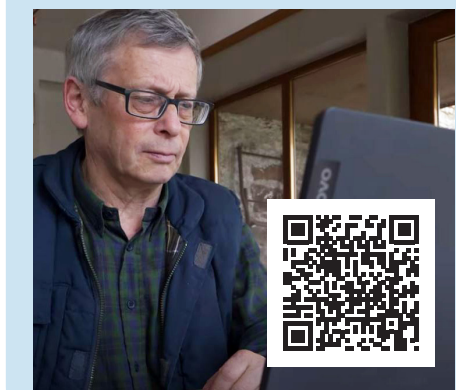




## FAS TV - Overcoming Learning Difficulties: An Agricultural Success Story

In this episode of FAS TV, we will be focussing on learning difficulties within the agricultural industry.

We hear from farmer Alasdair McNab currently Vice President of NFU Scotland on his experiences of living with Dyscalculia. We also hear from Chris McVey, a welfare manager with RSABI who highlights RSABI's involvement with Dyslexia Scotland to raise awareness of Dyslexia.



### Agricultural Wages Update

The Agricultural Wages Board have updated their rates.

Visit the Scottish Government website at [www.gov.scot/publications/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/) for more information

## Holistic management series: Holistic context and planning procedures



*This is a continuation of our Holistic Management series, first published on 23rd March 2024*

In the first part of our series on Holistic Management, we looked at the development of Holistic Grazing and the Holistic Decision Making Framework including defining the Whole Under Management. In this part, we will look at establishing your Holistic Context and the four Holistic Planning and Monitoring Procedures.

As discussed previously, before commencing with decision making and actions, under Holistic Management the user must first define their Whole Under Management and Holistic Context. The decision makers identified in the whole, must create one all-embracing Holistic Context. This will be referred to often when making day-to-day management decisions and when developing strategies which traditionally have been framed within a much narrower context. The Holistic Context has two and sometimes three aspects:

- **Quality of life** – an expression of the way you want your lives to be within the whole under management. Four areas to consider for this are economic well-being, relationships, challenge and growth and purpose and contribution.
- **Future resource base** – a description of the environment/land base, referring to the four ecosystem services, and people behaviours that will be required to sustain that quality of life for your successors.
- **Statement of purpose** – If you are managing an organisation formed for a specific purpose, then state in a single sentence that purpose prior to creating the context as this will inform the rest.

Decision making can then proceed, with selection of appropriate tools and actions, using the four Holistic Planning and Monitoring Procedures of Holistic-Planned Grazing, Land Planning, Financial Planning and Ecological Monitoring. Using the feedback loop through monitoring and replanning you can ensure that plans and actions are not deviating from the goal or objective with the action.

Now, however, when making decisions the Holistic Context is used to ensure that you do not lose sight of what is meaningful to you in both the short and long term, the quality of life for those within the whole and the health of the environment that sustains it. To do this you should run through the seven context check questions, to filter out any actions that may not be in context and so not socially, environmentally and economically sound.

*Daniel Stout, SAC Consulting*

For full versions of the articles, please visit the links below:

**Holistic Context:**  
[www.fas.scot/article/holistic-management-part-3-holistic-context/](http://www.fas.scot/article/holistic-management-part-3-holistic-context/)

**Holistic Planning Procedures**  
[www.fas.scot/article/holistic-management-part-4-holistic-planning/](http://www.fas.scot/article/holistic-management-part-4-holistic-planning/)

## Have you seen our sheep and beef technical toolkits?

Are you a beef or sheep farmer? At the Farm Advisory Service our advisors have put together technical toolkits for the year ahead.

Each toolkit is tailored to give farmers practical, timely advice to aid decision-making throughout the year, whether you're considering finishing cattle at grass or need tips for tugging in autumn time.

You can find toolkits for both sheep and beef cattle by using these QR codes or by visiting [www.fas.scot/livestock/beef-cattle/](http://www.fas.scot/livestock/beef-cattle/) and [www.fas.scot/livestock/sheep/](http://www.fas.scot/livestock/sheep/)



## Rumen microbes - adpating to change



The rumen is a diverse and complex ecosystem of microbes comprising of bacteria, archaea, protozoa and fungi. A particularly challenging time for rumen microbes is the change from winter rations to spring grass at turnout.

The winter ration is typically very well balanced for protein and energy supply, whereas spring grass can be variable on a day-to-day basis. The rumen microbes can take up to three weeks to adjust to a new diet, the fibre digesting microbes will digest the grass quicker due to its lower levels of structural fibre. Due to the lower structural fibre and high sugars in grass, this can pose a challenge to rumen function which can lead to sub-acute ruminal acidosis (SARA). This occurs when the rumen pH has fallen below 5.8 for a period of 2 – 3 hours or more due to reduced activity by the fibre digesting microbes following the excess production of acid and low pH. Therefore, it is vital that the change from winter rations to spring grass is gradual to ensure the rumen microbes have sufficient time to adapt to the variations in fibre, sugar and protein levels.

Giving the rumen microbes time to adjust to spring grass will benefit the overall function of the rumen and milking performance by the cow. Utilising buffer feeding during the transition period is key for a smooth adaption of microbes whilst reducing the impact on rumen function and milk output. If you are considering buffer feeding this spring, speak to your nutritionist for further advice.

*Dr Cara Campbell, SAC Consulting*

To read this article in full, please visit:  
[www.fas.scot/article/mmn-march-2024-rumen-microbes-adapting-to-change/](http://www.fas.scot/article/mmn-march-2024-rumen-microbes-adapting-to-change/)



This article is part of the March edition of Milk Manager News. To read more articles in this edition, please visit:  
[www.fas.scot/publication/milk-manager-news-march-2024/](http://www.fas.scot/publication/milk-manager-news-march-2024/)

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](mailto:advice@fas.scot)  
W: [www.fas.scot](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.fas.scot)



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