



# New Entrants News

## Autumn 2021

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**Welcome to the Autumn edition of New Entrants News. Since our last edition Covid-19 restrictions have eased, vaccination role out has been extended to 12 – 15-year-olds and we are slowly returning to some form of ‘normality’.**

However, the lack of lorry drivers to transport goods, due to the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit, has caused chaos with the public panic buying and empty shelves are now commonplace in the supermarkets, scenes reminiscent of Spring 2020 when we first entered lockdown. This has highlighted how fragile our supply system is, but there is clearly an opportunity for local, home-grown produce. Examples of this are Farm to Table launched in April 2021 by Fiona Smith of Westerton Farms and Lauren and Andrew Houstoun of Glenkilrie Larder whose inspirational stories are highlighted in this issue.

This month all eyes will be on Glasgow with the COP26 conference running from 1st to 12th November, where world leaders will unite to develop an action plan to tackle the Paris Agreement and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change goals. Although not featuring on the COP26 agenda, agriculture and its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is likely to come under the spotlight increasingly as we aim for Net Zero by 2045. Last year we hosted two webinars on climate change in livestock and arable agriculture, where we learnt of the challenges agriculture faces, but also some of the potential solutions. This year we followed it up by hosting another webinar on setting up a carbon neutral business.

Another recent headline for the agriculture industry has been the rapid increase in fertiliser costs due to spiralling wholesale gas prices. It is now more important than ever from a financial and environmental perspective to review our fertiliser use. A quick guide to understanding soil analysis is provided here as a starting point for those discussions with your advisor.

Also in this edition is an update and signposts to the array of new resources to support and inspire new entrants which are now available online.



The European Agricultural Fund  
for Rural Development  
**Europe investing in rural areas**



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
[gov.scot](http://gov.scot)

## A new chapter

After leading the FAS New Entrants theme for the last 5 years, Kirsten Williams has decided to step back to focus on other projects. She has been a brilliant leader and gave us several fantastic New Entrants Gatherings and guided delivery of factsheets, podcasts, and case studies along the way. The reins of New Entrants leadership have now been passed to Laura Henderson. Laura has facilitated the Morayshire New Entrants group since 2019.

## Save the date!

In February 2021, new legislation came into force that enables tenants with secure tenancies to assign it to new entrants or progressing farmers should the landlord not wish to buy the tenancy. This aims to provide new opportunities for young people to enter the industry.

To allow you to have a greater understanding of what opportunities there are in relinquishment and assignation of tenancies for new entrants and how to make an agreement a success we will host a Zoom webinar on Thursday 11th November 2021 at 8pm with a tremendous panel of experts including:

- **Dr Bob McIntosh CBE, Tenant Farming Commissioner, Scottish Land Commission**
- **Hamish Lean, Partner and Head of Rural Property, Shepherd and Wedderburn**
- **Tom Oates MRICS, Director & Registered Valuer, youngRPS**
- **Ian Craig, Partner, Azets**
- **Kirsten Williams, SAC Consulting (chair)**



**Dr Bob  
McIntosh CBE**



**Hamish  
Lean**



**Tom Oates  
MRICS**



**Ian  
Craig**



**Kirsten  
Williams**

This event is being supported by Scottish Land and Estates, NFUS and Scottish Tenant Farming Association. Book your space here: [Relinquishment and Assignation of Tenancies – Opportunities for New Entrants | Events helping farmers in Scotland | Farm Advisory Service \(fas.scot\)](#)

## A New Start Webinar Series 2

Following on from the success of the “A New Start” webinar series in summer 2020 and with Covid-19 restrictions still limiting face-to-face meetings, we ran another series of 7 webinars each Thursday evening from mid-June to late-July. We covered supplying the buyers, alternative livestock, business planning, poultry production, funding your dream, setting up a carbon neutral business and what to inspect from a land-based inspection. The recording of these webinars along with associated factsheets are now available online at:

[A New Start Webinar Series | Helping farmers in Scotland | Farm Advisory Service \(fas.scot\)](#). A

summary of the webinars and the top tips are presented on the next page.





## Supplying The Buyers

Caledonian Marts' auctioneers Oliver Shearman and Nick North shared their thoughts on what buyers are looking for in store cattle and lambs from the West Coast of Scotland.

