

New Entrants NEWS

Spring 2021



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Welcome to the Spring edition of *New Entrants News*. A year on from the first lockdown restrictions we are still in the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic. However with the vaccination role out it is hoped we get back to some kind of 'normality' albeit a new normal in the near future. The days are noticeably longer as calving, lambing and crop work takes place across the country and despite the challenges of 2020 farmers have shown just what a resilient group of folk they are with agricultural and rural businesses continuing to function throughout the pandemic with positivity in both the beef and sheep sectors.

In this edition we will update and signpost you to the various new resources that are now available for you to access in order to help to support and encourage new entrants and the next farming generation. As well as this there is an update on what's coming up in 2021 including FAS TV, starting out in arable farming, joint ventures and key dates for your diary.



New for 2021 is FAS TV. This was launched in March and is a new TV show aimed at farmers and crofters to help with knowledge transfer which has been lost with Covid-19 restrictions resulting in no on-farm meetings and gatherings. Launched with a week of special episodes FAS TV is a fortnightly show recreating traditional on-farm visits aimed at a farmer audience covering a diverse range of topics across all sectors. Regular updates on regulations and policy will also be included in the format which will see 25 episodes delivered throughout 2021.

Filmed across Scotland FAS TV will take you onto farms from Stranraer to Shetland without the need for leaving home. Filmed from a farmers perspective each programme will deliver technical messages with real farmers sharing and demonstrating advice in practice.

Follow the Farm Advisory Service on YouTube and watch the five part spring special on FAS TV via www.youtube.com/fasscot or on our [Facebook page](#).



Scan for quick access to specific pages aimed at new entrants on www.fas.scot

Also check out the events page to see what events are coming up.



Coming up in 2021 from the FAS New Entrants to Farming Programme

We have an exciting programme lined up for the coming year to help inspire new entrants to farming and to equip you with the skills require to enter the industry.

Monthly Bite Size Videos

First off, we are issuing monthly videos on our Facebook page (@NewEntrants). These will offer you a bite size of information including, timely and relevant advice specific for the month, as well as a knowledgeable consultant discussing the steps into farming to aid in establishing and developing your business.



Getting Started with Arable

In other delivery we will have a focus on starting out in arable farming which will include a series of fact sheets. So if crops are of interest to you, look out for these factsheets on the FAS website which should be available in the summer.

Inspirational Stories

We will, as soon as restrictions allow, be out and about getting six new stories of how people have either entered the industry or taken their business to the next level. We plan to be returning back to videos from podcasts this year.

Fact Packed Webinars and Fact Sheets

We have an excellent line up of webinars, which will be run via zoom starting on the 17th June, these will run every Thursday evening, until the end of July. These will include topics such as,

- Procurement in remote areas
- Alternative Livestock
- Poultry production
- Business Planning
- Funding your dream
- Setting up a carbon neutral business
- What to inspect from an inspection
- Relinquishments and Assignment

We will create topic specific fact sheets on all of these topics as a resource following the webinar.

Joint Ventures

This is an area where we receive a lot of queries from both new people entering the industry and people looking at retiring. We plan to create a suite of fact sheets including livestock agreements, crop agreements and if joint ventures actually suite your business. We aim to create a decision tool and some infographics around this subject as well.

Fact Sheets

We will be building on our fantastic resource of fact sheets with subjects such as writing a marketing plan, planning a social media campaign, capitalising on assets, and a few more.



New Content Available Specific to New Entrants

Fact Sheets

We have continued to add to our suite of fact sheets, that are available online. Have a sift through to find information on topics including getting started, technical efficiency and livestock production. Two of the new factsheets added since the last newsletter include a cattle and a sheep health newsletter. Follow the links below to discover these factsheets available;
<https://www.fas.scot/technical-efficiency/>

New Entrants to Farming Sheep Health Factsheet



This factsheet aims to highlight the general considerations for sheep health and what to look out for. It should be used as a guide for when to seek veterinary advice, rather than being used to decide when an animal requires treatment. However, prevention is better than cure as once an animal has become ill, any treatment may only be symptomatic, not curative. Therefore, potentially leaving the animal with long term effects that could reduce weight gain, efficiency and consequently profitability.

