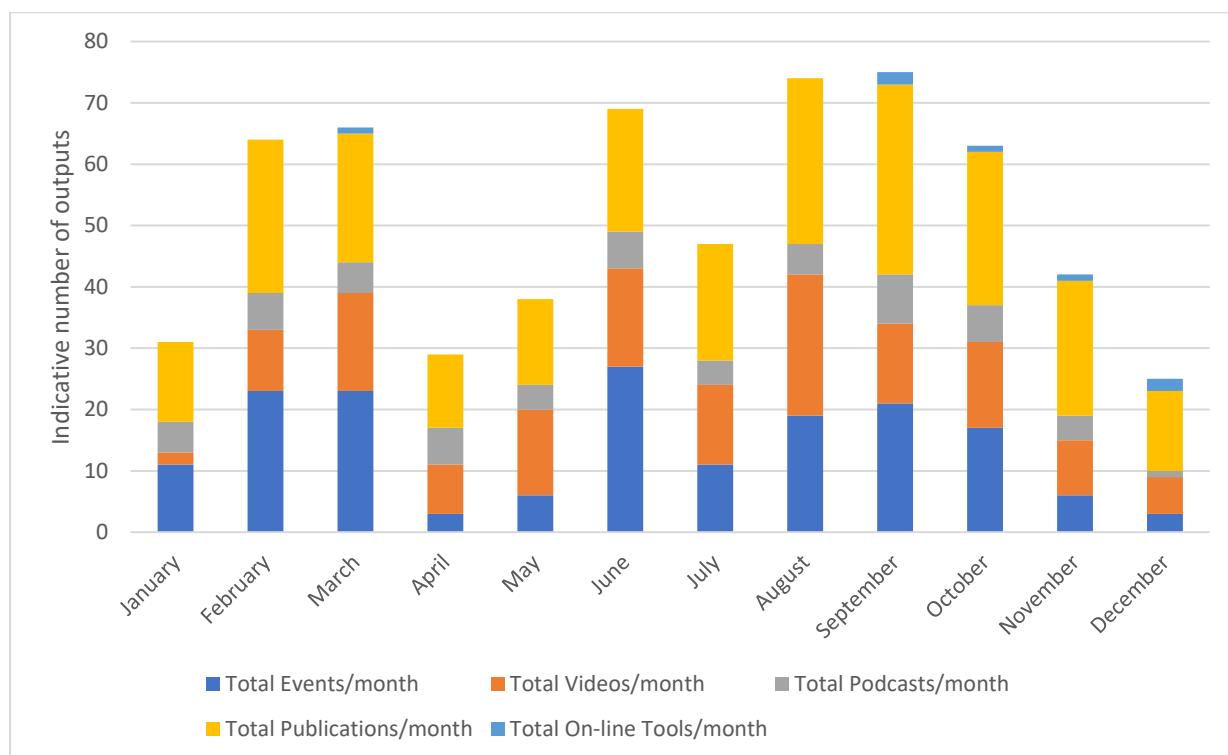
1. Events, publications, videos, podcasts, and online tools that transfer knowledge, enhance understanding and promote uptake of practices that benefit Scottish agricultural businesses and the environment.
2. Digital-only delivery until COVID-19 restrictions and uncertainty are reduced sufficiently that an element of face-to-face delivery is appropriate and deliverable.
3. Reflects the priorities identified through extensive consultation with Scottish Government and key stakeholders, as well as feedback from previous beneficiaries and the draft conclusions of the forthcoming RESAS evaluation of the programme to date.
4. Built around seven topics:
 - Animal Health and Welfare
 - Crofts and Small Farms
 - Crops and Soils
 - Developing People
 - Natural Capital
 - New Entrants
 - Thriving Through Change
5. Whilst co-ordinated and structured around an annual plan, also has the capacity to accommodate emerging issues (e.g. COVID-19, dealing with extreme weather or animal disease outbreaks), changes caused by Brexit, and new Scottish Government priorities.
6. 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.

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. A website, Facebook and twitter accounts, videos and podcasts will always be available online, providing farmers and crofters with access to detailed and wide-ranging advice on a range of subjects and an ability to register for events.
10. 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.
11. Content delivered will be updated as and when necessary in response to any changes resulting from Brexit, COVID-19 and policy developments.
12. Facilitation and delivery will be conducted in a manner that will appeal to an array of different learning styles as we face a new 'digital era' to optimise the audience reached.
13. An ambitious and innovative development for the final year of the programme in the form of the FAS tv and FAS radio. 25 episodes of a tv-style programme aimed at farmers and crofters and broadcast via YouTube, and accompanying radio edits broadcast via partner local radio stations.

