

News from the Farm Advisory Service:



Stock Talk Podcast - Practical advice for lambing and calving

In our latest episode from Stock Talk, we discuss the best practical advice for lambing and calving.

Hear from SRUC Veterinary Investigation Officers Megan Fergusson and Tim Geraghty as they discuss the importance of good husbandry, top tips to save time and how to prevent the spread of disease. They also talk about health planning and how recording lamb and calf losses can help when reviewing these losses and how to improve survival rates in the future.

Find this episode by scanning the QR code below or by visiting: www.fas.scot/sounds



Single Application Form (SAF)

The Single Application Form (SAF) is now open to allow completion of applications and will close on midnight 15th May.

Visit www.ruralpayments.org/ for more information

Expert advice on water pollution prevention and control

Receive up to £1000 of grant funding for expert advice on Water pollution prevention and control on your land

If you want to work in partnership with nature on your farm or croft, funded specialist advice offered through FAS can get you the expert help needed to make this happen.

By receiving advice on 'water pollution prevention and control' you can improve water quality on your land and in the surrounding area. This advice can also include guidance on wetland creation and management that can increase biodiversity on your land. The support is flexible and can be tailored to your location, size and type of business.

You can receive funding for up to two topics of specialist advice, meaning you can combine advice on 'water pollution prevention and control' with another option, such as 'biodiversity, habitat and landscape management' or 'soil and nutrient management'.

Up to £1,000 of funding is available per specialist advice topic. Our FAS advisers can talk you through the application process and help you find an appropriate adviser. Get in touch at advice@fas.scot or 0300 323 0161. Find more information at www.fas.scot/specialist-advice/

Managing difficult births this lambing season



A difficult birth will delay the onset of licking the lamb by the ewe, and can result in brain damage in the lamb which will make it slower to stand and suck. This risks a weaker ewe-lamb bond forming, and the lamb getting less colostrum.

Within breed, the offspring of some rams will need more birth assistance than others. One study recorded, over several pregnancies, most ewes either needed no assistance in any delivery (44%), or were assisted in only one pregnancy (31%). Of the rest about 10% of ewes needed assistance in all births. This indicates the importance of easy lambing genetics and culling to reduce intervention at lambing time, but more so, the effect of management to avoid large lambs.

Optimal birthweight is between 4 - 7.5kg – although this range will be narrower in outdoor lambing flocks. Feeding management will influence birthweight. Recording or selecting sires for easy lambing traits will improve the ease of delivery of lambs, especially for inexperienced ewes.

Stress during lambing can interrupt contractions and prolong the birth process. After lambing, disturbances may cause the ewe to leave the birth site early before she has properly bonded to the lamb. Stress during lactation reduces sucking interactions between the ewe and lambs and can make lambs grow more slowly. Ewes like a quiet, calm and familiar environment, especially when they are lambing. To reduce the impact of stress and disturbance on lambing ewes avoid excessive noise and intervention, keep dogs and other animals out of the lambing environment and avoid mixing groups of unfamiliar sheep. Do not over stock pens (> 1m² per ewe) and ensure that there is adequate feeder space to prevent fighting around feeding time.

Poppy Frater, SAC Consulting

To read more resources on lambing, please visit: www.fas.scot/livestock/sheep/sheep-updates/lambing/

Free events



Horticulture Webinar Series

Planning on growing and selling vegetables from your smallholding or croft? Join us for a two-part webinar series where we will discuss all things horticulture, from crop choices to compost, to marketing and selling your produce.

Horticulture - Crop Choice, Rotations & Marketing Produce
Online, 16th April, 7:30pm - 8:30pm

This online talk and discussion is aimed at maximising your income from your holding with profitable cropping. Soil expert and horticulturalist Audrey Litterick and marketing guru Calum Johnston will cover crop types, rotations, polytunnel challenges, selling produce and much more.

Horticulture - Compost & Growing Media
Online, 24th April, 7:30pm - 8:30pm

Do you buy or make compost or growing media? Do you get variable results? In the second part of the series, Audrey Litterick will discuss composting, how it works, what it means to go peat-free, along with some top tips.

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

Lantra Next Generation Training fund

In response to a clear need to upskill new and prospective new entrants/next generation farmers and crofters using Scottish Government funding, Lantra launched the Next Generation Practical Training Fund in Autumn 2023.

A range of in-person and online courses are available the length and breadth of Scotland, with a particular focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation practices; biodiversity/habitat improvement; health and safety; equipment training and business efficiency and resilience. Up to £500 per course is available and you may apply for a maximum of one course per month. Some examples of available courses include ATV and tractor driving; first aid; social media for business; bookkeeping; carbon audit training; wildlife identification; regenerative agriculture; livestock transport; sheep shearing; DIY artificial insemination, and foot trimming to name a few. All courses are listed on the Skills Hub Scotland website, just look for the Next Generation badge, and more are being added regularly.

There is no age limit for applicants to the Next Generation Training Fund and it is open to all Scottish residents who have entered the agricultural sector within the last 5 years or are already working or studying agriculture full-time or part-time. Those keen to start in the industry are also eligible.

Applications can be made online by setting up a free Skills Hub Scotland account. You will need to demonstrate what you expect to gain from the course and how it will benefit you and allow you to advance in the sector. Once received, applications are reviewed by a review panel of representatives from the Scottish Government and Lantra Scotland. Feedback will be given to unsuccessful applicants to help them improve future applications. Once confirmation is issued, successful applicants will have six months to complete the training. Therefore it is advisable to contact training providers early to ensure there is space on the course you have selected, as some courses only run on set dates with limited attendee numbers.

Laura Henderson, SAC Consulting

More information can be found on the Lantra website here: www.scotland.lantra.co.uk/next-generation-practical-training-fund

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
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 £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



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