

News from the Farm Advisory Service:



FAS TV: Jim Smith and Biomass Connect

In this episode of FAS TV, we spent the morning with farmer and stand-up comedian Jim Smith to talk about mental health in agriculture. We also visited the SRUC Biomass Connect trial plots on the outskirts of Edinburgh.

Please note that this video discusses topics on mental health and suicide, and viewer discretion is advised.

To watch, use the QR code below or find us by searching for Scotland's Farm Advisory Service on YouTube



Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF) 2023

- Carbon Audits
- Soil Sampling and Analysis
- Animal Health and Welfare Interventions

Claim 2023 works by 29th Feb 2024

Find out more information at:
www.ruralpayments.org

Support for your croft from the Farm Advisory Service

Get up to £3,700 in funding to help your croft remain profitable and sustainable in the years ahead.

Operating as a crofter presents different challenges from those larger farming businesses face. You likely cannot take advantage of economies of scale, meaning your business can be more expensive and feel less secure. All advice through the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) can be used by crofters. As well as specific support for crofters in the form of the crofter's plan specialist advice option, each of the thirteen FAS specialist advice options can account for the size of your business and be tailored to the needs of your croft. You can receive funding for two advice options

covering topics such as succession planning, business efficiency, animal welfare or organics.

Funding is also available for an integrated land management plan, which is an excellent option for crofts to help ensure they remain profitable and sustainable. Free mentoring is available for crofters in their first five years of business and provides regular support from an experienced mentor in the crofting community. Funding for an annual carbon audit can help you to be more efficient and environmentally friendly.

Up to £3,700 in funding is available. To find out more, contact FAS at advice@fas.scot or **0300 323 0161** and apply online at www.fas.scot/advice-grants/

Croft diversification

Diversification is a great way to add value to your existing physical and personal assets, add a new income stream to your farming or crofting business, and can be both financially and personally rewarding for you and your family.

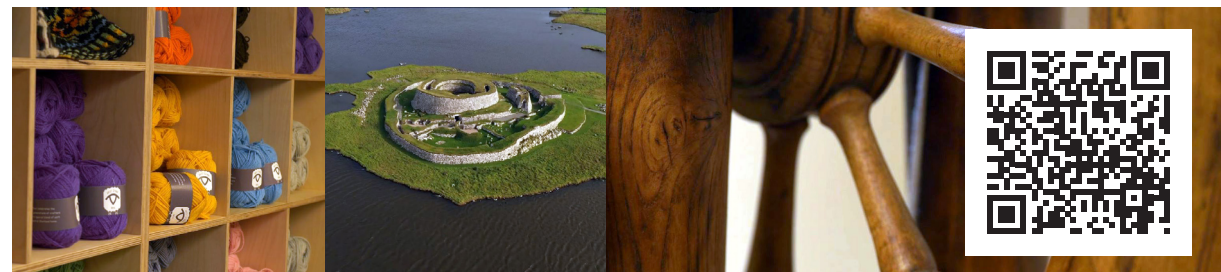
Diversification, by its very nature, can be extremely varied. Diversification should be unique to you, your farm or croft, family, and lifestyle. It should be an enterprise that you or a family member is truly passionate about which utilises skills, interests, professional qualifications, and/or existing farm or croft assets and infrastructure.

I recently visited Shetland and experienced the creativity and enthusiasm of crofters who celebrate their crofting roots, culture, and heritage, sharing them with domestic and international visitors. Bespoke workshops and events are a powerful way to showcase traditional crofting practices and the community spirit which underpins life in rural areas. Visitors can take part in a variety of workshops including carpentry, spoon and shawl pin whittling, photography, art, and knitting using pure Shetland wool. Local croft tours can be combined with guided tours to sites of natural and historical interest. It was great to see Shetland's crofters taking inspiration from their ancestors and the landscape around them, sharing their values, and creating a diversified income stream to support their lifestyle and crofting businesses.

Showcasing local, seasonal food and drink is also a big part of the developing culture where businesses work together to supply Shetland lamb, mutton, and beef to hotels and restaurants. The key learning from Shetland was that crofters have identified their own unique selling point, creating sustainable income streams which align their personal interests and skillsets, with crofting roots, culture, and heritage which are unique to them, their family, lifestyle, and individual crofting enterprises.

Calum Johnston, SAC Consulting

To watch our FAS TV episode on Shetland Wool, use the QR code below or find us by searching for Scotland's Farm Advisory Service on YouTube.



Free events

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

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

Farm Renewables - The What, the Why, the How
Glenluce, 23rd January, 10:30am - 2:00pm

Interested in renewables? Come to our event where you will hear how a solar micro grid has transformed energy consumption on a farm, it's technology, and how to start your journey towards energy independence.

Sustainable Beef Systems - Grazing Strategies Webinar

Online, 24th January, 7:30pm - 8:30pm

Considering outwintering on deferred grazing? Join our webinar where Daniel Stout, SAC Grassland Specialist, and Duncan Miller, Tullochgorum Farm, explain how outwintering on deferred grazing can slash wintering costs.

Women in Agriculture Conference 2024

Join our first national Women in Agriculture conference to hear from inspirational speakers, learn from specialists and network with like-minded people in a supportive and creative environment.

Further your knowledge on a range of topics including succession, diversification, farm management, finance, soils, policy and biodiversity.

There will be ample opportunity to meet new people, socialise with existing friends and make connections with various organisations who will have a presence on the day.

The conference is free to attend and will take place at **Murrayfield, Edinburgh on 28th February 2024**. Register your interest here: www.fas.scot/events/event/women-in-agriculture-conference/

FAS Connect Conference 2024

Join members from all 45 FAS Connect groups across Scotland to take a step back from the day to day and look to the future at the first FAS Connect conference.

A series of interactive panels sessions will cover topics such as Global Outlook, Time and Technology and Carbon and Biodiversity.

There will also be ample opportunity to network with members of other groups as well as visit a number of trade stands from relevant industry bodies.

Date: 31st January 2024, 10:00am - 4:00pm

Venue: Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh



Scotland's Farm Advisory Service (FAS) is funded by the 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.



So You Want to Work with Sheep?
Stranraer, 27th January, 11:00am - 2:00pm

Ever wanted to work with sheep, but haven't had the opportunity? This farm workshop will allow you to familiarise yourself with the common tasks associated with handling sheep such as using mobile pens, dosing techniques, lambing pen management, and much more.



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

If you need more advice on any 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



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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