1. **When breeding cattle and sheep consider the final product when selecting breeds to use as well as those that suit your system.**
2. **Sell calves at 8 – 12 months and lambs at 3 – 4 months as “stores” to ensure buyers have enough time to finish the animals.**
3. **Reach out to auctioneers to assist with presentation and batching of animals. A good relationship with the auctioneer can help sell your animals for the best price.**
4. **Sale reports highlight the top prices reached on that particular sale day so may not be realistic for your stock due to market fluctuations and different breeds.**

## Alternative Livestock

Andrew and Lauren Houstoun of Glenkilrie Larder shared their experiences of introducing deer to their family beef and sheep farm at the foot of Glenshee; while Neil Wright of Matheson's presented his view of becoming a new entrant in the pig industry based on his own experience over the last 20 years.

1. **Introducing alternative livestock can spread the risk in a world of changing policy and markets. Deer are lower maintenance, whereas pigs need to be managed more as a business than cattle and sheep.**
2. **Knowing your target market is key. Returns are dictated by supply and demand.**
3. **Network with other farmers working with pigs and deer. They can act as mentors for new entrants and provide valuable advice.**

### Business Planning

What to include in a business plan for tenancy and finance applications was covered by Galbraith and AMC Agent, Alice Wilson while SAC Consulting's Kirstyn Blackwood provided an overview of understanding a set of farm accounts in our business planning webinar.

1. **Be realistic in assessing your business development, the market, and future opportunities.**
2. **Consider your strengths and the opportunities available to you and your business, and then decide which options you would be interested in.**
3. **Investigate the set-up costs involved and draw up a projected gross margin to determine if the enterprise is worthwhile and feasible.**

## Poultry Production

New entrants to poultry production Gordon and Marie from The Wee Broon Hens and Robert Young from West Park Farm along with Aviagen's Head of GP Farming Operations Christopher Megarry shared their experience of working in the poultry industry.

1. **Poultry production can be broadly split into laying (egg production) and broilers (meat production). Knowing your market is vital for success whether you supply direct to the consumer or via a third party.**
2. **Cash flow is key, so always factor in a cash buffer for the first few months of setting up a poultry system as there is a lag between introducing birds and producing eggs or meat, but you will still need to purchase feed during this period.**
3. **Contract farming opportunities are also available in the poultry industry.**

## Funding Your Dream

Graeme McNaughton from Barclays and Jane Mitchell from Johnston Carmichael provided information on livestock finance and HP options for new entrants looking to fund their dream from a banker and accountants perspectives.

1. **Lenders use the CAMPARI acronym to assess the suitability of the funding applicant and their plans. This stands for Character, Ability, Management/Means, Purpose, Amount, Repayment, and Insurance/Security.**
2. **At the end of the HP repayment period, the asset is 100% owned by the business and tax relief is currently available on the HP interest. By contrast equipment on contract hire is not owned by the business and it is simply taken away at the end of the contract period, removing the uncertainty of asset value.**
3. **A key point to remember is never to finance a piece of equipment longer than you will have it on the farm.**
4. **Most marts provide livestock finance for up to 12 months and during this period the livestock remain property of the mart and must be resold through the mart or an associated processor.**

## Setting Up A Carbon Neutral Business

Panel member of the Farming for 1.5° group and organic farmer, Pete Ritchie presented the findings of the Farming for 1.5° report and his thoughts on how businesses can improve their carbon footprint.

1. **Everyone plays a role in reducing agriculture's carbon footprint and completing a carbon audit is an essential first step to identify where to start reducing a farms carbon footprint.**
2. **Nature and climate must be tackled together, and we should not just focus solely on greenhouse gas emissions.**
3. **Agro-forestry offers several potential positives including carbon capture, increased biodiversity, better water infiltration, and provision of shade and shelter for livestock.**

## What To Expect From A Land Based Inspection?

SGRPID's John Stuart and Stuart Lorimer presented what SGRPID expect from farmers and what records they should have available.

1. **Land based inspections cover basic payment scheme (BPS) including Young Farmer scheme and greening; Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS), Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS), Forestry Grant Schemes (FGS), Rural Priorities (RP), farm woodland premium scheme and habitat schemes. Annually 3% of SAF applicants are selected for land-based inspections.**
2. **Of the 3% selected for inspection, 0.5% are also subject to cross compliance inspection. Cross compliance is a set of rules, made up of 13 Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and 7 Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) which relate to protection of the environment, climate change, good agricultural condition of the land, public health, animal health, plant health and animal welfare.**
3. **Land must be kept in good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC) for the full year.**
4. **Most breaches only result in a warning letter, but penalties may be applied if the breach is severe or has repeatedly occurred.**



## Factsheets

Joint ventures are increasingly becoming popular avenues for new entrants to enter the agricultural industry or seeking to expand an existing business, with this in mind we have produced three factsheets covering will joint ventures suit me and my business and what are the opportunities for arable enterprises and livestock enterprises.

