

## News from the Farm Advisory Service:



### Monitoring flock performance vlog series

Throughout 2024 and 2025 we followed three sheep farmers in Scotland to discover how they monitor flock performance.

In our vlog series we hear from Michelle Bruce in Ellon, John Ritchie in Perthshire, and Owen Gray in Midlothian as they share how data has helped them make future decisions on breeding and management.

Watch our series by using the QR code or use the link below for our YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/FASscot](http://www.youtube.com/FASscot)



### REMINDER

SAF window closes  
Thursday 15th May

visit [www.ruralpayments.org](http://www.ruralpayments.org)  
for more info

## Funding to support spring biodiversity on your farm

Ground-nesting birds have begun their breeding season across woodlands, moorlands, grasslands and wetlands. These habitats are invaluable for biodiversity and can provide benefits to farmers and crofters who preserve them.

By encouraging biodiversity, you maintain the network of habitats, species, and ecosystems necessary to support human life - our oxygen, water, food, and health. You can also contribute to positive community relations and a good public image of your farm business.

Receive £2,000 of funding through FAS for an Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP), have an experienced advisor assess all aspects of your business, including a basic habitats,

biodiversity and conservation review. This can be taken further with specialist advice on biodiversity and landscape management, which has helped farms to improve their ecological status and journey towards sustainable and resilient systems. Up to £3,200 is available for two areas of specialist advice to help you understand specific areas of concern or interest for your farming business.

To learn more and apply for funding, visit our Specialist Advice and ILMP pages at [www.fas.scot/advice-grants/](http://www.fas.scot/advice-grants/). 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**.

## Nematodirus risk

Following recent warm weather, we encourage sheep farmers to monitor their flocks for the risk of Nematodirus, to reduce mortalities and ensure lamb growth rates are not comprised. Often the first sign of Nematodirus in lambs is sudden death.

In Scotland Nematodirus cases are often found in May, with a peak of diagnosed cases in June, which typically follows the weather. The Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep (SCOPS) group has a fantastic online Nematodirus forecast ([www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/](http://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/)), which we urge you to use to help identify the risk to your flock and ensure timely and effective treatment. As of 6th May 2025, there are several areas of southwest Scotland and the North of England flagged as areas of high-risk level.

However, it is important to remember that weather is not the only factor to consider when determining when to treat lambs for Nematodirus. Fields grazed by 6–12 week-old lambs in previous years will be high risk, especially if there was an outbreak in that field last year. The risk is increased as lamb grass intakes increase usually from around 6-8 weeks of age. Using the free online forecast tool in combination with grazing history, will allow you to better assess the risk to take timely preventive action.

*Sarah Balfour, SAC Consulting*

For more information please visit:

[www.fas.scot/article/nematodirus-hatching/](http://www.fas.scot/article/nematodirus-hatching/)  
[www.fas.scot/article/nematodirus-battus-in-lambs/](http://www.fas.scot/article/nematodirus-battus-in-lambs/)  
[www.scops.org.uk/internal-parasites/worms/nematodirus-in-lambs/](http://www.scops.org.uk/internal-parasites/worms/nematodirus-in-lambs/)



## Free Events

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

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

### Soil Myth Busting Series

Ayrshire, 21st May, 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Dumfriesshire, 22nd May, 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Scottish Borders, 28th May, 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Aberdeenshire, 29th May, 6:00pm - 9:00pm

### Unlock Profit from your Farm Accounts

Stirling, 27th May, 10:00am - 3:30pm

Deer Farming - Tullynessle Deer Farm  
Alford, 30th May, 10:30am - 3:00pm

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

## Keeping on top of disease in spring barley

With most spring barley crops sown so much earlier this year, there's inevitably a greater exposure time to foliar disease and a few early disease risks to watch for this season, although dry and cool weather will certainly reduce the risk from some.

The SRUC crop clinic has seen more loose smut and net blotch in recent years. This may relate to the fact that many of the seed treatments that previously managed the diseases have been removed. There are only one or two remaining treatments that manage these diseases, while the majority target seedling blights and leaf stripe. Net blotch is also suffering multiple resistance issues around azoles, SDHIs and strobilurins so that if used individually we see reduced efficacy. The better news is that when used in mixtures, as would be normal practice anyway, efficacy is still good.

Early control (timed from mid tillering before the start of stem extension) of damaging diseases such as rhynchosporium can be crucial in some of the outclassed and weaker varieties of spring barleys, particularly if it turns wet, but many of the current lead varieties have improved levels of rhynchosporium resistance. In the Scottish Recommended List 25/26, Laureate scores a 7 for resistance, as does KWS Enduris, Skyway and SY Arrow.

SRUC trials show that it is only the weaker varieties that tend to give a yield response to the T1 timed fungicides, over and above the standard T2 fungicides applied at booting/ear emergence, and then only in years and at sites where there was rainfall in the weeks around T1. In resistant varieties in drier areas and conditions it may be possible to omit a T1 spray and focus the disease management inputs on the T2 timing and ramularia. The risk is that a hard to control disease like rhynchosporium sneaks in between the T1 and T2 timings if you omit a T1.

Think about whether your farm history of disease and the varieties you have drilled will let you reduce or take out the T1 fungicides, and factor in the weather at the time; where growth is very rapid then that gap can be quite short.

Ramularia is best dealt with at T2 and is driven by factors such as wet weather and stress. The dry weather at early growth stages will have reduced some of the risk but there is still a lot of the season in front of us. Crops in better seed beds with better roots will be less prone to early spots than crops established in poor seed beds with limited rooting. The case for folpet in spring barley to help with ramularia is tricky. It can help reduce the disease risk in fields where ramularia is often a problem, but the yield benefit is not always linked to better disease management from folpet. Check latest application timings for all plant protection products carefully, especially for crops destined for malting where cut offs can be earlier.

*Mark Bowsheer-Gibbs & Fiona Burnett, SAC Consulting*

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



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