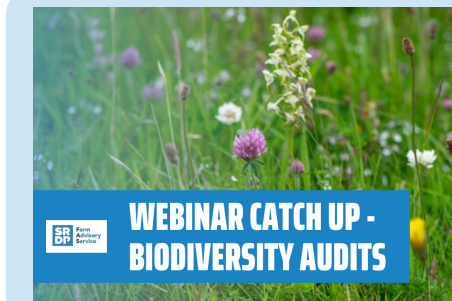


## News from the Farm Advisory Service:



### Webinar catch up: Biodiversity audits - Help with habitat mapping

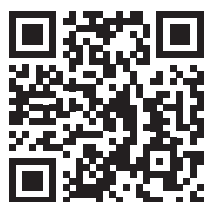
One option within the Whole Farm Plan conditions is the Biodiversity Audit, which involves creating a habitat map of your farm.

In this recent webinar, we provided guidance and support on the habitat key, identifying habitats on farm and more detail on the three methods by which you can complete a habitat map.

Representatives from NatureScot and Scottish Government provided us with technical detail on this matter, with plenty of time for questions to be asked.

This webinar provides you with the toolkit you need to get underway with creating your habitat map.

Want to catch up? Find our recording by using the QR code or by using the link below for our YouTube channel  
[www.youtube.com/FASScot](http://www.youtube.com/FASScot)



## Get funded support to advance your grazing management

As livestock return to fields this spring, management strategies must balance grazing intensity with sufficient recovery periods and pasture composition to maximise profit and biodiversity on your farm or croft.

An integrated land management plan (ILMP) can highlight on-farm opportunities for improving grassland management. By increasing productivity, stocking rates can be maintained, potentially negating the need to rent additional land. Specialist advice on farm business efficiency and soil and nutrient management can complement an ILMP, providing you with an analysis of your farm's soil and nutrient status and a detailed plan to improve your grassland management.

Up to £2,000 of funding is available through the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) for an ILMP, enabling you to work with a qualified advisor to develop a step-by-step action plan, ensuring your farm or croft is profitable and sustainable for the years ahead. You can receive a further £3,200 of funding for two areas of specialist advice to help you understand specific areas of concern or interest for your farming business.

To learn more and apply for funding, visit our Specialist Advice and ILMP pages. For support choosing the best grant options and help finding an advisor, contact FAS at [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot) or **0300 323 0161**.

## Milk fever in suckler cows on machair land

**Milk fever (hypocalcaemia) is uncommon in suckler cows but can occur, particularly in spring-calving cows fed on grass and whole crop silages grown on machair soils. These sandy soils, found in areas such as the Uists, produce forages with unusual mineral profiles that may predispose cows to calcium imbalance.**

Hypocalcaemia typically arises around calving, when calcium demand increases rapidly due to the onset of milk production. While cows usually draw on dietary calcium and bone reserves, a sudden shift in calcium requirements can overwhelm this system—especially if magnesium and vitamin D levels are inadequate, as these are essential for calcium absorption and regulation.

Clinical signs include mild ataxia, ear twitching, and muscle tremors, often accompanied by low appetite, reduced body temperature (below 38°C), and the classic posture of lying with the head turned into the flank.

### Prompt treatment is essential:

- Standing cows usually respond well to oral calcium.
- Recumbent cows require intravenous calcium and typically recover swiftly but might die if left untreated
- Multiple treatments can be required; relapses are not uncommon if only a single dose is administered.

### To reduce risk:

- Analyse forage to understand mineral imbalances.
- Supplement with 20 - 30g of magnesium per cow daily.
- Ensure mineral supplements provide at least 100,000 IU/kg of vitamin D.
- Maintain body condition around 2.5 - 3

While hypocalcaemia may not be a routine concern in suckler systems, recognising the specific risks associated with local forage and soil conditions - such as those found on machair land - is essential to safeguarding animal health and performance around calving.

*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](http://www.fas.scot/events) to sign up or contact the advice line and we'll help you get booked on.

**Grassland Roadshow Ayrshire - Managing Grass for Dairy**  
Crosshands, 8th May, 11:00am - 2:00pm

Want to catch up on our previous webinars?  
Visit [www.youtube.com/FASScot](http://www.youtube.com/FASScot) for our webinar recordings

## Trace elements - small but mighty for flock health



**Trace elements are crucial for the health and well-being of sheep - yet their availability in soil can vary depending on your soil's type, pH, and drainage. Identifying and addressing deficiencies early can help prevent serious issues across your flock.**

### Cobalt

Cobalt is essential for vitamin B12 production in the rumen. A deficiency in cobalt can be particularly detrimental to growing lambs, causing ill thrift and in severe cases, anaemia. Soils high in iron, manganese, or with high pH can reduce uptake by inhibiting cobalt availability.

### Copper

Copper deficiency can present in numerous ways. Most commonly, swayback in lambs or steely wool and reduced fertility in adult sheep. High molybdenum levels in soil can prevent copper absorption even when soil levels are adequate. To accurately assess the need for copper supplementation, it's recommended to combine soil analysis with blood sampling of ewes. Consulting your vet before beginning any supplementation is crucial to avoid the risks of toxicity.

### Iodine

Iodine is a critical trace element for sheep, as it supports the thyroid gland in regulating metabolism and energy production. It is also key for proper foetal development. Deficiency can lead to poor fertility and abortions. This can be worsened by low soil levels or by ewes excessively grazing brassicas, which can interfere with iodine uptake.

### Selenium

Selenium works as an antioxidant, supporting both growth and fertility. Deficiency can cause white muscle disease in lambs, higher rates of barren ewes and poor scanning percentages.

It is vital to test your soil and work with your vet to ensure your flock has the right balance of trace elements. This is essential for keeping your sheep healthy and productive.

*Captiva Mills, SAC Consulting*

For further information, articles, videos and more visit our website at [www.fas.scot](http://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.



National Advice Hub  
T: 0300 323 0161  
E: [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot)  
W: [www.fas.scot](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.fas.scot)



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
[gov.scot](http://gov.scot)