

NE Organic Discussion Group

Newsletter



September 2020

1st Meeting

The first online meeting of the NE organic Discussion Group was on 25th August. Mineral and trace element nutrition for livestock was the topic of the meeting and the speakers were David McCelland, Technical Director, Norvite Animal Nutrition Co. Ltd. and Mary Young, Livestock Nutritionist, SAC Consulting Solutions. They both gave excellent presentations covering:- mineral requirements; forage mineral analyses and understanding the supply from home produced feeds; what is an “organic” mineral; case studies covering some specific mineral & trace element imbalances (Vit D, Mn, I and Mg); how to determine a deficiency, how to solve mineral problems and manage a derogation request.

After the presentations there were then questions and discussion.

The speakers top tips were:-

- Ensure supplements are Organically ‘approved’
- Have forages analysed for minerals (not annually but every few years)
- Have forage mineral results interpreted and use appropriately
- Ensure good dialogue within your team (vets, nutritionists & suppliers)
- Get the balance right - too much of a good thing can be bad!

If you missed the meeting a copy of David and Mary’s powerpoint presentation and a link to the short powered pasture video from Alex Brewster which is worth a look and gives a good practical story about pasture and trace elements can be found here <https://www.fas.scot/ne-organic-group/>

Also watch out for a podcast which will feature Mary and David.

Meeting not to be missed

I hope to have the next meeting which will be a virtual farm tour of Barnside Farm, Duns (Farmers Weekly Grassland Manager of the Year 2019) in October. More details to follow shortly.



Job Opportunity

Job opportunity at Soil Association Scotland: [Senior Programmes Manager](#) – Farming and Land Use

This role is a chance to lead a dynamic and adaptive team, supporting real change on the ground through the management and delivery of Soil Association Scotland's current participatory and farmer-led knowledge, skills and innovation programmes.

Working with our UK-wide farming and innovation teams, you will also be responsible for developing new programmes of work which provide nature-based solutions to deliver our ambitious new organisational strategy – a ten year transition to agroecology and sustainable diets to restore biodiversity, health and a safe climate.

This is a fixed-term role based in Edinburgh, but remote working will be considered.

Closing date for applications: 9am, Wednesday 16th September, 2020.

Interviews are expected to take place: w/c 28th September, via video conference.

More information [here](#).

Greening Update

Crop diversification (3-crop rule) will be removed from 2021. EFA requirements will remain for 2021 but will be assessed as part of a wider review long term.

Sustainable Agricultural Capital Grant Scheme (SACCG)

A £10 million pilot scheme from the Scottish Government has now opened (Monday 7 September) to help farmers meet climate change targets. This is a rare opportunity and worth considering.

The maximum available for each business is £20,000 and applications will be awarded “green points” based on the contribution that the item makes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Bonus “green points” will be available for those who have completed a carbon audit, and/or nutrient management plan and/or veterinary health plan between 1 March 2017 and 1 March 2020 and where the item chosen helps to reduce their carbon footprint and improve business efficiency.

Standard costs will be allocated to each item to simplify the application process. 50% (60% in the Highlands and Islands) of the standard cost will be grant funded. Crucially, the pilot scheme is only going to be open for five weeks (applications close midnight Sunday 11 October). Full details are available here [Sustainable Agriculture Capital Grant Scheme \(SACGS\)](#) but if you have any questions or want to discuss please get in touch.