



One-to-one Farm Advisory Service

April 2019 - March 2020 Annual Report for Scottish Government

Customer:**Scottish Government****Customer reference:**

Farm Advisory Service

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Executive summary

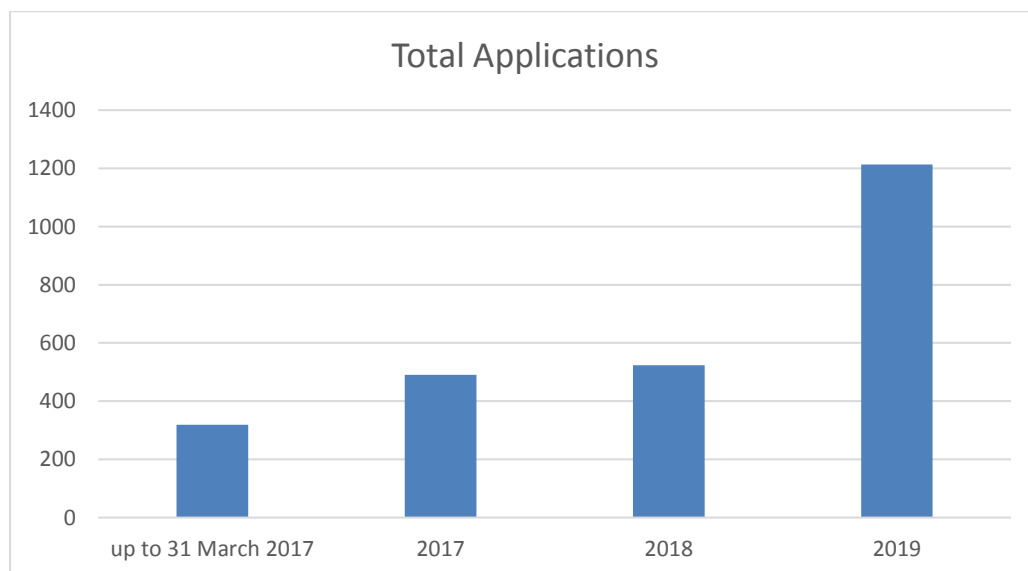
This report is the annual report April 2019 to March 2020 for the One-to-One Farm Advisory Service. The service commenced delivery of one-to-one support to farmers and crofters on the 20th September 2016. This comprises the delivery of Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMP), Specialist Advice, Carbon Audits and Mentoring for new entrants.

Ricardo manage the delivery of the one-to-one service, providing a full grant management service; a quality management process to ensure the standard of reports; and training to FBAASS advisers delivering ILMPs. The FAS website, helpline and overall promotional campaign is delivered via the One-to-Many contract however Ricardo implement a promotional plan for the one-to-one programme, to ensure that the support is promoted through all available channels;

- Press - working with journalists and producing press releases;
- Social media – providing a schedule of tweets and facebook feeds,
- Direct mail to new entrants
- Promotion via FBAASS advisers, encouraging this via the adviser newsletter
- Stakeholder communications including stakeholder meetings and the stakeholder communications pack.

The FBAASS team delivering the advice via ILMPs to farmers comprises 73 advisers and 29 associates from across a range of farm advisory organisations that meet the FBAASS accreditation standards managed by Lantra. Advisers are not contracted to deliver the programme, so as part of the quality assurance process and to ensure advisers they have the knowledge and skills required of them, the programme provides training. Ricardo have worked closely with the advisers to ensure that training reflects their needs and provides added value. The advisers' newsletter, ensures they are kept well informed and involved in the programme.

Since the launch of the programme we have seen a year on year increase in the application rate for the service, the programme is building momentum and recognition within the agricultural sector



Prior to 2019 we had charted an annual increase in applications for all grants (except Carbon Audits). In 2019 the demand for Carbon Audits increased significantly, an influence of the Beef Efficiency Scheme. The demand put pressure on the service administration and FBAASS advisers and resulted in a reduced availability of these advisers to deliver ILMPs, however it is notable that the team were able to rally resources and cope with delivering over 100 carbon audits per week without any reduction in quality assurance standards.

The programme has continued to evolve and develop over the year to ensure that we deliver to the needs of the industry. In October 2019, following training of the team in September, new resilience planning specialist advice was launched. This was in response to concerns that farmers were not making forward plans for businesses in light of Brexit and future market changes. This new element of the service has been very well received by the industry and there have been 44 resilience plans awarded to date.

In response to feedback received in the 'Winning Moves Report' <https://www.gov.scot/publications/farm-advisory-service-enhanced-monitoring-evaluation/pages/8/> Ricardo sought to further reduce the administrative burden on farmers. Ricardo sought to bring the whole application and administrative process on-line. The service already offered an on-line application process but still needed hard copies of signatures for verification. Scottish Government made checks with auditors to ensure that this was compliant with RDP requirements and approval was received in March 2020. Covid restrictions necessitated a rapid adoption of this new process, advisers were briefed, and the new process implemented within a week.

The feedback from users of the service has been excellent and it is fantastic to see ratings from users improving year on year.

Feedback

ILMP

- 98% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good. (+4% on last year)
- 100% of users rated the helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good. (+2% on last year)
- 98% of users rated the ease of application process as excellent or good. (+5% on last year)
- 91% of users rated the efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good. (-2% on last year)
- 98% of users of the ILMP would recommend the service to others. (+3% on last year)
- 96% would rate the adviser's working practices as excellent or good (-3% on last year)
- 93% would rate the quality of the report as excellent or good (-6% on last year)
- 77% of farmers state that they will implement all the actions recommended in their ILMP

Specialist Advice

- 98% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good. (+2% on last year)
- 98% of users rated the helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good. (=last year)
- 97% of users rated the ease of application process as excellent or good. (+4% on last year)
- 95% of users rated the efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good. (+2% on last year)
- 100% of respondents would recommend the service to others (4 did not answer this question).
- 98% would rate the adviser's working practices as excellent or good (-1% on last year)
- 95% would rate the quality of the report as excellent or good (-4% on last year)
- 83% state that they will implement all the actions in their advice plan (-12% on last year).

