

News from the Farm Advisory Service:



Thrill of the Hill podcast - The Scottish Land Matching Service

Thrill of the Hill is back for a sixth season!

Scotland has a vibrant and dynamic farming industry, yet barriers and challenges to entering and exiting the industry remain. In this episode Ian Davidson OBE gives us an overview of the Scottish Land Matching Service (SLMS); what it does, who it works with and who it is looking for, highlighting some of the opportunities and successes through the initiative.

Listen to our episode by scanning the QR code below, or visit www.fas.scot/sounds



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Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme (CAGS) update

Good news for crofters! The CAGS scheme, which helps support and improve crofting businesses, is getting an upgrade to make it easier and quicker to apply for funding.

To make the scheme more accessible and efficient, several changes are being introduced this year.

Simplified Application Process For Selected Items

For a number of items, applicants will no longer be required to submit quotes. This streamlines the application process, reduces administrative burden, and allows for faster processing by SGRPID.

The following items are now covered by standard costs:

Item	Standard cost
Agricultural steel frame buildings	£247.65 per m ²
Hardstandings and access tracks	£37.93 per m ²
Stock fence	£10.46 per metre
Deer fence	£16.67 per metre
Stock gate (under 3m)	£102.50
Stock gate (3m and over)	£153.75
Deer gate	£226.53

The rate for Agricultural Steel Framed buildings applies to four sided buildings only. Other building designs should be applied for under actual cost. For all other works, the existing requirements remain: two quotes must be provided for works under £10,000, and three quotes for works over that threshold.

Updated Conditions for Grant-Aided Assets

Items funded through the scheme must remain in use for the purpose for which the grant was awarded. The revised contractual periods are as follows:

- **Agricultural buildings:** Must remain in use for 10 years from the date of final grant payment.
- **All other items:** Must remain in use for 5 years from the date of final grant payment.

If assets are sold or no longer used for agricultural purposes during these periods, repayment of the grant may be required. In some cases, proportional recovery may be considered, depending on the circumstances.

Real Living Wage Requirement

In line with Scottish Government policy, businesses receiving a grant under CAGS will be required to confirm, when accepting their Offer of Grant letter, that all employees aged 16 and over, including apprentices, are paid at least the real Living Wage and any sub-contractors engaged in the grant-aided work also pay their employees the real Living Wage.

Further Enhancements Under Consideration

Additional updates to the scheme are currently being explored, including changes to the list of eligible items.



Siobhan Macdonald, SAC Consulting

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.

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

Croft Wildlife Walk - Shetland

Muckle Roe, 22nd May, 6:00pm - 8:30pm

Unlock Profit from your Farm Accounts
Stirling, 27th May, 10:00am - 3:30pm

Farm Wildlife Walks - Lothians

Midlothian, 29th May, 9:30am - 12:00pm

Tips for transporting livestock in hot weather



Prolonged periods of hot weather are becoming more common in the UK due to climate change, therefore it is now recommended that livestock should not be transported when external temperatures are more than 30°C. Where humidity is also high, the 'feels like' temperature on phone/web-based weather tools can also be used as an indicator of whether transport should happen or not.

When transporting livestock in hot weather there are a number of measures you can take including:

- Not moving animals during the hottest part of the day - could the animals be moved in the evening or early morning when it's likely to be cooler?
- Handle animals to a minimum during loading and unloading.
- Increase space allowance by 30% (this is particularly important in the hotter sections of the float i.e. the front compartments and high levels).
- Avoid penning stock in the hotter areas of the float/trailer.
- Improve ventilation – maximise air space by increasing internal height by removing tiers and folding decks.
- If you need to stop, park in the shade and make use of any prevailing wind.
- Plan your journey in case of delays or road closures etc.
- Check animals more frequently – looking for signs of heat stress (open mouthed breathing/panting, high respiratory rate & sweating).

For further information, articles, videos and more visit our website at 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.

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. 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).

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/