

Farming business support in challenging times



Welcome to the July 2020 edition of the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) stakeholder pack.

Life under lockdown has been difficult for many in the UK. Although restrictions are now beginning to ease, returning to 'normal' will be challenging for many Scottish farming businesses. In uncertain times, strengthening business resilience can help farming enterprises to better cope with market change.

As such, in this issue, we highlight resilience planning support available to Scottish farmers and crofters impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown, and how integrating trees and woodland could offer farming businesses a viable opportunity to diversify their portfolio or gain access to increased Government funding. We also bring you new podcast and video content from business owners who've participated in mentoring – giving their take on the benefits of such support and commenting on what mentors and mentees can expect to gain from the experience.

Please share with your networks

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

COVID-19 resilience planning support for Scottish farming businesses

Life under lockdown has been challenging for many Scottish farming businesses – with many having to significantly alter business operations to cope with restrictions or, in the worst of cases, sell stock to minimise financial loss. As restrictions begin to ease, the impact of the pandemic is likely to continue to be felt well into the future, making the path back to 'business as usual' difficult.

In this period of uncertainty, investing in and strengthening business resilience can help farming businesses develop greater flexibility, so building capacity to better cope with change.

Through the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\)](#), Scottish farmers and crofters can access up to **£1,000 worth of funding** from the Scottish Government, for [business resilience planning](#). Furthermore, applicants can request that their resilience plan is delivered to specifically address COVID-19 risks to their business, which might involve developing emergency plans, and considering risks in the supply chain and changes within the wider market industry.

As the needs of each business will be different, an expert adviser will work closely with applicants to develop a bespoke, step-by-step, resilience action plan to address challenges. Please note that applicants are not required to have completed a prior 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.

To apply for business resilience support, please visit www.fas.scot/specialist-advice/. To receive a hardcopy application pack, please contact FAS by calling 0300 323 0161 or emailing advice@fas.scot.

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



Up to £1,000 in woodland creation, management and conservation support available, without a prior ILMP

The Scottish Government has lifted requirements to complete an Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP) prior to accessing funding support for woodland creation. Since 1 May, Scottish farmers and crofters have been able to apply for up to £1,000 of funding through the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\)](#) to enlist the help of a specialist adviser to help with woodland creation.

Prospective applicants can apply for support here: <https://www.fas.scot/application-forms/specialist-advice-form/>

The adviser will work with the land manager to add value to underproductive land by reviewing farm-specific opportunities and financial incentives available to create or manage woodland. This includes identifying the most suitable grants and assistance packages that farmers and crofters can use to optimise the use and value of their land.

'This is great news and a fantastic opportunity for land managers across Scotland who are interested in woodland creation' said Lyn White, Forestry and Farming Development Officer at Scottish Forestry. 'To receive professional advice and discuss their farm's objectives around creating new woodlands – whether it be for shelter for livestock, habitat for wildlife, helping to reduce their carbon footprint or future income from timber sales. There is a wide range of forestry grant scheme options to choose from so practical, informative advice is key to getting the right tree in the right place.'

The Scottish Government has an ambitious target to increase woodland cover in Scotland from around 19% to 21% of the land area by 2032. These new woodlands will absorb and store carbon, and will provide a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits.

To apply or for more information, please call 0300 323 0161 or email advice@fas.scot.

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

Learning to 'live off the land' – thoughts on mentoring from a new crofter

In this podcast, new entrant and owner of Breacan-Beithe Croft, Catherine Mitchell, recalls how she got started in crofting and what help she received from her [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\)](#) supported mentor, Liz – including help developing a business plan, growing polytunnel crops, and practical advice on selling and pricing.

In the podcast, Catherine also discusses how she initially found her mentor, her thoughts on the process for applying for support and what impact the overall experience has had on her as a new business owner – and her aspirations for the future.

[Listen to podcast](#)

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 to help someone new to farming, 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.



[Listen now](#)



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

Seeing things in a new way – thoughts from a mentor on helping new entrants

The latest case study video from the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\)](#) features comments from crofter, Liz Paul, owner of a 12-acre smallholding on the east coast of Scotland. In the video, Liz shares her thoughts on becoming a FAS mentor and what it's like to mentor other new farmers and crofters.

She also provides details on her most recent mentoring experience working with new crofter, Catherine Mitchell, and her thoughts on the benefits of mentoring for mentors and mentees.

[Watch video for full details](#)

Interested in mentoring, but not sure how to apply?

Prospective mentors or mentees can find details on how to access mentor support or information on attaining formal mentor status via the FAS [mentoring for new farmers and crofters page](#).

Visit the [advice and grants page](#) for details on all FAS one-to-one business support services or contact advice@fas.scot or call 0300 323 0161 to find out how FAS can help.



[Watch video](#)



Images to use with newsletter text/online



Suggested Tweets to share



Up to £1,000 in #woodlandcreation, management & conservation support available, without a prior ILMP via @FASScot. Find out how integrating trees in farming could open up new opportunities & funding for your business <http://ow.ly/AOMs50Ahn4a> #farmingadvice #agribusiness



In uncertain times, improving #businessresilience can help farming enterprises to better cope with market change. Integrating trees and woodland could offer Scottish farmers and crofters a viable opportunity to diversify their business. <http://ow.ly/AOMs50Ahn4a> #farmingadvice



New to #farming or #crofting? Take advantage of free #mentoring support to grow your business via @FASScot. Access up to 4 days' worth of 1-2-1 time with an experienced farmer or crofter who is able to offer practical tips & advice. <http://ow.ly/xLkV50AhnjE> #farmingadvice



Not sure how #mentoring could help your new business? Listen to podcast featuring comments from new entrant, Catherine Mitchell, on the help she received from a @FASScot mentor to setup her new croft <http://ow.ly/nzGi50Ahnrx> #farmingadvice #agribusiness



Could #mentoring help you think in new ways? See @FASScot case study video with Liz Paul, owner of a 12-acre smallholding, commenting on how mentoring others helped her consider new working methods – like 'no-dig' growing: <http://ow.ly/Pwcd50ArJ7V> #newfarmer #farmingadvice



Interested in becoming a mentor, but not sure how to cover your time financially? @FASScot can help you secure an honorarium worth £250/day for up to 4 days' worth of mentoring (per mentee). Contact advice@fas.scot or visit <http://ow.ly/wvBa50ArJV0> to find out more.

Posts to share on LinkedIn and Facebook



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<http://ow.ly/AOMs50Ahn4a>



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Watch now: <http://ow.ly/Pwcd50ArJ7V>

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<https://www.fas.scot/>

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