



Scottish Farm Advisory Service One-to-Many Programme 2022/23 Annual Report



**Farm
Advisory
Service**



Part of Scotland's
Rural College (SRUC)

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Introduction

In 2022 the One-to-Many component of Scotland's Farm Advisory Service (FAS) was elevated through substantial re-framing to address the current climate and biodiversity crises and invigorated using innovative approaches to maximize engagement and impact.

This document reports on SAC Consulting's delivery of the One-to-Many FAS from 1 April 2022 until 31 March 2023.

Vision for the Farm Advisory Service

"Scotland's Farm Advisory Service is a professional, modern advisory service that continues to facilitate step-changes in the economic and environmental performance of farmers and crofters throughout Scotland. It achieves this through provision of advice, collaboration with industry bodies, promotion and communication of the prevailing themes and policies for the relevant year." Scottish Government, FAS Contract Specification, September 2021.

Objectives of FAS

The FAS has a firm customer focus and is designed to help farmers, crofters, and land managers by providing high quality advice that will help them to meet the challenges of the future, in particular advice which:

- Promotes resource efficiency and supports the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food, and forestry.
- Fosters knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture and forestry.
- Enhances competitiveness of all types of agriculture and enhances farm viability.
- Promotes food chain organisation and risk management in agriculture.
- Restores, preserves, and enhances ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry.

Delivering FAS

The programme comprises a diverse range of activities including in-person events, webinars, one-to-few group meetings, videos, podcasts, publications, and online tools. The FAS provides opportunities for farmers and crofters the length and breadth of Scotland to participate in activity, which is organized locally by teams based in twenty-three offices around Scotland including in mainland Scotland, the Hebrides, Orkney, and Shetland.

FAS activities provide opportunities to engage digitally, for example through videos, podcasts, webinars and by accessing content on www.fas.scot, and non-digitally including through in-person events, the FAS telephone helpline or in regular press advertorials.

In 2022/23 the FAS programme provided Scotland's farmers, crofters, and other land managers with:



Consultants
Lorna Galloway
and Robert
Ramsay
demonstrating
the
measurement of
2 metres from a
hedge base in
FAS Cross
Compliance
Video
(September
2022)

Figure 1 - Image from FAS TV video.

Executive summary

- The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were met or exceeded in 91.7% of reporting periods. Only one single KPI was not met (“bounce rate”). This is a specific website metric which, because of the way in which the FAS Website and FAS YouTube channel interact, is no longer an appropriate metric (and which will be replaced by an “average webpages viewed per session” metric for 2023/24).
- 293 events (predominantly online) were run during 2022/23, with 4,906 attendees and an average attendance of 22.4 at one-to-many events and 11.6 at one-to-few events. Of the 3,510 attendees at a FAS Live Event or FAS Webinar, 1,015 attendees completed an evaluation form (29%).
- Feedback from participants who completed an event evaluation was exceptionally positive, with 99% of the 962 who answered the question saying that the events were “excellent” or “very satisfactory/good”, and 86% of them saying they would implement changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event.
- 300 publications, 160 videos, 93 podcasts and 13 online tools were produced. The FAS newsletter was published monthly and by the end of the year was being distributed monthly to up to 6,425 people – 263 more than the same time the previous year.
- 1,576,363 page views of the website spread across 276,344 sessions – an average of 5.7 page views per session, which is good.
- Twitter followers grew by 8% to 2,814, whilst Facebook followers grew by 31% to 7,244.
- 2,228 crofters and 357 smallholders subscribed to the Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service.
- There were 1,185 enquiries to the Advice Line where farmers and crofters received up to 30 minutes of free advice.

	Contract Parameters	2022/23 Business Plan	2022/23 Actual	Number Delivered v Target	% Delivered v Target	2016 to Date
FAS Connect Group Events	250 - 350	120	120	-3	99%	120
FAS Live Events		118	115			1,340
FAS Webinars		42	42			
FAS Roadshow		16	16			
Publications	250-350	298	300	+2	101%	1,466
Videos	100-200	159	160	+1	101%	678
Podcasts & Audio	80-120	90	93	+3	103%	307

Tools		13	13	-	100%	48
Event Participants	4,086	4,086	4,906	+820	120%	30,590
Video Views			405,237			1,315,406
Podcast Listens			33,844			85,542
Publication Downloads			295,266			796,823
Website Views			1,576,363			5,028,065
Advice Line Enquiries			1,182			9,099

Figure 2 - Programme Statistics 2022/23

The graph below shows the number of outputs of each type where work is **completed** in the month. NB this may be different to the month in which they are released/promoted, for example normally a small bank of outputs are completed in the final months of the year for release and/or promotion early in the next year during the initiation phase of the new business plan. **This means that the audience experience is of a steady availability of new content throughout the contract.**

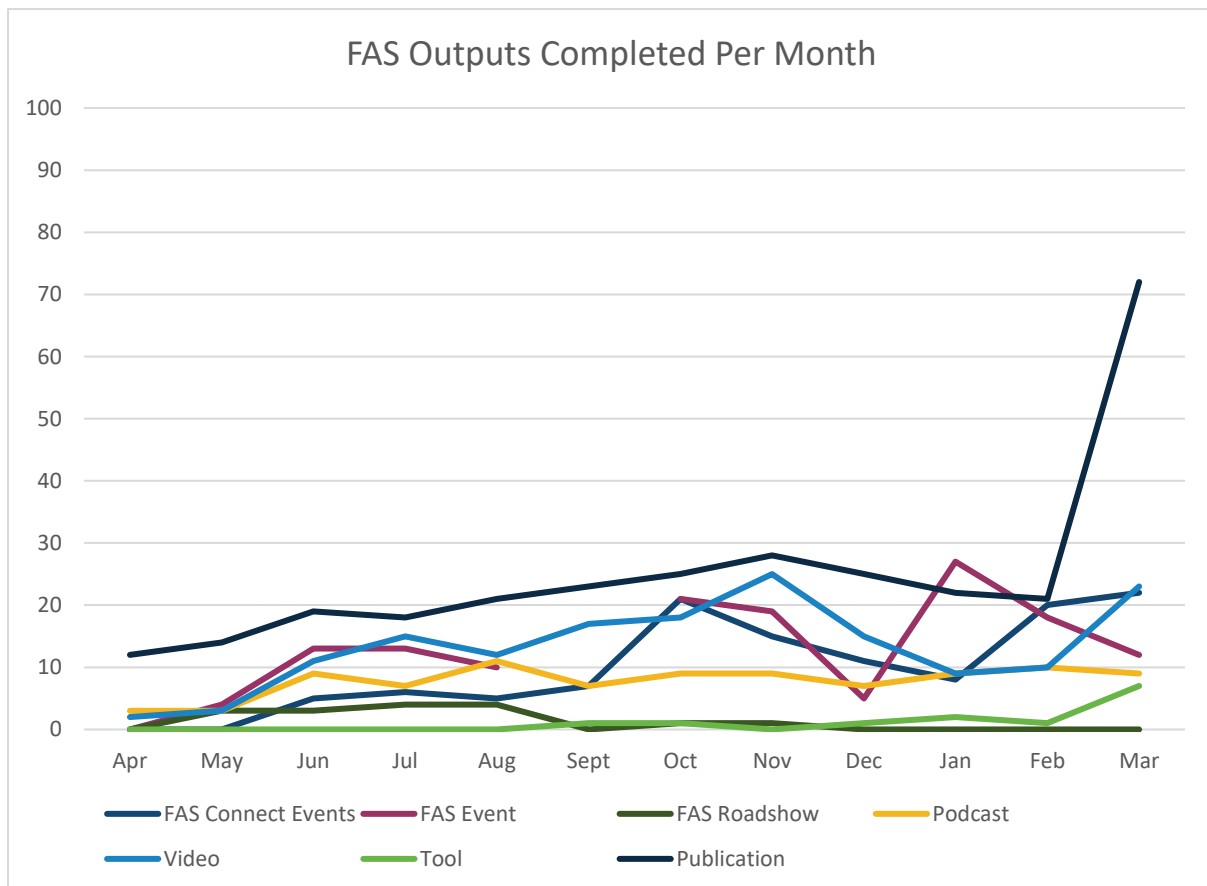


Figure 3 - FAS Outputs Completed by Month

FAS Connect is responsible for the apparent spike in publications in March 2023 since each of the 40 groups prepared an end of year summary of their activity, and for most groups their year concluded in March 2023.

The FAS programme is audience-centered and consequently there are seasonal variations in the volume of certain activities in any given month. For example, events are relatively seasonal –

there are times of the year when the audience are particularly busy on-farm, whereas podcasts are universally popular throughout the year - even during very busy periods the audience are still likely to engage with content (for example listening from the tractor).

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

The following were the KPIs for delivery of the one-to-many service in 2022/23:

1. At least 4,086 attendees at 170 events (an average of 24 per event).
2. Attendance exceeds 75% of the predicted number.
3. More than 95% of those completing a post-event feedback form rate the overall quality of the event as “excellent” or “very satisfactory”.
4. More than 95% of those completing a post-event feedback form rate the relevance of the event as “excellent” or “very satisfactory”.
5. More than 80% of those completing a post-event feedback form say they will implement changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event.
6. The bounce rate (the percentage of people visiting the homepage and then leaving without going to another page on the site) is below 50%.
7. The website is available for at least 99% of the time.
8. 95% of call-backs are done within six working hours.
9. 95% of routine queries are responded to within one working day.
10. 95% of detailed queries are responded to within two working days.
11. 95% of complex queries are responded to within five working days.
12. 95% of e-mail enquiries are responded to within one working day.

KPI 1 is measured annually and was partially met. 157 live events and webinars were held, the total attendance was 3,510 and the average attendance was 22.4 per event. Additionally 120 FAS Connect group meetings were held, the total attendance was 1,396 and the average attendance was 11.6 per event. Attendance levels were very good considering there were fewer very large in person gatherings planned due to the risk of Covid-19 still being present during the business planning period.

The remaining KPIs are measured and reported on monthly basis. The table overleaf summarises performance across the year.

KPI	Monthly KPI performance 2022/23 (green = KPI met or exceeded, red = KPI not met, yellow=KPI marginally not met*)												AVERAGE	
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
2														
3														
4														
5														
6														
7														
8														
9														
10														
11														
12														

Figure 4 - Monthly KPI Performance

* where a KPI was with 2 percentage points of being met.

The above table highlights that the KPIs 2 to 4 and 7 to 12 were met or exceeded 100% of the time. KPI 5 (influence to change) was met 91% of the time.

Only KPI 6 (bounce rate) was not met regularly however this is because of the way in which the website analytics measures a 'bounce'. A bounce is recorded if the user downloads a publication, or is directed to the YouTube channel to view a video (both of which occur with high frequency). The average page views per session in 2022/23 was 5.7 which is very good (more than 4.0 is considered very good) and is a better indicator of the 'stickiness' of the website.



Above: Attendees at Backing Beef South Event, September 2022. More than 99% of those who completed one rated the overall delivery of the event, and the relevance of the event "excellent" or "very satisfactory/good".

Events

Knowledge transfer (KT) events continued to be a very significant element of the delivery in 2022/23.

During the year the FAS held:

- 115 in person events
- 42 webinars
- 16 roadshow events
- 120 FAS Connect events.

The total predicted attendance at the in person and webinar events was 3,213 (an average of 20.5 per in person and webinar event) and at FAS Connect one-to-few events was 1,440 (an average of 12.0 per event). The total actual attendance was 3,510 (an average of 22.4 per in person and webinar event) and 1,396 (an average of 11.6 per one-to-few event event). 59% of events met or exceeded their predicted attendance – the same proportion as last year.