Carbon Audits

- 88% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good. (+8% on last year)
- 91% of users rated the helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good. (+3% on last year)
- 84% of users rated the ease of application process as excellent or good. (+1% on last year)
- 84% of users rated the efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good. (+3% on last year)
- 84% of users of the carbon audit would recommend the service to others.
- 98% would rate the adviser's working practices as excellent or good (+2 on last year)
- 92% would rate the quality of the report as excellent or good (= last year)
- 76% state that they will implement all the actions in their Carbon Audit mitigation plan

Mentoring

- 94% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good. (-6% on last year)
- 94% rated helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good. (-6% on last year)
- 94% rated ease of application process as excellent or good (-6% on last year)
- 94% rate efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good (+12% on last year)
- 100% of users of the mentoring would recommend the service to others.
- 100% would rate the mentor's working practices as excellent or good
- 100% would rate the quality of the support as excellent or good.
- 93% state that they will implement all the actions discussed with their mentor.

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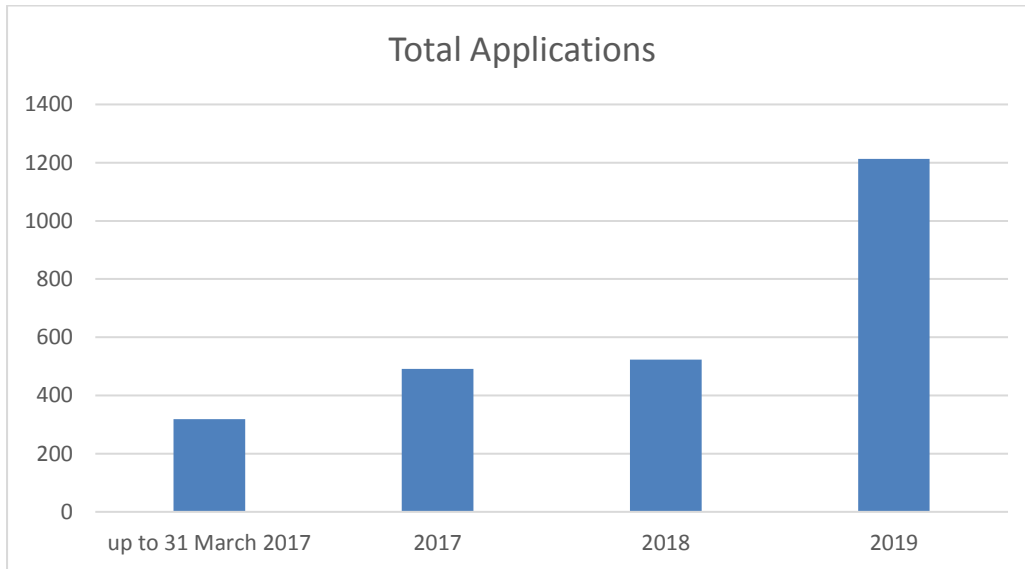
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1 Metrics of delivery

1.1 Applications received

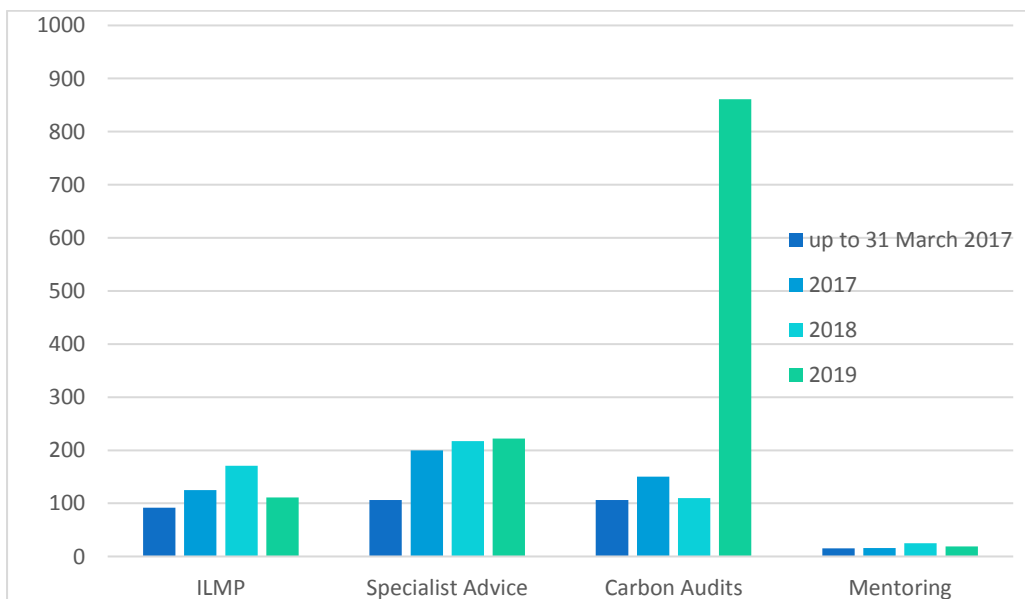
It is encouraging to see an overall year on year increase in the application rate for the service, the programme is building momentum and recognition within the agricultural sector.

Figure 1 Graph to show application rate compared to previous years



Prior to 2019 we had charted an annual increase in applications for all grants (except Carbon Audits). In 2019 the demand for Carbon Audits increased significantly - an influence of the Beef Efficiency Scheme. This increased demand put pressure on adviser availability reducing availability to deliver ILMPs, as a result there was a slight dampening of the uptake of ILMPs. We would anticipate that this will recover in future years. It is disappointing that the uptake of mentoring is not greater as this has been an area that we have focused on in communications as the feedback on this service is exceedingly positive. We will look to access figures on the number of new entrants to the industry, it is possible that uncertainty around Brexit is reducing these numbers.