Once you have identified your asset and written a marketing plan, social media can be a great platform to promote your business and our Creating a Social Media Campaign factsheet provides an overview of the 5W's (*Why/Who/What/Where and When*) you should think about when creating a social media campaign for your business.

Good quality silage can reduce the need for purchased concentrates which has financial and carbon footprint benefits. However, producing good quality silage is a skill and our Best Practice Procedures for Making Baled Silage factsheet provides some top tips and highlights the steps needed to make good quality baled silage that suits your system while also minimising financial and nutrient losses. To supplement this Donald Barrie the farm manager at Glensaugh Farm (James Hutton Institute) shares his management practices and top tips for making quality forage in another factsheet.

# New Entrants to Farming Fact Sheet

## Will it suit me and my business?

Joint ventures can be the perfect business arrangement for farmers/landowners looking to scale down/leave and off and new/young entrants and businesses looking to scale up, but how do you know if it's right for you and your business?

Will it suit me? – Relationships are one of the keys to success of any joint venture.

Somewhat startling the others – you have to be willing to either partner to embark on a joint venture. Hard work and compromise are required. You are entering into a business agreement, agree and are not to be taken back. The dates of 21st January '19 to 30th Jan '20, could have been with joint ventures in mind.

For example, if you are a farmer, you are looking to sell your business, you have family, study partnerships or farming partnerships are likely to be developed as a good working relationship. 40% good of farmland business.

## Landowners – would a joint venture suit your business?

Do any of these statements sound familiar?

- Don't want to give up farmland/farm but not thinking of scaling down or slowing down?
- Want to make a big leap from where you are to the whole business?
- Want to reduce your part time involvement in the whole business?
- Are struggling to find suitable agents and/or business?
- Want to make a change to your business?
- Resilience, and looking for new challenges?
- Want to get out of the day to day running of the business?
- Want to pass on knowledge and expertise to others?
- As a senior who has finished time to move to develop the new business?

Joint venture offers you potentially a good opportunity for landowners looking to protect their assets for the future, to pass on the farm, to allow landowners to retain their active involvement in farming but gives them the opportunity to pursue other interests and careers.

For those looking to achieve their personal ambition or to create time for a new or current, current farming could be a sound business decision. It is a business decision, a sound business on one hand and on the other hand, it is a business decision, where farmers, where farmers could be a good opportunity. Farming partnerships are best used where there is a good working relationship already established between a landowner looking to sell up and looking to farming partnership.



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European Union  
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development  
2014-2020



SAC  
CONSULTING



Scottish Government  
Rural Development  
grants

SRP001/2018/01



## Podcasts

Donald Barrie, farm manager of Glensaugh Farm shared his grazing management practices and top tips for making quality forage, while Lorna McPherson, SAC Dairy Specialist Consultant discusses rotational grazing, silage additives and the importance of good quality silage for saving on concentrate feed in this podcast: <https://www.fas.scot/publication/grassland-management-and-silage-making-at-glensaugh/>

### Inspirational Stories

This summer we have added an additional four videos featuring new entrants sharing their inspirational journeys into the industry. These were:

Fiona Smith a 4th generation farmer at Westerton Farms launched Farm To Table in April 2021, a modern retail space with a wide range of fresh farm produce where sustainability and consumer education is key. <https://www.fas.scot/publication/new-entrants-with-added-value-westerton-farmers-farm-to-table/>



Lauren and Andrew Houstoun of Glenkilrie Larder which was set up in 2019 to market the venison, beef and lamb produced on the family hill farm in Highland Perthshire direct to the public via home deliveries, farmers markets and events. <https://www.fas.scot/publication/new-entrants-with-added-value-glenkilrie-larder/>



Archie Paterson who has just taken on a 20-year tenancy of Plan Farm on the Isle of Bute after spending over 10 years as a full-time sheep shearer travelling around the world. <https://www.fas.scot/publication/new-entrants-case-study-archie-patterson-plan-farm-bute/>



