

Changes to resilience planning funding for Scottish farmers and crofters



Happy New Year and welcome to the January 2020 edition of the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) stakeholder pack.

As a result of the UK's decision to leave the European Union on 31 January, we highlight how recent changes to funding restrictions for resilience planning will help Scottish farming businesses safeguard against market change. The Scottish Government has lifted the March 2020 deadline for applications to extend resilience planning support to Scottish farmers and crofters indefinitely. This change comes as a result of widespread positive feedback received from industry following a successful trial to pilot the new grant support.

We also highlight the benefits of mentoring new farmers and crofters who are looking to grow their business and learn practical, day-to-day farm management skills, and how experienced farmers can share knowledge and cover their time financially. In addition, we include information on the importance of increasing the numbers of women in agriculture and how FAS can support this underrepresented demographic.

Please share with your networks

1. Text for your newsletter: (FAS programme information)

Funding deadline for resilience planning lifted for Scottish farming business owners

Following the piloting of resilience planning specialist advice and the positive feedback this has received from the industry, the Scottish Government has decided to extend this support to farmers and crofters indefinitely, to make this an ongoing element of the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\)](#). This means that Scottish farming owners can now seek to apply for funding support beyond March 2020 to improve business performance and strengthen business capacity to cope with market change.

Through FAS, applicants can access **up to £1,000** worth of funding to enlist the help of an expert adviser to undertake a thorough review of their business and develop a practical, step-by-step, **resilience action plan** to address challenges. It should be noted that applicants are not required to have completed an Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP) to qualify for support.

The adviser will work with the participating business to:

- Establish key performance indicators for financial resilience and analyse enterprise exposure.
- Assess profitability and cash flow.
- Review the 'health' of the balance sheet.
- Identify appropriate resilience measures and actions.
- Develop a practical implementation plan for the business.

Scottish farming businesses are operating at a time of unprecedented change. Factors such as Brexit, climate change, changing social trends and market fluctuations make it challenging for any business to maintain and safeguard profitability. Strengthening business resilience is key to successfully navigating change.

To apply for business resilience support, visit www.fas.scot/specialist-advice/

To receive a hardcopy application pack, contact FAS by calling 0300 323 0161 or emailing advice@fas.scot.

2. Text and image for your newsletter: (video content)

Mentoring helps sheep farmer grow his flock

The latest case study video from the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\)](#) features comments from farmer, Cameron Wilson, on the mentoring support he received when looking for help to grow his sheep farming business.

With support from FAS, Cameron was able to enlist the help of experienced beef farmer, James Andrew, who provided practical advice on growing the flock and the common pitfalls to avoid when investing in new stock and land.

[Watch video for full details](#)

Could mentoring help you grow your new business?

Curious to find out how mentoring could help you grow your business? Or maybe you're an experienced farmer who has been approached for help, but not sure how to cover your time financially?

FAS can help you secure an honorarium worth £250/day for up to 4 days' worth of mentoring (per mentee).

Contact advice@fas.scot, call 0300 323 0161 or visit www.fas.scot/advice-grants-2-2 to find out how FAS can help.



[Watch video](#)



3. Text and image for your newsletter: (case study content)

Did you know that over a third of farm operators are women?

Traditionally, the visibility of women in agriculture has been little or non-existent – causing the perception of ‘who’ can be a farmer to be skewed to men only.

However, the reality is women have always been an integral part of Scottish agriculture and, indeed, [research](#) commissioned by the Scottish Government shows that ‘women’s development in agriculture is vital to increasing the size of the skilled workforce, as well as unlocking talent to help drive the industry forward’.

Through the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\)](#), women looking for help with training, advice and guidance on how to pursue a career in agriculture can find a whole raft of free services and resources – including mentoring and networking events – to help get started.

Heather Brockie, a croft owner based near Kiltarlity, is one such female new entrant to the market who received help from FAS when starting out. Heather runs a 100-acre croft made up of grassland, rough grazing and woodland. She took over the running of the croft a few years ago from her parents. Since then, she has worked to expand the enterprise and bring in additional income via polycrub produce and cross-breeding livestock. Read the [full case study](#) for Heather’s views on working in agriculture and her future intentions for the business.



Case Study: Heather Brockie Women in Agriculture

Heather Brockie farms a croft above Kiltarlity, to the west of Inverness. She recently took over the croft and has expanded the enterprises to bring in additional income. She describes herself as a combination of farmer, wife, mother of 4, a jack of all trades and a master of some! Here she tells us about her life in agriculture and future intentions for the business.