Figure 2 Graph to show applications for each service

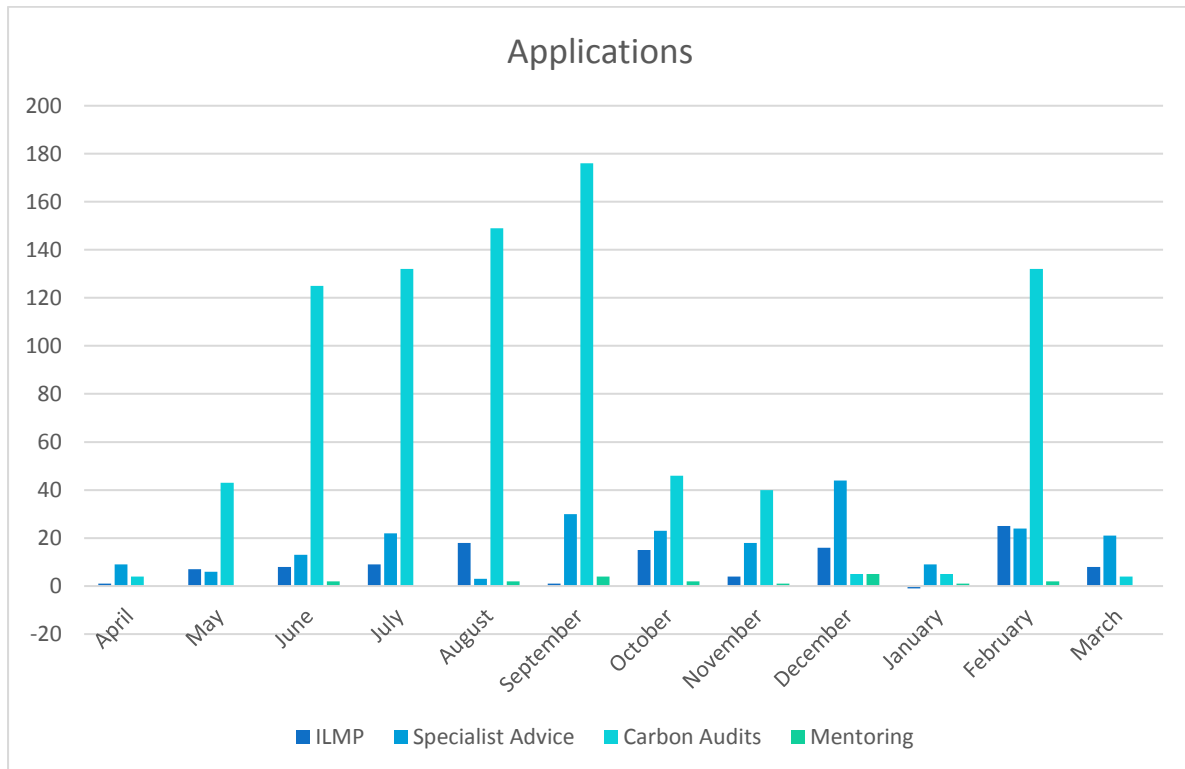


Applications in 2019/20

Table 1 Table to show the application rate for each grant scheme

	Applications received												Total in 2019/20	Targets for year
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March		
ILMP	1	7	8	9	18	1	15	4	16	-1	25	8	111	300
Specialist Advice	9	6	13	22	3	30	23	18	44	9	24	21	222	100
Carbon Audits	4	43	125	132	149	176	46	40	5	5	132	4	861	250
Mentoring	0	0	2	0	2	4	2	1	5	1	2	0	19	60

Figure 3 FAS Applications throughout the year (2019)

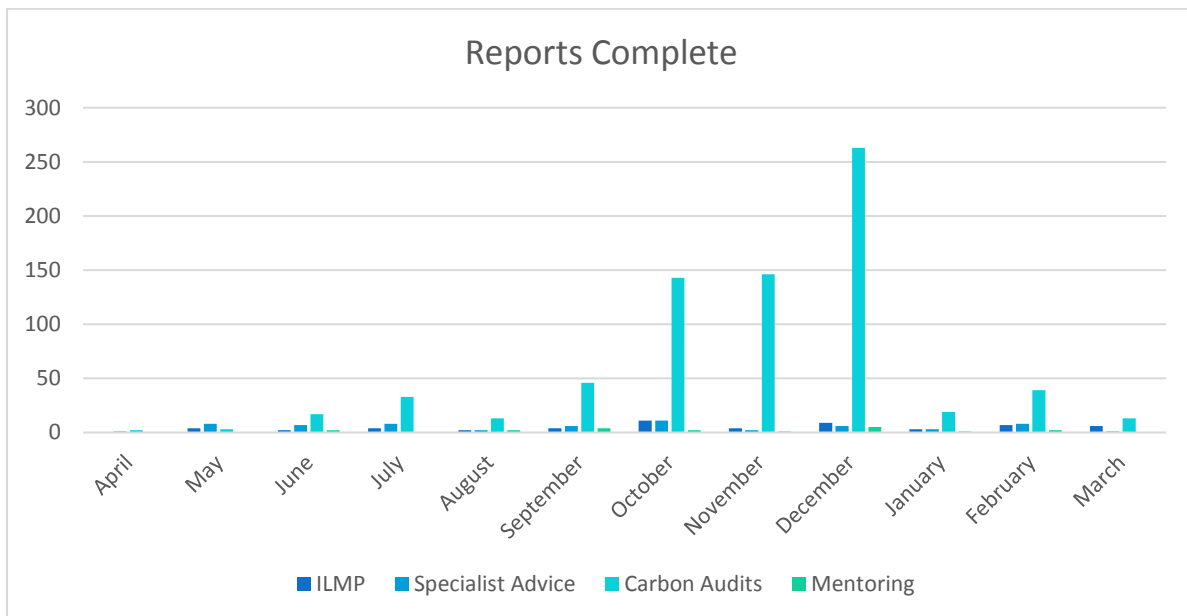


1.2 Reports Completed

Table 2 Table to show the number of reports completed in 2019

	Reports Complete												Total in 2019/20
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	
ILMP	0	4	2	4	2	4	11	4	9	3	7	6	56
Specialist Advice	1	8	7	8	2	6	11	2	6	3	8	1	63
Carbon Audits	2	3	17	33	13	46	143	146	263	19	39	13	737
Mentoring	0	0	2	0	2	4	2	1	5	1	2	0	19

Figure 4 Graph to show reports delivered over the 2019 delivery plan



There are currently 1,094 reports in the system (for which offers have been made, but the report is yet to be completed). Ricardo are active in following up with advisers to stipulate deadlines and checking with applicants that the work is still required and if there are delays that they are happy with the situation and do not wish to change advisers. With the current programme ending in December 2020, all advisers will receive notification in May 2020 of the work they must complete before this deadline.