Promotion of events to ensure good awareness, attendance levels and value for money was an ongoing activity. The ways in which attendees said they heard about events was as follows:

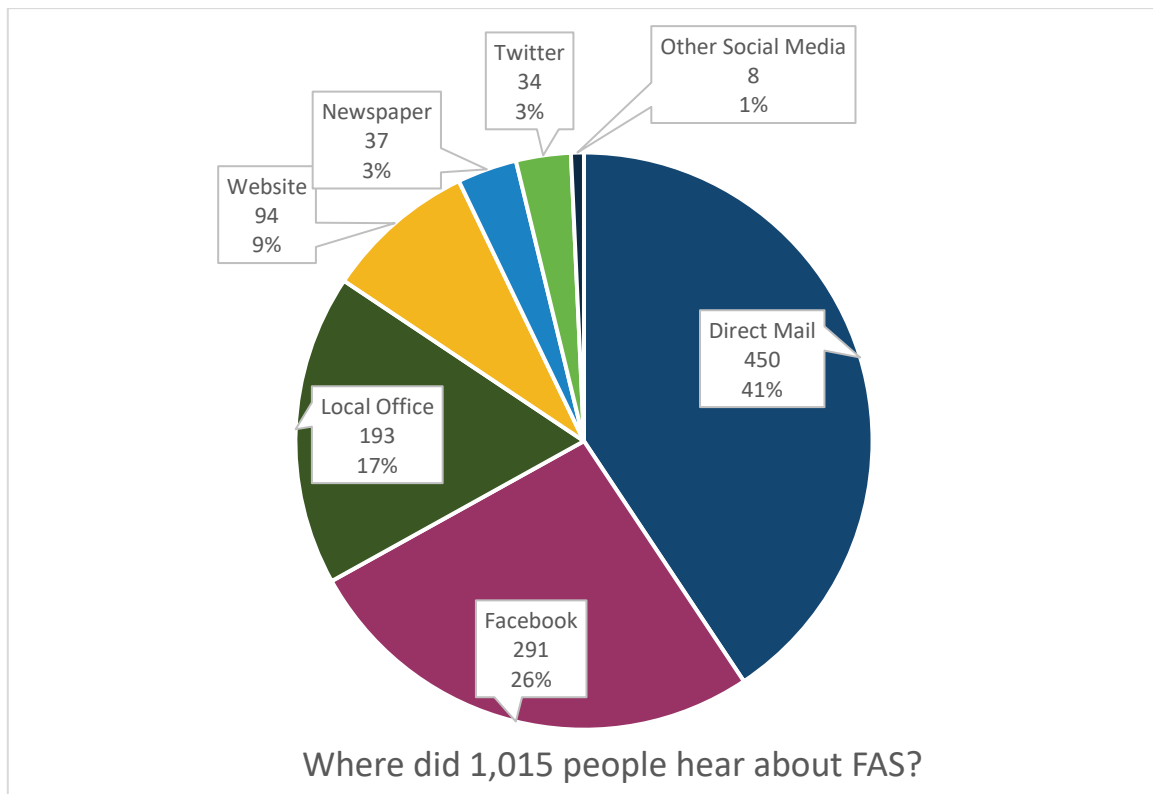


Figure 5 – Where 1,015 participants who completed an evaluation form had heard about the FAS event (some answered more than once).

The average attendance (22.4) was very good since there were fewer than normal very large gatherings planned because at the time when the business plan was being prepared in late 2021 there was still significant Covid-19 restriction. In 2021/22 there were four events with over 100 people in attendance, in 2022/23 there was only one event in this category.

The experience of online webinars is that the audience is divided into two groups, those who attend live, and those who watch the recording of the webinar later, at a time of their choosing. For example, during the year the webinar **Sheep Pre-Lambing Nutrition Planning** was held on 9th February 2023. There were thirty-five attendees during the live webinar but subsequently the webinar recording has had almost 250 views.

The following graph shows the distribution of attendees at events in 2022/23. There were a smaller number of very large attendances, however as described above, coming out of Covid-19 restrictions meant that fewer very large gatherings had been planned. There were a significant number of events around the 10-15 people mark because of the 120 FAS Connect peer-to-peer learning groups whose optimal group size is 12.

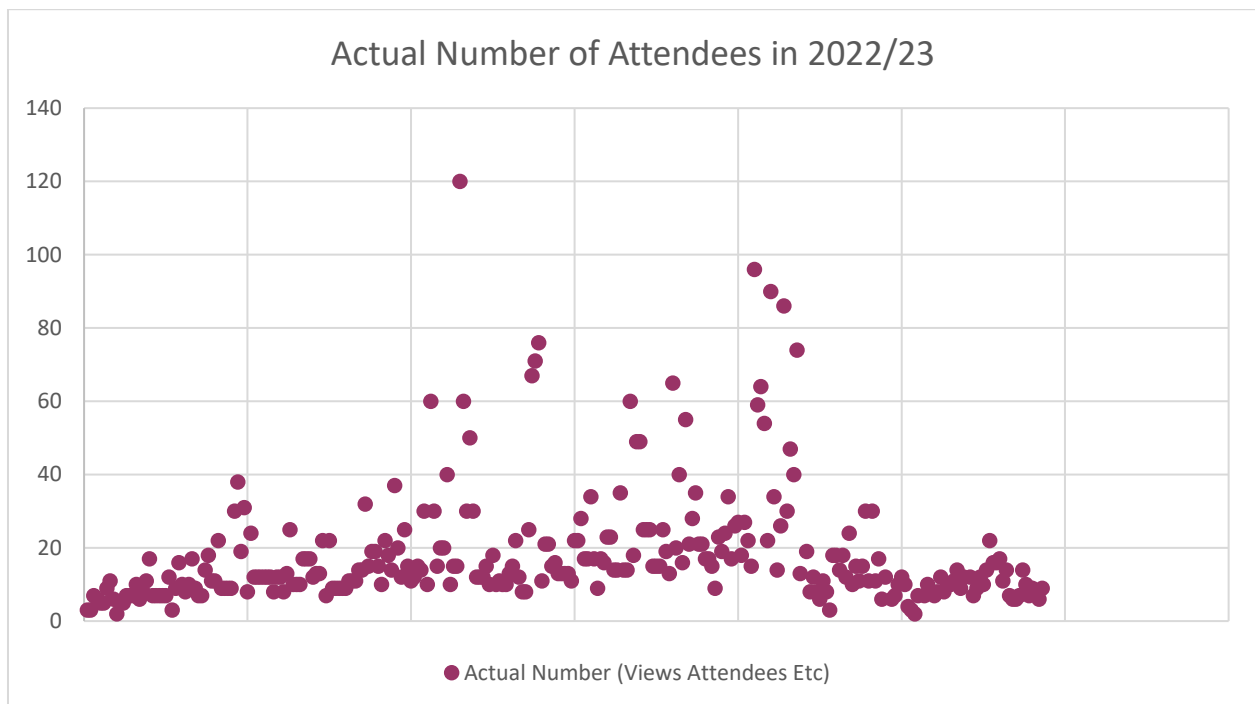
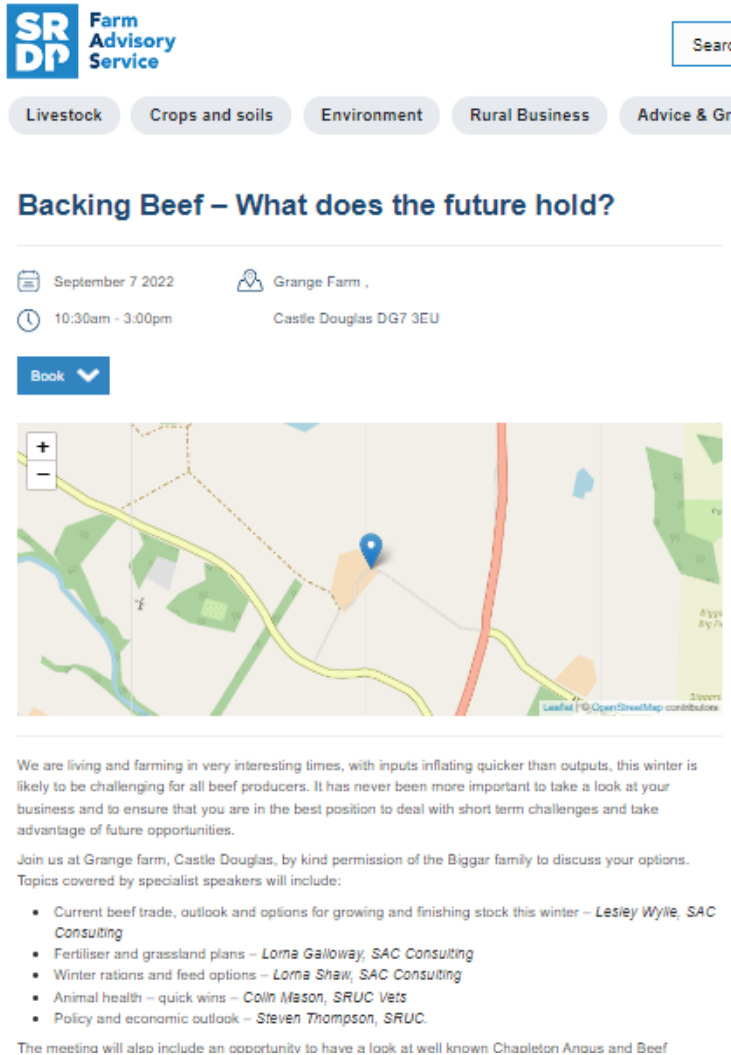


Figure 6 - Distribution of Participants at Events

During the previous year delivery had moved entirely online due to Covid-19 restrictions, however in 2022/23 restrictions were winding up and the programme resumed a significant number of in-person events, in accord with audience expectation and a desire to resume social gathering.

The most popular event of 2022/23 was the Backing Beef series, and the first of the series **Backing Beef South** attracted 96 participants.



SRDP Farm Advisory Service

Livestock | Crops and soils | Environment | Rural Business | Advice & Grants

Backing Beef – What does the future hold?

September 7 2022 | Grange Farm, Castle Douglas DG7 3EU

10:30am - 3:00pm

Book

We are living and farming in very interesting times, with inputs inflating quicker than outputs, this winter is likely to be challenging for all beef producers. It has never been more important to take a look at your business and to ensure that you are in the best position to deal with short term challenges and take advantage of future opportunities.

Join us at Grange farm, Castle Douglas, by kind permission of the Biggar family to discuss your options. Topics covered by specialist speakers will include:

- Current beef trade, outlook and options for growing and finishing stock this winter – *Lesley Wylie, SAC Consulting*
- Fertiliser and grassland plans – *Lorna Galloway, SAC Consulting*
- Winter rations and feed options – *Lorna Shaw, SAC Consulting*
- Animal health – quick wins – *Colin Mason, SRUC Vets*
- Policy and economic outlook – *Steven Thompson, SRUC.*

The meeting will also include an opportunity to have a look at well known Chaleton Angus and Beef



Figure 7 - Backing Beef South Event, September 2022

As well as being well attended, FAS events are of demonstrably excellent quality and consequently are very highly regarded by those who attend. All attendees are asked to complete an evaluation form, and across the year 29% (1,015) did so. The headline message is that those who attend are overwhelmingly very positive in their feedback and 99% of responses to the question about the overall delivery are “Very Satisfactory/Good” or “Excellent”.

The graph overleaf shows a summary of the results.

