



Scottish Farm Advisory Service One-to-Many Programme January – March 2022 Report



**Farm
Advisory
Service**



Part of Scotland's
Rural College (SRUC)

Contents

.....	1
Introduction	3
Vision for the Farm Advisory Service	3
Objectives of FAS	3
Delivering FAS	3
Executive summary	4
Events	7
Publications	9
Videos, podcasts, and online tools	10
Website and social media	10
Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service	11
Advice Line	11

Introduction

A short extension was granted to the Farm Advisory Service contract to cover the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022, at which point the 2022 – 2024 contract was commenced.

This document supplements the FAS One-to-Many Annual Report 2022-23 and provides specific data on the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022.

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 January to March 2022 the FAS programme provided Scotland's farmers, crofters, and other land managers with:



Executive summary

- The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were met or exceeded in >80% of reporting periods and only marginally not met in a further 11% of periods.
- 24 events were run during the period, with 892 attendees and an average attendance of 37 per event. Feedback from participants was exceptionally positive, with >97% saying the events were “excellent” or “very satisfactory”, and 80% saying they would implement changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event.
- 39 publications, 24 videos, 8 podcasts and 1 online tools were produced. The FAS newsletter was published monthly and by the end of the year was being distributed monthly to up to 6,162 people – 652 more than at the same time the previous year.

- 357,579 page views of the website spread across 94,864 sessions – an average of 3.7 page views per session.
- Twitter followers grew by 13% to 2,603, whilst Facebook followers also grew by 13% to 5,499.
- 531 crofters and 36 smallholders subscribed to the Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service.
- There were 411 enquiries to the Advice Line where farmers and crofters received up to 30 minutes of free advice.

Target measure	Target	Actual	Number delivered versus target	Percentage delivered versus target
Events	24	24	-	100%
Event attendees	683	892	+209	130%
Average attendance	28.5	37.1	+8.6	130%
Publications	28	39	+11	140%
Videos	21	24	+3	114%
Podcasts	8	8	-	100%
Online tools	1	1	-	100%
Crofter and small farm subscribers	600	567	-33	95%

Figure 1 - 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 last month of the period or year for release early in the next year during the initiation phase of the new business plan or contract. In practice the **audience experience is of steady availability of new content**.

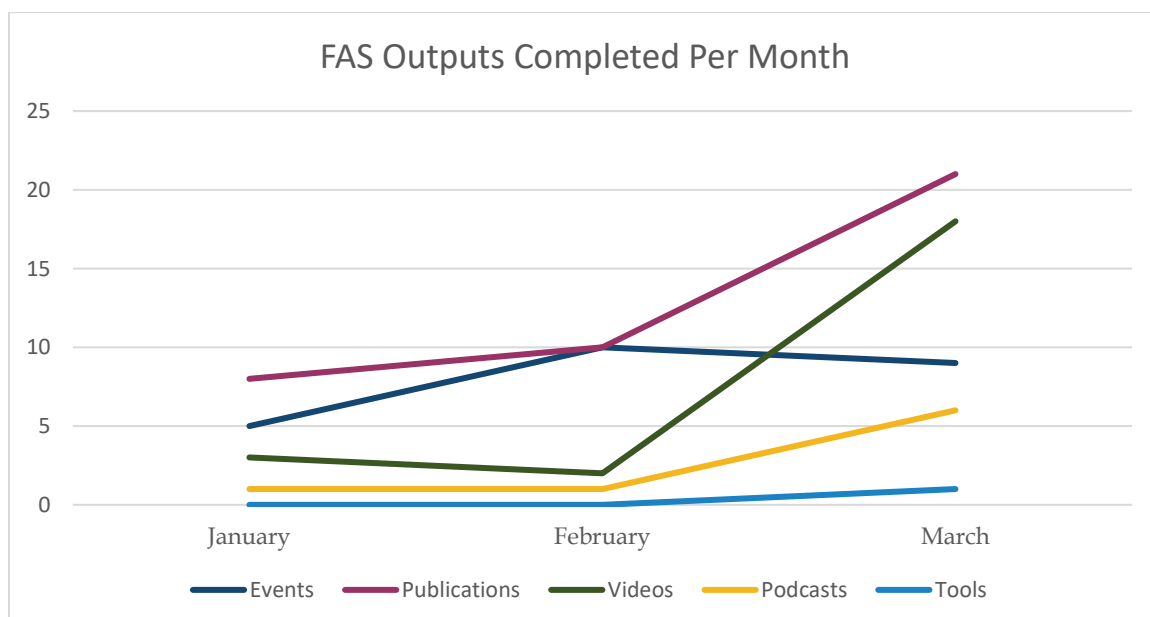


Figure 2 - Phasing of Output Completion

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

KPI	Monthly KPI performance January to March 2022(green = KPI met or exceeded, red = KPI not met, yellow=KPI marginally not met*)			AVERAGE
	January	February	March	
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

Figure 3 - Monthly KPI Performance

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

KPIs 1, 2, 7,8,9,10,12 were met or exceeded 100% of the time.

