



News from the Farm Advisory Service:



Thinking of taking up a tenancy?

With very few tenancies becoming available, it makes the long and often challenging tendering process very competitive. Therefore, it is important you are quick off the mark with an application.

The Farm Advisory Service has put together guides and information to help you get started with tenancy applications, from guidance on filling out your forms to recorded webinars on the whole process.



Single Application Form (SAF)

The Single Application Form (SAF) is now open to allow completion of applications and will close on midnight 15th May.

Visit
www.ruralpayments.org/
for more information

Biodiversity Net Gain in Scotland

Farmers, crofters and landowners can benefit financially from their existing natural assets, such as woodlands and areas of high biodiversity value, though Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach that ensures habitats are left in a measurably better state than before a building development took place. This can also include habitat creation and management. BNG credits from certain habitats can be sold directly to developers or brokers, a practice gaining popularity in recent years. There is also the option

to rent land long-term (30+years) to a habitation creation company who are responsible for habitat management. Episode 12 of the FAS Natural Capital podcast gives more detail on BNG options in Scotland. You can listen to the Natural Capital podcast by visiting www.fas.scot/sounds.

Through FAS Specialist Advice you can access up to £2,000 of funding for two specialist advice plans, which can assist you in identifying BNG opportunities on you land, including their creation and potential markets. For help, please contact FAS at advice@fas.scot or **0300 323 0161** or visit our website at www.fas.scot/advice-grants/.

Delayed turnout for suckler cows post calving



Struggling with forage shortages and cattle still housed due to wet ground and insufficient grass? If so, please seek nutritional advice on any ration changes to minimise disruption to the cow/calf combination. The energy and protein demand post-calving are high as the cow lactates, recovers from calving and thinks about cycling again.

The longer housing period means a greater build-up of pathogens, increasing disease risk to newborn calves, due to increased stocking density and warmer weather, with dung building up. Keep bedding as clean as possible, provide refuge areas (for calves only) to give them a clean, dry lie (e.g. a simple electric wire in corner of the shed or through a creep gate).

If cows and calves are turned out to minimal grass (less than 6cm), reduce the stocking rate so cows do not over graze what is there as this will slow growth down further. If grass is less than 6cm cows will need supplemented with additional forage and/or concentrates. This can be tricky with wet fields, so try and move the feeding site regularly if there is not a suitable hard standing/sacrifice area. Again, seek advice on the quantity and type of supplementation required for the grazing that is available.

Finally, lactating cows are at a high risk of grass staggers (magnesium tetany). Poor weather and inadequate grazing puts cows under stress and increases this risk. If energy is also lacking the best method of supplementing energy and magnesium at grass is through Hi Mag rolls. 1kg will provide enough energy for 2 litres of milk, 2kgs for 4kg of milk. If grass (and cow condition) is adequate, then Hi Mag buckets or free-access minerals are an option.

Karen Stewart, SAC Consulting

To read the full article, please visit:
www.fas.scot/article/spring-calving-nutrition-and-management/

Free events



Preparing for Sustainable Farming Animal Health & Welfare Webinars

Ever wondered what options are available under Preparing for Sustainable Farming for cattle and sheep? Join us for our webinars where speakers from SRUC Veterinary Services will explain all of the options available to help you decide which two interventions are the most important to your business to investigate further in 2024.

PSF Animal Health & Welfare - Cattle (With Helen Carty, SRUC Veterinary Services)
Online, 21st May, 8:00pm - 9:00pm

PSF Animal Health & Welfare - Sheep (With Megan Fergusson, SRUC Veterinary Services)
Online, 28th May, 8:00pm - 9:00pm

Visit www.fas.scot/events to sign up or contact the advice line and we'll help you get booked on.

Considerations for growing maize silage

Maize planting is on the increase in south west Scotland this year. The acreages of maize had dropped over the last 10 years due to the high establishment costs, cold wet summers which restricted yield and wet autumn conditions which made harvest tricky. There is no doubt that maize is a fantastic addition to a milking cow diet, reducing the reliance on purchased feeds, but there are some key considerations to bear in mind;

- Choose the variety you are going to plant according to your farm conditions. Use the BSPB Forage Maize Descriptive List to help you select the variety most likely to be successful on your farm.
- Careful consideration should be given to the field you choose for planting; a sheltered, low lying site is preferable. Minimising soil erosion after harvest is also a key consideration, cover crops can be difficult to establish late in the season, but undersowing with grass can provide a ground cover for the winter.
- Plastic film is expensive and does have an environmental impact, but on more exposed sites or on heavier soils it will help to warm up the soil quicker and so speed up germination and early plant growth.

The following table produced by AHDB shows the growing and harvesting factors which can affect the feed quality of maize silage.

	Dry matter yield	Dry matter %	Starch %	Dry matter intake	Clamp spoilage	Starch degradability
Harvest too early						
Harvest too late						
Cutting height >90cm						
Cutting height <90cm						
Aerobic spoilage						
Wet growing season						
Dry growing season						

Key: ■ Positive ■ Negative ■ No Effect ■ Effect Unknown

Alison Clark, SAC Consulting

For the BSPB Forage Maize Descriptive List, please visit:
www.niab.com/research/agronomy-and-farming-systems/variety-evaluation-and-management

To read the full article for links to further nformation, please visit:
www.fas.scot/article/considerations-for-growing-maize-silage/

Scotland's Farm Advisory Service (FAS) is funded by the Scottish Government, providing information and resources aimed at increasing the profitability and sustainability of farms and crofts. Grant support, a full programme of events, a subscription service for crofts and small farms, and a range of articles and publications form the core of this service which is designed to provide integrated advice for farmers and crofters across Scotland.



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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