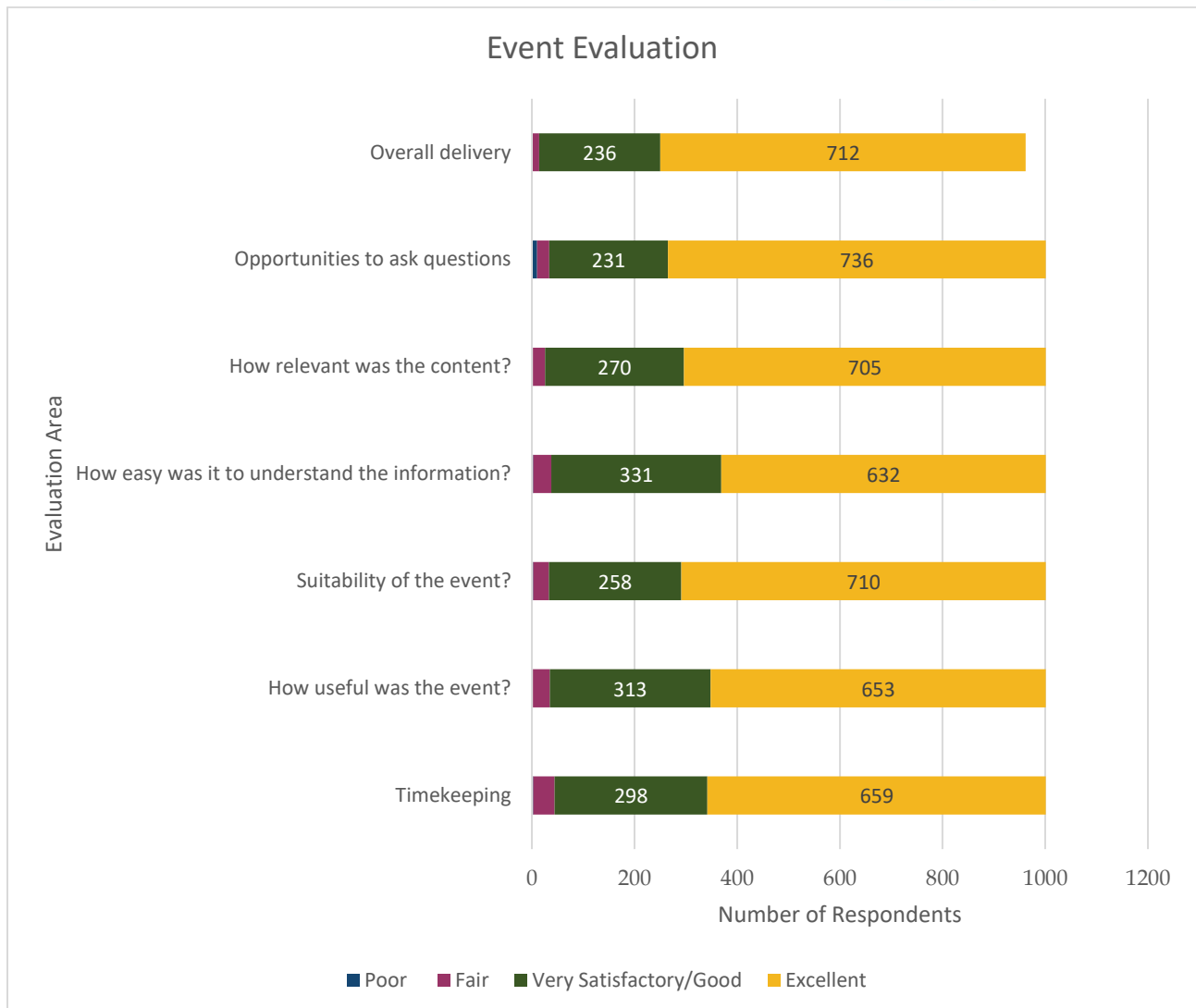


Figure 8 - Annual Event Evaluation Information – Number of Respondents

	<i>Timekeeping</i>	<i>How useful was the event?</i>	<i>Suitability of the event?</i>	<i>How easy was it to understand the information?</i>	<i>How relevant was the content?</i>	<i>Opportunities to ask questions.</i>	<i>Overall Delivery</i>
<i>Excellent</i>	65.8%	65.2%	70.9%	63.1%	70.4%	73.5%	74.0%
<i>Very Satisfactory/Good</i>	29.8%	31.3%	25.8%	33.1%	27.0%	23.1%	24.5%
<i>Fair</i>	4.1%	3.3%	3.0%	3.5%	2.4%	2.4%	1.4%
<i>Poor</i>	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	1.0%	0.1%

Figure 9 - Annual Event Evaluation Information - % of Respondents

Scottish Government's vision of the FAS is a service which *can facilitate step-changes in the economic and environmental performance of farmers and crofters throughout Scotland* and it is important that event attendees act on what they have learned.

An impressive 91% of those who answered the question indicated at least one change that they thought they would make because of information gained at the event.

The graph below shows the positive changes the attendees thought there were likely to be on their businesses because of the knowledge they had gained at the event. Participants could select more than one positive change.

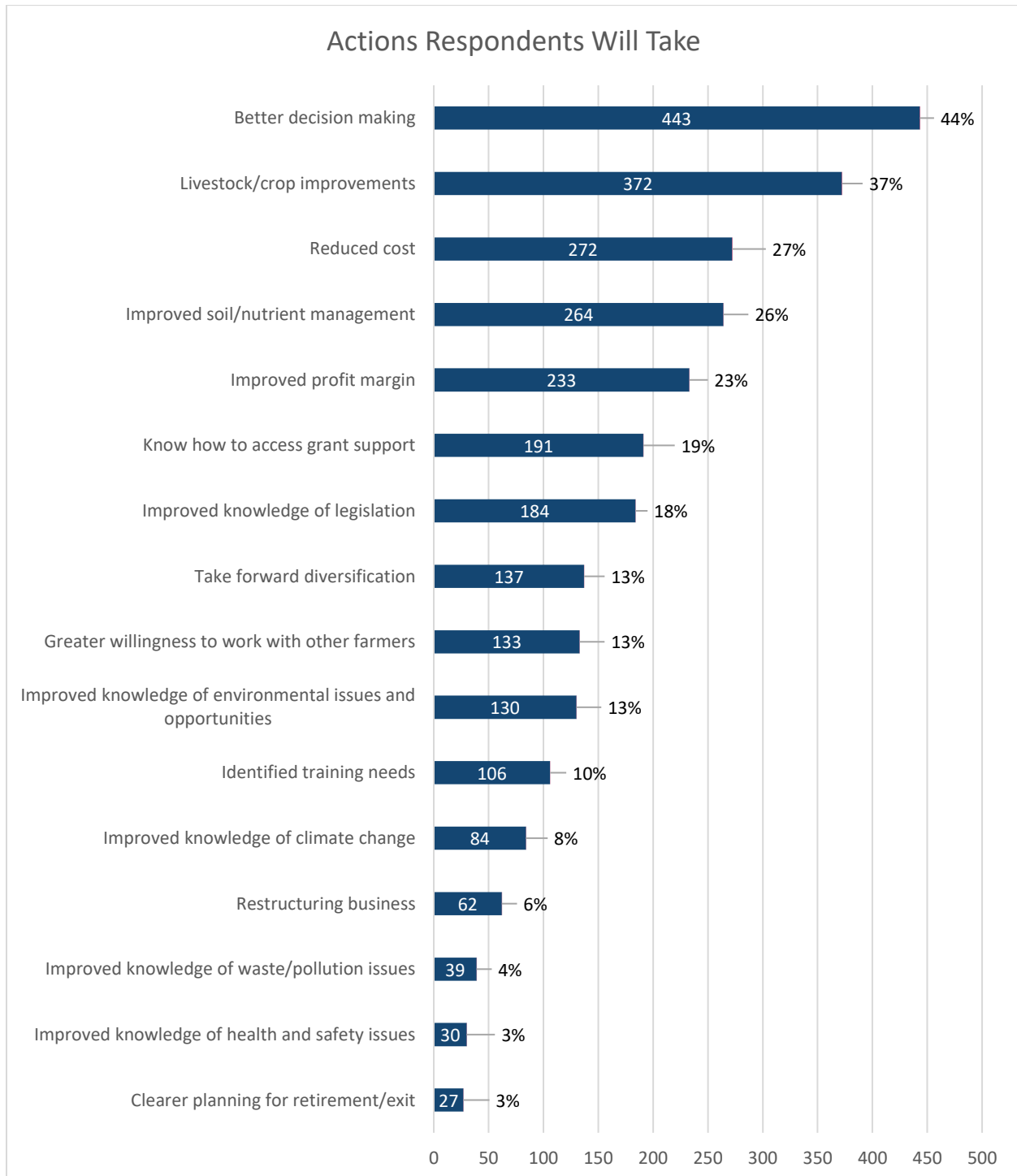


Figure 10 - Positive Changes Event Attendees Intend to Make – number of respondents and % of respondents.

Only 9% (93) of attendees who attended an event indicated that they would not make any of the above changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event. Of those who provided reasons why, the following information was provided (participants could select more than one response):

	Number	% of those who said they would not make changes	% of total respondents
Too expensive	28	30%	2.8%
Did not have enough time	19	20%	1.9%
Needed more information	71	76%	7.0%
Learned nothing new	17	18%	1.7%
Other	72	76%	7.0%

The number of participants who said that they would not indicate any changes to their farm management was very small. However, often the actions discussed at an event would require a significant commitment (for example a change in system, or a capital spend) and therefore it should not be a surprise that participants may want to learn more before making a change. Those who indicated 'other' typically did so because they were not able to make a change, for example prospective new entrants who did not yet have a farm, or where participants were from other important industry groups (for example vets or agronomists).

In 2022/23 the majority (55%) of attendees were female, although this varies greatly between events depending on the topics being covered. If Women in Agriculture events are omitted from the sample, the remaining 631 participants are 35% female, 65% male. The age profile and gender of attendees is diverse and outlined in the graph below.

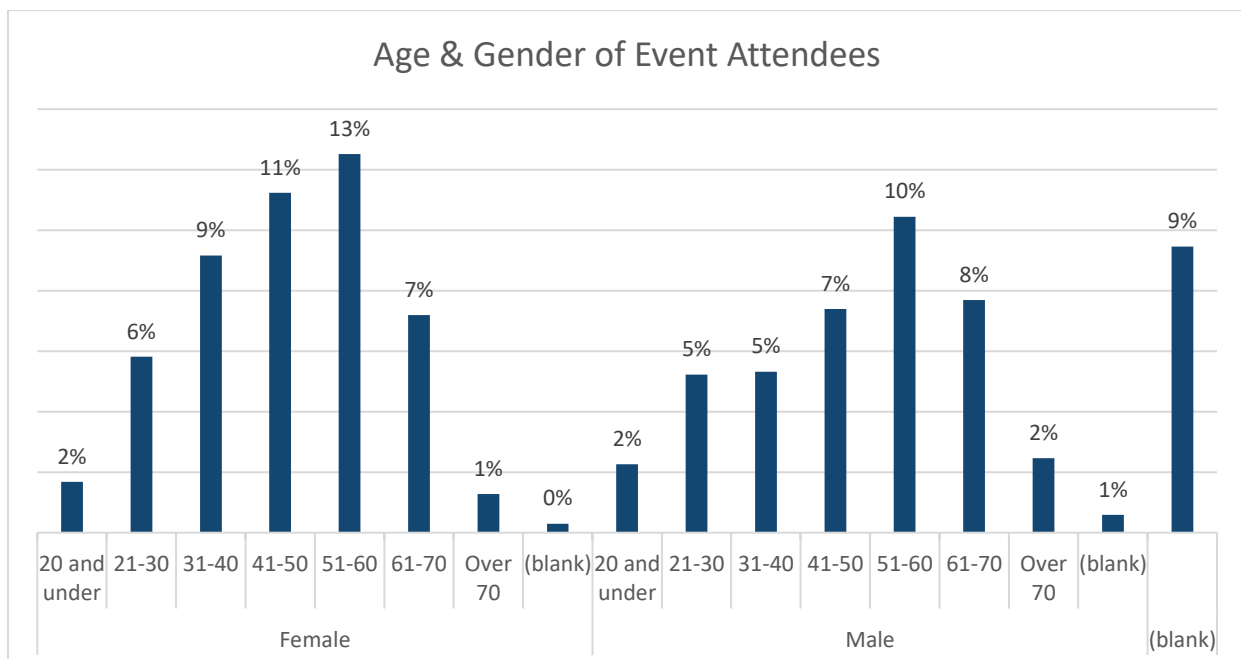


Figure 11 - Event Demographic Information

Obviously, this represents the demographic who is *completing the evaluation form* rather than necessarily that of the eventgoers themselves.

FAS Connect: Redefining “Group”

The Farm Advisory Service has successfully delivered groups since its inception, including Women in Agriculture groups and New Entrants groups. However, some of these might be more accurately thought of as *populations* since they tend to comprise a pool of participants sharing a particular social or demographical characteristic, whilst exhibiting a truly diverse range in interests, objectives, and individual circumstances.

The consequence of diversity in interests is that attendance throughout the individual group's annual programme can be fluid – members perceive obvious relevance in some planned activity, but not normally all, and it is relatively unusual for every group member to attend every event.

