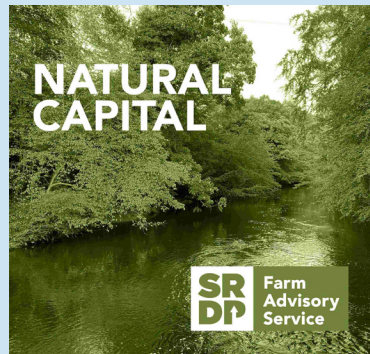


News from the Farm Advisory Service:



NATURAL CAPITAL



Natural Capital podcast - NatureScot biodiversity audits

By 15th May 2025 farmers are being asked to complete two of five baseline audits as part of the Whole Farm Plan, with one of these plans being the biodiversity audit.

In this episode of Natural Capital, host Harry Fisher speaks to Celine Delabre of NatureScot, who talks about biodiversity audits, and how the NatureScot app can help deliver these in future.

Find out this episode by scanning the QR code below, or visit www.fas.scot/sounds



Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme 2024

Deadline
30th November 2024

Apply online, it's quick, easy and reduces ear tag errors

www.ruralpayments.org

Government-funded advice on succession planning and will writing

Planning the future management of a farm or croft can be the elephant in the room at family dinner tables. Will writing is an essential part of owning a farming business. An up-to-date will can prevent family disputes and probate issues, protect non-farming heirs, help minimise estate taxes and ensure a smoother farm transfer.

If you are looking for support, funding of up to £1,600 is available for specialist advice on succession planning through the Farm Advisory Service (FAS).

With support from FAS, you can benefit from expert guidance through one of the hardest stages of running a business. By looking at your situation impartially and with clear eyes a

professional, third-party consultant can help with the crucial stages of will planning and writing, guiding you through the decision-making process. This can include helping you to understand legal language, avoid common mistakes and navigate complex family dynamics.

You can apply for up to £3,200 worth of funding for two specialist advice options through FAS, meaning you can pair succession planning advice with another topic such as business efficiency. For more information and to apply visit the FAS website at:

www.fas.scot/advice-grants/ or contact FAS at advice@fas.scot or 0300 323 0161.

Win-win - Crofters' assistance for energy efficient heating

The Croft House Grant (CHG) can help alleviate fuel poverty for some crofters providing them with warmer homes that are cheaper to heat. This grant has recently been updated to include Energy Efficiency options at a higher grant rate to help tackle the Climate Crisis. These improvements mean lower fuel bills and more comfortable homes.

You need an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) before applying. Applications for energy efficiency improvements may include:

- Under floor insulation
- Loft insulation
- Wall insulation (Cavity, Internal or External)
- Flat roof insulation
- Heating Upgrades and improvements*
- Hot Water system upgrade*
- Thermostats and Heating Controls
- Hot Water Cylinder Insulation
- Solar Thermal Heating
- Solar Photovoltaics
- Window and Door Upgrade

*Limited to zero direct emission heating systems (unless demonstrated that these will not be suitable for the property).



Please contact the RPID Tiree office if you require more assistance on 0300 244 9999, by email on chgs@gov.scot or contact the FAS advice line on advice@fas.scot or 0300 323 0161.

Janette Sutherland, SAC Consulting

More information and further support can be found by visiting our publication here: www.fas.scot/article/win-win-crofters-assistance-for-energy-efficient-heating/

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 1 - The Guidance

Online, 29th October, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Your Farm is a Marketing Tool

Online, 30th October, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Nutrient Management Workshop - Stonehaven

Stonehaven, 31st October, 10:00am - 2:00pm

Crofting Cows - Mull

Lochbuie, 4th November, 10:00am - 2:00pm

Sustainable Beef Systems - Easter Howgate Farm

Penicuik, 5th November, 10:00am - 3:00pm

Farm-Scale Renewables Events

Ayr, 4th November, 10:30am - 2:30pm

Kinross, 20th November, 10:00am - 2:30pm

Getting started with an animal health and welfare plan

As part of the Whole Farm Plan, all farmers or crofters who keep any number of cattle, sheep, goats, deer, alpacas, llamas, pigs, or over 350 poultry need to have an animal health and welfare plan completed by at least 15th May 2024 and update this annually.



Recently there has been a shift to more proactive, regular reviews at three-to-four-month intervals to coincide with the production cycle, rather than being viewed as an annual tick box exercise to meet auditing requirements.

Health planning should be farmer-led, but other members of the farm team including farm staff, farm vets, nutritionists, and other consultants will have valuable input in the process.

Livestock health planning is a cycle consisting of four components.

1. Set targets

- Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, Time-limited (SMART) goals should be set specific for your farm/croft.
 - These can be based on technical or financial Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which help you benchmark against other similar enterprises or year-on-year change within your business.
 - E.g. scanning percentages, weaning rates, growth rates.

2. Risk plan

- Establish an action plan for predictable risks.
 - Focus on one production stage (fertility/survival/growth) at a time.

3. Monitor

- Record the minimum data you need to know if you have hit your targets or not. Data recording can be time consuming.

4. Review

- Investigate areas where targets were missed or unexpected things happened with your team.

Tools and templates are available to help you prepare your livestock health plan.

Laura Henderson, SAC Consulting

For more information, please visit:

www.fas.scot/article/getting-started-with-an-animal-health-welfare-plan/

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