

Derelict to Productive – No 3 - A Practical guide – Grants



On acquiring new land it is natural to want to rush in and start making improvements to the land.. However any improvements, no matter how small will hit you in the pocket.

The Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme (CAGS) is an ideal pathway to aid you to start making improvements. There is varied options but the main choices to we will look at in this guide are:-

Land Improvement

Fencing

Ditching and/or Drainage

All three are very much inter linked and it is highly likely you will need to carry out all three on a derelict croft, albeit after environmental considerations.

Applying for CAGS – the general basics

An owner-occupier, tenant, and sub tenant of registered crofts are all eligible	A short term lease holder if consented by Crofting Commission on a registered croft is eligible
80% grant if applicant not reached 41 years of age and new to crofting in last 5 years	60% grant if applicant is over 41 years of age and/or has been crofting for more than 5 years
All prior approval – no work undertaken until approval	For actual costs – 2 quotes for each item if under £10000, 3 quotes if above



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Why Land Improvement?

If livestock are to be grazed on the croft or indeed winter fodder is to be made, then it is important to have good quality grassland. As age of grassland increases, the quality of grassland decreases. Therefore poorer quality grassland will slow down the growth of your stock and result in poorer quality fodder to either feed to your stock or sell.

The Steps

- 1– Assess which fields are in most need of improvement. This will take into account the fencing and drainage required as well as the grazing availability on the croft. For example, if there is livestock on the croft, it is not practical to plough and reseed the whole croft. It also may be useful to assess the soil, as if there is a lot of rock, lack of soil depth, an over seed may be more beneficial than a complete new reseed.
- 2- Soil sample the required field



- 3- If using a contractor, requirement to get 2 quotes for carrying out the improvement, whether a full reseed or over seeding.
- 4- If using own labour, only requirement to get 2 quotes for materials, lime, Scotphos, fertiliser based on soil sample result, plus grass seed
- 5- A map will be required with area to be improved.
- 6- Apply to SGRPID with PF08 application form
- 7- Once approval has been granted, land improvement completed and grant can be claimed.

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Why Ditching/drainage?

To make use of the land for agricultural purposes, it must be dry enough to allow machinery or livestock to pass over it without causing damage such as poaching or wheel ruts. To allow crops to grow successfully, land cannot be waterlogged and water must be able to run away freely, whether that be in an open ditch or filled in drains. This will also reduce incidence of rushes.

The Steps

1 -As with land improvement

Assess which fields are the highest priority. It may also be useful to take into account which areas of drainage will improve the largest area of land, this may be directly or somewhat indirectly. Such as a ditch in a different field which required to be cleaned but it may actually benefit a number of fields to let water away.

2- Measure the required lengths

3- If using a drainage contractor, requirement to get 2 quotes for labour and if field drainage, for materials such as pipe and stone.



4- If using own labour, only requirement to get 2 quotes for materials, own labour can be applied for in number of hours to carry out works as applicable and claimed on timesheets

5- A detailed map will be required with lengths of drains and also size of pipes.

6- Apply to SGRPID with PF08 application form which is downloadable from <https://www.ruralpayments.org>

7- Once approval has been granted, drainage and/or ditching completed and grant can be claimed for.

8- It also must be considered that mass drainage may not be cost effective and wetlands can be useful habitats.

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Why Fencing?

The obvious reason to have stock proof fencing is to ensure your animals do not stray off the croft, so good boundary fences whether with a neighbour, common grazings or public roads is paramount.

However internal fencing within the crofts is invaluable for better grazing management.

The steps

- 1 - Like the two options above, assess which fencing is the highest priority. It may be advisable to apply for different sections of fencing rather than one very large application.
- 2 - Would deer fencing be required
- 3 - Measure the required lengths
- 4- If using a contractor to erect, requirement to get 2 quotes
for erection and materials
- 5- If using own labour, only requirement to get 2 quotes
for materials, own labour can be applied for in
number of hours to put fence up and claimed on
timesheets
- 6- Ensure quotes for materials include everything you will
need, for example gates, staples etc.



7- Apply to SGRPID with PF08 application form which is downloadable from <https://www.ruralpayments.org> along with map of fencing to be done.

8- Once approval has been granted, erection of fence is completed and grant can be claimed for.

9- If applied for in sections, repeat the steps above.