Summary of outputs by topic

Topic	Events	Videos	Podcasts	Publications	Online tools	Total
Animal Health & Welfare	10	26	23	58	0	117
Crofts and Small Farms	29	15	6	12	1	63
Crops and Soils	31	21	14	44	0	110
Developing People	60	8	1	8	2	79
Natural Capital	14	22	15	33	0	84
New Entrants	8	18	1	21	2	50
Thriving Through Change	18	9	0	66	2	95
FAS tv	0	25	0	0	0	25
Total	170	144	60	242	7	623

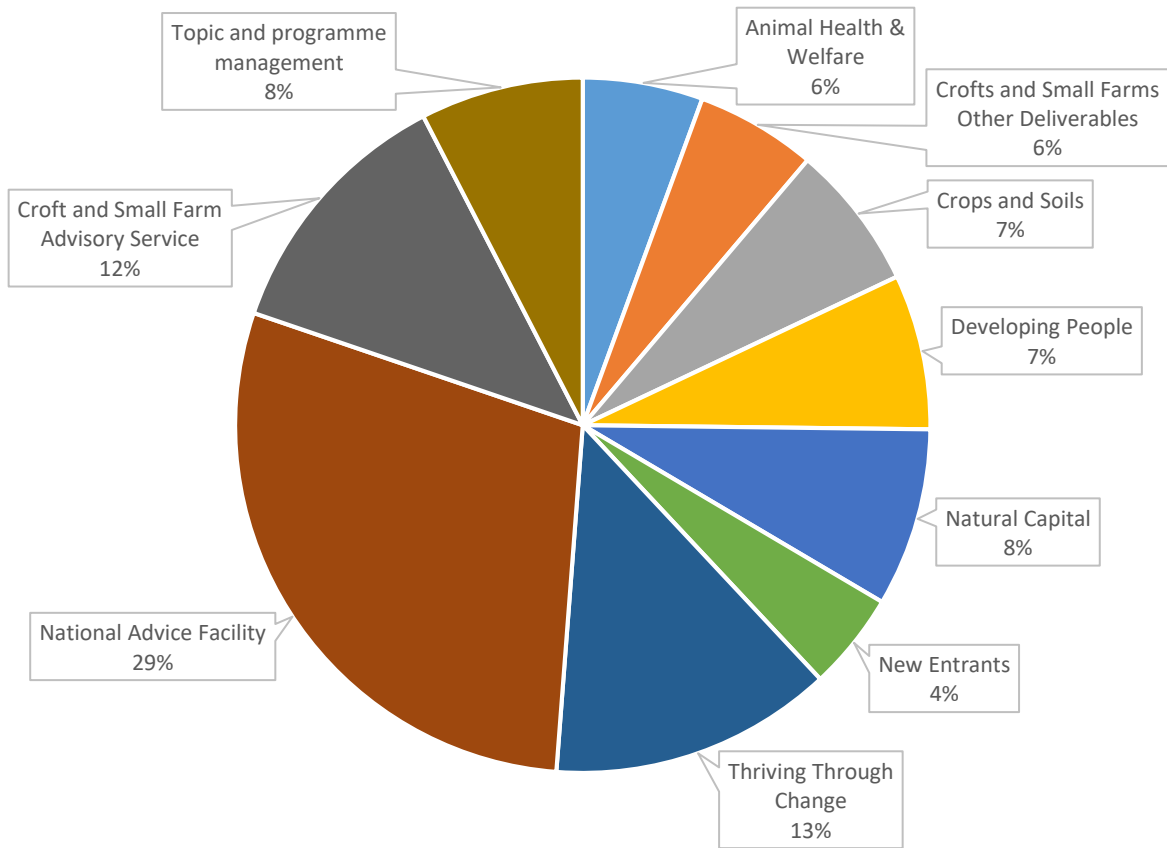
Indicative delivery schedule



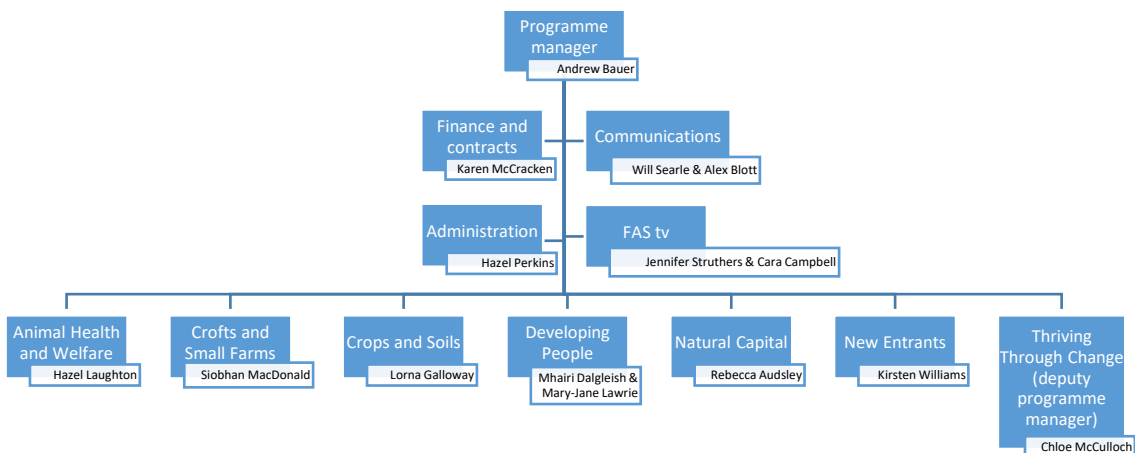
Note: Full phasing of the programme will be completed once the business plan is approved

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 2021 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.

Animal Health and Welfare strives to deliver a national programme of webinars combined with creation of an extended range of resources on a wide range of topics. These materials combine expertise from livestock specialists, vets and research as well as farming peers to provide farmers and crofters with the tools and knowledge to maximise animal welfare, productivity and profitability, all of which can only have a positive impact on climate change mitigation.