2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Farming Advisory Service requires all users of the grant schemes to complete an evaluation of the service prior to payment of the grant. Whilst this report provides a high-level summary for 2019/20, detailed analysis of the feedback from each grant scheme has been provided as separate reports, this includes full information and commentary provided by participants:

- 2019 FAS one-to-one review of ILMP Feedback
- 2019 FAS one-to-one review of Specialist Advice Feedback
- 2019 FAS one-to-one review of Mentoring Feedback
- 2019 FAS one-to-one review of Carbon Audit Feedback

2.1 Administration

2.1.1 How users heard about the grant?

The predominant route by which users heard about the ILMP, specialist advice and carbon audits is via contact with an adviser, it is important that we continue to work with the adviser network to ensure that advisers are able and willing to promote the scheme to farmers they engage with. It is important to also ensure that other advice providers; banks; accountants; government offices; SEPA and Scottish Enterprise have a good knowledge of the programme and the ability to refer clients to the service where appropriate. Farmer-to-farmer referrals have grown this year- doubling for specialist advice. This is a real testament to the value of the programme.

2.2 Feedback on the administration

This section of the feedback form is intended to provide feedback on the administration process as delivered by Ricardo, however it is clear from the comments made that respondents are often using this section to feedback on the full experience.

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	% excellent or good	% rating excellent or good	% excellent or good	% rating excellent or good
The ease of access to information as excellent or good	98%	98%	87%	94%
Helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.	100%	98%	91%	94%
Ease of application process as excellent or good.	98%	98%	84%	94%

Efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good	93%	94%	84%	94%
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Feedback on all schemes is excellent and it is really pleasing to see that this has improved further on the position last year. This may be attributed to the introduction of the on-line application process, which has considerably reduced the administrative burden on the farmer. The feedback on the carbon audits falls behind the other services. A review of the carbon audit feedback and the comments for improving the process mainly focus on the need for a carbon audit rather than the administration of the scheme. A couple of comments talk about adviser availability or the length of time it took an adviser to deliver the report. With the very high volume of Carbon Audit applications stemming from the BES scheme, there was a period when most advisers had a backlog of work to deliver. Ricardo managed this process and ensured that advisers and farmers were informed of deadlines and work kept on track, a more even spread of applications through the year and less last minute applications would be preferable, but the administrative team put in a herculean effort to deal with the situation and maintain the service standards.

2.3 Finding an adviser or mentor

Generally, there seem to have been little problem finding suitable advisers and mentors.

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	% rating	% rating	% rating	% rating
Very Easy	74%	79%	71%	56%
Easy	26%	21%	27%	31%
Not Easy	2%	0%	1%	6%

*6% of mentees stated that it was not easy to find a mentor (this equates to one farmer- from their comments it is possible this is a mistake on the form). The one farmer who said it was not easy, goes on to comment '*I found Harry Emslie through a neighbour as we are quite new to the area and didn't know how to contact the right person. Thankfully my neighbour knew Harry and made it easy*'.

A couple of farmers fed back that they struggled to find ILMP advisers with availability, or who were willing to take on the work. Ricardo propose that we address this by adding a paragraph to the offer letter asking the farmer to advise us if they are having issues and with their permission, we can promote the opportunity to the full FBAASS panel.

2.4 Recommend to others

- 100% of users of the mentoring would recommend the service to others.
- 98% of users of the ILMP would recommend the service to others.
- 100% of users of the Specialist Advice would recommend the service to others.
- 84% of users of the carbon audit would recommend the service to others.

This metric is a great barometer for the performance of the programme. The % who would recommend are extremely high. It is pleasing that even with the majority of carbon audit recipients being driven to the programme by need rather than want that such high volumes still felt that the carbon audit was worthwhile and would recommend to others.

2.5 Adviser/Mentor performance

The feedback on all grants is excellent. It is pleasing to see that the advisers and the team delivering quality assurance of reports managed to maintain such a high level of performance in delivering the Carbon Audits. During the final months of 2019 FAS was dealing with hundreds of reports a week. To ensure that quality assurance was maintained Ricardo trained an additional 8 staff to support this role.

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	% <i>rating excellent or good</i>	% <i>rating excellent or good</i>	% <i>rating excellent or good</i>	% <i>rating excellent or good</i>
Working practices (helpfulness, understanding, expertise, etc)?	97%	98%	98%	93%
How would you rate the quality of the report/support you received?	93%	95%	92%	93%

With regards to Carbon Audits, individual advisers- Claire Simonetta, Craig Bothwell, Rhidian Jones were named and the SAC Lanark Office, Owen Farm Services and SAC Oban were all mentioned as providing a good service.

2.6 Impact of the Support

It is interesting to note the top-ranking impacts from each support mechanism.

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
RANK	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Impact</i>
1.	Livestock/crop improvements	Better planning/decision making	Improved soil and nutrient management	Better planning/decision making
2.	Financial benefit from improved profit margin	Financial benefit with improved profit margin	Livestock/crop improvements	Improved soil or nutrient management
3.	Better planning/decision making	Livestock/crop improvements	More awareness about climate change and energy use	Livestock/crop improvements
4.	Financial benefit from reduced costs/overheads	Financial benefit from reduced costs/overheads	More awareness about waste and pollution issues	More awareness of how to comply with legislation
5.	Improved soil or nutrient management	Livestock/crop improvements	Better planning/decision making/ Financial benefit from reduced costs/overheads	Financial benefit from reduced costs/overheads

2.7 Implementing the actions

- 94% of users of the Specialist Advice would implement all the actions recommended
- 93% of users of the Mentoring would implement all the actions recommended
- 77% of users of the ILMP would implement all the actions recommended
- 76% of users of the Carbon Audit would implement all the actions recommended

The aim of the reports is to provide a range of actions, including those that may be quickly implemented now, but also some more stretching ideas for the business to consider. The question asks if the farmer/land manager will implement all the actions suggested. I would suggest it was unlikely that this will ever be the case. This is potentially more likely in the case of specialist advice which tends to be more sharply focused on one issue.