Therefore, whilst the participants still benefit from what they learn *at* the event, and their attendance brings the social interaction that the audience demand, they lack the cohesion as a group to be able to confidently share their own experience and knowledge. Therefore whilst they are ‘groups’ they normally aren't a highly effective as a *peer-to-peer* learning platform.

FAS Connect is the solution to this challenge. The focus of these events is deep peer-to-peer learning, with individuals challenging themselves . each other to reach their personal and business goals. For this to be successful it requires a group-led syllabus, trusted local facilitator, commonality of group interest, trust between and commitment from members.

The principles of FAS Connect are:

- One-to-few: 10-15 participants optimum, no more than 20.
- Closed groups: important to enable building of trust.
- Participant led: topics and syllabus decided by participants.
- Peer-to-peer in both the group creation and learning: significant commonality in interests and aims of group members; less about “experts” and more about learning with and from each other and challenging each other.
- Skilled, trusted local facilitator to organise the group's activity and ensure everyone can engage and learn.
- The group holds 3 – 6 meetings per annum.
- Group members participate in discussion between meetings.
- Development of the action plan for the group and individual development plans for members.

Different types of meetings enjoyed by FAS Connect groups during 2022/23 have included:

- Farm visits to an ‘external’ farm or to a group member's farm, often accompanied by a vet or agronomist.
- Visits to relevant supply chain sites, e.g., abattoir or processing facility.
- Round table discussion with group members only e.g., benchmarking workshop.
- Round table discussion including external speaker(s).
- Webinar or online meetings with external speaker.

FAS Connect Participant Comments

"Think our group is brilliant, able to talk to like-minded people, with some brilliant experts."

"Informal meetings which were well lead. Nice to have the opportunity to visit other farms. Everyone was very welcoming and open and honest conversations."

"I was encouraged and inspired by the ideas put into action by group members."

"I think the importance of these groups can't be spoken of highly enough. To get out onto others farm for real talks is very valuable but, so was the day spent looking at minerals/feed etc. Well Done!"

"The thing about this type of meeting is that you can ask questions and maybe learn something to take back home for your set up."

"It was great to get farmers together again and share information".

"It's great that everyone has the opportunity to put in their input and we can cover a lot of ground during a single meeting."

"Lets us sit round the table and discuss what we are doing and learn from each other, you can take something away and put it into practice on your own farm."

"A group of about 15 people is exactly the right size to make sure everyone can contribute."

"[The meetings are] a good mix of being able to discuss ideas with like-minded farmers as well as getting the technical expertise from the facilitator and speakers."

"The FAS Connect meetings really get you thinking about options for your own farm."

Publications

As the national advisory service covering a diverse agricultural sector, it is not surprising that a wide range and large number of publications were produced in 2022/23.

In total, 300 were produced (101% of the planned number) ranging from large, detailed publications like the Farm Management Handbook, popular periodicals such as Agribusiness News and Milk Manager News, FAS Technical Notes, through to case studies and advertorials in the farming and mainstream press.

There is a wealth of information on the website, including material produced or updated during 2022/23. In the year publications were downloaded more than 295,255, an increase of 34% compared to the previous year.

	Top 10 Downloads	Downloads
1	Farm Management Handbook 2021/22	7,056
2	Farm Management Handbook 2022/23	3,067
3	Agribusiness News July 2022	1,882
4	Agribusiness News May 2022	982
5	Agribusiness News April 2022	744
6	Agribusiness News August 2022	731
7	Border Disease	576
8	Sustainable Sheep Systems – When to Wean?	554
9	Technical Note (TN726): Fertiliser Recommendations for Grassland	546
10	Planning for High Fertiliser Prices in a Beef System	518

Figure 12 - Top 10 Publication Downloads in 2022/23




The Farm Management Handbook 2022/23

The Farm Management Handbook 2022/23
The UK reference for farm business management



43rd Edition



News in brief
The crises deepens

In different times, embedding an April Fool spoof article in this edition could have brought light relief to a very busy time of the year but with the covid pandemic passing its two year 'anniversary' and the deepening humanitarian crisis in war torn Ukraine, the mood this spring is anything but light with the resultant combined economic shock waves crashing through every sector and everyone's lives.

Although the covid pandemic and its periodic food shortages opened the general public's eyes and minds to the complexities of the normally slick farm-to-fork supply chain, the war being waged by Russia on its neighbour is already having far greater consequences with escalating energy and input prices, and rapidly rising inflation eroding incomes.

While Farm Business income margins showed an overall increase for the 2020/21 Farm Business Survey year, the fact that this was largely due to lower expenditure on inputs, does not bode well for the current year with all sectors becoming significantly affected by the rising cost of feed, fertiliser and fuel putting increasing pressure on margins. With no designation in the UK for planting additional cereals on Ecological Focus Areas (EFA) there are real concerns with regards feed and food security if there is no swift end to the war given that both sides are major cereal producers.

With livestock heading out for the start of the grazing season, the rising pressure on margins means that good grassland management will be more important than ever. Our grassland article gives some simple tips on how to forward plan to help mitigate the input cost challenges over the grazing season and into next winter.

Next month:

- Contract Farming
- Green Cow Research



Planning for high fertiliser prices in a beef system

The fertiliser price over the last six months has been on an upward trajectory and as we enter the main growing season hope of prices falling aside. Gas is an essential component in the manufacturing process of Urea, with urea driving the price of fertiliser globally. Gas supply and prices, reduced export of urea from China, interruptions to manufacturing due to COVID-19 and rising haulage costs have all contributed to nitrogen prices which are almost 4 times higher than in September 2020. Phosphate and potash have also followed the same trend. This will have a substantial impact on input costs and requires careful consideration of several factors to ensure there is a justifiable return on fertiliser investment.

It is anticipated fertiliser prices will remain significantly higher than in 2021 for the foreseeable future so we must look to the actions we can take in the short term and longer term to mitigate the impact this has on forage production and business profitability. Few farms can plan to cut fertiliser use dramatically and expect the same outcome, so planning is required.

Where to start?

With the daunting prospect of a fertiliser bill twice to three times that of last years it is difficult to know where to start to balance the additional cost with achieving the crop yields required. Any changes to your fertiliser policy should consider the following steps:

- Baseline soil fertility with up to date soil samples
- Apply lime to ensure optimum pH and maximum nutrient availability
- Account for N, P and K supplied from livestock manures available on farm
- Only buy the nutrients you need
- Prioritise fertiliser applications to the most productive grassland or crops
- Ensure fertiliser is applied under best growing conditions
- The use of rotational grazing to increase the utilisation of grass
- Use feed budgets early to calculate what fodder you need for winter 2022 and the different ways you can fulfil this such as use of forage crops or buying fodder early
- Increase clover content of pastures for longer term benefits from Nitrogen fixation
- Know your cost of production for grass and silage to evaluate against other fodder sources
- Take advice from a FACTS qualified adviser on preparation of a Nutrient Management Plan

The Farm Management Handbook is produced in the autumn, therefore for the early part of the year the audience is downloading the edition produced the previous year. The audience also likes to look at differences and trends in data, hence it is appropriate that they can access not only the current year, but those of previous years.

In addition to publications being downloaded, many publications are presented as webpages on the FAS website, and consumption of this content is recorded as a 'view'. In 2022/23 there were 1,576,363 views of the website.

	Top 10 Articles	Views
1	Bloat in Orphan Lambs	9,536
2	Eye Conditions of Adult Sheep	5,110
3	Drugs for Pain Management in Ruminants	5,145
4	Hypomagnesaemia (Staggers) in Sheep	4,845
5	Opportunities to Control Rushes	4,678
6	How Much Grass do Ewes and Lambs Need?	3,641
7	Alternative Clostridial Vaccines	2,419
8	Nutritional Safety for Feeding Urea	2,200
9	Ewes Lambing and Time of Day	2,069
10	How to Stomach Tube a Calf	2,113


Figure 13 - Top 10 Articles on FAS Website in 2022/23

Ewes Lambing and Time of Day

1 April 2020

In order to reduce staff hours, particularly for those that find themselves short-staffed during this time, some may ask whether we can be more targeted with lambing surveillance by utilising knowledge of when ewes lamb and what influences this.

Most ewes lamb during daylight hours, but management will affect when peaks occur.




Feeding

The evidence in cattle shows that feeding delays calving so feeding late at night (after 6 pm) will reduce night calving (for instance, one study over 1,300 cows on 15 farms in Iowa showed 85% of cows calve between 6 am and 6 pm when fed at dusk). Proposed theories for this effect include rumen contractions affecting uterine contractions and hormonal changes. However, evidence with sheep is less clear; one study demonstrated feeding did have an effect (1: 65% of lambings occurring within 4 h before, and 6 h after feeding – therefore feeding in the morning was recommended. However other studies have not managed to replicate this effect – suggesting the interactions with sheep are more complicated – consider how much management of ewes will vary between farms.

Stress

Another study showed that peak lambing period of housed ewes was unrelated to feeding time or diet but was associated with periods of reduced human activity in the barn (2). This was further demonstrated in SRUC studies where increased stress for one group of sheep (including a negative handling interaction) and saw an increase in night lambing in that group. This makes sense: exposure to stress will result in the ewe deeming that the environment is too stressful to lamb in. Ewes control the timing of birth and sudden acute stress



Eye Conditions of Adult Sheep


14 January 2021

There are three main eye conditions of the ewe, all of which can be associated with harsh winter weather and housing of ewes. The most common condition is infectious Keratoconjunctivitis, more commonly called "pink eye" or "snow blindness". This is often related to bad weather such as driving snow or high winds but also dust which may be in hay. It is a contagious condition, caused by one of two species, either Chlamydia Pasitai or Mycoplasma Conjunctivae. It can be identified as, tear stains on the face, cloudy eyes, a discharge to bright lights and/or an inflamed pink eye depending on the length of infection. There are often carrier animals within flocks which transmit the organisms to other sheep in the flock. Close contact at troughs allow the infection to spread rapidly. To limit infection sheep must have adequate trough space (45 cm/head for troughs and 15 cm/head for ring feeders), not be highly stocked and sheds should be well ventilated, in addition shelter should be provided for out wintered stock. Purchased stock must be isolated until it is apparent if they are affected by the condition.

Anterior Uveitis is a condition often linked to feeding big bale silage to sheep. This is a conjunctival infection from *Listeria Monocytogenes*. Signs of infection include cloudy eyes in sheep. To limit the risk of the condition, big bale silage should be offered to the animals fresh and not allowed to be opened from the wrap for more than 3 days. The condition is more common when sheep are pushing their heads into the bale. Unwrapping bales along a feed barrier is likely to reduce the risk of disease compared with using a round feeder.

The final condition is Periorbital Eczema. This condition occurs when the skin around the eye is damaged allowing for entry of *Staphylococcus aureus*. This can often occur when there is not adequate room allowed for at troughs or ring feeders. It results in swollen eyes and blocked vision due to large scabby lesions forming around the eyes.

Eye conditions are particularly problematic disorders for ewes in late pregnancy, where an eye condition can lead to blindness. This can make it difficult to source food, resulting in metabolic disorders: loss of body condition and low milk yield. The condition below shows a ewe from a high concentrate diet to sheep.




Bloat In Orphan Lambs

16 April 2021

A year of high numbers of lambs being born, inevitably means orphan lambs being reared. One of the most common reported problems for these lambs is abomasal bloat (tympany), which is caused by harmful bacteria in the stomach that feed on the lactose, which often gains entry with unhygienic conditions and hot milk. These bacteria multiply in the stomach and the sugars in the milk ferment, causing excess gas production. This gas cannot escape from the stomach, bloating the lamb, which causes sudden death.

This is an orphan lamb specific problem and is most common in lambs that are two to four weeks old. When a lamb is reared on an ewe, it drinks little and often, and the milk is always at the correct temperature and not too hot. Orphan lambs tend to have a greater intake per feed, and with competition of other lambs, they tend to guzzle fast.