Tell us a bit about your background and farming career.
‘I wasn’t sure when I left school whether to study agriculture or art. After I left school I worked half a week as a farmworker, and the other half as a designer. After a year I decided to go to Clinterty College where I did a HNC. After college I was self-employed, working as a lamber, harvest worker etc. As I had left college at the height of the BSE crisis, farmers were more cautious with their money due to the uncertainty in the industry, and those that gave me seasonal work were slow to pay. Having an irregular income forced me to rethink my career choice and so I decided to go back to college to complete an HNC in Construction Management. These studies and contacts have come in very handy as after working in the construction industry for a few years, I was able to renovate the croft house. I also have an HNC in business studies, and have worked in hospitality management. For several years I home schooled our four children, which was great, but I just don’t have the time to do that anymore.’

Describe your croft.
‘It’s just over 100 acres of upland grassland and rough grazing and woodland. I make silage and hay, and—if they grow—turnips. I took over the croft from my parents a few years ago. I have been lucky to get a Young Entrant grant and have expanded the enterprises here, and built a sheep and a polycrub.’

“Going to the Women in Agriculture meetings was great for networking. Meeting other women doing the same thing is encouraging.”

My parents helped with a flock of sheep and I now have Cheviot mules and Lleyn mules with replacements kept and some lambs going fat. I recently bought 6 pedigree Gascon cattle; 2 in calf cows and 4 in-calf heifers. They are really quiet and easy to handle, which was one of the main reasons for choosing them. I will probably put them to an Aberdeen Angus as the breed itself is not well known, so an Aberdeen Angus cross should make the progeny more saleable initially. I

husbandry, nurse and vet... It’s a constant juggling act, where spinning plates is my forte! But because I’m at home, people don’t always perceive what I do each day to be a job. A male farmer in most situations doesn’t have such responsibilities, they can just get on with being a farmer and be viewed as such!

am also looking into water harvesting as we are on a private water supply. My biggest environmental issue is plastic waste; I hope a biodegradable wrap is invented soon, as the measures put in place for recycling are costly from both a recycling and logistical perspective.’

What are the biggest challenges for Scottish farmers at present?
‘Markets. I feel there is a lack of choice. Although

What are you particularly proud of in your farm?
‘I’m trying new things and am willing to do things differently.’

How do you think things are changing in UK agriculture for women?
‘There are more women in agriculture. Looking round at farmers I know, about 50% are female.’

Describe yourself in 3 words?
‘Positive, Pragmatic, Perrinckety!’

For further information about the Women in Agriculture work being done by the Farm Advisory Service, including information on discussion groups, head to [www.fas.scot](#) or contact us on 0300 323 0161.



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Images to use with newsletter text/online



Suggested Tweets to share



Funding deadline for resilience planning lifted for #Scottishfarming business owners. @scotgov has extended grant funding indefinitely to make specialist advice on resilience planning an ongoing element of @FASScot services. More info at <http://ow.ly/frao50xZXRF> #farmingadvice #agribusiness



#Scottishfarming owners can now seek to apply for resilience planning support through @FASScot beyond March 2020 to improve business performance and strengthen business capacity to cope with market change. Find out more at <http://ow.ly/frao50xZXRF> #farmingadvice #agribusiness



New to farming and in need of business support/advice? Visit <http://ow.ly/qPwD50xMz6B> to find a whole raft of free @FASScot services and resources – including mentoring and networking events – to help you get started. #newfarmer #farmingadvice



Research shows that increasing the number of #WomenInAgriculture is vital to increasing the size of the skilled workforce, as well as unlocking talent to help drive the industry forward. Visit <http://ow.ly/ODs450xMyrF> to see how @FASScot can help. #newfarmer #farmingadvice



Could #mentoring help you grow your new business? See new @FASScot case study video on farmer, Cameron Wilson, on the mentoring support he received to grow his sheep farming business. <http://ow.ly/dAEW50xMvVh> #newfarmer #farmingadvice



Are you an experienced farmer considering #mentoring but not sure how to cover your time financially? @FASScot could help you secure an honorarium to cover up to 4 days' of your time. More info @ <http://ow.ly/zhqe50xMz3r> #farmingadvice #farming

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Did you know that over a third of farm operators are women?

The Farm Advisory Service can help women looking for help with training, advice and guidance on how to pursue a career in agriculture. Heather Brockie, a croft owner based near Kiltarlity, received help from FAS when starting out. Find out about her story here: <http://ow.ly/vtmA50y1NaM>



Could mentoring help you grow your new business?

The latest case study video from the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) features comments from farmer, Cameron Wilson, on the mentoring support he received when looking for help to grow his sheep farming business.

Watch now: <http://ow.ly/dAEW50xMvVh>



Funding deadline for resilience planning lifted for Scottish farming business owners

Scottish farming owners can now seek to apply for funding support beyond March 2020, to improve business performance and strengthen business capacity to cope with market change.

To apply or for more info, please visit <http://ow.ly/Ridh50w43wf>

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