Reasons for not implementing the actions detailed above:

	Too costly	Insufficient time to implement action	I do not understand why this action has been recommended	I do not think this is necessary for my business
Mentoring	0	0	0	0
Carbon Audits	64	42	11	43
ILMP	4	5	0	2
Specialist Advice	2	1	0	5*

* It should be noted that 12% of the Specialist advice reports were RSABI referrals, in these situations the adviser is often having to present unpalatable options for the business which may not be warmly embraced.

3 Training

The one-to-one programme provides training to advisers via the on-line training portal, via face-to-face training workshops and via ongoing communication through the advisers' newsletter.

3.1 Adviser training events

Face-to-face adviser training is delivered each year of the service.

3.1.1 2018 adviser training workshops

Three sessions were delivered during September as follows:

Venue	Adviser Attendance
Tuesday 10th September, Aberdeen	33
Wednesday 11th September, Stirling	35
Thursday 12th September, Dumfries	25

Agenda

- 10.00-10.15, Registration and Coffee
- 10.15- 10.30, Introduction to the day, Caroline Wood
- 10.30- 10.50, Carbon Audit- mitigation action planning, Hugh Martineau
- 10.50- 11.10 Diffuse pollution, SEPA
- 11.10-12.45, Financial resilience in farming businesses and how to mitigate the risks of volatility, Neil Wilson
- 12.45- 1.15, Lunch
- 1.15- 3pm, Determining the correct key performance indicators that drive profit in farm businesses, Andre van Barneveld

The focus of the Carbon audit session was to provide advisers with further training and insight into what mitigation measures specifically have the highest impact on farm, and which areas mitigations should particularly focus on if we are to get the best environmental outcomes

Peter Wright and colleagues from SEPA's land unit provided advisers with an update on the current situation with Diffuse Pollution, the actions that SEPA are taking and how the advisers can help to improve the situation on farm and support both farmers and SEPA in addressing this issue.

Neil Wilson SAB Consultancy: Neil has over 20 years' experience in various banking roles and was Head of Agriculture at HSBC until June 2019. Neil discussed the principles of financial resilience in farming businesses and how to mitigate the risks of volatility.

Andre Van Barneveld, Andre is a farm consultant based in Ireland. He has almost 20 years' experience dairy farming in NZ, from farm worker to sharemilker to farm ownership, followed by consulting in NZ and now in Ireland as Graise Consultancy. Passionate about the dairy industry, efficiencies, margins, breeding and achieving client's objectives. Andre discussed the importance of profit and how to determine the correct key performance indicators that drive profit in farm businesses.

The attendance at the training was the highest to-date, with 93 attendees.

The day sparked a lot of interest and Ricardo have received many positive emails from attendees who found the sessions very informative. To ensure advisers have the information they need to take forward their learning both the presentations and further reading material were circulated to all advisers as an adviser newsletter <https://fas-scot.com/DA4-6IC35-CAPFJ077D8/cr.aspx> this included the template and guidance for delivering resilience planning specialist advice.

4 Adviser FBAASS accreditation

4.1 Re-accreditations

At the close of March 2020, 73 full advisors and 29 associate advisors were registered.

5 Review of reports

A new accreditation process was introduced in 2016, to quality check each advisor and create a clear benchmark for the standard which all advisors should achieve – this relates to both technical competences and style and use of language.

Our accreditation process is integrated into our quality assurance process. We conduct a 'peer' review process with first reports reviewed by a panel of peer reviewers managed by Lanta. The reviewers provide feedback on areas for improvement (if required) and score reports against the following matrix:

Description	Technical Score	Description
Report clearly lays out how scope has been met	10	Technical advice provided appears to fully meets client requirements
Report meets scope but not fully described in report	9	Technical advice provided appears to substantially meets client requirements
Report meets scope but only partially described in report	8	Minor omission in terms of technical advice
Report doesn't cover one minor element of the scope	7	Significant omission in terms of technical advice
Report doesn't cover or describe why one significant element of scope wasn't covered	6	Major omission in terms of technical advice
Significant omission in terms of scope (e.g. primary focus of report not covered)	5	Wrong technical advice in one part of the report
Major omission in terms of scope (e.g. primary and secondary focus of report not covered)	4	Wrong advice throughout the report
Substantial omissions in terms of scope (i.e. majority not covered)	3	Serious technical errors in most of the report
Serious omissions in terms of scope (i.e. failure to address nearly everything)	2	Serious technical errors in all areas of the report
Nothing in report matches scope (i.e. none of the requested support provided)	1	Insufficient technical information in to allow any assessment (report generic not tailored to the client)

The peer review group have been pleased with the overall quality of reports reviewed, with many considered excellent.

Ricardo work with the adviser to ensure that comments from the peer review are addressed and it is only at this stage that reports are issued to customers. The standard of reports is generally good, if a report scores below 6 the subsequent reports from this adviser will be sent to peer review. Otherwise all reports receive an internal review by Ricardo. Should Ricardo have concerns and require a second opinion the peer review group will provide this facility.

5.1 Standards setting

The Quality Review Group met on a quarterly basis throughout the year for a standard setting day. The group jointly review ILMP reports to ensure consistency in scoring between the group.

6 Communications

6.1 Website

During 2019 FAS have continued to build the case study portfolio available on the website to ensure there is fresh, engaging material to engage the audience. With the introduction of new services such as the resilience planning specialist advice Ricardo have worked closely with Will Searle (SAC) to update the pages and amend the on-line application forms to facilitate new applications. The website continues to be reviewed and refined as new content is developed and hosted.