There are various methods that can reduce bloat in lambs, including:

- Ensure orphans have had quality colostrum.
- Don't over feed lambs, follow the guidance on the milk bag for the quantity to be fed per feed and the mixing rate.
- Ensure lamb milk is used and not calf milk as this has higher levels of lactose.
- Use hard teats with small holes, to slow down the speed the milk is drunk.
- Adding yogurt to the milk. This has good bacteria (probiotics) which can compete with the bad bacteria.
- Feed milk at body temperature (a sheep is generally between 38-40°C) to reduce the growth of bacteria.
- Self feeding systems reduce the risk, as lambs generally take milk little and often, as if they were on their mothers.
- Good hygiene, clean jugs, bottles and teats regularly. Ensure automatic feeders are kept clean and fresh and are cleaned regularly.
- Wean lambs at 35 days (provided they are eating at least 250g/head/day of high quality concentrate).

In addition to documents that are downloaded or viewed on the website, there are regular newsletters which are created and pro-actively sent to those who are registered to receive them. By March 2023 the distribution list for the newsletter had grown to 6,425. As the graph overleaf shows, the distribution of the newsletter grew overall. The percentage of recipients who open it (an average of 45% through the year) is far ahead of the benchmark figure (16%) for similar publications.

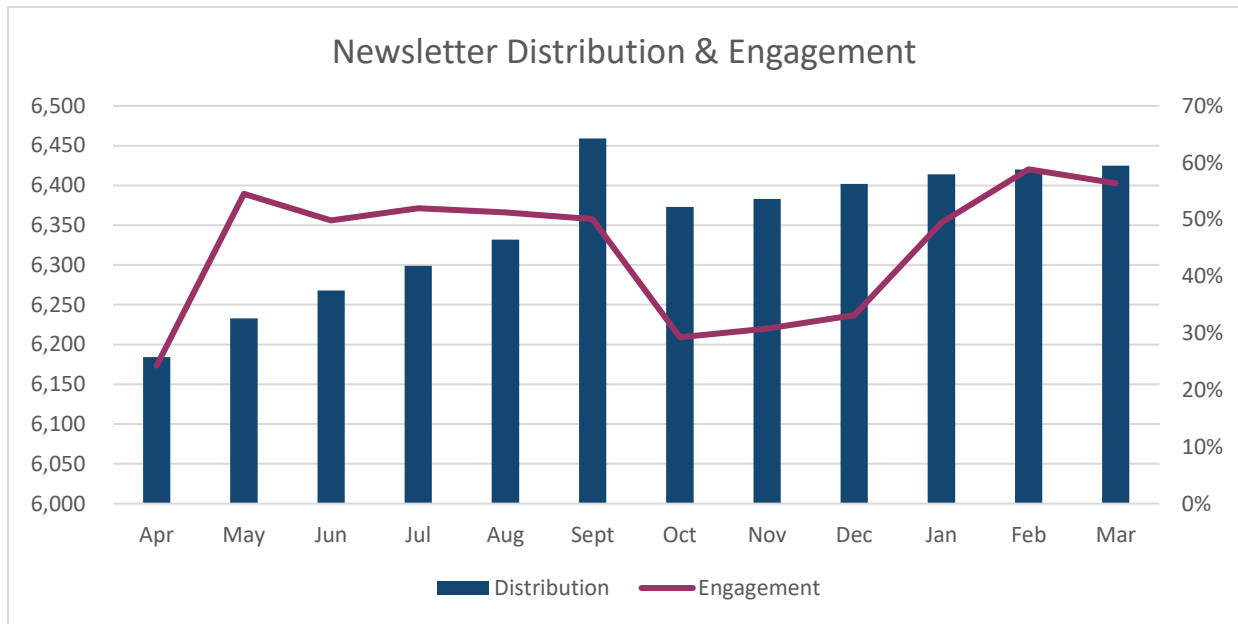


Figure 14 - Newsletter Distribution and Engagement Information for 2022/23

When the newsletter is distributed those who do not open it are sent a reminder.

Videos, podcasts, and online tools

Video

Video has again grown in popularity and significance in 2022/23 and 160 videos were produced and posted online – the FAS has its own YouTube channel. Engagement with videos, and the number of subscribers to the FAS YouTube channel, grew significantly during the year. This reflects the audience appreciation of the quality and relevance of the videos produced.

Included in the videos produced were 30 episodes of FAS TV, bringing the ‘farm visit experience’ to the viewer’s screen and enabling access to a range of excellent speakers and experiences.

A key factor in the success of video output has been the provision of professional videographers and editors, increasing the quality of output to rival any television documentary or magazine programme.

The FAS YouTube account has seen significant growth in use as outlined in the table below.

Measure	2022/23	2021	2021 vs 2022/23 (%)
Minutes watched	672,978	546,000	+23.2
Sessions	377,610	244,900	+54.1
Average minutes per session	1:46	2:14	-31.8
YouTube Subscribers	2,977	1,653	+85%

Figure 15 – FAS Video Statistics for 2022/23

The number of minutes watched overall, and sessions of watching, have increased, though the average minutes per session has reduced during the year. This is likely to be because of the advertising of the video outputs since whilst the content is reaching a significantly larger audience (and the audience who are subscribing to the YouTube channel is increasing substantially indicating genuine and significant audience growth) it won’t necessarily be relevant to all and, when they only watch a short amount, this reduces the overall average.

Information from YouTube reporting tells us more about the gender, age distribution and location of video viewers:

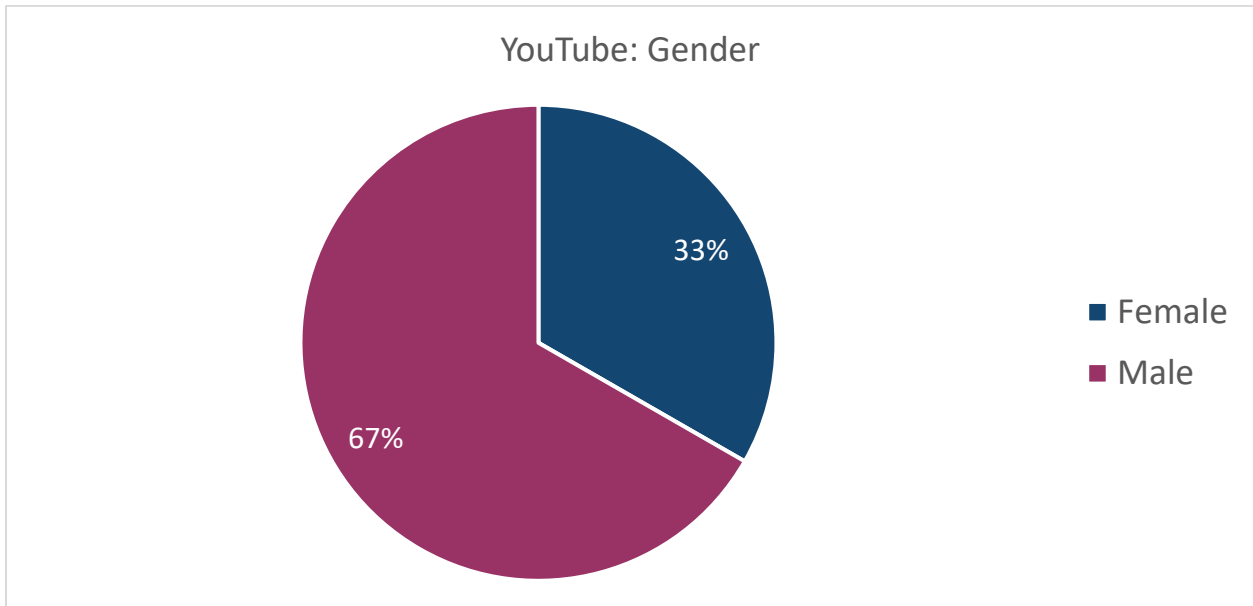


Figure 16 - YouTube statistics on FAS Video viewer gender

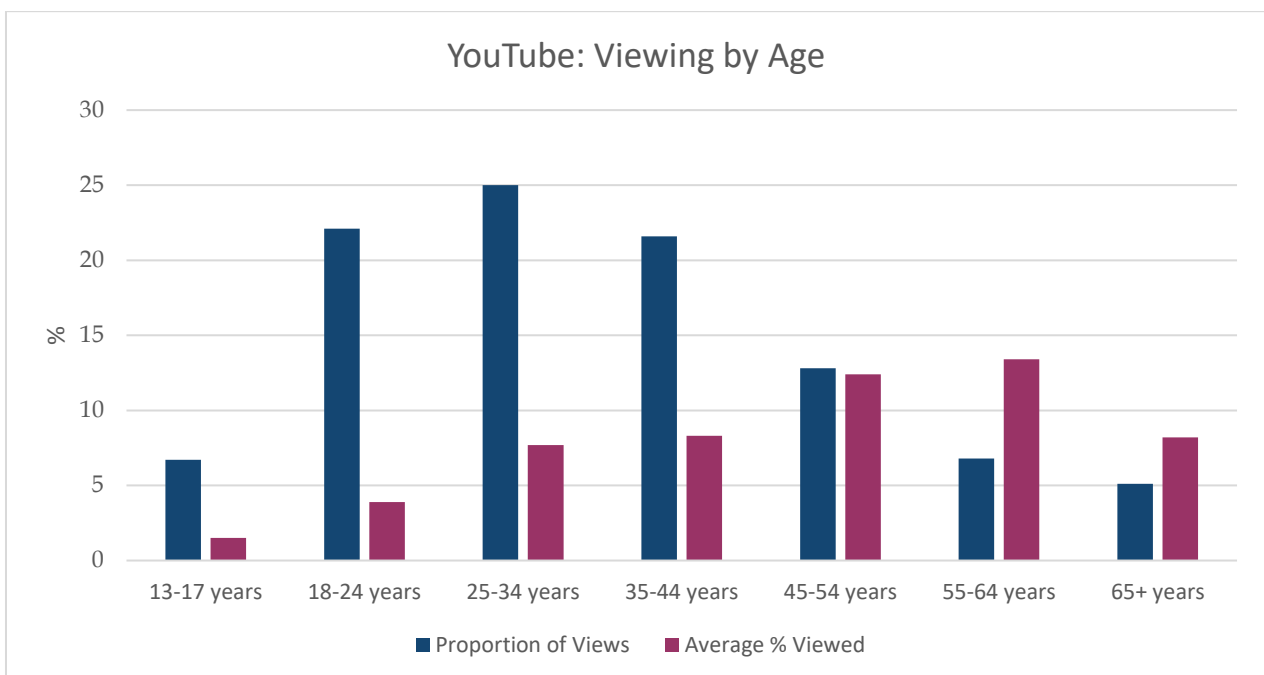






Figure 17 - YouTube statistics on FAS Video viewer age

The gender split is consistent with what we know about the demographic of industry generally. The age profile suggests that whilst the majority of video views are by the 25-34 year old age group, they do not watch as much of any video as the older age categories. However, the relationship between these numbers is complex since it involves a variety of variables, both of the audience and how the algorithms make them aware of new or relevant content.

The YouTube channel reports that 79% of views are from the UK, and 9.3% come from Ireland, USA, India, Australia, and Canada. However this data is not highly reliable as it is common for users to be routed through an IP address that doesn't reflect their actual location. This would

also be the case in that London is apparently the single largest city in which FAS content is accessed, when in reality many Scottish viewers will be routed through a London IP address.

The table overleaf provides information about the top five videos on YouTube in 2022/23. FAS TV videos are shown separately since these routinely occupy the top viewing slots and mask the success of many other videos.