KPI 3 (overall event satisfaction) was an average of 93% in February 2022 and which, though not meeting the KPI, is still a very positive outcome. The planning and delivery of events is being reviewed to identify the circumstances which gave rise to the lower than normal satisfaction rating and resolve any issues.

KPI 4 (event relevance) was an average of 94% in February 2022, so was marginally not met. The information provided to participants considering attending the event is being reviewed to make sure that those who do attend know what to expect, and reduce the chance that someone attends and doesn't experience what they expected to.

KPI 5 (intention to make changes) was not met in March 2022 (68% versus KPI of 80%). This month included an event on Agritourism and whilst there was significant interest, we know from four participants who gave more information about why they didn't intend to make a change that they rated the event excellent or good overall, but it represented general research, or that they simply weren't ready to pursue it at this time. This KPI will continue to be monitored.

KPI 6 (bounce rate) was marginally not met in one month. This saw the beginning of a trend which continued into 2022/23 report year and which is believed to be linked to the way that the website redirects visitors to the FAS YouTube channel (which is seen, by the analytics system, as 'a bounce'). Investigation subsequently identified that certain types of website engagement are recorded as a 'bounce' in spite of them being expected and positive – for example when a user is directed to the FAS YouTube channel to watch a video. Therefore an alternative KPI for the website is being explored, which will provide better quality information.

KPI 11 (complex advice line queries not responded to within 5 working days) was regularly marginally not met, or not met during this period. The reason for this is that whilst the queries themselves are followed up swiftly upon receipt, there are often delays in completing the word document form and emailing it to the external Advice Line provider. *A new, sophisticated call logging and reporting system will be implemented in 2022/23 and it is believed that this will result in an improved performance against this KPI.*

Events

During the period 24 in person events and webinars were held.

The total predicted attendance at the in person and webinar events was 683 (an average of 28.5 per event). The total actual attendance was 892 (an average of 37.2 per event). 67 % of events met or exceeded their predicted attendance – a greater proportion than are normally seen.

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.

The graph overleaf 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.