The objectives for this topic in 2021 are:

- Present relevant and appropriate messages for preventative measures and management practices that promote and improve animal health and welfare.
- 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 2021 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Timely Communications – Monthly mixed media content to include short, topical or responsive issues covering the dairy, beef and sheep sectors; tackled via articles, press-releases and social media content as well as two technical notes and a series of veterinary podcasts focusing on monthly disease risks providing advice and management tips to reduce the risk. This project will deliver 48 timely articles (four per month), 12 monthly podcasts and two technical notes.
2. Management of Livestock on Forage Crops – This is the continuation of successful and highly popular rotational grazing farmer vlog series. A series of technical videos and farmer vlog updates based on three “focus farmers” in different areas of Scotland showing how they successfully manage their stock on a range of forage crops. This will include technical advice on considerations throughout the crop life covering seed bed preparation, sowing, weeds,

pests, nutrient disorders, yield analysis, stock allocation and crop utilisation. Animal welfare benefits will be highlighted such as the reduced risk of pneumonia. A technical note on mineral supplementation and three farm fact sheets will be created in addition to the seven technical videos and 12 farmer vlogs. Regular social media and “farmer” updates will be integral to this proposal 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.

3. **Low Cost Sheep Systems – Low Cost Sheep Systems** – A suite of materials will be created to take farmers on a ‘journey’ throughout the sheep breeding year providing a range of advice and materials with the sole aim of reducing costs within sheep systems. Helping sheep farmers to be more sustainable, creating a robust business model that can withstand volatility. This will be a national program covering a wide range of topics which will be adaptable throughout the year to cope with the changes that result from the impact of Brexit, trade negotiations and COVID-19 implications which had a vast impact on wool prices. Five webinars will be held integrating advice from specialists, vets, farming peers and international speakers on a range of topics such as low input systems, lambing trait selection, managing triplets, strategic worming and the benefits of using EID as management tool to improve flock performance. In addition, a 2-part podcast series on lameness prevention and a video on tips to reduce labour at lambing which was vital in aiding farmers to cope throughout COVID-19 restrictions. Finally, four publications will be created to add value to the digital events.
4. **What’s Happening in Research Podcasts** – A series of eight podcasts will be recorded with research scientists from SRUC and Moredun. An overview of eight current and relevant projects will be selected with an emphasis on practical results and appropriate messages that can be employed in Scottish livestock businesses to enhance animal health and welfare as well as having a positive impact on profitability and carbon footprint.
5. **Animal Health is Wealth** – A webinar, supported by a podcast will focus on the welfare and economic benefits of creating a vet health plan. The true cost of disease and other ailments such as lameness will be discussed in more detail by a health economist to provide depth to the topic.

6. Stranraer Sustainable Dairy Group – A proposed continuation of an existing, successful dairy discussion group in Wigtownshire, established in 2019 under the Natural Capital topic. 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 previous years the group have looked at fertility, calving pattern, silage quality and how this will impact on their carbon footprint, early lameness detection to improve animal welfare and reducing antibiotic use. This proposal seeks to continue another four virtual meeting covering white line disease and sole ulcers as a cause of lameness, transition cow management and youngstock health. Each meeting will be followed by a review of the information gathered for other farmers to compare themselves with and directions for them to compare their own businesses.

7. Welfare Videos - This series of videos aims to target six key on farm management issues which will significantly improve animal welfare, performance and profitability on livestock farms. These video topics have been carefully selected based on industry need and their ability to have an impact at a farm level. These videos will have a legacy that will outlast the term of the FAS contract, being available and relevant for many years to come.

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

Croft and Small Farm

In 2021 this topic will support crofters' and smallholders' ability to increase biodiversity, protect natural resources and the crofting landscape, meet crofting regulatory requirements and enhance crofting businesses.

Building on previous FAS activities, the output for 2021 continues the series of on-line meetings, illustrated guides, videos and on-line tools. These aim to encourage more use of croft land; encourage uptake of efficiency measures and build confidence to be able to change direction in the face of new trading and subsidy challenges.

The objectives for this topic in 2021 are:

- Increase understanding and use of Crofting Commission processes.
- Provide practical solutions to increase efficiency and for climate change mitigation.
- Improve the resilience of crofts and small farms and reduce food miles.
- Translations farming practices to address climate change, biodiversity and new technology to a small scale.
- Provide advice via a mix of media to ensure information is accessible to all.

In 2021 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Crofternomics – Small scale DIY or money saving ideas, e.g., installing watering points to allow rotational grazing. The outputs will be short videos and guides, with low cost, low tech solutions to improve productivity and lower carbon footprint.
2. Future Crofting – New technology and new (and old) science to help mitigate climate change, delivered through online panel meetings, podcasts and guides. Various topics will raise awareness of new technology and methods of production, provide insight on veterinary and husbandry methods, provide opportunities to quiz experts and researchers and encourage progress to Net Zero.
3. Horticulture and cropping on a small scale – To provide additional income, reduce food miles and increase business resilience (e.g. growing specialist potatoes and using aquaponics).

