

News from the Farm Advisory Service:



Risk Assessment for Manures and Slurries (RAMS): An Overview

Now a requirement for farmers and landowners during a land inspection, a RAMS map, (Risk Assessment for Manures and Slurries), is a tool to promote the responsible, effective spreading of agricultural byproducts to land, in such a way that the potential for diffuse or point source pollution is mitigated. In this video, James Orr, Agricultural Consultant for SAC Consulting provides an overview of the RAMS process and why preventing pollution and making best use of farm nutrients is in your best interest.

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

Agroforestry in Scotland

Considering integrating trees into your croft or farming business? Agroforestry is a holistic approach that integrates trees and shrubs into traditional farming systems.

This combination of agriculture and forestry doesn't just diversify the landscape; it diversifies income streams, too. Farmers embracing agroforestry are discovering a multitude of benefits, from enhanced soil health and biodiversity to increased productivity and resilience. It's the ability of trees to sequester carbon that helps mitigate the growing impact of climate change.

By selecting either the woodland management and conservation, or biodiversity, habitat and landscape management specialist advice options through the Farm Advisory Service (FAS), an expert adviser can

offer guidance on how planting trees can benefit your business.

Through FAS, you can access up to £2,000 of funding for two specialist advice options. For advice on which options to choose, help finding an adviser, and to apply for funding, contact FAS at advice@fas.scot or **0300 323 0161** or visit our website at www.fas.scot/advice-grants/

The Integrating Trees Network is a demonstrator network of host crofters and farmers across Scotland. The network provides information and support on integrating trees into farming and crofting businesses. Find out about the Network, upcoming events and other useful information here: www.farmingforabetterclimate.org/projects-and-networks/

Getting ready for corncrakes returning in 2024

In the early spring corncrakes will return from their wintering grounds in Africa. When they come back to Scotland in April and May, it is important that they find inviting tall vegetation, or 'Corncrake Cover,' to settle into.

Corncrake Cover are areas of grassland that contains clumps of tall plants. Corncrakes require vegetation which is at least 20cm (8 inches) high for the entire breeding season. It often comprises plants such as nettles, flag iris or cow parsley. The aim is to have this vegetation at least 20cm high by April.

Corncrake Cover needs upkeep to keep it as inviting as possible for corncrakes. The Farm Advisory Service created a tool that allows you to upload images of your Corncrake Cover and get bespoke advice: www.fas.scot/corncrake-cover-advice/

This might be especially useful for those applying for Agri-Environment and Climate Schemes or who are currently managing the land for corncrakes.

The FAS TV episode, Corncrakes on the Isle of Skye, highlights how crofting and farming is key to creating welcoming habitats for these spring to autumn visitors. They visit farms that have successfully created habitats including Corncrake Cover resulting in birds returning to the farm. Collaborative work by the Skye Crofting and Corncrake partnership has made a lot of this possible.

It also touches on how smart phones are allowing crofters to record corncrake calls, which is sent on to scientists who can read the voice pattern to understand how the birds are moving around the crofts and farms on Skye. This is part of the Corncrake Calling project. **Watch our episode by searching for Scotland's Farm Advisory Service on YouTube or by using the QR code below:**



Don't forget to let your local Corncrake officer or SAC office know if you hear a corncrake in 2024.

Janette Sutherland, SAC Consulting

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.

Getting Started with Small-Scale Beekeeping - Naim

Naim, 4th March, 10:30am - 2:30pm

Come to our beekeeping event to learn all about keeping honeybees! Hear from SRUC's Bee Advisory Officer Lorraine Johnston, who will talk you through everything you need to know about getting started, from equipment to native bee considerations.

Nutrient Management Workshop - St Boswells

St Boswells, 6th March, 11:00am - 2:30pm

Join our interactive workshop which focuses on the management and application of livestock manures from cattle. We will examine the best practice for managing mucks and slurries and how to get the best value outcomes for grass, crops and soils. Bring along a soil sample to build understanding of soil texture, structure and nutrient retention.



Preparing for Lambing - Uist

Ballivanich, 14th March, 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Lambing is a busy time of year, and whether you are new to lambing or would like a refresher, we have got you covered! This workshop will cover colostrum management, condition scoring, ewe nutrition and diseases. We will also practice intraperitoneal injections (IP) and practice difficult deliveries with a lambing simulator.

Herbal leys - the challenges



Herbal leys contain a variety of species of grass, legumes and herbs and cannot be managed in the same way as the typical grass/clover ley. Below are some common challenges:

1. Species/variety selection

Species/variety selection will involve some experimentation. The species used need to be able to persist under your management regime, whether grazing and/or cutting. Additionally, growth rates of different varieties included in the seed mix should be similar.

2. Establishment

There are several factors to consider regarding establishment, including soil nutrition, timing and cultivation method.

For soil nutrition, pH should be ideally 6.5. In addition, phosphorus and potassium should be within the optimum range of 4.5 - 9.4mg/l and 76 - 140mg/l respectively. Herbal leys should be sown when the soil temperature is above 8°C and moisture is available, typically in late summer and early autumn.

Broadcasting or shallow drilling seed into a consolidated, firm, fine, and weed-free seedbed yields the best establishment. Less reliably, you can also oversow an existing sward. Crucially, small seeds should not be sown deeper than 1cm.

3. Maintenance

Maintaining the production and species diversity of the ley over time is challenging. Herbal leys persist best under a rotational regime, where the entry residual is 4,000kgDM/ha, and graze/cut down to a residual of 1,800kg DM/ha.

Weed control constitutes a significant issue as sprays also kill the herbs and legumes within the swards. Alternative measures such as stale seedbeds, spot spraying, hand rogueing, optimal plant nutrition and grazing/cutting within target residuals are effective.

James Orr, SAC Consulting

To read the full article, please visit:

www.fas.scot/article/herbal-leys-the-challenges/

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.

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