

News from the Farm Advisory Service:



Modern Apprenticeships Video Series

Apprenticeships can be a valuable route for the next generation to enter agriculture by gaining a recognised qualification through a combination of specialist "on the job" training and college based learning, while being paid at the same time. In this three part series, we will hear from two apprentices and an employer to learn more about their experience of the apprenticeship scheme and how it has helped them develop on a personal and business level.

To watch, use the QR code below or search for Scotland's Farm Advisory Service on YouTube



Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme 2023 is still open for applications

Apply online. It's quick, easy and reduces ear tag errors.

Find out more information at: www.ruralpayments.org

PSF Animal Health & Welfare and funded advice through FAS

Maintaining the health and welfare of cattle and sheep is a high priority for all livestock farmers and crofters; it also results in better production efficiency, which means lower greenhouse gas emissions. In Scotland, you can get funding from the Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF) fund for various interventions to help improve the health and welfare of your animals.

If you want to take this further and develop a comprehensive animal health and welfare plan for your business, you can also apply for funding to get animal welfare specialist advice through FAS. This will provide you with personalised recommendations covering anything from

breeding, feeding, and animal housing plans to improving the quality of life for your livestock and helping you meet regulation requirements. A specialist advisor qualified in the relevant field will provide you with advice tailored to the needs of your business. This can be combined with other FAS specialist advice options to give your business the tools to make significant changes.

Up to £2,000 is available through FAS for two specialist advice options. For more information about the options and to apply for funding, visit www.fas.scot/specialist-advice/ or contact us at advice@fas.scot or **0300 323 0161**.

Energy audits

Energy has become an expensive commodity in recent years and while prices have fallen back from the highs seen in 2022, reviewing energy use through conducting an energy audit is still a practical action to help reduce costs and improve efficiency.

Firstly collate all energy bills (gas, electricity, diesel etc) and calculate the total you spend on each energy type per month along with the quantities.



Ask questions of the data such as:

- Are there times when energy consumption is higher? If so - why?
- Confirm whether bills are estimates or actual readings?
- Can you break the data down to individual tasks or equipment e.g. grain drier fuel?

Secondly walk round the farm and look at all energy using equipment, including tractors and vehicles. Some of the things to consider include:

- Are equipment and machinery the right size for the job?
- What condition are they in - are they still working efficiently?
- Do sensors and thermostats work and are they accurate?
- Do operators know and understand how to maintain, set up and use machinery in the most fuel efficient way?
- How efficient is lighting and should it be upgraded to LED.

Using all the above information, consider how you can reduce consumption or make savings. Even simple messages like turning lights and equipment off when not in use and the use of timers can make a big difference.

George Chalmers, SAC Consulting

To read the full article including suggested questions for an exit interview, visit: www.fas.scot/article/why-and-how-to-do-an-energy-audit/

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.

Finances around Developments on the Common Fort William, 12th December, 6:30pm - 9:00pm

Resumptions, turbines, hydro, woodland - all items on a Common Grazing that need careful treatment of the costs and outcome. Come along to our meeting to hear from speakers from the Corfting Commission on how shareholders, committee members and clerks can manage these situations. This meeting will help provide you with the know how and confidence that these finances are being properly dealt with.

Virtual Fencing Collars, Crops & Costs Girvan, 13th December, 10:30am - 2:30pm

Interested in how virtual fencing works in practice? How does this technology help develop a profitable system for your suckler herd? Come along to Maxwellston Farm and learn from David Whiteford, who uses GPS collars to implement an outwintering system for his suckler herd on deferred grass and strip grazing of forage crops.



Nutrient Management Workshop (Dumfries) Dumfries, 14th December, 11:00am - 2:30pm

Ever wondered if you're making the most out of your manures and slurries? What does a soil analysis tell you and how can this help you calculate crop requirements? Which fertiliser should you be using, how much should be applied, and how to calculate the best value products? To help develop and improve your nutrient & lime knowledge (and hopefully save money!) come along to our Nutrient Management Workshop.

Winter housing considerations



Housing cattle for winter is a key event in the farming calendar. A smooth transition at housing will ensure a healthy and productive winter. Effective ventilation is key in cattle housing, to ensure good animal health and productivity. Ensuring good ventilation will reduce disease risk and provide a healthier atmosphere for stock. Also, well-ventilated buildings will ensure moisture is removed affectively from the air, reducing the amount of bedding required.

For more information on ventilation please refer to:

www.fas.scot/downloads/technical-note-tn689-cattle-housing-ventilation/

Feed space and water source are key considerations for housing to minimise bullying and to ensure animals have sufficient drinking space. Stock must have access to clean, fresh drinking water at all times. It is important that troughs are sufficient for the number of cattle and the height of the trough is suitable for all ages of stock to be able to reach to drink from. Enough space should be available for 10% of the stock to drink at any time.

Ensure that animals have enough lying space, which is appropriate to the size of the animal. A key thing to remember is to allow space for the animal to grow during the winter. In-calf cows require additional space to allow for space for calving/the cow seeking isolation away from the rest of the group. Also remember for those with autumn calving cow herds, that space will be needed for a calf creep area.

Sarah Balfour, SAC Consulting

For more information on housing stock for the winter including the minimum space allowances for cattle refer to:

www.fas.scot/article/preparing-for-winter-housing/ and www.fas.scot/downloads/beef-cattle-housing/

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.



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



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