4. Crofting Regulation – Explanations to encourage the use of crofts by letting, transferring and understanding purposeful use. 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.
5. Alternative crops and stock for new income streams and increased business resilience – Meetings and guides to help crofters and small holders to prepare for the future, build resilience and help them overcome the challenge of Brexit. Using successful businesses as examples, explain methods of adding value to croft and smallholder produce - product development, reducing waste through nose-to-tail / root-to-shoot.
6. Season with Cattle – A series of events and publication supporting the management of cattle in small scale crofting situations. Small scale businesses do not benefit from economies of scale and keeping cattle on crofting is a major challenge to the industry.
7. Adding Value – This project builds upon previous FAS delivery on polyproduce, Skye Mutton, adding value to pigs and adding value to croft produce to provide insight and knowledge of new trends and opportunities for small farmers and crofters following COVID-19 and Brexit. Online meetings will explain the opportunities for crofters to add value to their produce, meet market demand, and explore new routes to market.

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

Crops and Soils

In 2021 this topic will deliver a suite of national events which supported by research will give farmers the tools to drive effective and efficient soils and crop management on their farms. The national events will be complemented by six regional focus groups delivering farmer driven meetings facilitated by consultants. These meetings will expand on the national themes, Soil and Nutrient Network (SNN), monitor farms and benchmarking projects to ensure the Crops and Soils topic is specific to our farmers at a regional level and provides a platform to integrate research into on-farm policies.

Scotland's soils are the foundation upon which all farming systems are built. Well managed healthy soils provide efficient food production, increased sustainability, reduced GHG emissions, contribute to improving water quality and reduce diffuse pollution. The benefits also expand to the wider Scottish economy with soil management playing its role in flood prevention and combating the effects of climate change. 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.

The objectives for this topic in 2021 are:

- Increase farmer and crofter awareness and understanding of soils. Particularly the importance of drainage, liming, biodiversity, and alternative approaches to land management.
- Promote key messages on crop health regularly through events, podcasts and videos.
- Endorse innovation, science, and best practice through knowledge transfer from SRUC and partner organisation trials to raise the efficiency and sustainability of Scottish arable, grass and organic farms.
- Promote current and relevant advice to farmers and key industry stakeholders on ICM and soils through the production of key articles, technical notes and support to the industry.
- Explore opportunities which match sustainable crop production with effective management of our environment to create strong profitable businesses.

In 2021 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Arable Scotland – In collaboration with the JHI and AHDB partners funding from FAS for the 2021 event will be used to produce discussion session videos, support technical downloads and as a contribution towards the Arable Scotland Digital platform. The Arable Scotland event will deliver key messages around crop and soil health and sustainability and integrated management practices.
2. Winter Arable Digital Roadshow – The popular winter agronomy roadshow will be delivered digitally over a variety of platforms for 2021. The delivery will combine the ability for the roadshows to reach a wider audience but also maintain a regional relevance. The roadshow will cover a range of topics from soil health, integrated crop management strategies, business resilience and share latest research findings and trial data.
3. Topical Crops and Soils Articles and ‘Cropcasts’ – Plant health, soils and crop agronomy articles will be published on the FAS website and farming press promoting the use of Integrated Crop Management (ICM), regulatory changes and to raise awareness of real time crop health issues. 13 articles will be published to agricultural publications and a further nine to the FAS website. In conjunction with these articles, nine ‘Crop-cast’ podcasts will be released providing an opportunity for farmers to ‘tune-in’ monthly for a short discussion from crop specialists on the relevant articles. Social media will also be utilised more widely for timely updates and signposting to wider publications.
4. Plugging the Protein Gap in Scotland – One podcast, four videos and two webinars will be used to deliver discussion, research and farmer interviews on how we address sourcing sustainable, ethical protein for livestock, utilise protein and forage crops for increased biodiversity and rotation benefits in arable and highlight the opportunities for some niche protein crops which can be grown in Scotland.
5. Best of Soil Nutrient Network – Key messages, farmer interviews and collation of key findings from regional SNN events will be presented through video and supporting publication to the four regions in Scotland. The videos and publications will seek to bring the previously local meetings to a wider audience whilst still maintaining a regional relevance.

6. Crop Trials Research into Practice - Digital delivery of this long running event was very successful in 2020 so this will be built upon with podcasts, videos and webinars being used to share progress on trial sites, fungicide updates, ICM protocols and relevant marketing information from relevant specialists. With fewer options in chemical control measures, cultural and biological measures are essential for successful cropping. The regional trials run by SRUC ensure farmers get up to date research on how to incorporate these into their farming system.
7. Regenerative Agriculture – A series of five informative videos will be used to educate and discuss regenerative agriculture, deliver expert and farmer opinion on the benefits of these adaptations and how they can be incorporated into a farming business.
8. Technical Note Update – Updates will be made to key nutrient recommendation Technical Notes, TN312 on Manganese Recommendations for Crops and the production of a new Technical Note on Management of Potentially Toxic Elements in Soils for Crops. These will ensure farmers and industry are provided with current and relevant nutrient guidelines based on science and specific to Scotland.
9. Crops and Soils Focus Groups – Six regional groups which will provide a forum for farmers to draw on the learnings from the national events in the Crops and Soils topic and from previous SNN farms, monitor farms and benchmarking projects and allow members to take the discussions to the next level through their regional focus groups.
10. Spring Barley - Planning your NPK – Two webinars will present current guidance on N, P, K & S for Spring Barley, discussing tailoring applications for different markets, latest research on N efficiency, crop requirements for P, K & S and the cultural methods which can be deployed to improve the crops response to Nitrogen. One webinar will discuss feed barley and one will cover malting barley ensuring the recommendations are matching the end use requirements.
11. Healthy Soils Series – Soil health Series: 'How to' videos on the two fundamentals of a healthy soil - drainage and pH. Ineffective drainage reduces yield, impacts livestock performance, reduces the effectiveness of nutrient and lime applied and emits harmful nitrous oxide to the atmosphere. Low pH soils affect nutrient availability, animal and plant

health and crop yield. The two videos on the series will answer all your questions on what, when, how, and where of drainage and liming.