6.2 Case studies

The one to one programme had a target of developing 8 case studies by the end of March 2020, In the case studies we have tried to achieve a balance of promotion across the schemes and how the support has been used and benefitted a range of holding types, from small crofts to large estates, mainland/island, new entrant and those with long experience, women and men.

All case studies developed have been hosted on the FAS website and YouTube channel and have been promoted to stakeholders, via Rural Matters and the FAS newsletter.

These are all available on the FAS website

- Martin Birse, <https://www.fas.scot/integrated-land-management-plans-ilmps/>
- Beef Efficiency Scheme: Genomics podcast featuring Eileen Wall <https://audioboom.com/posts/7533090-beef-efficiency-scheme-genomics-ft-eileen-wall>
- Beverly Wainwright- mentoring new entrants <https://www.fas.scot/mentoring-new-farmers-crofters/>
- Caroline Wood and Hugh Martineau- What can the Farm Advisory Service do for you? <https://www.fas.scot/publication/what-can-the-farm-advisory-service-do-for-you/>
- Danny Miller and Michael Blanche, Find out how an Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP) has helped farmer, Danny Miller, set a path towards reducing costs, improving the profitability of his business <https://www.fas.scot/publication/ilmp-helps-beef-farmer-identify-ways-to-reduce-costs-improve-profitability/>
- Finlay MacIntyre, <https://www.fas.scot/specialist-advice/>
- Cameron Wilson, on the mentoring support he received when looking for help to grow his sheep farming business. <https://www.fas.scot/mentoring-new-farmers-crofters/>

The final case study to round off the year has been delayed. This was to feature Liz Paul another of our female mentors. Filming was scheduled for March but has had to be delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions. This will be completed as soon as we are able to proceed

6.3 Articles

Monthly articles promoting the One-to-one service have been published in Rural Matters and the FAS newsletter and press releases are circulated to press contacts.

6.4 Posters to RPID and SEPA Offices

In April 2019 a poster was been developed for RPID area offices. This was sent to each office with a bundle of promotional fliers. All offices now receive the FAS stakeholder pack so are receiving new information from the service on a quarterly basis.

Could FAS help your farming business to run more efficiently, identify growth opportunities or save costs?



Regardless of farm size or business stage, the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) can help you to increase the profitability and sustainability of your farming business through Government funding for one-to-one advice, worth up to a total of £3,200.

One-to-one support services and funding available:

Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMP)	Commission an adviser to undertake a confidential assessment of the business and help develop plans for the future. Up to £1,200 per plan
Specialist advice	Bring in an expert to take a deeper look at specific issues of concern. Up to £1,000 per plan
Carbon audits	Identify where performance improvements and financial savings can be made. £500 per audit
Mentoring for new entrants to farming	Up to 4 days one-to-one time with a personal mentor

Pick up a leaflet from the front desk or contact us directly at
www.fas.scot | 0300 323 0161 | advice@fas.scot



A further poster promoting the launch of resilience planning was circulated in October 2019

Is your farming business resilient to potential market or funding changes?



– Apply for a £1000 grant for a business resilience plan

A changing economic landscape means that it is now, more important than ever, for Scottish farming business owners to have a clear understanding of the capacity within their business to manage market change or potential changes in subsidies.

Resilient businesses can quickly **adapt to disruptions** while maintaining continuous business operations and **safeguarding people and assets**.

Apply for funding to enlist the help of an expert who will work with you to establish key performance indicators for financial resilience and develop a practical implementation plan to address issues.

Benefit from:

- ✓ practical, step-by-step plan to safeguard business operations;
- ✓ identify opportunities to support and maintain financial resilience;
- ✓ improve business capacity to adapt to market/economic change.

To apply or for more information, contact FAS at
www.fas.scot | 0300 323 0161 | advice@fas.scot



6.5 Targeting crofters

FAS worked with the Crofter Magazine to place an article and arranged for the 'FAS One-to-One for Crofters' flier to be inserted in the August 2019 edition, these went out to an audience of 1,200 crofters.



One-to-one advice and grant support for Scottish crofters

Helping crofting businesses to be successful in a competitive environment

Regardless of land size or business stage, the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) can help croft owners across Scotland to grow their business, increase profitability, improve sustainability and avoid the common pitfalls to success.

It does this through Government grants – worth up to £3,700 – that can be used for business development support and one-to-one expert advice in specialist areas*.

Benefit from:

- expert advice tailored to the specific needs of your business;
- subsidised access to specialist support;
- an understanding of how you are performing compared with similar crofts;
- one-to-one mentoring guidance from an experienced crofter or farmer in your chosen sector.



* Terms and conditions apply. See www.fas.scot for full details.

6.6 Show attendance

- **Highland Show**, the FAS one-to-one was represented at the Highland Show alongside the one-to-many in a wing of the SRUC pavilion. The key value of attending was the opportunities for stakeholder engagement, and the ability to informally update interested parties on the services FAS provides and the range of support available. We received a good number of technical enquiries from farmers, those that could not be addressed on the spot were documented and responded to via the helpline.
- **Women in Agriculture**, FAS took a stand at the Women in Agriculture meeting on the 26th November. This was a highly successful meeting, attended by over 100 women from across the agricultural sector. The speakers were inspiring, and the event had a really positive vibe. The engagement with the FAS stand was excellent, we had one to one discussion with bankers, accountants, lawyers and a range of other intermediaries working in the sector. The majority had heard of FAS but were keen to explore how it linked with the services they deliver. Delegates took away bundles of fliers to further distribute to their clients. It was a worthwhile event for FAS and one we will look to continue to support in the future
- **FAS New Entrants Gathering**, the FAS One-to-One provided a stand and information at this year's gathering. The event was well attended and there was good interest in the service. Our

impression from talking to attendees was that compared to previous years there were more delegates who were looking at the options for the future, for when they take on the farm, then currently having control. Whilst this group can not yet utilise the mentoring service, many were able to take back to the farm information on the other services.

