

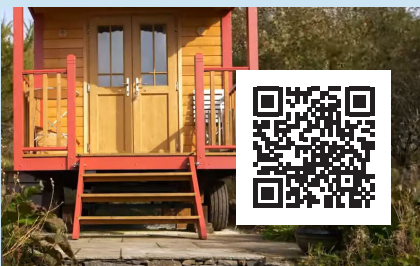
News from the Farm Advisory Service:



FAS TV - Agritourism and Bats on the Isle of Skye

In this episode of FAS TV, we visited the Isle of Skye. We hear from Alistair Danter from Skye Connect about how agritourism plays an important part of the island's economy. Cathryn Baillie from the Bat Conservation Trust also joins us to explain why having bats on your croft can help reduce midges.

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



Farm Advisory Service Newsletters

Sign up to our newsletters to receive the latest information and news in different areas of the industry, sent straight to your email inbox!

Visit www.fas.scot/newsletters to find out more

Get your soil and nutrient management plan

Better nutrient use efficiency is a win-win, resulting in financial savings and better protection for the environment.

The Farm Advisory Service (FAS) soil and nutrient management specialist advice option provides £1,000 of funding to enable you to bring in an expert adviser to prepare a nutrient management plan for your business. An adviser can help you to match inputs with nutrient uptake by crops, calculate the requirements for maximum crop yield, and improve the nutrient use efficiency. This can help mitigate the effects of high fertiliser costs and improve soil health.

Over 2,000 farmers have applied for FAS specialist advice since the start of the service, and 98% of users of the specialist advice would recommend the service to others, so why not give it a try?

Up to £2,000 of funding is available for two special advice options through FAS. For advice on the best grant options for your business, help finding an adviser, and to apply for funding, contact FAS at advice@fas.scot or **0300 323 0161**. More information can be found on the FAS website at www.fas.scot/advice-grants/.

Policy updates for February



Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF) - 2023 scheme year grant claims

As part of Track 1 of the Scottish Government's National Test Programme (NTP), Preparing for Sustainable Farming grant, all Carbon Audits, Soil Analysis and/ or Animal Health and Welfare claims for the scheme year 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 must be submitted by midnight on **Thursday 29 February 2024**.

Scottish farmers, crofters, and agricultural contractors (based in Scotland), can claim for these grants if they:

- Have an active Business Reference Number (BRN)
- Have a Rural Payments and Services (RPS) username and password

Claims must be made online. Full guidance on how to claim is available on the Preparing for Sustainable Farming Portal on Rural Payments and Services Website:

www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/preparing-for-sustainable-farming--psf/

Rule changes for Basic Payment Scheme entitlements

Under the new Rural Support (Simplification and Improvement) (Scotland) Regulations 2023, from the 2024 Scheme year, the two-year usage rule for Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payment entitlements no longer applies. Up until last year, farmers and crofters could lose entitlements if they did not utilise some or all of their entitlements in the previous two years.

For farmers and crofters wishing to transfer entitlements, the entitlement transfer request form PF23 will be simplified to 3 categories – temporary, permanent or inheritance.

Farmers and crofters will also no longer need to notify if the transfer is to be done with or without land. The siphon for transfer without land will no longer be applied.

Christine Beaton, SAC Consulting

To read the full article online, please visit:

www.fas.scot/article/agribusiness-news-february-2024-policy-brief/

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.

Introduction to Hedgerow Carbon Code Online, 19th February, 7:00pm - 8:30pm

In our efforts to mitigate and adapt to the pressures of climate change, few habitats are as versatile as the hedge. Join us for a webinar with Alastair Leake from Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust and Dr Lorna Cole from SAC Consulting to hear about the development of the carbon code, opportunities for farmers and the importance of hedgerows in the farmed landscape.

Sustainable Sheep Systems - Footrot and Flystrike Resistance Online, 20th February, 7:30pm - 8:30pm

Our Sustainable Sheep Systems webinars continue with this evening webinar, where Mark Ferguson of NeXtgen Agri discusses breeding for genetic resistance to footrot and blowfly strike. Mark has been heavily involved in research to identify these genetics including indicator traits and scoring systems.



Outwintering at Oakwood Mill - Selkirk Selkirk, 21st February, 11:00am - 3:00pm

Come and see first hand Giles and Stuart Henry's herd of Luing cows outwintering on deferred hill grazing. Learn about their system, where their cows have thrived outwintering on deferred hill grazing for 27 years at Oakwood Mill. As we all aim to reduce cow wintering costs, this meeting is not to be missed!

First FAS Connect conference a success!



Nearly 200 farmers and speakers from across Scotland gathered at Murrayfield to discuss the future of farming at the first FAS Connect conference on 31st January.

The key take-home messages included: build your farming system around your life and business aims – not the other way around; don't wait for disaster to start building a resilient farming system; and take time away from day-to-day tasks to work on the business as a whole.

FAS Connect groups bring farmers and crofters together to tackle the big problems with shared experience, ideas and knowledge. The group members work closely with a dedicated facilitator to tailor content to topics decided by the members - from beef to organics.

The event brought together members of the 45 FAS Connect groups for the first time to hear panel discussions covering the global outlook for agriculture, time and technology, and carbon and sustainability.

Jennifer Struthers who organised the event said: "I'm delighted that the first FAS Connect Conference was a sell-out event. There were some great discussions and a brilliant buzz in the room, and we've already had excellent feedback from participants who thoroughly enjoyed their day."

Attendee Robbie Meikle, member of the FAS Connect group Sustainable Dairy Lanarkshire, said: "The diversity of the speakers was fantastic so I couldn't miss the opportunity to come and hear their opinions."

Anyone interested in joining a FAS Connect group can visit www.fas.scot/connect to find out more.

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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