Topic leader: Lorna Galloway (lorna.galloway@sac.co.uk)

Developing People

In 2021 this topic will 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 topic will also continue to run Women in Agriculture (WIA) groups across Scotland, and other events focussing on farmer resilience and personal development. The WIA topic continues the work done after the "Women in Farming and the Agriculture Sector" 2017 report and the "Final Report of the Women in Agriculture Taskforce", by providing women only workshops and networking events across Scotland.

This year, the topic will actively approach personal and business resilience by looking at co-operation and collaboration and the benefits this can provide. Furthermore, we aim to address the needs of small producers who are looking to market their own produce and sell direct to local businesses. The resilience theme will be continued through a project on looking at how physical and mental health affects your personal and business resilience.

The topic will also work with the crofting communities and the Crofting Commission to build on successful materials developed last year. Finally, there will be some new health and safety resources developed on children's safety and temporary illness cover.

The objectives for this topic in 2021 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.
- Highlight the benefits to farmers and crofters of collaborating and co-operating in terms of marketing and business development.
- Develop conflict resolution skills in crofting.
- Build knowledge and awareness of safe farming practices amongst farmers and crofters.

In 2021 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Women in Agriculture discussion groups – 14 groups will be run, each holding three meetings. Topics to include benchmarking, accounting and business planning, practical livestock topics, adding value to produce, marketing 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. A number of the groups will hold a meeting under the 'WiA Motivate and Inspire series' which will include talks and meetings with females who have an inspirational or motivational story to tell with the aim of building confidence amongst the participants to not be afraid to step out of their comfort zone, try something new or make a change to their current practices. Examples of speakers would be people who have built up their beef and sheep business from purely seasonal or short term lets and the challenges that they have encountered along the way or those who have paved a career in agriculture despite having no agricultural background.
2. Co-operation and Collaboration – A series of webinars in collaboration with SOAS, accountants and solicitors to deliver specific technical expertise to highlight the benefit to the agricultural industry of collaborating, sharing assets and wins, and that there is strength in numbers.
3. Selling your own produce: A guide to success – A series of online meetings and a suite of resources to offer advice and guidance to any small producer who wants to enter the direct selling market. To highlight the benefits of and encourage co-operation and collaboration with other small producers.
4. Health is your Wealth: Physical and Mental Resilience – A series of webinars supported by other online resources to raise awareness of positive mental & physical health among farmers and rural communities and the benefits that this has on the resilience and success of your business. Awareness will be raised of the support mechanisms and organisations available such as RSABI.
5. People Skills for Common Grazings – A series of five online discussion group meetings will be held to assist those with Common Grazing co-operatives to work together thereby reducing conflict which will benefit the individual businesses as well as the common businesses. A supporting workbook will be created to reinforce the content.

6. Developing Safe Farming Practices – To create a toolkit of resources for farmers and crofters to break down the complex world that is health and safety on farms. By providing reference documents and by hosting a Q&A webinar, we aim to increase the confidence of farmers and crofters regarding Health and Safety procedures while making farms a safer place for all.

Topic leader: Mhairi Dalglish (mhairi.dalglish@sac.co.uk) and Mary-Jane Lawrie (mary-jane.lawrie@sac.co.uk)

Natural capital

In 2021 this topic will support farmers and crofters to take action to support efforts to address biodiversity under threat, a changing climate and a drive to achieve net zero carbon by 2045. There is an increasing recognition that we must all take action to protect, support and enhance our natural environment. With an abundance of natural capital, farmers, crofters and land managers are ideally placed to find practical, low and no cost solutions to benefit both the environment and their farm business.

The objectives for this topic in 2021 are:

- Help farmers and land managers understand the potential value of natural capital to their business.
- Promote a range of low and no cost ideas to help farmers and land managers identify, support and improve biodiversity on their land.
- Highlight activities farmers and land managers can consider reducing diffuse pollution risks and protect water quality.
- Raise awareness of woodland planting and management opportunities, highlighting multiple benefits including business benefits, carbon sequestration and habitat enhancement.
- Promote ideas to help farmers and land managers manage carbon on their farm and adapt to a changing climate, making their farm business more resilient to future changes.

In 2021 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Identifying, supporting and benefitting biodiversity on the farm – This project will introduce farmers and land managers to techniques to identify, monitor and record mammals and birds on their farm. This project will place a focus on farmland waders, with bird ID and species information guides, a recording sheet and video case studies featuring farmers who are already protecting waders on their holding. It will signpost farmers to relevant information and highlight how to find out which species and habitats might be important in the areas where they farm. A secondary project will explore biodiversity measures dairy farmers can consider, linking up with farmers in Cork, Ireland to hear about practical measures they have put in place, some of the benefits they have seen and if/how these measures could be easily replicated and adapted across dairy units in Scotland.