Signs to identify sick animals

- The early identification and treatment of sick animals limits the impact on productivity, efficiency and subsequent profitability. Livestock should be inspected at least once per day, ideally twice, for signs of ill health. There are a range of signs that may indicate ill health in livestock, which are sometimes termed "sickness behaviours", and include:
- Not coming forward to feed / anorexia
 - Not drinking
 - Unkempt coat indicating less grooming
 - Lying down more
 - Reduced play in young animals
 - Staying away / isolating from others in the group
 - Abnormal posture e.g. hunched back, standing with neck or legs extended
 - Drooped ears

It should be noted that not all the above behaviours may be seen, or even at the same time in the same animal. Sick animals can vary in the level of expression of these behaviours and some of them can be quite subtle, requiring careful observation. This is particularly true for sheep, as they tend to only show obvious signs of illness once very sick and in the advanced stages of disease. Also, these signs are non-specific and can be seen with a range of illnesses, so further investigation by a vet is usually required to identify the cause. A vet may involve blood, urine, faeces or other clinical samples or relevant history to arrive at the diagnosis. However, if you have made the best option, your vet will then be able to conduct a post-mortem examination and obtain additional samples for further analysis.

A healthy animal should appear bright in the head, be alert to its presence and respond to touch or sound. An animal that is heavily anaemic will have a dull head of grey, but this is alleviated with time spent grazing their food (cuddling) while ridding which places more importance in healthy digestion and stimulation and is a sign that the animal is content. Although, this may depend on the diet being fed and the breed's content consumed.

Any animal that has not been drinking may have sunken eyes, but this can also occur with a loss of skin turgor (firm) in very thin animals. The level of dehydration can also be assessed by measuring the time it takes a bit of tent flaps by pinching the skin then gently raising it to 100% to return to normal. In a well hydrated animal this should take less than ten seconds but will be prolonged in dehydrated animals.

If an animal is seen to be frequently sitting down from lying down to standing up when combined with kicking at the abdomen, this could indicate this may be a sign of abdominal pain (colic), and animals that are in pain may grind their teeth.




 Scottish Government
 Rìghdhalas na h-Alba
 gov.scot

Webinar Recording

There is a fantas

webinars freely av

discuss the various

from sourcing financial

building relations

systems and imple

climate change.

<https://www.fas.scot>

[new-start-webinar-s](#)



Inspirational Stories

Our amazing contributors to the inspirational stories show a fantastic range of routes into the industry including through securing tenancies, buying a farming business and or land, by succession and joint ventures.

These motivational stories can be found here; <https://www.fas.scot/inspirational-stories/>



The latest to be added are podcasts with Laura Hinnekens a new entrant farmer who travelled from Belgium to farm in Scotland, she has built up a successful sheep enterprise in Lanarkshire. Along with grass based Welsh dairy farmer Rhys Williams who is an absolute advocate for generating opportunities through joint ventures.

Keep an eye out for more inspirational stories, factsheets and topic specific webinars coming to FAS in 2021.

Don't forget to look on the Facebook page for updates.

<https://www.facebook.com/NewEntrants>



Key Sources of Information

Sheep Record Keeping

One of the most popular webinars from last winter was **sheep record keeping**. Record keeping is an important part of running an agricultural business and can be challenging to get your head around at first. This webinar is freely available where you can learn more about the aspects of keeping sheep records including; stock identification, movements of stock and medicine records. This webinar will ensure you are up to date with sheep record keeping requirements.



<https://www.fas.scot/publication/sheep-record-keeping/>

Joint Ventures

In November 2020, we held a webinar **Joint Ventures – an experts opinion**. This was a very popular webinar with a large audience including new entrants, older farmers and professionals.



Matthew Currie,
Savills



Ian Davidson, OBE,
Scottish Land Matching Service



Hamish Lean,
Shepherd and Wedderburn



Chloe McCulloch,
SAC Consulting

The main messages that came from this webinar included

- 1) Seek a professional and understand your agreement.
- 2) Have trust, confidence and its essential to have a good relationship with your partner.
- 3) No two agreements are the same, this must be created to be beneficial to both sides.