Top five videos on YouTube 2022-2023	Views	(22,367 views in Total)
Technology and Sheep	7,341	
Controlling Rushes on your Farm	5,535	
Making Anaerobic Digestion Fit Your System	3,842	
Derelict to Productive: Drainage	3,084	

<p>Understanding Your Carbon to Nitrogen Ratio</p>	<p>2,565</p>	
<p>Top five FAS TV Episodes on YouTube 2022-2023 (73,967 views)</p>		<p>Views</p>
<p>FAS TV EP31: A Farm to Fork Special!</p>	<p>17,091</p>	
<p>FAS TV S2 E23: Deer Farming at Innerhadden Estate</p>	<p>16,070</p>	
<p>FAS TV: S2 Ep 21 - Farming and Crofting with Woodland</p>	<p>14,880</p>	
<p>FAS TV S2 E22: Feeding Brassicas to Pedigree Cattle and Hydro Power at Innerhadden Estate</p>	<p>14,295</p>	
<p>FAS TV: S2 Ep 10 – Potatoes in Practice Special</p>	<p>11,631</p>	

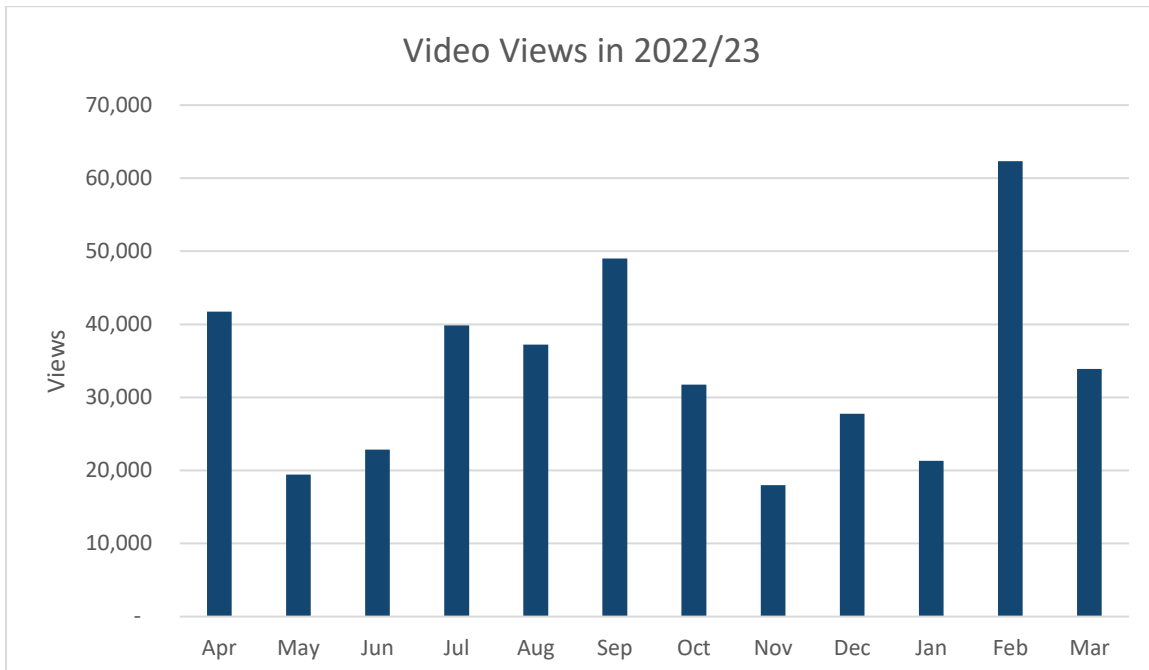


Figure 18 - Video Views in 2022/23 (Total Inc FAS TV)

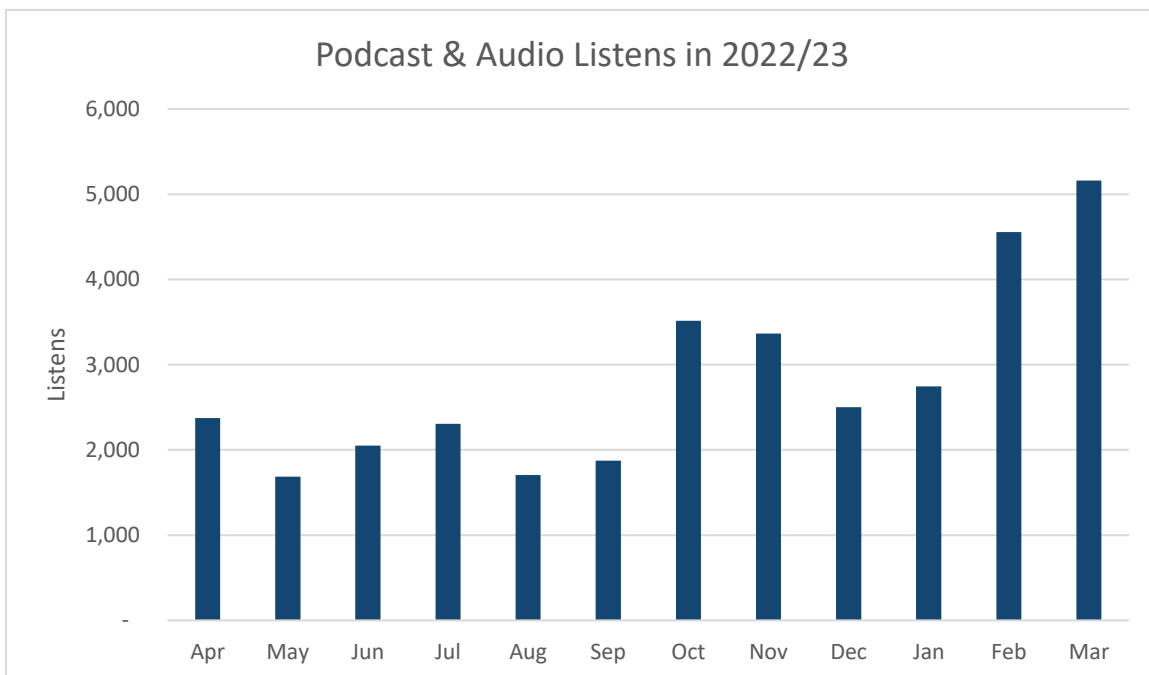


Figure 19 - Podcast & Audio Listens in 2022/23

Podcasts

Podcasts are delivered through FAS Sounds, an industry leading audio output comprising several targeted feeds which, by targeting audio content, enable users to find the content they find interesting and relevant.

In 2022/23 FAS introduced targeted content feeds which were structured around a combination of periodical round-up style (e.g., Rural Roundup), Periodical In-Depth (e.g. Stock Talk or Thrill of the Hill) and Standalone Series' form.



In 2022/23 there were 33,844 podcast listens, a 45% increase on the previous year, reflecting the success of the new approach.

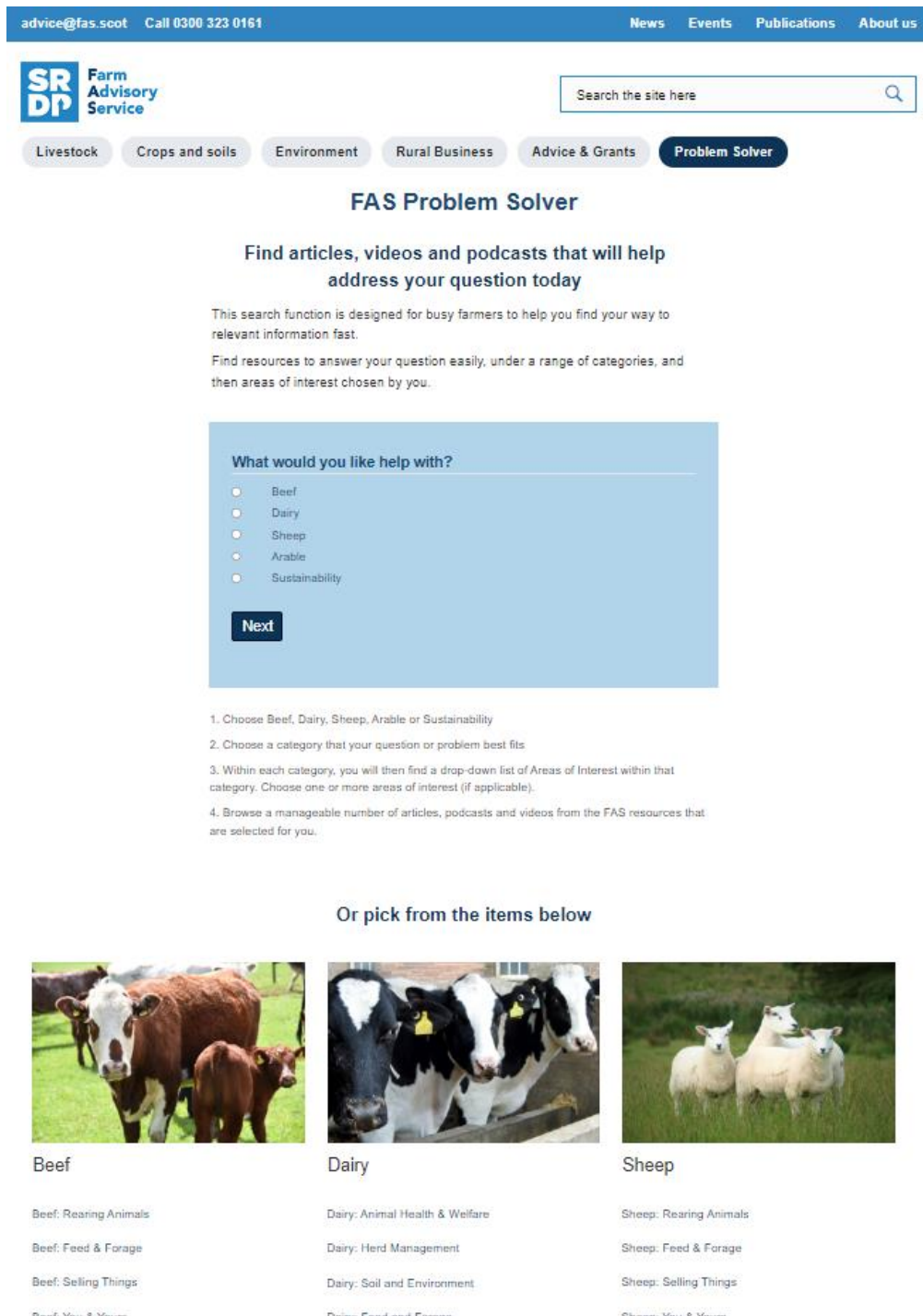
The top 10 individual podcasts of the year are detailed below.

Top five podcasts 2022-2023 (3,246 total listens)	Listens
Stock Talk – Beef – Spring Update	412
Thrill of The Hill – The Great Yellow Bumblebee	399
Rural Roundup (24th May)	384
Stock Talk - Sheep Systems & Grazing Strategies with Poppy Frater	368
CropCast - Disease Control for Spring Barley, Winter Oilseed Rape and Potatoes Along with Tips for Planting Forage Crops	360
CropCast – Cover Crops & Green Manures	335
Rural Roundup (16th June)	333
CropCast – Grain Marketing	329
Rural Roundup (10th August)	326

Figure 20 - Top 10 FAS Podcasts in 2022/23

Tools

During 2022/23, 13 online tools were produced. These include the new FAS Problem Solver tools for Beef, Dairy, Sheep, Arable, and Sustainable Systems. These tools combine online tool functionality with a curated journey through relevant FAS resources, helping the user to arrive at the right content by asking them the right questions and returning the most useful FAS outputs.



The screenshot shows the FAS Problem Solver tool interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with contact information (advice@fas.scot, Call 0300 323 0161) and links for News, Events, Publications, and About us. Below this is the SRDP Farm Advisory Service logo and a search bar. A horizontal menu contains categories: Livestock, Crops and soils, Environment, Rural Business, Advice & Grants, and Problem Solver (which is highlighted). The main heading is "FAS Problem Solver" with the sub-heading "Find articles, videos and podcasts that will help address your question today". A brief description explains the search function's purpose for busy farmers. Below this is a form titled "What would you like help with?" with radio button options for Beef, Dairy, Sheep, Arable, and Sustainability, and a "Next" button. A numbered list of four steps guides the user through the process. At the bottom, there are three columns for "Or pick from the items below", each featuring a photo of the animal type (Beef, Dairy, or Sheep) and a list of relevant resource categories.

advice@fas.scot Call 0300 323 0161 News Events Publications About us

SRDP Farm Advisory Service Search the site here

Livestock Crops and soils Environment Rural Business Advice & Grants **Problem Solver**

FAS Problem Solver

Find articles, videos and podcasts that will help address your question today

This search function is designed for busy farmers to help you find your way to relevant information fast.

Find resources to answer your question easily, under a range of categories, and then areas of interest chosen by you.


What would you like help with?

- Beef
- Dairy
- Sheep
- Arable
- Sustainability

Next


1. Choose Beef, Dairy, Sheep, Arable or Sustainability
2. Choose a category that your question or problem best fits
3. Within each category, you will then find a drop-down list of Areas of Interest within that category. Choose one or more areas of interest (if applicable).
4. Browse a manageable number of articles, podcasts and videos from the FAS resources that are selected for you.