2. National Priority Species – This project will help farmers identify, protect and enhance suitable habitat for five identified priority species – corncrake, black grouse, marsh fritillary, chequered skipper and freshwater pearl mussel. It will highlight the value of having these species on your land and suggest management actions for those farms with potentially suitable habitat within the species distributional range.
3. Profiting from biodiversity – With a focus on biodiversity improvement, consumers and alternative crops and markets, this project will use a range of farmer case studies to show how land managers have taken on new or less traditional crops or activities to the benefit of both their farm business and biodiversity. The past year has seen an increase in those wishing to keep a hive; via a video case study we will also look at what's involved for those who wish to start beekeeping on farms maybe with a view to supplying a farm shop, and suggest additional sources of information.
4. 'Thrill of the Hill' – Due to its popularity, we are continuing this podcast series. A monthly podcast will focus on upland issues with a mix of productivity and environmental topics. The podcasts will make timely links and co-promote other outputs.
5. Making pesticides sustainable – This project will build on the outputs in 2020 which highlighted pesticide management around the steading, taking its focus into the field. A video and publications, along with signposting to the Voluntary Initiative, will focus on good practice around application and promotion of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques.
6. Ask the Farming and Water Scotland team – With the cessation of all in-person events, the Farming and Water Scotland team are diverting their awareness raising online with the continuation of a series of 'top tips' videos based on common questions asked at shows and events across Scotland. This activity would support an agricultural consultant to give their views and share their experience on some of the suggested measures in a series of five partnership videos for the FAS and Farming and Water Scotland webpages and linked social media accounts.

7. Changing climate, changing farms – Through a series of five webinars with invited speakers, this deliverable will look to highlight the issue of climate change and agriculture, focusing in on what we know, and what farmers and land managers can practically do to help work towards net zero and adapt their business to a changing climate. Two webinars will be focused on livestock and arable respectively, looking at how a carbon footprint can help inform business decisions and what actions could yield results, along with written material highlighting what size of impact changes in current management could have on your farm business and carbon footprint.
8. Protecting peatlands – This project will look to raise awareness of the role peatlands play in carbon release/sequestration and encourage land managers to protect peatland through a series of videos and publications, signposting to the work and support offered by Peatland Action.
9. Focus on Forestry – We propose five webinars featuring farmers and guest speakers. Topics will cover agroforestry, commercial forestry, trees for pollinators and biodiversity, carbon capture and woodland shelter for livestock. Four publications will support the information in the webinars and add additional guidance, such as highlighting the Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme, biomass supply from short rotation forestry, case studies on timber harvesting and processing equipment.
10. Promoting and sharing key findings and messages – Aside from social media and web content, three additional mechanisms are used within Natural Capital to inform farmers and land managers about current findings across the programme and wider. For forestry, the Natural Capital theme will continue to produce the popular Farm Woodland News as a printed copy with signposting to further information (two editions). Messages around carbon management and adaptation will be promoted via the Farming for a Better Climate newsletter (two editions). Climate and efficiency measures will also be promoted via six regular columns in Farming Scotland Magazine. Inclusion in this publication also reaches a diverse audience, providing another way to promote FAS and showcase some of the measures Scottish Farmers are considering reducing on-farm emissions.

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

New Entrants

In 2021 this topic will equip the next generation into 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 through online platforms.

The objectives for this topic in 2021 are:

- Increase skills and knowledge through various virtual events and use of video, podcast and publications.
- Create a knowledge reservoir for new entrants into arable farming.
- Promote joint ventures.
- Inspire new and dynamic people and ideas to the industry.
- Enhance the suite of material aimed at new entrants.
- Increasing awareness of opportunities.
- Enhance networking for new entrants.

In 2021 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Starting out in Arable Agriculture – This project will look at planning, budgeting and costs associated with growing arable crops across Scotland. For a new entrant starting an arable enterprise for the first time from scratch or wanting to expand their current business can be a very daunting though the price of land, machinery, inputs and contractors' fees on the rise. This project will be split into three fact sheets looking at the most important factors when deciding what crop to grow and how to grow it.
2. Understanding Joint Ventures – Joint ventures are gaining popularity for both new entrants to agriculture and existing farmers looking to spread fixed costs. This project will create a knowledge hub for accessing knowledge for people to assess if joint ventures are for them. Outputs will include an online decision tool, a cartoon infographic on managing relationships and three fact sheets.

3. Case Studies – The new entrant video case studies are one of the most popular of the FAS outputs created. This project will allow us to create an additional six case studies in video form. Three of these will be created to support the FONE group and to aid in inspiring new entrants through showing the different routes that people have gained a step up the ladder. In addition, a further three will be created on inspirational established rural businesses who have added value through various streams.
4. Fact Sheets – Creation of four concise fact sheets specifically aimed at new entrants that will be a lasting reference for them. Many new entrants have an initial barrier of sourcing land, and when land is sourced, they must think differently to create enterprises and systems that will create a high output on the limited land resource. These fact sheets will include topics such as writing a marketing plan (e.g. for those who may wish to sell boxed lamb, plan a social media campaign) to sell their agricultural produce and capitalise on their assets. This may be the view, the way they farm, or their location etc. In addition, a podcast will be recorded on capitalising on assets, which will signpost opportunities for those looking to add value to their units.
5. Newsletter – Continued creation of "FAS new entrants' news" which is produced in October and March annually. This publication is shared widely within the new entrants' network and highlights the various projects we have carried out the previous six months, as well as highlighting key industry workings (e.g. SLMS, mentoring scheme, etc). In addition, good news stories to inspire others are shown in the publication, as well as sharing opportunities, news, etc.).
6. New Start to Agriculture – In 2020, we changed direction of our regional new entrants' meetings to national webinars. These were an outstanding success and we would like to build on these for next year. We aim to explore all the topics further as well as creating fact sheets specific to the topics, to ensure a lasting resource is available. We would also like to add a new dimension here, where we show short (1-2 minute) videos every month highlighting a topic on entering the industry (e.g. sourcing finance, land, starting with sheep/cattle/pigs/poultry, etc.). Using multiple outlets (webinar, fact sheet and video) will enhance our reach for these key messages for people starting in agriculture and give them access to the essential skills and knowledge they require in their fledging years.

