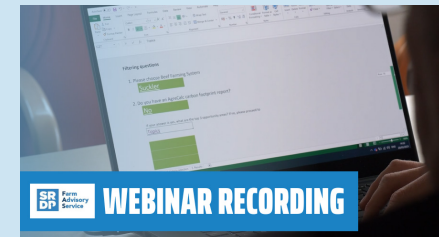


News from the Farm Advisory Service:



Webinar catch up Understanding your farm carbon audit

Have you had a carbon audit report prepared and are unsure what the report is telling you? Or are you considering undertaking one to meet the requirements for the Whole Farm Plan and don't know what it involves?

In this webinar recording we will provide clarity with an overview of the reasons for carbon auditing and provide a better understanding of the process and outputs and how it can benefit your farm business.

Watch our video by using the QR code or use the link below for our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/FASScot



Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF) Deadline

All claims must be submitted
by 28th February 2025

Funding to keep your croft thriving

At the end of last year, The Crofting Commission announced a new initiative to address the issue of vacant crofts across Scotland. Recognising the significant economic, social, and environmental benefits that crofting provides, the Commission is committed to maximising the productive use of croft land by addressing two key areas: 'communication and awareness' and 'enforcement and compliance'.

As a new entrant or a seasoned crofter, the Farm Advisory Service (FAS), can provide funding for specialist advice tailored to your croft or smallholding to help you overcome challenges and keep your business active, profitable and sustainable.

A crofter's plan through FAS offers you the chance to discuss your ideas, objectives, and any issues or concerns with an experienced advisor, resulting in a personalised advice plan tailored to your needs. This could address environmental sustainability, opportunities and risks, business finances, and your croft's legislative status.

Up to £3,200 of funding is available for two specialist advice options through FAS. To find out more and apply for funding, visit www.fas.scot/specialist-advice. For support choosing the best grant options and help finding an advisor contact FAS at advice@fas.scot or 0300 323 0161.

Pig update February 2025

Relatively stable prices and sustained profitability are not words usually associated with pig production however these sum up the fortunes of the pig sector recently.

Prices have however, continued to drift very slowly downwards throughout 2024 and this has continued into 2025, losing around 8 p.p.kg throughout 2024, and a further 3 p.p.kg so far in 2025. Despite this downward trend, margins continue to be made.

Deadweight prices (SPP EU Spec) have now fallen to just above 203 p.p.kg with falling EU prices heavily influencing the UK market. The last few months have seen a further widening of the price differential between UK and EU prices with the gap now reaching historical highs of 48 p.p.kg (AHDB). This means EU pig meat is much more competitive, being more attractive to UK buyers and potentially displacing UK product on supermarket shelves.

Weekly average carcass weights remain high in relative terms, typically around 90-92 kg, a rising trend over a number of years. When this is combined with continual improvements to breeding herd performance, these factors partly mitigate the fall in UK pigmeat production due to the contraction of the UK breeding herd.

The latest published margins from AHDB (for Q4 of 2024) showed pig producer margins fall to £10 per pig, a sharp fall from the previous quarter due to a reduction in prices received and a sharp increase in feed prices. Overall, this represents the seventh consecutive quarter of positive margins although there is still some way to go to make up for the preceding ten quarters of mostly heavy losses.

George Chalmers, SAC Consulting

This article is part of our February edition of Agribusiness News. Read more at: www.fas.scot/publication/agribusiness-news-february-2025/



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.

Common Grazing Finances and Procedures - Harris

Harris, 18th February 7:00pm - 9:30pm

New Entrant Finance Course Webinar 2 - Accounts & Accounts Analysis

Online, 19th February, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Improving Efficiency & Reducing Emissions

Online, 24th February, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Sustainable Sheep Systems - Alternative Proteins

Online, 25th February, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

New Entrant Finance Course Webinar 3 - Cashflow

Online, 26th February, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Keeping Livestock for Young or New Crofters

Portree, 1st March, 11:00am - 3:30pm

Green bedding for the dairy herd



Recycled Manure Solids (RMS) are being used on dairy farms as an alternative for bedding due to the ever-increasing costs of production. Green bedding is made of slurry solids which have been dried down to a dry matter of over 34%.

This mixture is then pumped into the separator and forced through a screen which will collect the solids, leaving the liquid portion behind. The solids are dried down further, then the solids can be spread onto the cubicle surface on top of mats or mattresses in a thin layer instead of sawdust. It can also be used in deep bedded cubicles (up to 15cm) and lime can be added to dry the bedding out further.

Total costs of the machine installation can be upwards of £40-53,000. Before investing there are several things to consider:

- Costs versus return? What are the maintenance costs? Are there local companies available to do this?
- As always cow health and welfare are the top priority attention should be paid to bulk tank milk quality. The use of green bedding should be discontinued if any health problems arise.
- Any farm labour should be made aware of the risks of handling green bedding and the importance of hygiene.
- Ventilation and moisture management should be monitored.

Overall, this bedding has many benefits when managed correctly. However, it would incur a change in management practices of the herd and their environment to ensure it is a success.

Helen Cowie, SAC Consulting

To read our article in full, visit:

www.fas.scot/article/green-bedding-for-the-dairy-herd/

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.

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