

News from the Farm Advisory Service:

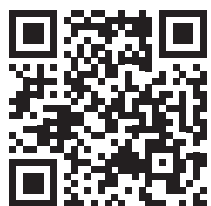


Webinar catch up Mineral Requirements in Housing Systems

Catch up on our webinar from 2nd October, where we covered mineral requirements in housing systems for beef and dairy cattle.

Join Dr Annie Williams, Independent Mineral Advisor for Ruminants, as she discusses mineral balance and over-supplementation, and how these can affect cow health, performance and farm profitability.

Find this video by scanning the QR code below, or visit www.youtube.com/@FASscot



Nutritional management and metabolic profiling of suckler cows



Good nutritional management requires year-round planning. Reproductive efficiency is a major factor in profitability and production in the suckler herd. A key performance indicator for cow efficiency is over 90% of cows put to the bull should have a calving interval below 370 days. However, in 2021 the mean calving interval of the Scottish suckler herd was c.400 days. The conditions for eligibility to the Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme has also changed, with an initial calving interval threshold set at 410 days (or less). In the future this threshold may reduce further.

There are many factors involved in achieving this goal, and nutrition plays a key role but can often be over-looked. Body condition scoring is an important management tool, that can be used to monitor and assess the nutrition of the suckler herd at key times. Achieving target body condition score at calving is a key element to accomplishing as close to a 365-day calving interval as possible, and will go a long way to help enhance performance and fertility in the beef herd.

Ration formulation is a necessary step that can seem complicated, but when a team approach is taken this will help with planning, and improve the overall productivity of the herd. Forage analysis and weighing cattle can vastly improve the accuracy of your rations and potentially reduce your reliance on expensive bought in feed. Calving spread also has an impact on nutritional management, therefore monitoring your calving spread and aiming for a compact calving block makes it much easier to manage nutrition.

Metabolic profiling is a useful management tool to assess the nutritional status of the herd and allow fine-tuning of the rations. Alongside body condition scoring and ration formulation it provides a useful insight to the adequacy of a ration and allows for accurate nutritional planning of the suckler herd.

Mary Young, SAC Consulting

For further details and guidance on interpreting results, particularly for suckler cows rationed to lose condition and in outwintering scenarios, visit the link below:
www.fas.scot/article/nutritional-management-and-metabolic-profiling-of-suckler-cows/



More information on nutrition for the beef herd can be found at:

www.fas.scot/livestock/beef-cattle/beef-nutrition/

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.

WiA Whole Farm Plan Webinar Part 2 - Biodiversity Audits
Online, 19th November, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

WiA Argyll - Measure What You Manage
Oban, 20th November, 11:00am - 1:00pm

Ag Reform - Getting Ahead of the Game
Berwick-Upon-Tweed, 21st November, 10:00am - 12:00pm

Deciding on Diversification - What Are Your Options?
Online, 25th November, 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Grassland Roadshow 2024
Lanarkshire, 27th November, 10:30am - 3:00pm
Caithness, 28th November, 12:30pm - 3:00pm

Nutrient Management Workshop - St Boswells
St Boswells, 28th November, 10:00am - 2:00pm

Metabolic profiling in the sheep flock



Metabolic profiling involves blood testing sheep at key times in the production cycle, such as pre-tupping and pre-lambing or for lambs post-weaning. It is a common management tool used to assess the nutritional adequacy of a ration and to help reduce the risk of metabolic diseases and suboptimal fertility or performance. Blood testing can also be used as part of a mineral audit to assess the mineral and trace element status of the ewes or lambs.

In the final 6 weeks of pregnancy 75% of the lamb's growth occurs, hence there is a massive demand on the ewe at this critical stage. Metabolic profiling can identify potential problems in the run up to lambing including; pregnancy toxemia (twin lamb disease), hypocalcaemia and hypomagnesaemia (stagers).

It can also assess if the energy and protein supply is sufficient which is important for colostrum production and quality. This allows you to take preventative action and correct the issue. Blood testing before mating is useful to identify if there are any trace element deficiencies that may cause sub-optimal fertility.

The timing of sampling is important alongside interpretation as some blood parameters will only give you information about the nutritional adequacy at the point of sampling, whereas some blood parameters will provide more historical information. A range of parameters can be measured to assess energy, protein and mineral status, as well as picking up indications of disease.

Mary Young, SAC Consulting

For more information, visit our full article online at:
www.fas.scot/article/metabolic-profiling-in-the-sheep-flock/

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
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 £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