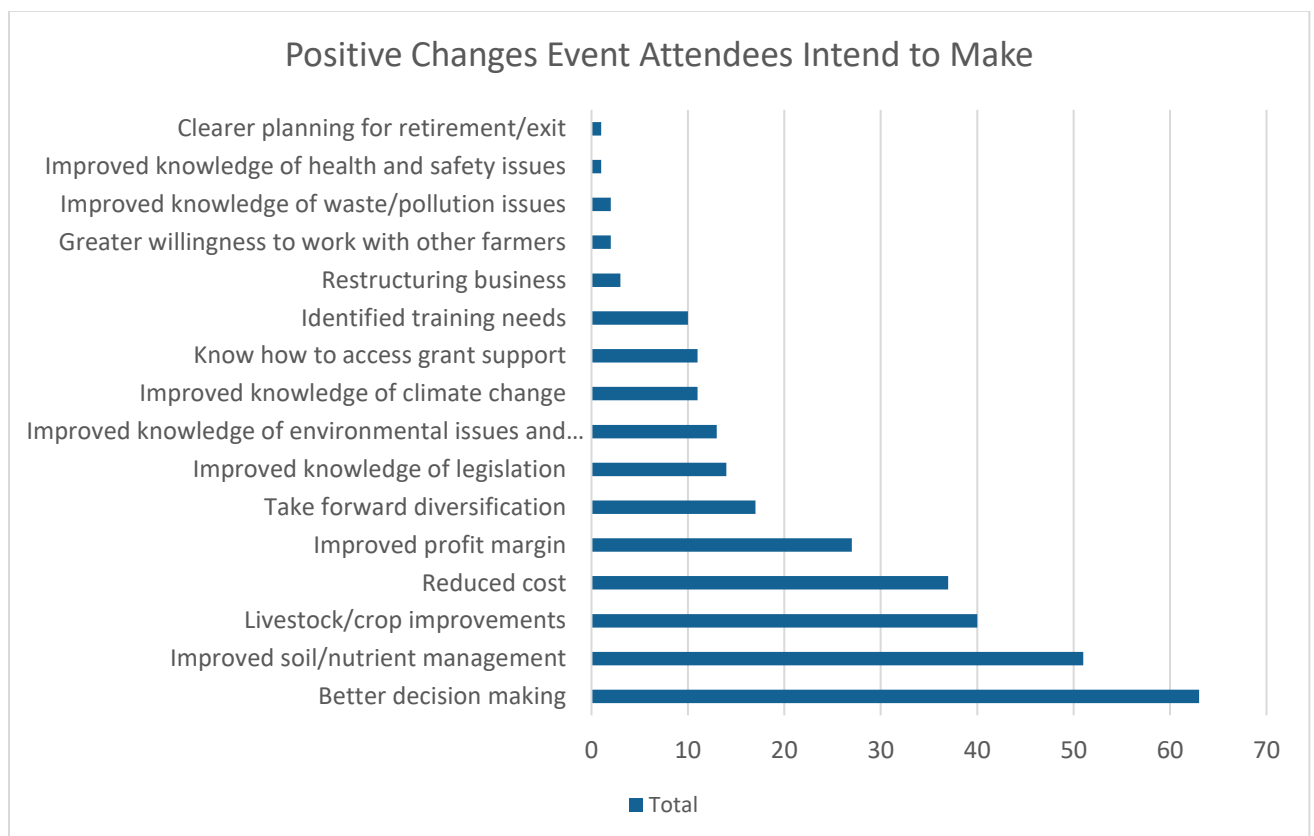


Figure 4 - Positive Changes Event Attendees Intend to Make

Of the attendees who did not indicate they would make a change, and who provided more information about their reasons, the table overleaf contains the responses:

Reasons	Number of Respondents
I did not learn anything new	4
I need more information	15
Not enough time to implement	2
Too costly	1

Figure 5 - Reasons Given by Event Attendees

In the period the majority (60%) of attendees were male, although this varies greatly between events depending on the topics being covered. The age profile and gender of attendees is diverse and outlined in the graph below.

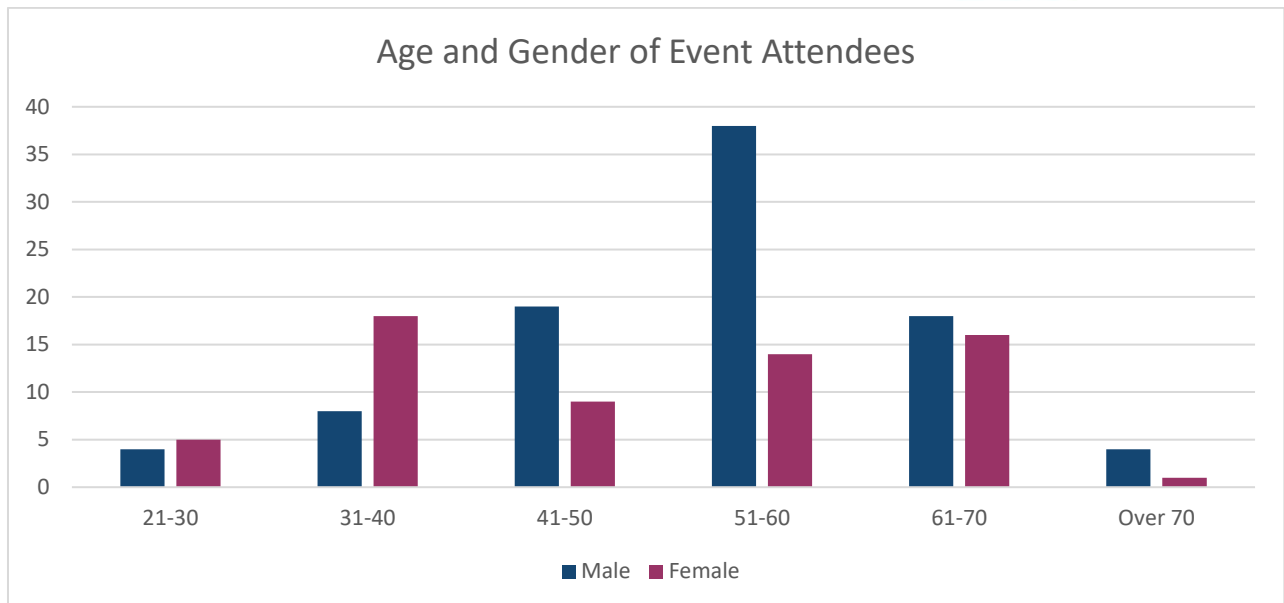


Figure 6 - Event Demographic Information

Obviously this represents the demographic who are *completing the evaluation form* rather than necessarily that of the event-goers themselves.

