

New Entrants NEWS

Autumn 2019



Farm
Advisory
Service

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Welcome to the Autumn edition of New Entrants News. This edition will give you an update of various events, new initiatives, case studies and success stories from across Scotland.

The Farm Advisory Service New Entrants to Farming Programme will be delivering a range of workshops and webinars over the winter period designed to give new entrants a flavour of what's involved when entering into a farming business. Whether you are looking to get a start on the farming ladder or are a younger member of an existing farming business, these workshops will cover a variety of topics which you will find relevant. The facilitated workshops will be run at 14 different locations across Scotland (see below). The workshops are designed to increase business knowledge, aid succession decisions and increase technical skills.

New Entrants to Farming “get with the” Programme

There is a network of new entrants across the country at various stages of developing their businesses. You can join in:

- www.facebook.com/NewEntrants
- www.fas.scot/new-entrants/
- Regional workshops

For more info contact Kirsten Williams, SAC Consulting, Clifton Road, Turriff, 01888 563333, Kirsten.Williams@sac.co.uk

There are useful free resources on the website too:

- Case studies—learning from the experiences of other new entrants.
- Guidance notes—benefit from advice tailored to assist new entrants to farming.
- Also see: www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/NewEntrantsToFarming

Caithness
Inverness
Edinburgh
Western Isles
Orkney
Skye
Oban
Ayr
Lanark
Stranraer
Dumfries
Angus
Morayshire
Aberdeenshire

For further information on workshops in your area please see <https://www.fas.scot/new-entrants/> or scan the QRC below.



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



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

A Date for the Diary, Land Matching Service & Mentoring

SAVE THE DATE – New Entrants Gathering 2020

On an annual basis we have held a “New Entrants to Farming Gathering”. In the past this has attracted a large audience due to the calibre of speakers and the networking opportunity that it allows. The gathering in 2020 will be held on **Tuesday 25th February 2019** at Perth Race Course.

More details to follow....



Scottish Land Matching Service

The Scottish Government announced the launch of the Scottish Land Matching Service in September. This allows for a mechanism to facilitate discussions and arrangements between land owners and new entrants.

This involves a register where both land owners and new entrants will register. An independent advisor who has been appointed by the Scottish Government can then aid in matching individuals up and assist in building an agreement that is beneficial to both parties be it a tenancy, joint venture agreement, etc.

This initiative will be hosted on the NFUS website <https://www.nfus.org.uk/policy/joint-venture-hub.aspx>

Focus on Mentoring for new entrants

Eligibility

- If you have set up or become head of a farming business within the last five years.
- Registered with IACS and have a BRN number.

Aim

This can give you access to the valuable skills and knowledge of an experienced mentor, matched to your business's needs, who can guide you through the vital set-up and early growth-years of your business.

Contact

A mentor is funded to support a business over four days, this can include meetings, phone calls or emails. With the first contact being a face to face meeting. The frequency of these meetings can be decided by the mentor and mentee.

Mentor

The mentor must have experience in the agricultural industry and manage their own business. They must not have any direct connections with your business.

If you have already identified a mentor, complete a mentor profile and submit with your application, which can be found here <https://www.fas.scot/downloads/mentorin-g-support-new-entrants-application-form/>

If you haven't identified a mentor then state this on the form and FAS will aid you in finding a suitable mentor.



When a Plan Comes Together

Alan Sutherland took over the croft tenancy of Bennachie, Halkirk, Caithness on 1st November 2017, just over 26 hectares of permanent grassland. He had run a small flock of Beltex sheep prior to this as a hobby on seasonal grazings. Alan also works full-time with JGC Engineering.

Previous to Alan taking over there was very few sheep on Bennachie and the grassland had become rank. Some fields had been cut for hay but no reseeding or drainage works had taken place.



Flooding and poor drainage at gateways

A Single Application Form was submitted in 2018 with an application to the National Reserve for entitlements.

To get underway in crofting, and also to start some grassland management he purchased 80 Blackface cast ewes from Dingwall. With the ewes coming from hill farms and put onto grass, they were flushed very well and resulted in a high number of triplets at the 2018 lambing, a cost burden to the fledging business.

On entry to the croft, Alan jetted the existing drains and gravelled on top of existing drains, making a massive difference. He also dug out and hard cored all the gateways. In addition weed wiping was carried out to reduce the rushes burden, and he is now contemplating reseeding and further ditching having greatly reduced rushes. He also cut silage in summer 2019.

A new building has been erected with grant assistance through the New Entrants grant scheme.



New building

Conservation has also been looked at with an application submitted in spring 2019 for the Agri Environment Climate Scheme. If successful, this would involve introducing native cattle to the croft and planting a number of lengths of hedgerows.

Alan feels there are a number of things he has learned since becoming a new entrant in his own right:-

- Take time at start to plan
- Be cautious when introducing livestock
- Be patient, everything can't be improved at once
- Make use of grant assistance for improvements



Planning for the Future

We are half way through the Planning for the Future roadshow. This was created last year and run in partnership with the NFUS and the Scottish Land Commission. The roadshow is based on a working lunch type event. All events have had specialist speakers including Hamish Lean, Shepherd Wedderburn, James MacKessack-Leitch, Scottish Land Commission, representative from the NFUS next generation group and a local accountant. These are excellent workshops for all generations to attend, allowing for a deeper understanding to which succession options are available from leading specialists in the area.



Succession Webinar

We were joined by Heather Wildman of Saviour Associates in the summer to host a webinar specifically on succession of family farms, this is available on our website and can be found here:

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

Crofting Specific Webinars

New entrants in the Crofting areas face unique challenges whether that be crofting law, remote markets or generally smaller business sizes.