6.7 Briefings for SEPA and SNH staff

- **SEPA**, on the 21st May, Caroline Wood provided an update to SEPA field staff on the support available via the FAS. There was considerable interest, particularly in the role the specialist advice could play in tackling soil and diffuse pollution issues.
- **SNH**, Kirsty Hutchinson arranged for Ricardo to provide a FAS update to SNH staff, on 21st August 2019

6.8 Social media feed

Since August 2017 Ricardo have provided Will Searle, SAC with a twitter and social media schedule, this provides one-to-one content for two tweets per week. Will, issues these via the FAS account

6.9 Stakeholder pack

The FAS stakeholder pack containing links to all FAS press resources, case studies, press releases, articles and flyers was first developed in December 2017 a new pack is issued on a quarterly basis. The premise of the stakeholder pack is to provide information in order that stakeholders can pick and choose relevant material for inclusion in their own publications. The stakeholder pack is sent to a growing list of stakeholders, currently 183. Links below provide detail of the content of each pack:

April 2019 (released on 29 March) This issue includes newsletter content on anticipating the impact of Brexit, and what farming businesses can do to strengthen resilience and safeguard profitability in a climate of change. We also showcase a new video case study about Pitgaveny Farm –a 6,000 acre lowland estate, with 3,714 acres of farmland –where substantial business savings were identified following completion of a FAS-supported Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP) and specialist advice. In addition, we bring you two new case studies focusing on one-to-one mentoring for a new entrant. The case studies provide perspectives from the crofter, who benefitted from practical one-to-one training with an experienced farmer in his local community, and the mentor himself on the mentoring experience and what he got out of it. https://www.fas.scot/downloads/fas-2019-stakeholder-pack-march-2019/?utm_source=Ricardo-AEA%20Ltd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=10392395_SFAS%2FNAO-BB%2FED61746005%2FStakeholder_Mar19&dm_i=DA4.66QTN,PFJ077,OCTYI,1

September 2019, the quarterly stakeholder pack was released in September to announce the availability of resilience planning specialist advice. This was sent to 218 contacts in stakeholder organisations. Click on link to see full content: https://www.fas.scot/downloads/fas-stakeholder-pack-sept19/?utm_source=Ricardo-AEA%20Ltd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=10873318_SFAS%2FNAO-BB%2FED61746005%2FStakeholder_Sept19&dm_i=DA4.6H1WM,PFJ077,POKYU,1

January 2020, <https://fas-scot.com/DA4-6REHM-CAPFJ077D8/cr.aspx?v=1> We highlight how recent changes to funding restrictions for resilience planning will help Scottish farming businesses safeguard against market change. The Scottish Government has lifted the March 2020 deadline for applications to extend resilience planning support to Scottish farmers and crofters indefinitely. This change comes as a result of widespread positive feedback received from industry following a successful trial to pilot the new grant support.

We also highlight the benefits of mentoring new farmers and crofters who are looking to grow their business and learn practical, day-to-day farm management skills, and how experienced farmers can share knowledge and cover their time financially. In addition, we include information on the importance of increasing the numbers of women in agriculture and how FAS can support this underrepresented demographic.

April 2020, in this stakeholder pack, we highlight the vital support and resources available to Scottish farmers and crofters to help in these challenging times. As well as information on our core one-to-one

services, we point to a range of useful resources for managing the farm business during COVID-19. <https://fas-scot.com/DA4-6SSKD-CAPFJ077D8/cr.aspx>

6.10 Stakeholder Meetings

The stakeholder meetings are an opportunity for FAS to discuss delivery plans and provides a forum for information sharing, building collaboration between groups and ensuring that the various streams of advice delivery are complimentary and well-coordinated.

The current invitation list for FAS stakeholder meetings is:

Sarah Millar	QMS
Colleen McCulloch	Soil Association
Mags Granger	RSABI
Jack Dalziel	SG
Caroline Wood	Ricardo
Hugh Martineau	Ricardo
Andrew Bauer	SAC
Will Searle	SAC
Jen Craig	NSA
Chris Bailey	RSPB
Peter Begbie	SG
Ian Davidson	
Lyn White	Scottish Forestry
Kevin Patrick	
Claire Hodge	AHDB
David Mitchie	Soil Association
Megan Welford	Soil Association
June Geyer	Women in Agriculture
Alice De Soer	CAAV/SAAVA
Liz Barron-Majerik	Lantra
Ian Muirhead	AICC
Jenny Brunton	NFUS
Neil McCorkindale	SBA
Eleanor Kay	Scottish Land and Estates
Patrick Krause	SCF
Duncan Waldman	SG
Gordon Jackson	SG
Lorna Teague	Lantra
Jim Booth	SAOS
Henry Graham	Agricultural Champions
Stephen Young	SLA
Chris Leslie	AHDB
Stuart Martin	Dairy Hub/NFUS
Penny Montgomerie	Chief Executive, Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs
Stewart Hendry	Forestry and Land Scotland
Sarah Allen	Land Commission

Meetings Held

- **June 2019**, the second stakeholder group meeting took place on the 10th June. The agenda included speakers from FAS, Women in Agriculture, QMS, SOAS and Soil Association. The intention of this second meeting was to stimulate more information sharing of what works and how we can support each other to provide a more comprehensive service to farmers. The speaker from Women in Agriculture- June Geyer provided some valuable feedback on how to ensure communications were more inclusive. She recommended the use of direct mail- addressed to the farm business rather than using email to a specific individual. The value of this slightly less targeted approach was that the information was better shared within the farm management team and therefore more likely to be picked up.
- **November 2019**, the stakeholder meeting took place on 25th November at Oatridge College, this was attended by 16 stakeholders representing AHDB, QMS, RSABI, Lantra, NFUS, SCF, RSPB, Forestry and Land Scotland. This provided stakeholders with an update on FAS activities and a focused session with Ian Davidson looking at the Land Matching Service.

FAS are keen to grow the stakeholder involvement and happy to expand this group if there are others who are interested in attending.