7. Social Media – New Entrants to Farming has an active Facebook page, which has lost its way as the main FAS page has grown. There is a ready-made network and a platform that could be used to aid discussion, exchanging of ideas and networking, while groups are not operating. We would like to invest in the social media channels and investigate which other platforms we should be using (e.g. Instagram). This project will allow for content and discussion to be generated and moderated by a team of knowledgeable staff.

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

Thriving through change

In 2021 this topic will support Scotland's agricultural industry 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 environmental services.

The objectives for this topic in 2021 are:

- Provide advice and resources on key business management topics including benchmarking, using data, and resource efficient farming.
- Provide timely farmer-oriented responses to specific business challenges and developments, including COVID-19, 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 farmer-to-farmer learning, sustaining successful existing groups.
- Providing resources designed to complement and support Scottish Government initiatives.

In 2021 this topic will deliver the following:

1. Topical national campaigns which feature events, articles, podcasts or videos in key farm business operational areas not otherwise well served. Includes:
 - “Technology for Sustainable Farming” – a set of resources aimed at farmers investing in technology which will provide valuable information about how to maximise its effectiveness. This will build on the 2020 project that aimed to support the roll-out of the Sustainable Agriculture Capital Grant Scheme.
 - “Building on Farm: Are you Compliant?” and “Machinery on Farm: Are you Legal?” – an initiative to improve awareness of legal and best practice in an easy to understand format.
2. “Timely Responses to Topical Challenges in Farming” – The continued provision of regular outputs which will inform and support farmers facing a range of topical challenges such as COVID-19 and Brexit.

3. “30 Minute Benchmarking for Upland Beef & Sheep Farmers” – An innovative project which will facilitate farmers benchmarking key performance indicators, and then provide a curated journey through the existing FAS resource base according to the results.
4. Farmer-to-farmer learning groups – A mixture of existing, highly successful group (including Stranraer Forage for Profit, North East Organic Discussion Group, and Westhills Discussion Group) and new groups (Arran Net Zero group) that will facilitate small group discussion and learning.
5. Industry-leading publications:
 - AgriBusiness News – The essential independent monthly e-publication on outlook and business issues for key commodity and enterprises, tailored to the needs of Scottish agriculture.
 - Farm Management Handbook – The highly popular annual industry budgeting handbook carefully tailored to match Scottish conditions and made available online – and in 2021 with added data around carbon.
 - Milk Manager News – A bi-monthly publication designed to support the dairy sector.

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

National Advice Facility

In the era of lockdowns and social distancing, the National Advice Facility (Advice Line, website, social media (Facebook and twitter), monthly newsletter) has assumed even greater importance. The ambition for 2021 is to build on this and ensure there is ever greater integration and complementarity between the topic outputs and all elements of the National Advice Facility, FAS tv and FAS radio) so that each act as an amplifier to the other. The National Advice Facility has grown in importance throughout the life of the programme, and now in the final year it will see its biggest evolution yet – FAS tv and FAS radio.

During 2021, the following developments will be made:

1. A refresh to the website homepage in order to ensure that new content is given more prominence and the page reflects this dynamic throughput, thereby encouraging more repeated visits and interaction.
2. Roll-out and promotion of the imminent FAS mobile app for Apple and Android.
3. The option to tailor interaction with the website via sector-specific models accessed via the newsletter – thereby making the site more relevant and driving even greater levels of engagement with the newsletter (whose monthly distribution has grown to in excess of 5,500 and which enjoys already high engagement levels of around 50 percent).
4. Continue to build on the efforts in 2020 to increase the amount of interactive content on the website – to make both existing and new content more engaging and impactful.
5. A concerted effort to identify and address any areas of relative weakness on the website – to ensure the website is as comprehensive as possible prior to the end of the programme.
6. Continue efforts to review to all existing content and take action to rectify content that is out-of-date – to ensure the website is accurate and giving relevant advice prior to the end of the programme.
7. The roll-out of FAS tv and FAS radio – an ambitious step change in the production values, integration and potential reach of FAS.

FAS tv and FAS radio

In the era of COVID-19 and a reliance on digital delivery, this pioneering and ambitious project will deliver far-reaching and accessible technical information to farmers and crofters in a highly palatable format via television and radio. This will aim to build on the success of farming programmes such as This Farming Life, Lambing Live and Our Yorkshire Farm – programmes which have a large farming following despite not being the target audience – but will have a much stronger advisory focus. Seeks to fill the gap in the market of TV style programmes about farmers for farmers.