Ryan Shand of Lythebrae Croft in Aberdeenshire who after buying land in 2016 has purchased another croft in 2021 and now has 35 cows and 300 ewes. <https://www.fas.scot/publication/new-entrants-case-study-ryan-shand-lythebrae-croft/>



## Bitesize Videos

Each month a bitesize video featuring a timely and relevant update on advice and some top tips for establishing and developing your business has been featured on our Facebook page (@NewEntrants). These have covered a range of topics including setting up a business, sourcing land, registering to keep livestock, building relationships and brands. If you have missed any of the quick tips, they are also available on the website [Quick Tips | Helping farmers in Scotland | Farm Advisory Service \(fas.scot\)](#)

### Still to come

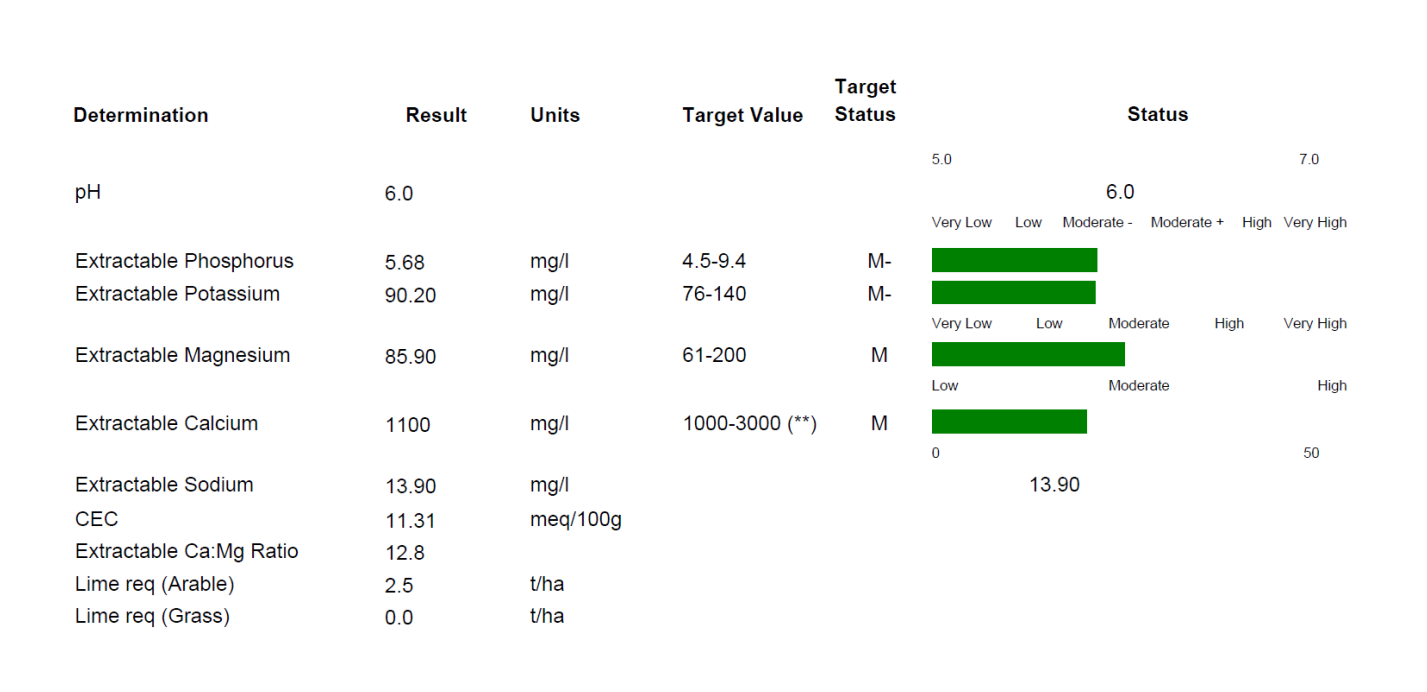
Keep your eyes peeled for a further two inspirational stories featuring Morton's Milk Vending and Farm Shop and sublet crofter management. We will also have a podcast on capitalising on assets plus an online decision-making tool for joint venture agreements will be launched later this year.