This webinar is available at

<https://www.fas.scot/publication/joint-ventures-the-experts-opinion/>

Scottish Land Matching Service

If you considering a joint venture in farming then you may find the Scottish Land Matching Service a useful tool. This free service offers independent advice and facilitation to those of your may might be considering options for joint ventures. It is available to anyone seeking an opportunity to start out on a joint farming venture or those looking to offer an opportunity on their farm. <https://slms.scot/>



Bouncing Forward from a Crisis

Featuring Doug Avery

Bouncing Forward from a Crisis

We were extremely fortunate to have Doug Avery who, has garnered international recognition for his frank, upfront and honest take on managing mental health within the agricultural industry speak at a webinar on behalf of the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) last November.



He discussed his 'four pillars' (Love, Connection, Purpose and Hope) of good mental and emotional health, identifying issues that hold you back and how to bring yourself back from the brink.

Farming can be a high pressure industry and, at times you may become overwhelmed. It is very important to understand your own limitations and to reach out for help and support when it is needed.

'When we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change'.

Doug Avery

Doug urged the audience to think about WHY – why you are here and what you want to do in the future. Spend time in answering this, to go forward, be mindful of the past, but be enthusiastic about the journey in front, look forward and ask self what do I do, to end up at the destination I am planning.

We have witnessed great change happen within the UK and globally with Brexit and COVID, but looking back it is evident that change is part of the evolution of mankind, and the greatest things have happened from the hardest challenges.

The world is changing now, faster than it ever has, and courage and control is required. Some will lack self confidence, be vulnerable and be affected by the opinions of others. The courage will allow you to deal with these problems and find the opportunities for the solution. Giving you a sense of value for your own worth, which is empowering.

There are two types of people including resistant and resilient people. Rather than avoiding challenges and feeling threatened by others as a resistant person, see the opportunities, embrace challenges and learn from criticism as a resilient person. Being resilient is "your ability to bounce forward from a crisis"



Beef Production in South America

Beef Production in South America

Another highlight from last year, was our webinar focusing on beef production in Argentina.

With a world renowned beef industry, as well as an arable sector producing huge volumes Argentina plays a major role in feeding the world.

In this webinar we heard from Allan Cameron an Argentinian farmer with farming roots in Scotland. Allan gave an insight into Argentinian agriculture and the country's extensive breeding herds which equate to 54 million head of cattle. Allan discusses the country moving away from traditional breeds to the Bradford and Brangus breeds we associate with Argentina.

In Argentina, efficiency is driven by extensive beef farming with 500 calves per employee being common practice. The cattle markets are also on a larger scale with Allan describing the country's unique way of selling cattle where 10,000 head of cattle are sold across three days.

Listen to how the country has adapted over the last 30 years and is now producing food for 10 times its population.



As well as hearing about the beef sector Allan talks about the country's other meat products including lamb, goats, the poultry industry and the growing pig population.

Aspects of agriculture in Argentina

- Exports for animal feed
- Lack of infrastructure and lack of investment in it
- Political and economic instability

A fantastic and very interesting Q&A session was held as part of the webinar where topics such as traceability, antibiotic useage and wages in the agricultural sector were all discussed.

Listen here;

<https://www.fas.scot/publication/beef-production-in-south-america/>



Succession Planning Funding

Scottish Government lifts restrictions on succession planning funding

The Scottish Government recently announced changes to funding requirements for succession planning. This means farming businesses can now access **up to £1,000 in funding** through the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) for specialist advice on succession planning – without the need for a prior Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP).

The average age of farmers in Scotland is over 50 and it's estimated that less than 50% of farm businesses have established a succession plan. Succession can be a tricky subject to broach for many as it may involve awkward conversations among family members or colleagues. However, if handled correctly and at the right time, succession planning can provide certainty for the longer term.

Yet, doing this alone can be daunting. Enlisting the help of a professional adviser to lead discussions can remove the anxiety from those initial tricky conversations about your business vision and growth plans. This is where FAS can help. Our advisers are here to help build your confidence when looking at business viability, profitability and technical efficiency; and to provide an independent and objective viewpoint to help guide discussions.

It is recommended that succession plans are reviewed regularly, particularly when there is a change in family circumstances, or to your tenancies or land occupation. Succession planning funding support through FAS is open to all farming and crofting businesses in Scotland at any stage.

To apply for a **succession plan** of up to **£1,000** or for more information, please visit <https://www.fas.scot/specialist-advice>.

