

# News from the Farm Advisory Service:



## JUNE CROP UPDATE

Looking Ahead:  
Harvest  
Soil Health  
Reducing Disease

### Crop update video for June

In this crop update video, Fiona Burnett from SAC Consulting looks ahead to harvest after the recent wet weather.

Better soil health has led to more resilient crops and encourages alternating fungicides to reduce potato blight resistance, as well as rotations to control disease, pests, and weeds.

Find our video by using the QR code or visiting [www.youtube.com/FASScot](https://www.youtube.com/FASScot)



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## Funding for cross compliance support

Scotland has 2 million hectares of peatlands which, if well-preserved, can store carbon, provide unique habitats and mitigate climate change by regulating water flow and reducing the risk of flooding.

In January 2025, new requirements to protect peatlands and wetlands and limit further emissions were introduced under Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition 6 (GAEC 6 - Maintenance of soil organic matter).

These new requirements apply to all farmers and crofters who claim support scheme payments and have peatlands and/or wetlands on their farm or croft. Cross compliance requirements can be confusing but through FAS you can receive

up to £2,000 of funding for an Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP) to provide you with a holistic business review conducted by an experienced adviser.

This includes a cross-compliance assessment to highlight where there may be risk areas for your business. An ILMP also includes a step-by-step action plan to ensure your farm or croft remains profitable and sustainable

To learn more and apply for funding, visit our ILMP page. For support choosing the best grant options and finding an advisor, contact FAS at [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot) or **0300 323 0161**.

## Improving flock efficiency with a data-driven approach

At Saughland Farm in Midlothian, Owen Gray and his team have embraced data to transform their sheep enterprise, achieving improved productivity, reduced labour, and lower lamb losses.

The farm, which includes 1,700 ewes, has seen significant progress since 2019, when high stocking rates, lamb mortality around 20%, and rising labour demands during lambing were creating challenges.

Key to the farm's success has been the use of data to guide decisions. By monitoring pasture supply they identified an overstocking issue. They interrogated their lamb loss recording and realised that Romney sheep were the most suited to their system, with lower mortality rates compared to other breeds. This led to a strategic culling of 400 ewes, improving rearing rates and flock profitability. The farm has since seen scanning rates rise from 160% to 180%, ewe efficiency increase from 48% to 67%, and a reduction in lamb losses to under 15%.

The team has also adopted low-input, outdoor lambing, which reduced labour and improved lamb health, with fewer cases of watery mouth. Careful breed selection, including the development of a resilient maternal flock and homebred Suffolk rams, has further contributed to the farm's efficiency.

Looking forward, Saughland Farm continues to focus on growth and genetic improvement, particularly in lamb growth rates and maternal traits. This case study demonstrates how data-driven decision-making and breed selection can future-proof livestock enterprises while maintaining profitability and efficiency. We look forward to following their progress.

Poppy Frater, SAC Consulting



At the Farm Advisory Service we run a range of events both online and in-person.

Visit [www.fas.scot/events](https://www.fas.scot/events) to sign up or contact the advice line and we'll help you get booked on.

**RHS: Women In Agriculture Drinks Reception**  
Ingliston, 20th June, 5:30pm - 7:00pm

**Crop Trials Evening – Lothians**  
Dalkeith, 24th June, 5:00pm - 9:00pm

**Succession for Crofters**  
Tiree, 25th June, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

**Employment Rights Bill: Impact on Agricultural Employers**  
Online, 25th June, 7:30pm - 9:30pm

## Keeping performance monitoring simple in a grass-based system

For the Ritchies at Montalt Farm, monitoring body condition of their flock is essential to maintaining flock performance on a grass-based system.

Situated in Perthshire, Montalt is an upland sheep and beef unit rising to between 850 - 1000ft above sea level. To achieve this ultimate goal of an easy to manage system reliant on forage, the Ritchies have established a successful rotational grazing system in spring and summer, and all grass/forage wintering. They have adapting breeding and selection criteria to retain livestock that best complements the system, with flock performance monitoring essential for success.



Maintaining a consistent body condition is the key driver for flock selection and is checked four times throughout the year: Weaning, Pre-Tupping, Scanning and 8 Weeks post-lambing. This is essential to ensure ewes are responding well to the system and to optimise fertility and rearing ability of the flock.

Lamb performance is also monitored closely, with all lambs EID tagged at marking, weighed at 8 weeks and regularly through to finish to assess performance and also ewes' mothering ability. The Ritchies are aiming for an average gain of lambs at grass of >400g/day from birth to 8 weeks and an average of >300g/day from birth to weaning.

### Tips for monitoring your own flock performance

- Keep it simple – identify which data will give you the biggest benefit to your flock.
- Set performance goals and stick to them.
- Determine easy methods of identification to make selection and decision-making simple.

### Vlog series

FAS has followed John and two other farmers from weaning 2024 through to lambing 2025 on a vlog series, read the full case study and watch their journey at:

[www.fas.scot/article/monitoring-flock-performance-vlogs](https://www.fas.scot/article/monitoring-flock-performance-vlogs)



Lorna Shaw, SAC Consulting

For further information, articles, videos and more visit our website at [www.fas.scot](https://www.fas.scot)

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

If you need advice on any topic, the Farm Advisory Service can help

### Advice line

For free telephone advice on a wide variety of topics, including the Whole Farm Plan, cross compliance, water framework directive, and other technical issues, call us on **0300 3232 0161** or email [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot). The advice line operates between 9 am–5 pm Monday to Friday.

### Funded advice and grants

**Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMP).** Up to £2,000 of funding is available for you to commission an adviser to undertake a confidential assessment of your business and develop a step-by-step action plan.

**Specialist advice.** Get support to take a deeper look at specific issues of concern or interest. You are eligible to receive specialist advice for two topics with £1,600 of funding per topic (see [www.fas.scot/specialist-advice](https://www.fas.scot/specialist-advice)).

**Mentoring for new entrants.** If you are new to farming, you can receive up to **four days of FREE**, one-to-one Mentoring support from an experienced farmer or crofter.

### Online

More information can be found at [www.fas.scot/advice-grants/](https://www.fas.scot/advice-grants/)



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Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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