## Understanding soil analysis

Soil sampling should be carried out every three to five years and can be done at any time of year, but samples are best taken in the autumn or winter. For the most accurate results, soil testing should take place at least three months after the last application of slurry, FYM, or fertiliser and two years from when lime was last applied. It is also important that soils are not overly dry or waterlogged at the time of sampling. Soil analysis results should form the foundation of any nutrient planning to ensure that only what is needed for optimal crop growth is applied to reduce costs, especially when fertiliser prices have reached record highs, and to avoid environmental contamination.

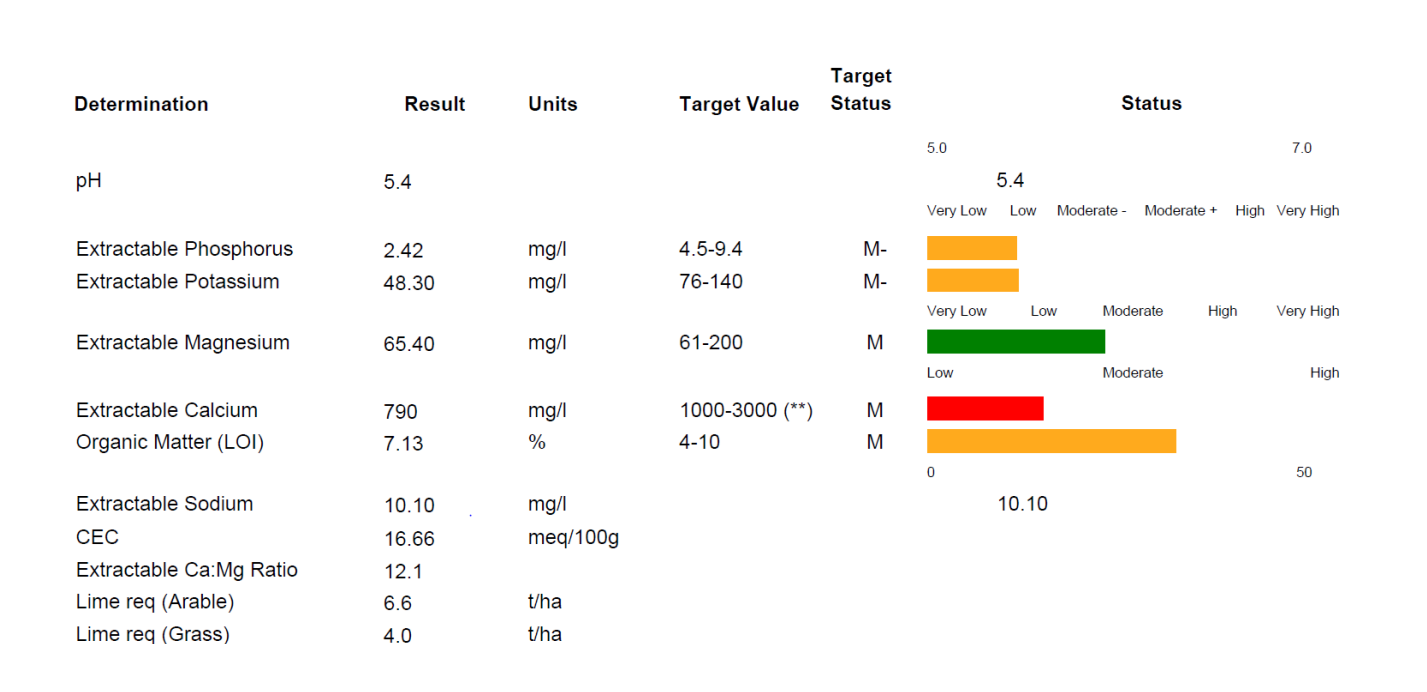
Standard soil analyses will provide results on pH, lime requirement, extractable phosphorus (P), potassium (potash, K) and magnesium (Mg). Phosphorus is important as it aids root development, early growth and ripening of seeds while potash promotes root development and provides the strength and stiffness of the whole plant. Magnesium helps soil particles stick together.

In Scotland, the SAC Modified Morgan’s method is used which separates soils into six different status categories: Very Low, Low, Moderate -, Moderate +, High, and Very High. Different systems are operated in England and Wales due to differences in pH and chemical compositions of soils across the UK.



Above is a SAC soil analysis for a grassland field with mineral soil type. It indicates that the pH is within the optimum range and P and K levels are Moderate – , while Mg is Moderate. As a result no lime is required for this grassland field and grass yields should be good.