Alternatively, call **0300 323 0161** (up to 30 minutes of free advice available) or email **advice@fas.scot**



For more information on succession planning you may find the following useful;

<https://www.fas.scot/downloads/top-tips-for-a-succession-planning/>

<https://www.fas.scot/succession-planning-crofting/>



Understanding Abattoir Feedback

Sarah Balfour explains what a kill sheet can tell you about your business

Data collection and interpretation is an important tool for any business. Making better use of data available to you, will help you make better informed management decisions about your business. One key tool to use for this is the feedback sheet from the abattoir.

Commonly, cattle are sent to the abattoir out of market specification, being too light or too fat. Producing overfat cattle is not cost effective to a business with additional feed, forage, bedding costs and time spent on farm outweighing any financial gain. Understanding what the processor wants first of all will help you present stock in specification. Processors operate different payment systems so understanding processor's payment grids and penalties is key to hitting the specification. Weight limits differ between abattoirs so it's important to be aware of this as what is required at one abattoir may not be sought after at another. The way to maximise financial returns is to aim to produce and sell the type of finished cattle the market place really wants and is willing to pay the most money for.

The EUROP Grid is used to classify carcasses, with the conformation class always given first.

Once the carcass has been given a conformation class (E, U, R, O and P) it will then be given a fat class ranked from 1 to 5 with 1 equalling the leanest the 5 the fattest. In order to achieve the quoted base price or better aim for conformation grade R or better (R, U, E) and fat class 2, 3, 4. Any grades out with these tend to receive a penalty. However, only looking at the grade will not tell you how efficient the animal was (weight, age etc. all need to be considered) but will let you see if you are producing what the market is looking for.

On the example sheet (all sheets are laid out slightly differently) there is an AAX and an AA which both have the same specification O+4L however are different weights. Although they have the same spec and their weight varies slightly, consider they age of the two (if this was your abattoir feedback sheet) to compare how efficient the each of them are and which animal left you the best margin. With carbon footprinting now becoming more of a focus it will be crucial to reduce the number of days an animal is on farm for before it reaches slaughter spec to maximise its efficiency. Going forward the kill sheet could be used to work out the carbon footprint per kg of beef produced.

Breed	Sex	Grade	Dest	SideA	SideB	SideA Cold	SideB Cold	Cond	Net Carcase
AAX	F	-O3	SBAA	143.0	149.4	140.1	146.4	0	286.5
AAX	F	O+3	SFAA	146.0	150.4	143.0	147.3	0	290.3
AAX	F	O+4L	SFAA	146.0	148.8	143.0	145.8	0	288.8
AAX	F	O+3	SBAA	130.0	133.4	127.4	130.7	0	258.1
AA	F	O+4L	SBAA	157.0	163.7	153.8	160.4	0	314.2
AAX	F	-O4L	SBAA	143.0	140.6	140.1	137.7	0	277.8
BSH	F	R4L	SBBT	175.7	174.5	172.1	171.0	0	343.1
GA	F	O+4L	SBBT	153.6	155.4	150.5	152.2	0	302.7
AA	F	-O3	BTAA	131.2	130.0	128.5	127.4	0	255.9



Understanding Abattoir Feedback Cont.

Feed conversion efficiency drops off as an animal ages i.e. a 10 month old steer weighing 350 kg will take less feed and finishing time compared to the same weight at 15 months of age. Older animals require more food and energy per kg of gain. Aim for a target Daily Live Weight Gain (DLWG) of 1.1 - 1.4 kg/day for heifers and steers. Remember DLWG is associated with the finishing system with targets differing depending on the type of system used and how the animals are fed.

The killing-out percentage (KO%) determines how much saleable carcass weight has come from the live animal. Killing out percentage is carcass weight as a percentage of the liveweight of the animal and shouldn't be confused as yield. Yield is the total percentage of saleable meat from a carcass.

Aim for around 50% for dairy beef animals and 55-60% for suckler beef animals. Remember when comparing KO% figures that bulls will have a higher KO% compared with heifers.

When calculating the killing out percentage use the cold weight. The cold weight is what you the farmer are paid on.

It is important to know what Dress Specification the abattoir is using as this will affect how much (if any) fat is removed. The dress spec will affect the cold weight and therefore the KO%. There are three different specs that are used.

