

Commercial timber income from low productivity upland



**Farm
Advisory
Service**

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Planting timber crops – a part of the farm business

A commercial timber crop can be a more productive use of rough grazing ground, particularly when planted at the right scale. Grant funding for woodland creation is currently available through the Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS). One-off payments support the costs of planting, and annual maintenance payments for 5 years help to ensure the trees establish well. Income from the timber can begin around 20 years after planting, with 2-3 thinnings before clear-fell after 35-40 years.

Dalfoil Farm Woodland Creation

The Christie family, of Dalfoil Farm near Stirling, recently planted productive conifers on an area of moorland previously used for sheep grazing. They wanted to make better use of the land, and diversify the farm business to help with succession planning. For the Christies, participating in the FGS has provided both a short term income and a long term investment.

Key figures

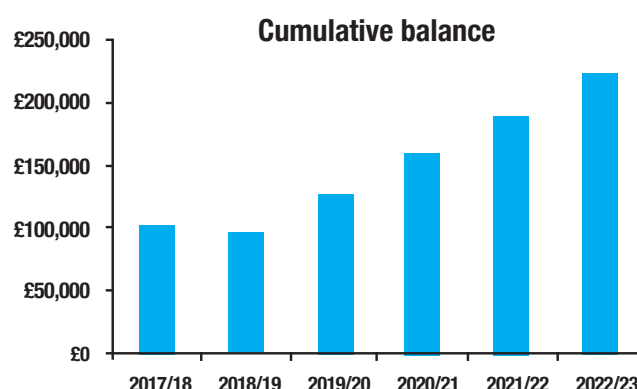
- **Area: 130ha**
- **Total grant: £577,300**
- **Total cost: £326,700**
- **1st year balance: £108,000**
- **Estimated surplus by 2023: £222,710**
- **Species: Sitka spruce and Scots pine**

Why was this scheme successful?

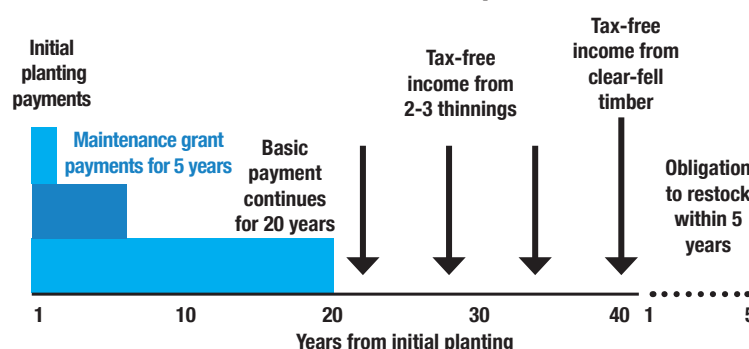
There is a good farm road to the site, which is important for future harvesting access. Weeds on this upland site will be far less vigorous than on more fertile lowland, meaning the annual maintenance payments more than cover the costs of weeding. Watercourses and archaeology were protected by using the 10% open ground allowed within the grant scheme. A peat depth survey was done at an early stage to map areas of deep peat that must be excluded from planting. Due to its location, the project received additional funding from the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN).

What should I do if I want to take advantage of the Forestry Grant Scheme?

- Seek professional advice early on. Find out if the ground is suitable for a commercial timber crop and if there are any potential issues such as deep peat or archaeology that need to be avoided. Request an indicative cashflow to see how the grants and costs stack up.
- You will need temporary finance, such as a loan or overdraft facility, to pay contractors for the initial planting work – grant payments can take up to 3 months to be processed after the work is complete.
- Plan ahead. If the Forestry Commission requests ecological surveys, these usually need to be done in the spring so missing this window can delay the whole project by a year.



Timeline of timber crop income



If you need more advice on farm woodlands or 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. 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

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.



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