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 the period.

In total, 39 were produced including popular periodicals such as Agribusiness News and Milk Manager News, as well as a variety of relevant and timely articles, for example about lambing and calving preparation, integrated pest management, slurry management, and organics.

There is a wealth of information on the website, including material produced or updated during the period. In the year publications were downloaded 64,129 times.

The top download was the Farm Management Handbook 2021/22, which was downloaded 5,556 times during the period.

Other popular downloads during the period were Agribusiness News (consistently the second highest downloaded publication after FMH), Milk Manager News and Technical Notes. In January 2022 the FAS Technical Notes on Phosphate and Potash recommendations in different parts of Scotland featured highly in the top downloads, reflecting their promotion during the popular Arable Scotland events held in the period.

The regular FAS Newsletter, which is created and pro-actively sent to those who are registered to receive them was distributed each month. By March 2022 the distribution list for the newsletter had grown to 6,162. The percentage of recipients who open it (an average of 54% through the period) is far ahead of the benchmark figure (16%) for similar publications.

Videos, podcasts, and online tools

Video

During the period 24 videos were produced. Engagement with videos grew significantly during the year and the total views during the period was 126,595 (average of 5,275 per video). The total views in the same period in the previous year was 65,349 (average of 2,042 per video). This reflects the audience appreciation of the quality and relevance of the videos produced.

Podcasts & Audio

During the period there were 8 podcasts produced, producing 6,530 listens. During the same period in the previous year there were 7 podcasts produced, resulting in 8,022 listens.

Tools

During the period 1 online tool was produced, the Whole Farm Benchmarks Tool.

Website and social media

During the period there were 357,579 website views and 94,864 website sessions. The average number of webpages viewed per session was 3.76.

At the end of the period the number of Twitter followers was 2,603, which was a significant increase of 329 from the same period in the previous year. The top 5 Tweets, based on impressions were as follows:

Top 5 Tweets	Impressions	Retweets	Likes
Making Sheep Systems Sustainable: Controlling Liver Fluke Podcast	4,061	8	8
Precision solutions to animal health & welfare: parasites	3,019	3	8
Promoting Biodiversity & Alternative Food Crops	2,478	1	1
Farm Management Handbook Promo	2,141	4	8
FAS TV – Episode 26	1,738	1	3

Figure 7 - Tweet Information

The number of Facebook followers was 5,499, a very significant of 742 from the same point in the previous year. Total Facebook Impressions in the reporting period increased by 22,280 compared to the same point in the previous year. The top 5 Facebook posts, based on impressions, were as follows:

Top 5 Facebook posts	Impressions	Reach	Likes	Shares	Comments
Regional Phosphate and Potash Technical Notes	34,777	16,402	120	8	5
FAS TV Episode 30	33,952	11,492	20	5	3

FAS TV – AECS Update	33,082	9,615	21	2	0
Listeriosis Diagnoses	32,581	22,649	40	23	10
FAS TV – Episode 26	24,712	19,895	20	10	0

Figure 8 - Facebook Information

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).

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.

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

During the period there were 531 Crofter Subscriptions taken out, and 36 Small Farmer Subscriptions.

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 the period there were 411 beneficiaries of the Advice Line. Of the calls received, 51% were resolved by the Advice Line team, and 49% were of a more technical nature and referred to a consultant.

The graph below shows the number of calls received each month and the number referred to a consultant:

	Number of Beneficiaries	Number of Tier 2 Referrals	% Referred to Tier 2
January	170	76	45%
February	131	78	60%
March	110	47	43%
Total	411	201	49%

Figure 9 - Advice Line Information

One to one advice was the top subject area with a total of 120 enquiries about ILMP, carbon auditing, specialist advice and mentoring (29% of the total). Croft and small farm enquiries were the second most popular subject area with a total of 75 enquiries (18% of the total). Other very common subject areas during the period included new entrants, Rural Payments & Services, and cross compliance.

Most enquiries were received by email (52%) and this includes 'walk in' enquiries which are a vital source of contact between enquirers and the FAS Advice Line. Telephone calls make up also make up a significant proportion (48%).