News from the Farm Advisory Service:

'In Conversation With...' podcast: Peaks and troughs of grass and water

In the second episode of 'In Conversation With...', host Kirsten Williams speaks to Poppy Frater from SAC Consulting and Kerr Adams from The James Hutton Institute about grass productivity and water management. They also look ahead to the summer months, the trends and how to plan for possible drought problems.

To find this episode, scan the QR code below or visit www.fas.scot/sounds

News

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Support for organic farming

If you are keen to eliminate the use of synthetic pesticides, enhance animal welfare and biodiversity on your farm or croft, and access agri-environment funds, converting to or maintaining an organic farming system might be of interest to you. Organic is a system of farming that can deliver many benefits for wildlife, society, and the natural world.

Organic farmers and crofters produce high-quality food using methods that benefit our environment; they must work to a strict set of standards. Before conversion, you must consider some critical aspects related to soil management, crop rotation, livestock management, and the infrastructure of your farm. It takes at least two years to convert to an organically certified system; once certification is achieved, you will need to finesse your marketing strategy. The Farm Advisory Service (FAS) can support you with targeted guidance on best practices and access to the organic market, providing you with organic conversion plans and business efficiency advice for organic production.

Whether you are planning to convert or are an established organic farmer, up to £2,000 of funding is available through FAS for specialist advice. To find out more and apply, visit **www.fas.scot/specialist-advice/** or contact **advice@fas.scot** or **0300 323 0161.**

Supplying water to rotationally grazed beef cattle

Designing an effective rotational grazing system is crucial for ensuring livestock have a continuous supply of clean drinking water. Key considerations to make:

Water Sourcing and Pressure: Ideal water systems are gravity-fed from an uphill source. Pumps, including electric, fuel-based, solar, and RAM pumps, can also be used, each with its pros and cons.

Water Legislation: Abstraction licensing regulations in Scotland require different levels of authorisation based on the amount of water abstracted daily. Consult your local farm consultant or SEPA office for more information.

Calculating Water Needs: Water demand varies with temperature and lactation. Estimate water needs using: Animal Live Weight (kg) x 12% (Dry Stock) or 15% (Lactating).

Flow Rate Calculation: Systems should supply water at a rate that meets peak demand. For instance, 40 cows needing 4,200 litres per day should have a flow rate of 17.5 litres per minute if consumed within four hours.

Pipe Sizing: Correct pipe size is crucial to minimise friction and pressure loss. Small pipes create more friction, thereby reducing flow rate.

Fixed vs. Mobile Troughs:
Fixed troughs are easier and more robust but are costlier and less flexible. Mobile troughs offer flexibility and at a lower cost, but they need careful management to maintain flow and prevent poaching.

Additional Tips:
- Ensure ease of cleaning for waterers.
- Space T-junctions for flexibility in piping for grazing paddocks.
- Invest in a robust pipe network and regular maintenance to prevent leaks and prolong pump life.

Poppy Frater, SAC Consulting

To read this article in full, please visit:
www.fas.scot/article/supplying-water-to-rotationally-grazed-beef-cattle/

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.

Deer Farming at Glenrinnes
Keith, 26th June, 10:30am - 3:00pm

Crofting Sheep Shetland - Record Keeping Pt.1
Lerwick, 26th June, 6:00pm - 9:00pm

The Devil's in the Detail - Benchmarking for Profitability
Castle Kennedy, 26th June, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Crop Trials Night Aberdeen
Kinellar, 27th June, 5:00pm - 8:00pm

Ask the Expert - Scotland's Food Biodiversity Webinar
Online, 28th June, 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Farm Wildlife Walks - Ayrshire
Dalmellington, 24th July, 5:00pm - 7:00pm

Natural capital assessments

Natural capital refers to the stock of natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, that deliver benefits to people, planet and nature. From woodlands to species-rich grasslands, burns to hedgerows, these habitats provide multiple benefits such as: raw materials, flood risk mitigation, shelter for wildlife and carbon sequestration. These benefits are known as ecosystem services. To maximise these benefits to farm and business, understanding the condition of natural capital assets and the dependencies between farm and nature can be a beneficial management practice. Conducting a natural capital assessment (NCA) can offer insight into assets on farm, highlighting areas that may require additional support to thrive and support the business.

Baseline state of natural capital assets	Taking stock of natural capital assets within farm boundary and asessing the condition and size of habitats.
Identify and value ecosystem services	The benefits and dependencies that affect the farm are identified and measured.
impact assessment	Assessing factors (both farm and external) that impact natural capital assets and its capacity to deliver ecosystem services.
Insights for next steps and future management	Potential risks, opportunities and action steps are identified to improve the condition of assets and maximise their capacity to deliver benefits.

With development and wider adoption of environmental reporting standards, corporations are increasingly scrutinising their biodiversity and carbon footprint, and require greater transparency across their supply chain. A NCA, conducted in line with global standards such as The Natural Protocol, can assist land managers to meet growing disclosure requirements from stakeholders, while helping form management decisions to benefit the farm.

Each farm is unique, and the interaction with natural capital and ecosystems is highly complex and dynamic. Through conducting an NCA, land managers can gain an enhanced understanding of their farm, allowing for the future business decisions to be made, which enhance and protect the farm.

Tushaani Naidu, SAC Consulting

For more information, please visit our guidance material on Natural Capital Assessments:
www.fas.scot/article/natural-capital-assessment/

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.

SRDP Farm Advisory Service

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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