Carcasses are split in two/half for ease of handling and offal removal. You will see the carcass weight for each side listed as side 1 & 2 or side A/B. If there has been any condemnations (for example an abscess) this will be highlighted and you can calculate roughly how much of the carcass was condemned by comparing the weight of each side of the carcass.



The notes/remark page is another key thing to consider. Health anomalies will be noted here such as injection site abscesses, liver fluke and lung lesions (caused by pneumonia). If active liver fluke are found then action should be taken immediately to protect stock still on farm. Although you are not penalised on these things it does highlight underlying health issues and highlights areas where you have lost production.

Sarah Balfour, SAC Consulting Beef Consultant



FAS Companion App

Launched at the end of 2020 the FAS Companion App has proven to be a great success with hundreds of downloads already. The App gives you easy access right at the end of your fingertips wherever you are whether you are in your tractor or in the lambing shed to a variety of tools to help you with day to day farm work.

You can access FAS support at a time to suit you and use the tools and technical advice to make the right business decisions.

You can download the app for both Android and Apple.

Google Play: www.bit.ly/3pe4h2v

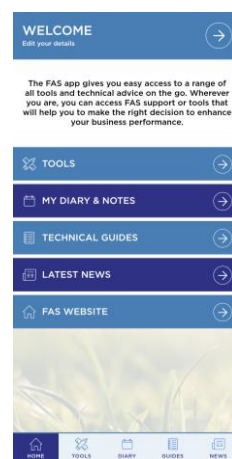
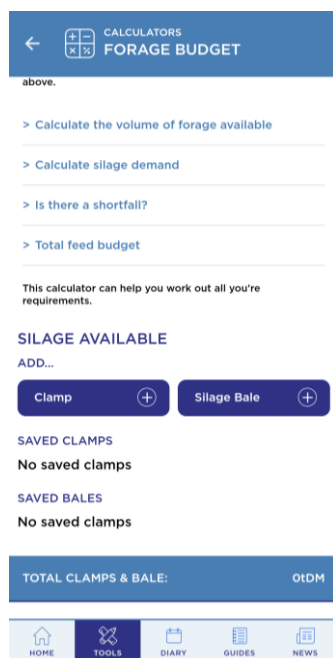
App Store: www.apple.co/3tUgSeD

The FAS App features Access to technical notes

- Lime equivalent & forage budget calculators
- Various unit and measure converters
- A diary which captures photos and geo-location for detailed note-keeping

For more information

<https://www.fas.scot/app/>



Carbon Audits

How a carbon audit can help your farming business stay competitive

An important data collection tool which is likely to become even more relevant across all sectors of the industry as the industry aims to reduce its carbon footprint is the carbon auditing process.

As part of its 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan, the Scottish Government has committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across Scotland by 75% by 2030. Reducing GHG emissions in the agricultural sector is a key factor in achieving this goal. A good starting point to help Scottish farming businesses remain competitive over the next 10 years and play their part in reducing GHG emissions is to undertake a carbon audit. Not only can a carbon audit help your farming business to be more environmentally sustainable, it can also help you identify where performance improvements can be made, helping you to compete better with similar enterprises.

A carbon audit can help you identify the quantity and source of GHG emissions – carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, and where you can make processes more carbon and cost-effective in your business. Having a low carbon footprint will enable you to position yourself favorably against your competitors and appeal to buyers who are actively looking to buy from low carbon suppliers.

Over the last year, the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) has helped 540 farmers and crofters access funding for carbon audits, enabling them to identify a range of opportunities to reduce GHG emissions, and make efficiency improvements and cost savings.

Do you know how well your business compares to its nearest low carbon competitor?

Don't find yourself behind the curve. Act now to improve business efficiency and sustainability. FAS can help you access up to **£500 in grant funding** to commission a qualified farm adviser to conduct an audit of your farming business. All you need to do is apply.

It is recommended that carbon audits are repeated annually to monitor performance and identify the impact of the changes made over the course of the year. FAS carbon audits are open to all farming and crofting businesses, provided they are registered in Scotland with the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS). Whether you've already had a carbon audit or if you are looking to change the efficiency across your farming business, FAS is here to help.

To apply for **carbon audit** funding of up to **£500** or for more information, please visit <http://www.fas.scot/carbon-audits>.

Alternatively, please call **0300 323 0161** (up to 30 minutes of free advice available) or email advice@fas.scot