Or pick from the items below




Beef

- Beef: Rearing Animals
- Beef: Feed & Forage
- Beef: Selling Things



Dairy

- Dairy: Animal Health & Welfare
- Dairy: Herd Management
- Dairy: Soil and Environment



Sheep

- Sheep: Rearing Animals
- Sheep: Feed & Forage
- Sheep: Selling Things

Figure 21 - FAS Problem Solver Tool

Other digital tools produced during the year included Crofting Regulation Flowchart tools for decrofting, the Whole Farm Benchmarking Tool, and the Routemap Following Carbon Audit tool.

Website and social media

During 2022/23, the website enjoyed significant improvement in user quality.

With average page views of over 130,000 during the year, we have seen:

- 35% increase in unique page views.
- 64% increase in average number of actions on the site.
- 172% increase in the number of searches being made on the website.
- 774% increase in unique keywords (indicating an increased variety of search).

This represents a wider (number of unique page views) and more engaged audience making better use of the site (number of actions and search).

Social media paid advertising has historically been heavily used to drive visitors to the website and to learn more about the quality of the audience attracted, we carried out a trial in 2022/23. This involved a targeted reduction of paid advertising of the website during the second half of the year. During this period there was a reduction in the overall number of visits to the website (visitorship reduced by 35%) but this was accompanied by an improvement in the actions taken on the website: actions taken on the website increased by 56% and the total number of searches increased by almost 80%. This information will be used to inform when and how paid advertising is directed in future in order to deliver maximum value.

As the volume of material on the website increases it has been important to continue to improve the searchability of our content. We are in the final stages of implementing a more advanced and capable search function which will result in better returns to more specific searches. Furthermore, we are conducting a review of website pages that considers best-practice SEO, readability, and accessibility. This work is currently focused on the most popular entry pages to the FAS website, and over time will be expanded to cover the entirety of the website.

Measure	2022/23	2021	% change 2021 versus 2022/23	2020	19/20	18/19
Sessions	276,344	475,665	+41.9	347,157	166,356	67,899
Page views	1,576,543	1,766,090	-10.7	862,554	311,742	153,737
Unique page view	1,032,095	762,678	+35.32			
Total searches	44,914	16,544	+171.5			
Average page views per session	6.1	3.32	+83.7	2.50	1.87	2.26

Figure 22 - Social Media Statistics 2022/23

There are several ways that visitors find their way to the website, outlined in the table below. Direct access to the FAS website has dropped as advertising on Facebook was reduced in September, however the overall engagement remains the same.

We were curious about the value of advertising spend on Facebook and Twitter, so decided for the second half of the year to reduce it and track whether the reduction in direction entry correlated with a reduction in page views.

We found that while the number of people visiting the website did reduce, the quality of visits to the website increased significantly, as mentioned above. Visitors who didn't come to the site through advertising visited more pages, took more actions, and made more varied searches.

Route to website	Audience Proportion (%)	
	2022/23	2021
Organic search (using a search engine to find us)	163,319 (58%)	206,818 (42%)
Social (accessing the FAS website via link from social media)	33,758 (12%)	31,593 (6.4%)
Direct (direct links to access specific pages)	71,899 (26%)	241,576 (49%)
Referral (links to FAS from other sites)	6,479 (2%)	9,434 (1.9%)
Email (links to FAS embedded within e-newsletter emails)	2,800 (1%)	3,270 (0.7%)
Total	276,344	493,844

Figure 23 - Route to Website in 2022/23

While the audience size this year appears lower than the previous year, it is important to reiterate that the number of page views has increased during the same period, i.e. audience volume has reduced slightly but quality and engagement has increased.

The route taken to website was affected by our experimentation with advertising. Most notably in the reduction of direct links leading to specific pages. This is directly linked to fewer adverts providing those direct links. Interesting to note, however is that despite the reduction in social media ad spending, the number of people accessing the website through social media has increased, which is positive and demonstrates that our social media impact is increasing.

Organic search has increased, and this is a result of the work being done around website content tagging, SEO, and website restructuring, which is making the content not only more accessible to visitors, but also more favorable in the eyes of search engines.

Social media

Both the Facebook and twitter accounts of the one-to-many service have seen impressive levels of growth in followers – by 27% and 11.5% respectively. Meanwhile Facebook page visits were 12,762, up 142.2% on the previous period.

Social media is increasingly a 'pay to play' environment and the effect of not increasing paid advertising spend is, predictably, an *apparent* reduction of impression and engagement. However, and more importantly, both the Facebook page visits (where the audience actively go to the FAS page) and follower-counts on both Twitter and Facebook continue to rise, indicating increased recognition of the FAS brand and an increasing audience who will become aware of content through their use of social media. Nevertheless whilst advertising spend does increase metrics on the social media platforms themselves, this does not necessarily directly or automatically translate into the engagement level of the audience, which is the purpose of our channels. Tweets are a good example – the top tweet in terms of impressions was of a podcast, and a different podcast was the top tweet in terms of retweets and likes – however neither of these podcasts were in the top 10 for listens.

Using this information we will continue to experiment with different advertising approaches on social media to identify what results in the most impact and engagement going forward.

Twitter Statistics & Data

Twitter measures	2022/23	2021	2021 versus 2022/23	% change 2021 versus 2022/23*
Followers	2,814	2,523	+291	+11.5
Tweets	1,328	804	+524	+65.2
Link clicks	3,485	3,275	+210	+6.4
Retweets	971	979	-8	-8.4
Likes	1,376	1,591	-215	-8.4
Impressions	465,811	1,080,473	-614,622	-56.9
Engagements	9,604	16,171	-6,567	-40.6

Figure 24 - Twitter Statistics 2022/23

Top five tweets	Retweets	Likes	Impressions
AgriCulture Nigel Owens Podcast	2	5	36,531
Land Management for Scottish Atlantic Rainforests- Practical Guide - promo	9	26	8,010
Hedgerow Restoration Video promo	6	18	7,908
Grazing for Profit & Biodiversity Video Promo	8	17	6,025
Crofter's Fuel Poverty Publication Promo	16	12	5,897

Figure 25 - Top 5 Tweets in 2022/23

Facebook Statistics & Data

Facebook measures	2022/23	2021	2022/3 versus 2021	% change 2022/23 versus 2021
Followers	7,274	5,277	1,997	+27
Posts	697	711	-32	-5
Post likes	4,325	7,033	-2,708	-63
Post shares	587	1,463	-876	-149
Comments	303	635	-332	-109
Link clicks	6,202	12,465	-6,263	-109
Photo views	<i>N/A – FB posts link straight to the website – no individual images posted.</i>			
Video views	<i>N/A – all videos now posted on a dedicated FAS YouTube channel.</i>			
Total reach	180,426	223,596*	-43,170	-23
Total impressions	752,136	1,482,725	-730,589	-97

Figure 26 - Facebook Statistics 2022/23

**Obtained from Facebook Analytics in May 2023 to ensure comparability – Facebook have changed their methodology for estimating reach.*

In addition to Facebook changing how they estimate reach, we have made some changes in how videos are released and promoted. In 2021 all videos were released on Facebook and video views were a significant proportion of the post likes, shares and comments. In 2022/23 we have moved to the promotion of the YouTube channel as the primary source of video release to grow this important channel's reach and impact. YouTube is considered the second largest search engine on the internet, so having successful videos there is greatly beneficial to the programme, whereas Facebook videos have a much lower search impact. Facebook also has less sophisticated discovery and referral tools within the videos itself (links to related videos or articles). Therefore, whilst the engagement on YouTube has increased by 85% because of this, it simultaneously reduces the associated engagement with Facebook.

Top 5 Facebook Posts	Impres sions	Reach	Likes	Shares	Comm ents
Starting and Growing a Sheep Enterprise – Event Promo	29,189	12,012	25	8	8
Aberdeenshire New Entrants – How Diversification Can Enhance Your Business – Event Promo	18,797	1,887	7	1	0
How to Reduce Your Farm Bills Webinar – Event Promo	18,256	2,605	22	4	0
Sheep Pre-Lambing Nutrition Webinar – Event Promo	12,675	5,317	54	11	10
Thrill of the Hill Season 3 Ep 6 - Understanding Natural Capital	11,241	2,444	36	4	2

Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service

The Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service offers an annual subscription where the crofter or small farmer (less than 30 hectares) receives advice and independent recommendations (up to 2 hours per year), technical notes, quarterly bulletins, monthly newsletters, and a subscription to Farm Text to receive notifications and important news (for example about deadlines).

Case Study

Originally brought up on the island, Pete has relocated back to the Argyll Islands with his young family and obtained the tenancy of a small croft. Pete is full of drive and determination to make a go of living and working in the remote community. He had lots of ideas and had written his own business plan. He needed someone to sense check his ideas, make sure they were realistic in terms of timescale, investment required and financial returns. A SAC consultant visited the croft to discuss the plans with Pete and reviewed his business plan giving him a clearer focus, ensuring that practical ideas were prioritised, the land was fully utilised and it gave him the confidence to move forwards with his new crofting business.

“As a newby crofter I just wanted to say how fantastically valuable I have found FAS. I cannot imagine starting on this journey without FAS” Subscriber comment made at a Cross Party for Crofting meeting

Advice is available on many topics, including: livestock rations, analysis of nutrients in silage, animal health planning; horticultural advice; conservation and environmental advice (e.g., management of muirburn, wildflower areas); organic farming; forestry and woodland design and management; renewable energy; livestock record keeping rules and regulations; prevention of pollution, compaction and nutrient loss; and grassland and crop advice including soil analysis, liming, fertiliser, grassland reseeds, removing rushes and weed control.

Case Study

Paul recently took over the croft from his mother. The croft is large and supports 180 breeding ewes. Paul's mother used her FAS Subscription to work how best to pass on the croft, discussing decrofting, how and when to make the transfer, and business considerations such as VAT and income division and tax. With many aspects to consider, a Specialist Plan was undertaken to detail an action plan. Paul is now the tenant of the croft and has used his FAS Subscription to gain advice on improving the sheep flock, with time spent on the croft with his advisor practicing condition scoring the ewes and discussing nutrition. Paul has gone on to take soil samples and apply for CAGs for fencing to improve efficiency and output and applied for a tag reader to help monitor performance.

In addition, for crofters, advice is also available on completion of assignments, decrofting and sublet applications; croft maps for Crofting Commission or SGRPID; advice on the Crofting Register; and advice on available grants.

Case Study

Catherine has 2 crofts in which she works alongside her son, producing lamb, hay, and growing potatoes. She said “I couldn’t do without the advice I get from the croft subscription. It is good sound advice which puts me in the right direction, and my advisor is never scared to tell me if something is a bad idea. I trust them. I’m about to make an appointment to discuss going back into Highland cattle and I know I’ll get the right answer.”