6.11 FBAASS Advisers Newsletters

FAS provide newsletter to FBAASS advisers to ensure that advisers are kept up to date on the programme and are informed of any new developments in the programme. The newsletter is released approximately bi-monthly, but this is dependent on need. Our experience is that advisers do not have time to read communications, therefore we try to collate information and keep newsletters punchy to try to ensure that they receive due attention.

- April Adviser newsletter <https://fas-scot.com/DA4-68ME1-CAPFJ077D8/cr.aspx>
- July Adviser newsletter <https://fas-scot.com/DA4-6EZ34-CAPFJ077D8/cr.aspx>
- October 2019 Adviser Newsletter <https://fas-scot.com/DA4-6IC35-CAPFJ077D8/cr.aspx>
- March 2020 Adviser Newsletter <https://fas-scot.com/DA4-6REHM-CAPFJ077D8/cr.aspx?v=1>
- April 2020 Adviser newsletter <https://fas-scot.com/DA4-6SSKD-CAPFJ077D8/cr.aspx>

7 RSABI support

FAS work closely with RSABI to ensure that farmers and crofters in need are able to access professional support swiftly. RSABI act as a gatekeeper and refer on to FAS for specialist advice farmers who they have discerned require emergency assistance. It was agreed by Scottish Government that in these limited circumstances farmers will be allowed access directly to specialist advice without the need for a prior/or corresponding ILMP. The specialist advice will receive funding up to a limit of £1,000. This service is well used, and the advisers brought in to deliver this support show great willing to prioritise this work and get out to the businesses as quickly as possible. The advice is not always what the business wants to hear, and in these cases RSABI are able to broker discussions and help support the business throughout.

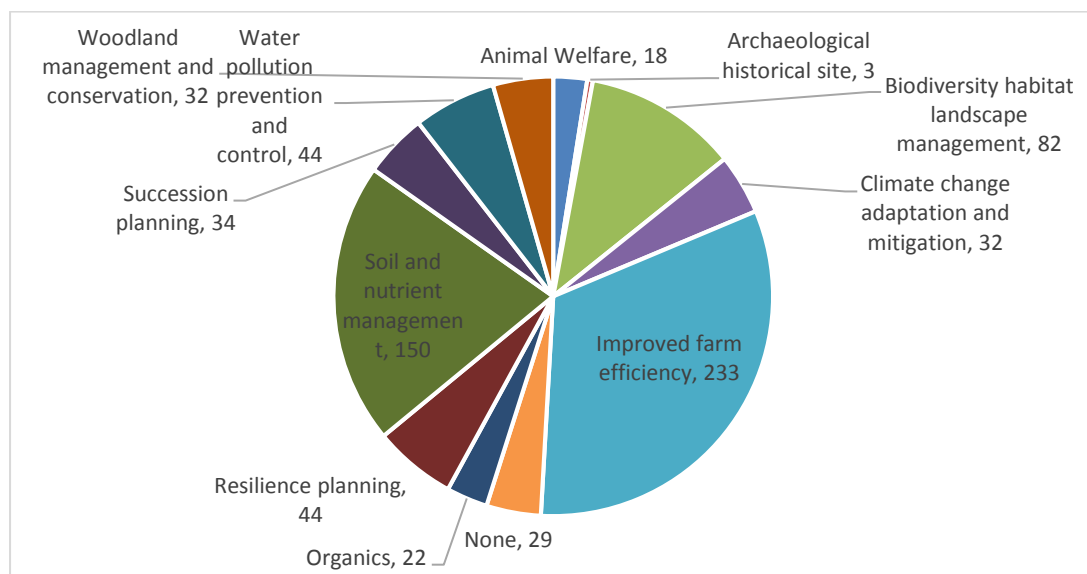
8 New Initiatives

8.1 Launch of resilience planning specialist advice

In October 2019, following training of the team in September, new resilience planning specialist advice was launched. This was launched in response to concerns that farmers were not making forward plans for their businesses in light of Brexit and preparing for market changes. This was promoted with posters in the RPID offices and in the agricultural press:

- Scottish Dairy Hub: <https://scottishdairyhub.org.uk/notices/farm-resilience-planning-funding>
- Scottish Rural Network: <https://www.ruralnetwork.scot/news-and-events/news/specialist-advice-essential-component-farm-resilience-planning>
- The Scottish Farmer: <https://www.thescottishfarmer.co.uk/news/18005652.funding-will-support-farm-resilience-planning/>
- Scotland's Rural College: https://www.sruc.ac.uk/news/article/2490/funding_for_farm_resilience_planning
- The Strutt and Parker Autumn Newsletter https://2391de4ba78ae59a71f3-fe3f5161196526a8a7b5af72d4961ee5.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/6915/7020/2594/Farming_Update_-_Autumn_2019.pdf

Uptake and interest in these plans have been good and there were 44 resilience planning specialist advice offers this delivery year.



8.2 Application process now fully electronic

In order to reduce the administrative burden on farmers Ricardo sought to bring the whole application and administrative process on-line. Scottish Government made checks with auditors to ensure that this was compliant with RDP requirements and approval was received in March 2020. Covid restrictions necessitated a rapid adoption of this new process, advisers were briefed, and the new process implemented within a week. This has enabled the programme to proceed as normal and we no longer require applicants to post documents of Ricardo staff to access offices to receive them.

9 Payment Mechanisms

9.1 Approach to payment

Ricardo administer the payments directly to advisers on the Scottish Government's behalf. Ricardo operate a separate bank account with funds being drawn down into the dedicated bank account in accordance with financial profiling. We have developed this process to ensure the following:

- No monies are awarded without evidence of the work being completed or support being provided (evidence saved onto the CRM).
- All monies to be paid in arrears.
- The monies are ring-fenced and separated from Ricardo's own accounts.

9.1.1 Overview of payment transfers

In the period 1st April 2019 to 27th March 2020 Ricardo administered 13 pay-runs, delivered on a rolling 4 weekly cycle. During this period £390,192 was transferred to advisers for work completed.