

## Case study

# One-to-one Integrated Land Management Plan

Support provided by the Farm Advisory Service: subsidised funding to commission professional help to complete an Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP)



### Name & business: **Fergus Laing, Glenbeg Estate**

For many years, land owner, Fergus Laing has run a successful and diverse highland estate, incorporating a tenant farm, golfing, fishing and hunting. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, there is a good likelihood that the tenant farming lease may not be renewed when it expires. To prepare the business for potential change, Fergus applied to the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) for Scottish Government funding to help develop an ILMP.

Now, armed with a detailed plan of potential development areas to pursue, Fergus recalls how an ILMP is helping him to plan for the future.

### How did you get into farming?

'I was born and bred in the countryside. I grew up here (Forres area) and went to school here and didn't want to leave. After leaving school, I worked as a shepherd in Argyll for a few years and later attended agricultural college.

'As a young man, I was lucky enough to inherit a bit of land. I worked as a farmer for several years before diversifying into other areas and growing my estate into what it is today. I haven't actually farmed in over 25 years. I gave it up to focus on running the estate.

'At present, I run a Highland estate with a tenant farmer and some property lets. We also have a golf course and trout fishery, and let out mixed-game shooting.'

### Why did you apply for an ILMP?

'While I'm more than happy with the current business structure, there is a possibility that my tenant farmer – who is more of a farming partner – may not stay on when the lease comes up for renewal in two years' time. As such, I'm exploring what options are open to me for repurposing the land. My son works for a land agent and he suggested I should apply for an ILMP to consider my business options.'

### How did you find the process of applying for funding through FAS?

'Very simple, mainly because I had help with the application form.'



I would definitely recommend doing an ILMP to find out what their options are.





### **What did your adviser help you with?**

‘I had help from a land estate adviser. We went through what I do now and looked at different options of what I could do in the future. We discussed a range of options including sheep and beef farming.

‘The ILMP looked to assess the current land-use practices and considered ways of enhancing those through an integrated farming conservation management approach.’

### **What do you think the benefits of having an ILMP are for your business?**

‘I haven’t implemented the measures in the plan yet because I’m happy with the estate the way it is for now. The ILMP was just about understanding what my options are going forward, should I need to make changes.

‘If the farming lease isn’t renewed, the ILMP my adviser helped me put together provides guidance on potential livestock and crop improvements, options for restructuring the business, and how to approach better planning and decision making.’

‘I’ve been out of the game so long, I didn’t know what my options were. The ILMP is good in that it gives you a guide.’



It helps you understand what business opportunities are available to you and how best to go about developing your business.



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### **Would you recommend ILMPs to other farmers?**

‘Depending on their circumstance – yes, absolutely.

‘If, like me, they haven’t been farming for years. I would definitely recommend doing an ILMP to find out what their options are.

‘The vision for the estate is to create a redefined business structure that integrates forestry, field sports, tourism and farming. I already have suitable structures in place for the first three, so the challenge was finding the best fit for a new farming entity within that new business structure. The ILMP lays out a plan to do that.’

### **Would you recommend FAS support services to other farmers?**

‘Yes. In a situation like mine - I would recommend [FAS] highly.’

### **What advice would you give to others seeking help with an ILMP?**

‘I would tell them to do an ILMP. It helps you understand what business opportunities are available to you and how best to go about developing your business.’

**For further information about the support available, please visit [www.fas.scot](http://www.fas.scot)**

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