



# On track for progress



**Farm  
Advisory  
Service**

**National Advice Hub**  
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## Incorporating cow tracks into a dairy grazing system can increase herd productivity and profitability whilst helping Scotland work towards net-zero emissions.

Increasing grass utilisation can be a challenge for many farms in Scotland. Once grass production has been maximised through improved soil, nutrient and grass variety mixes, the next step is to improve the grazing management. Installing cow tracks can allow efficient movement of cattle across grazing ground to maximise grass offtake and encourage regrowth. In poor weather conditions, cow tracks can prevent damage to pasture and extend the grazing season, particularly relevant with the recent extreme weather events experienced over the last couple of years.

Well designed and correctly constructed cow tracks will provide multiple health and production benefits too. Reduced lameness can lead to increases in milk yield and herd fertility levels. Cleaner udders can improve milk quality from reduced somatic cell counts and incidences of mastitis, whilst good cow flow reduces stress levels for both the herd and the herds person. Efficiencies in grazing systems can ensure that increased quantities of higher quality forage can be produced to maximise production from grass.

Environmentally the benefits of cow tracks also add up. Efficient livestock systems improve the carbon footprint of milk or meat produced. Preventing poaching at high traffic areas will reduce the risk of erosion, run off and soil compaction, helping to prevent diffuse pollution and maintain water quality whilst complying with the General Binding Rules as part of cross compliance.

Any investment needs to maximise its return, and installing a cow track system is no different. There are a number of points to consider before installing tracks e.g. grazing system, choosing locations/siting, weather conditions, materials, drainage and maintenance. There are links to industry recommendations on the FAS web site at [www.fas.scot/cow-tracks](http://www.fas.scot/cow-tracks). Scotland's Farm Advisory Service is holding a series of meetings for dairy farmers in South West of Scotland to highlight the benefits of installing cow tracks. Dairy herd nutrition in outdoor systems, managing lameness in the dairy herd and correct methods of constructing and maintaining cow tracks will be discussed. There will also be the opportunity to hear from progressive farmers and view their established cow track systems. Below is a list of events and dates.

**For a full description of what to expect at each meeting and to book your place visit [www.fas.scot/news/cow-tracks/](http://www.fas.scot/news/cow-tracks/)**

Date	Event location
29th August	Dunblane - Kinbuck Village Hall, FK15 0NQ with farm visit to Waterside Farm
4th September	Campbeltown - West Drumlemble Farm, PA28 6PW
4th September	Thornhill - Shawsholm Farm, DG3 5JG
12th September	Stranraer - High Three Mark Farm, Stoneykirk, DG9 9EA
13th September	Kilmarnock - Netherlands Farm, Hurlford, KA1 5JY

Scotland's Farm Advisory Service (FAS) is part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) which is co-funded by the EU and Scottish Government, providing information and resources aimed at increasing the profitability and sustainability of farms and crofts.

Grant support, a full programme of events, a subscription service for crofts and small farms, and a range of articles and publications form the core of this service which is designed to provide integrated advice for farmers and crofters across Scotland.



If you need more advice on cow tracks or on any other topic, the Farm Advisory Service has a range of support and help available:

### Advice line

For free telephone advice on a wide variety of topics including cross compliance, water framework directive requirements, climate change and other technical issues call us on 0300 323 0161 or email [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot). The advice line operates between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

### Bespoke Advice and Grants

FAS can also help you to increase the profitability and sustainability of your farming business through Scottish Government grants including Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMPs) – worth up to £1,200. The ILMP will identify opportunities and cost savings for your business, based on an independent and confidential assessment of your business by an experienced farm business adviser of your choosing. As part of your plan you can choose to benefit from up to two further specialist advice plans.

### Online

Our website contains articles, videos and much more at [www.fas.scot](http://www.fas.scot)