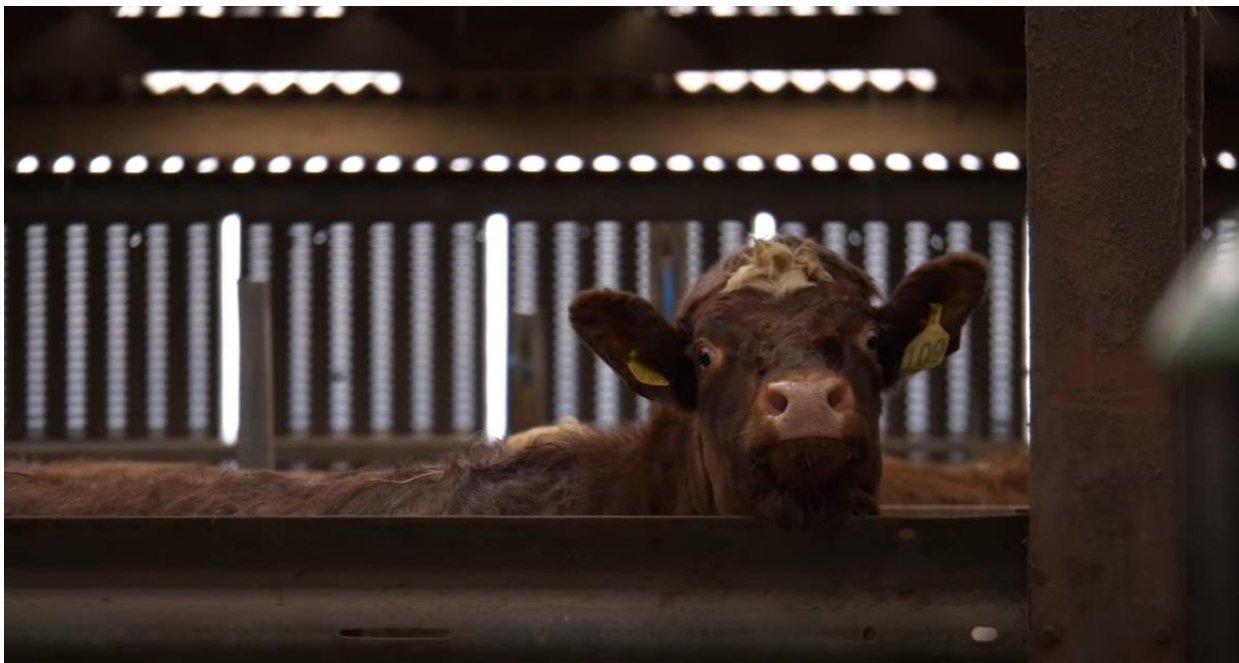


Figure 27 - Imagery from *Health Planning for Cattle on the Croft* Video from 2022/23

Advice Line

The FAS Advice Line offers eligible businesses up to 30 minutes of free advice. This can range from advice about upcoming events to more complex regulatory or technical questions.

During 2022/23 there were 1,185 enquiries received. This was slightly fewer than the 1,405 enquiries in 2021 however a call triage system employed on the Advice Line telephone number in 2022/23 has meant that those callers seeking information about FAS One-to-One advice areas can choose to be transferred straight through to Ricardo, rather than first coming to the Advice Line team (and being logged as an Advice Line enquiry), and therefore the recent call volumes exclude this category of calls.

Of the calls received 42% were concluded by the Advice Line team, and 58% were of a more technical nature and referred to a consultant.

The graph below shows the total number of enquiries per month and the proportion which were supported by the advice line, and the number which were referred on to a consultant.

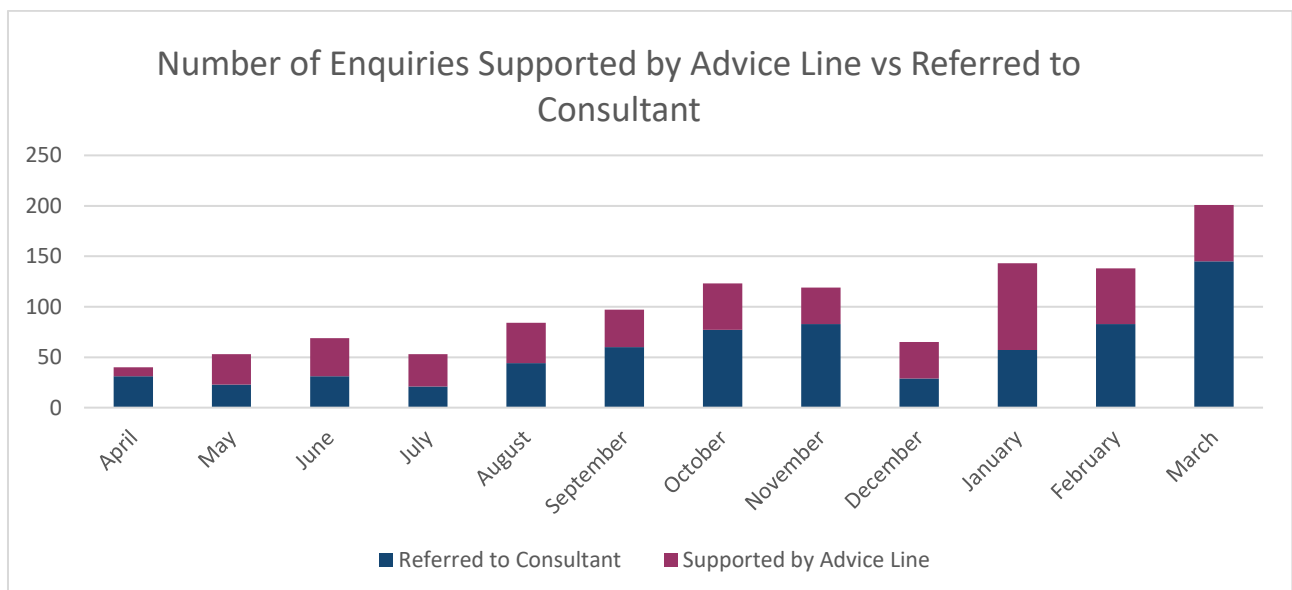


Figure 28 - Advice Line Enquiries 2022/23

Advice Line Enquiry Example

“Sarah recently took over her father’s farming business and called the advice line after seeing the advert in the Scottish Farmer offering 30 minutes free advice. She had already spoken with a couple of friends who told her they had been given good quality in-depth advice by the FAS service. She was looking for guidance on a wide range of topics from record keeping to grants and sources of support and advice. She spoke with a local SAC consultant who was able to advice on aspects such as an ILMP, mentoring and specialist advice, as well as AECS and the Nature Restoration Fund, and discuss with her the SAF and timeframe to do this. Subsequently Sarah has gone on to apply for an ILMP.”

Croft and small farm enquiries were the top subject area, received through the advice line in 2022/23, with a total of 310 enquiries, out of 1185. New Entrant and Event enquiries were also among the top, with subjects such as biodiversity, animal welfare, efficiency, diversification, compliance and organics.

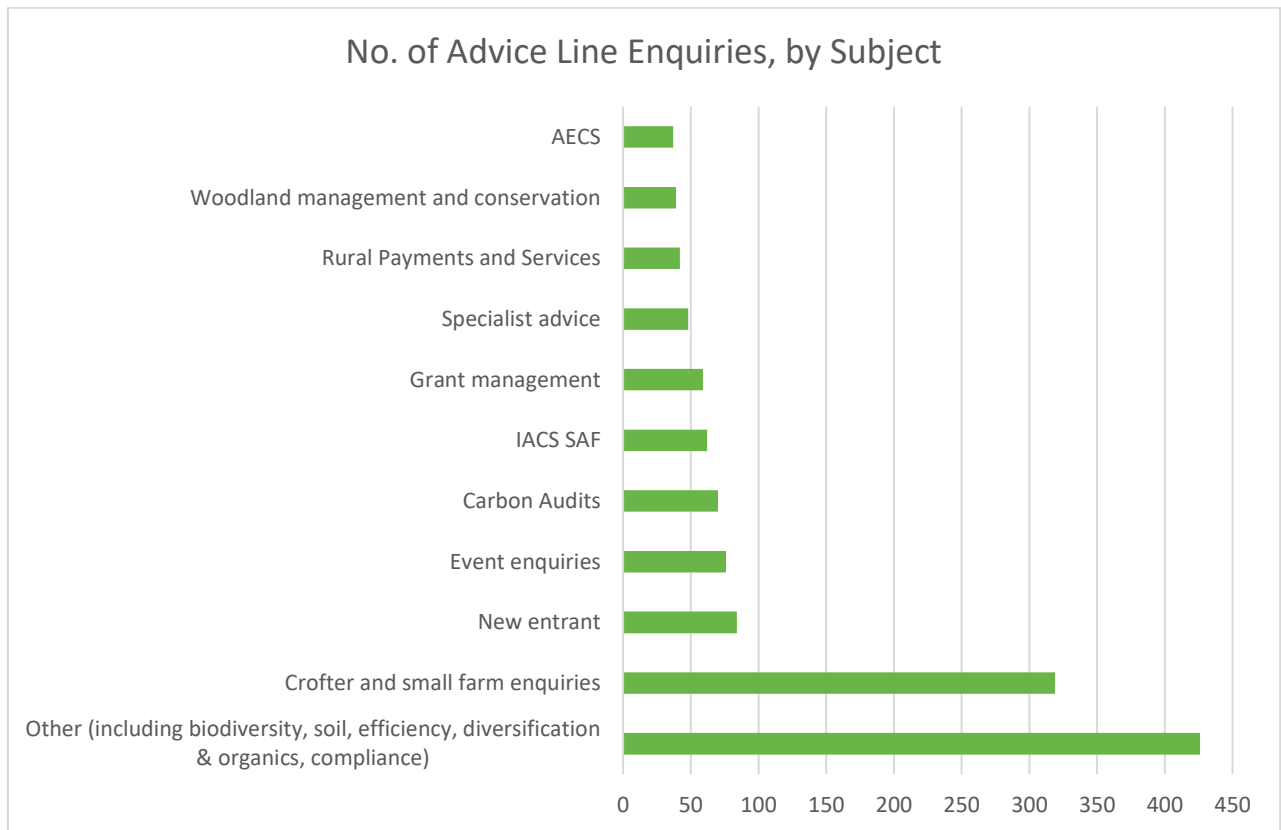


Figure 29 - Advice Line Enquiry Subjects 2022/23

Most enquiries were received by phone call (56%). Emails also make up a significant proportion, and walk-ins continue to be a vital source of contact between enquirers and the FAS advice line. Social media enquiries have gradually improved, particularly through the Facebook page which has seen significant increased visits.

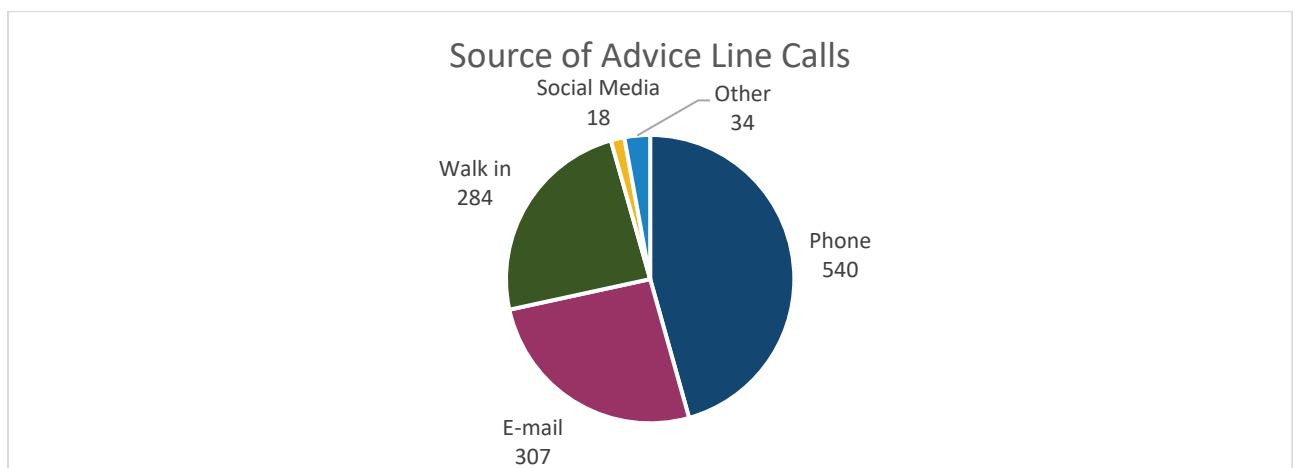


Figure 30 - Source of Advice Line Calls in 2022/23

Advice Line Enquiry Case Study

The helpdesk was contacted by Colin who owned 60 acres of ex-commercial forestry land and sections of fencing were deteriorated. He was interested in finding out about available funding which would allow him to re-plant some of the area, not for commercial use but to run alongside a small residential development and glamping business. The enquirer was referred onto a local consultant who assisted with advice on the Small Farms Grant schemes with regards to fencing and eligibility criteria, as well as Woodlands Trust schemes and general information on small scale woodland planting and hedges.

Advice Line Enquiry Case Study

Martin got in touch looking for courses or events on VAT having recently taken on the farming business. The helpdesk team were able to talk through the upcoming "Making Tax Digital" webinar we were running, which he was and we were able to book him on to. The helpdesk team also followed up with links to FAS materials on book keeping and farm accounts, as well as directing him to the business tools section on the website.