We have a series of bespoke webinars coming up to help

- Crofting Succession with Heather Wildman – Tuesday 5th November 2019 7.30 -8.30pm
- Making Money – How does VAT affect you? Monday 3rd December 2019, 7:30 – 8.30pm
- Tax matters – Guidance for new entrants to crofting & farming: 23rd January 2020, 7:30 – 8.30pm



NEWBIE

New Entrant netWork

Part of the goals of the NEWBIE project is to learn about new entrant innovations from other European countries. On 27th October, NEWBIE sent a delegation from Scotland and England to learn about new entrant business “incubators” in Northern France.

The incubator model is designed to create a test space for new agricultural businesses. They usually let land at subsidised rates and provide consulting on access to markets and agronomic expertise. Without some of the burdens of a traditional tenancy, farmers can experiment with new ideas, strengthen their business model and explore farming as a career without taking on too much too soon.

On **20th November** at AgriScot in Edinburgh, some of the delegates who went to France to learn about this model and how it may support new entrants will share their experiences. Contact adam.calo@hutton.ac.uk for more information about the **NEWBIE** (<http://www.newbie-academy.eu/>) project and the international exchanges.



Last year the NEWBIE project announced the winner of the NEWBIE UK award for New Entrant Farm Business of the Year to Lynbreck Croft, a 150 acre mixed habitat croft enterprise in the Highlands (<https://www.hutton.ac.uk/research/projects/newbie/award-results>).

Again, as part of the NEWBIE project, the James Hutton Institute will soon be announcing an award opportunity for innovative new entrant farmers of 2019. The goal of the award is to highlight new entrant farmers who demonstrate fresh ideas for business resilience, long-term planning and overcoming the challenges of access to land. The award process will be announced in November of 2019 and awarded Spring 2020. Contact adam.calo@hutton.ac.uk for more information about the **NEWBIE** and the ‘Newbie Award’.



Follow Newbie UK on twitter
<https://twitter.com/newbieuk>



News from the groups

Robert Ramsay updates on the Ayr Group

Ever thought about goats?

The Ayr new entrants group recently visited the Young family at Castle Mains Farm, New Cumnock. The purpose of the day was to look at Walter and Wayne Young's goat enterprises and give the group the opportunity to ask questions and develop their understanding of goat meat production.

The UK has had a small dairy goat industry for many years but very few farmers in the UK have kept goats for meat production, in spite of a growing demand for goat meat. With a growing ethnic population in the UK, the Young's at Castle Mains recognised a gap in the market and moved in to goats a few years ago. While still running a considerable beef and sheep enterprise, goats were added as an experiment and also for a bit of fun. The goat herd at Castle Mains is made up of around 50 predominantly African Boer goats, which are renowned for producing high yields of quality, healthy red meat, which commands a premium in delicatessens and restaurants. The problem is that the supply chain is very disorganised and doesn't meet the needs of the primary producer.

The Young's sell their goats on a liveweight basis through their local market. They are sold during sheep sales and achieve similar prices to fat lambs. As goats need to be housed through the winter, the cost of production of a kilogram of goat is consequently higher than the cost of producing a kilogram of lamb.

Boer goats are also built to withstand arid environments and while there are many words to describe the weather in Scotland, arid would not be an accurate description. Wet weather causes foot problems in goats and also creates parasite issues, namely liver fluke. These issues also add to the cost of production in goats.

Driving down the cost of production is one way to improve profitability but gains will be marginal and are unlikely to mean that the price achieved in the live market is good enough to make goats viable on a large scale. However, if goats are properly marketed, there is significant potential in the sector. There is no doubt that goat meat is an unusual product and does command a premium. However, it is important that those looking to enter the sector look at how they are going to market their end product. The group discussed marketing at length and felt that box schemes and farmers markets would provide a real opportunity for new entrants to the sector. Internet sales also provide a great way to market this type of product.

In summary, diversifying into goat production is a potential opportunity for new entrants to farming but it is very important to develop a robust business plan with a strong focus on marketing to ensure that your exciting new enterprise is a success.



News from the groups

Rebecca Cruden updates on the Aberdeenshire Group

Co-operative Partnerships

The aim of this meeting was to help new entrants to farming make calculated business decisions when setting up a farming business, as well as highlight key sources of help and support available.

The group visited an organic sheep farm business near Oldmeldrum in Aberdeenshire. The business, run by new entrants Clarke Hibberd and Meg Morrison was established two years ago when an opportunity arose in the local area with an organic carrot producer. As part of the carrot crop rotation, a short-term grass clover ley is established to provide nutrition for the following organic carrot crop. The grass sward is then utilised by the new entrants for grazing. As well as a breeding flock, the business works closely with an organic farmer based in Northumberland to contract rear ewe lambs. The agreement is that the weaned ewe lambs are transported to Aberdeenshire and are reared for 12 months before being returned to Northumberland as gimmers (two year old sheep), ready for tugging. The new entrant farmers are paid £1/kg live weight gain, as well as retaining the lambs from the ewe lambs. This has allowed the business to increase stock numbers with reduced capital requirements.

Key messages

- Using a SWOT analysis to evaluate your current or potential business can aid business planning, therefore mitigating possible risks and highlighting potential business opportunities going forward.
- Using a partial budget can be beneficial for a quick financial evaluation of small (partial) changes and therefore possible impacts to an existing business. For example when analysing the business impact if an enterprise was expanded (i.e. increase cow numbers) or introducing alternative enterprises (i.e. grow a spring barley crop instead of finishing lambs). This then allows the suggested change to be analysed in further depth if it looks viable.
- Benchmarking can be used as an indication of business performance compared to similar businesses, hence giving a good indication of key performance indicators to aim for.
- There are a number of sources of FAS funded help and support to set up and run a farm business. These include FAS one to one mentoring support, integrated land management plan, the FAS helpline and FAS website.

