



News from the Farm Advisory Service:



Agri Culture Podcast - Pete Black: The Superpower of Dyslexia

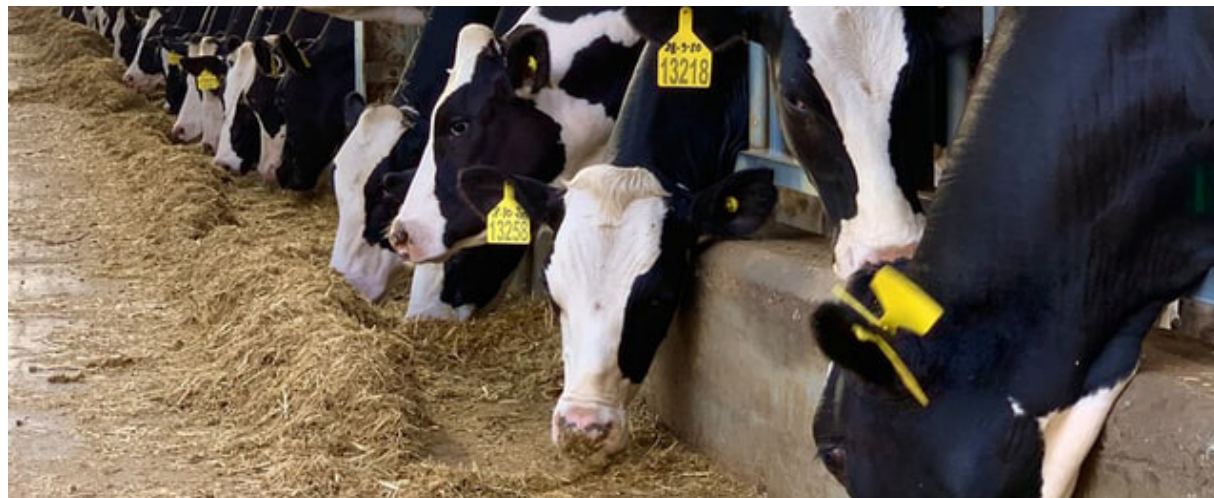
In this podcast episode, Mary-Jane Lawrie is joined by Pete Black of Collessie Feeds and Newton of Collessie Farm. Whilst appearing on This Farming Life, Pete mentioned that he had dyslexia which led to him becoming an ambassador for RSABI to help them promote their dyslexia in farming campaign. Pete talks openly about how dyslexia affects his day-to-day life and how he has adapted to find ways to make running his business easier.

To find this episode, scan the QR code below or visit www.fas.scot/sounds



To arrange a free dyslexia assessment, which typically costs around £500, people involved in farming or crofting in Scotland should contact **RSABI's** 24-hour freephone Helpline on **0808 1234 555**

Is your feed space sufficient?



As we head into autumn, winter feeding of dairy cows is just around the corner and following a poor summer and reports of some delayed silage cuts, maximising feed intake and feed efficiency is going to be key for performance. Part of ensuring good feed efficiency is the feed space that is available for the cattle.

Feed space requirements for dairy cows is 0.6 – 1.0 m per cow, all cows in the group should be able to feed at the same time. Preferably, for dry cows and fresh cows, the feed space per cow should be at the upper end of the range. Barrier design is vital for effective feeding, the cows require the ability to have good reach across the feed.

Insufficient feed space can impact cow health, cause lameness issues and bullying issues within the herd. Typically, heifers tend to have fewer meals throughout the day and consume larger quantities of feed at each meal compared to the cows higher up in the social hierarchy. If feed space is insufficient for the number of cattle, the heifers and thin cows are the ones that will be poorer performers in the herd with poor condition scores. Cows that can approach the feed fence freely throughout the day will eat little and often, which allows for a more stable rumen fermentation with less fluctuations in rumen pH, which in turn improves feed conversion efficiency and milk production.

There are a variety of ways that the feed barrier can be designed, as listed below, depending on what suits your shed, with each design having pros and cons.

- Diagonal bars
- Head-locking yokes
- Straight rail barrier
- Feed troughs

Prior to cows coming inside for winter, now is a good opportunity to assess your feed space and determine whether you need to carry out any maintenance or adjustments to the feed barrier. Also, it is important to ensure the feed troughs are as clean as they can be prior to starting feeding. Providing the correct feed space can improve cow health, feed conversion and performance.

Dr Cara Campbell, SAC Consulting

This article is part of the September Milk Manager News. To read the publication, visit: www.fas.scot/publication/milk-manager-news-september-2024/



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.

WiA Inverness - Administering Treatments
Ullapool, 8th October, 10:45am - 1:45pm

Preparing Crofts & Small Farms for 2025 and Beyond - See Below for Dates and Locations

Thurso, 8th October, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Inveraray, 8th October, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

North Uist, 9th October, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Better Wellbeing, Better Business - Lothian
Pathhead, 23rd October, 10:00am - 1:00pm

Farm Wildlife Walks - Selkirkshire
Yarrow, 23rd October, 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Farming with Nature: A Practical Toolkit
South Queensferry, 24th October, 10:30am - 2:00pm

Ergot - what is it and how can we prevent it?

Ergot contains toxic alkaloids or mycotoxins which cause serious health problems and even death in extreme cases in both humans and livestock if ingested. Ergot takes two forms - firstly grain or cereal ergot, which is like a large deformed black and purple grain, and secondly grass ergot which is much smaller and thinner, looking more like blackened nail clippings.



Planning ahead can help reduce the risk of ergot in future years.

Where ergot is not a problem in a field, using clean seed is important and home saved seed can benefit by being run through a cleaner. Some seed treatments can also suppress the germination of ergot in seed.

For infected fields and for those with grass margins, breaking the cycle of infection is key.

- Crop and varietal choice - wheat is more susceptible than barley, with barley in turn more susceptible than oats.
- Grass weed control. How well do you control grass weeds including couch? Can your agronomy regime be changed?
- Dormant ergot remains viable for only one year. Sowing a different crop type (non-cereal) can help break the cycle.
- Ploughing as opposed to min-till can also bury the ergot and prevent them germinating.
- Consider tipping headlands separately, particularly where adjacent to grass margins, which can also act as a prolonged source of infection where crops have secondary or later tillers.
- Grass margin seed mixes should contain later flowering species.
- Some varieties of wheat are more open flowering than others and are more susceptible. Varieties with a longer flowering period are also more at risk.
- Keep a note of fields where ergot can be a problem so that these fields can have more targeted management.

George Chalmers, SAC Consulting

This article is part of the September Crops & Soils bulletin. To read the publication, visit: www.fas.scot/crops-soils/crops-and-soils-bulletin/

Scotland's Farm Advisory Service is funded by the Scottish Government. It is delivered by SAC Consulting, part of Scotland's Rural College, and Ricardo Energy and Environment.



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 £2,000.

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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