The objectives for this are:

- To deliver television style technical programming on a regular basis to farmers and crofters throughout Scotland, broadcast via YouTube and Facebook.
- To deliver a shorter radio edit via local radio stations throughout Scotland.
- Increase farmer engagement with FAS by giving regular and readily available access to information
- To engage with a wider audience, through businesses that have not engaged with FAS before and reaching more of the family members of the business.
- A vehicle through which we can promote existing and upcoming FAS material, including the one-to-one programme.

This project will deliver 25 episodes of FAStv. Each episode will be 30 minutes of television-style technical programming aimed at farmers and crofters. These will be released on a fortnightly basis from February to November, opening with a “special week” which will run for five consecutive days. These will be released on YouTube and Facebook at a regular time slot, allowing people to tune in and watch individually shortly after release or to be “binged” in a block.

Each episode will be formatted in a “magazine style” with an average of six segments per episode. Each episode will feature information from a range of farming sectors to make every episode attractive to any farmer or crofter. This will help to promote the “must watch” mentality as well as helping to deliver a range of messages to a new audience who may not traditionally engaged in topics that they felt were not of interest to them.

FAS tv will look to fully integrate with the seven main FAS topics. This will be done in three ways:

- By drawing attention to interesting examples of what has been achieved through FAS via the one-to-one and one-to-many programmes
- Signposting at the end of (and perhaps during) each episode to appropriate existing materials and upcoming events.
- Visiting farmers who have used information from the wider FAS programme over the period in order to make changes to their business helping to show the journey that FAS has enabled.

Important themes such as climate change mitigation will be woven through a high proportion of the episodes in a practical way. FAS tv will support and enhance the technical materials already on offer but seeks to use real practical examples explained by farmers in their own words rather than delivered by “experts”. This enhances the technical messages of FAS by showing how they can work in different scenarios as well as promoting peer-to-peer learning.

A hugely experienced former producer of the BBC programme ‘Landward’ has been heavily involved in the initial planning stages and has confirmed that the project is achievable within the suggested time frames and budget. It is intended that this person, or a similarly skilled sub-contractor, will be used throughout the project to edit the programmes to ensure quality and consistency in delivery. Similarly, a professional voice-over artist will be sought in order to help maintain a consistent feel in the programme to ensure that FAS TV is more than just 25 stand-alone videos

Delivery of this project will be by a core team of specially selected and trained individuals who will work closely to ensure delivery of high-quality technical information, consistency of message and delivery style. A steering group will be selected for each episode consisting of topic leaders and specialists who will help guide the storyboarding to ensure the messaging for each episode is appropriate and on topic, as well as providing exemplars.

It is likely that a proportion of the episodes will be regionally focussed. This will allow streamlining of logistics and ensures that all areas of Scotland are covered. Other episodes may have a focus such as technology, research topics, forecasting for the future, or carbon reduction. There will be three regular features built into the programming. This will include “Rural Round Up” – a short update on important statutory information (deadlines, updated to guidance) as well as giving an insight into the benefits of the one-to-one and one-to-many programmes. This will be included in 20 of the episodes. A regular vet update and regular crop update will alternate to provide a monthly update

from each. These will be delivered by SAC Vets and SRUC's Professor Fiona Burnett. These will give us the ability to provide timeous updates on pests and diseases and things that farmers can be looking out for or actioning. Both the crop and vet sections will link to other podcasts under FAS topics for 2021.

FAS radio will sit alongside FAStv in order to further enhance the reach of the project. It will consist of shortened radio specific interviews with some of the farmers from each of the FAStv episodes. These can be recorded on the same day allowing resources to be shared. The radio episodes will help to reach people who have poor rural broadband but also allow signposting to the full episode for those who have internet access. Discussions have been started with several regional radio stations, including BBC Radio Orkney and BBC Radio Shetland who have indicated that they would be interested in providing a regular slot. Discussions have also been instigated with numerous local community radio stations and the proposal has been positively received.

Whilst this project seeks to bring FAS to an audience in the absence of face-to-face meetings, it could in turn be affected by things such as travel restrictions. Contingencies have been put in place to mitigate this, including:

- A geographical spread of staff has been selected to work on this project to ensure flexibility should travel restrictions limit nationwide travel at times of filming.
- A high proportion of the filming will take place outside which will allow for social distancing. Appropriate risk assessment and precautionary measures will be put in place.

This is an ambitious project which, when delivered, will reach a very large number and range of land managers across Scotland. It will communicate advice on the breadth of content that FAS engages with. It will do it in ways that appeal to those who are comfortable with digital delivery and those who are not. As a side-benefit, it is likely to engage and educate a lay audience about agricultural matters. It has been planned in detail and will have a dedicated staff team supported by experienced sub-contractors. It is both a reflection of the times we find ourselves in, and a necessary step towards changes that will come in the way advice is delivered in the future. It is a bold statement that the Scottish Farm Advisory Service aspires to be the best.

Project manager: Jennifer Struthers (jennifer.struthers@sac.co.uk) and Cara Campbell (cara.campbell@sac.co.uk)

Key performance indicators

The one-to-any programme will have following key performance indicators (KPIs) in 2021 (below each KPI is the equivalent 2020 KPI):

1. At least 4,086 attendees at 170 events (an average of 24 per event).
 - At least 3,363 attendees at 177 events (an average of 19 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 95 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 95 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.
 - 95 percent of detailed queries are responded to within two working days.

11. 95 percent of complex queries are responded to within five working days.
 - 95 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.
 - 95 percent of e-mail enquiries are responded to within one working day.