Below is a soil analysis for an arable field with mineral soil type. With a pH of 5.4 it is well below the optimum level of 6.3 and would benefit from liming. P, K and Ca levels are all Low, but Mg is Moderate. Therefore, a calcium-based lime and P and K applications would be recommended. The P and K required can be supplied by organic fertiliser or bagged fertiliser.



Soil pH is determined by the material from which it was developed, and Scottish soils have a tendency to be acidic. Achieving the optimum pH through liming will enhance the availability of nutrients to the growing crop and subsequently improve yields. Yield potential is reduced by up to 20% in grass, 30% in winter wheat, and 50% in spring barley, despite adequate PK fertiliser if soil pH is not corrected when it is 5.5 or lower. The quantity of lime to be applied is determined by the soil pH, soil texture, soil organic matter and the target pH you wish to reach. In general, sandy soils require less lime than clay or organic soils to increase pH by one unit. Aim for an optimum soil pH 5.9 – 6.2 for grassland and pH 6.3 for arable on mineral soils, but lower pH of 5.3 – 5.5 for peaty soils is acceptable.

The selection of liming material should be based on the neutralising value and fineness of the product in relation to the price. Another aspect to consider when selecting a liming product, is the extractable calcium to magnesium ratio (Ca: Mg) in the soil. Although calcium and magnesium do not play a direct role in increasing soil pH, the balance between soil calcium and magnesium levels can impact on soil structure, as calcium causes soil particles to move apart while magnesium has the opposite effect. There is no definitive target Ca: Mg ratio, as actual levels of these elements in the soil are more important than Ca: Mg ratios. A high Ca: Mg ratio suggests there is either too little Mg relative to Ca, or Ca is excessive relative to Mg, while a low Ca: Mg ratio indicates low Ca with normal Mg, or normal Ca and high Mg. AgLime Quality Standard assured lime provides reassurance that the product provided is of a high quality and complies with UK national and EU regulatory standards.

For most crops grown in Scotland the optimum soil nutrient status for P, K and Mg is Moderate. The aim is to maintain soils within this target by replacing any offtake by crops each year, but it can take several years to increase soil nutrient status from low or very low. Soils with high or very high nutrient statuses pose a pollution risk, particularly for phosphates, through run-off. Scottish soils have differing capacity to regulate P availability for plant uptake and a series of technical notes are available to guide phosphate and potash recommendations for crops grown in different regions including Highlands and Islands (<https://www.fas.scot/publication/technical-note-tn715phosphate-and-potash-recommendations-for-crops-grown-in-highland-and-islands/>), South West Scotland (<https://www.fas.scot/publication/technical-note-tn716-phosphate-and-potash-recommendations-for-crops-grown-in-south-west-scotland/>), North East Scotland and Tayside (<https://www.fas.scot/publication/technical-note-tn717-phosphate-and-potash-recommendations-for-crops-grown-in-north-east-scotland-and-tayside/>) and Fife, Lothian and Scottish Borders (<https://www.fas.scot/publication/technical-note-tn718-phosphate-and-potash-recommendations-for-crops-grown-in-fife-lothian-and-scottish-borders/>). Technical notes providing fertiliser recommendations for grassland (<https://www.fas.scot/publication/technical-note-tn726-fertiliser-recommendations-for-grassland/>), forage crops (<https://www.fas.scot/publication/technical-note-tn733-forage-crops-for-livestock/>) and fodder beet (<https://www.fas.scot/downloads/tn694-alternative-forages-sheep-fodder-beet/>) are also available.

It is also possible to request additional tests including other macro minerals and trace elements such as calcium, copper, zinc, manganese, molybdenum, sulphur, sodium, boron, cobalt and selenium and loss on ignition (LOI) which provides a measure of soil organic matter content. The need for these additional tests will be determined by which crops you wish to grow, as some elements are more important for some crops than others and if there is a history of problems on your farm. For example, boron is an important element in legumes for nodulation and nitrogen fixation and particularly important to some brassica crops which are sensitive to deficiency, while copper is important for cereals. Cobalt and selenium are particularly important in grassland, as deficiencies in these can result in deficiencies in livestock with consequential negative impacts on animal health and performance. Equally, excessive levels of trace elements can cause toxicity and prove detrimental to crop and livestock health and performance. For advice on interpreting soil analysis and nutrient planning contact your local advisor.

