

# FAS One-to-Many Business Plan

## 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018



Web Version (1) – 10 October 2017

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## FAS Business Plan

### 1. Vision for the Farm Advisory Service

Scotland's Farm Advisory Service (FAS) is a professional, modern advisory service that continues to facilitate increases in the profitability and environmental performance of farmers and crofters throughout Scotland.

### 2. Outcomes

The outcomes aim to achieve the main priorities of the SRDP and support the Future of Scottish Agriculture outcomes. The proposed outcomes for the FAS (one-to-many component) are:

- Knowledgeable and multi-skilled farmers and crofters capable of delivering business, societal and environmental benefits within a complex legislative and physical operating environment.
- Greater uptake of agricultural practises that deliver increased economic performance whilst mitigating against climate change and enhancing biodiversity status.
- Increasing numbers of dynamic young people successfully entering Scottish Agriculture, thereby injecting vigour in the development of thriving farm and rural businesses.
- Easy access to up-to-date and relevant knowledge and information to all farmers and crofters through a network of advisory centres, on-line resources and a telephone advice facility
- Land managers using key national performance metrics (benchmarks).
- Improved uptake of integrated methods of managing plant and animal health, including the safer use of and reduced reliance on pesticides and antibiotics.
- Improved water quality through a reduction in diffuse pollution and run-off.

### 3. Key Deliverables

The key deliverables of the One-to-Many Farm Advisory Service Scotland for 2017-18 are:

#### **An integrated National One-to-Many Advisory Service**

A continually evolving and flexible series of Scotland-wide events, publications, tools, benchmarks, technical notes, training courses, videos, webinars etc. that delivers knowledge and understanding and achieves uptake of modern, efficient and compliant practices that benefit business and environment.

One-to-Many Advisory Service activities will focus on the following 8 areas:

1. Animal Health & Welfare	5. Farm Woodlands
2. Soil Nutrient Network Farms	6. Business Resilience
3. Water Resource Management (includes Farming & Water Scotland)	7. Crop Health
4. Climate Change & Environment (includes Farming for a Better Climate)	8. New Entrants

The listed themes have been selected to reflect Scottish Government priorities. A degree of flexibility has been incorporated into the programme to accommodate new and emerging priorities.

#### **A discounted Subscription and One-to-One Consultancy Service for Crofts and Small Farms.**

This service, providing generic advice, will increase the opportunity for knowledge transfer to those farmers and crofters who, because of the scale of their operations and/or location, are economically disadvantaged.

#### **A National Advice Facility (Hub)**

A national facility that represents the entire FAS programme (one-to-many and one-to-one components) It consists of a national telephone advice line, website (with online resources and FAQ's) and social media capability. The telephone advice-line and online facility will encourage users to register interest in events, access information and signpost to other sources of information.

An awareness raising campaign to optimise uptake of the Farm Advisory Service that will be national and coordinated with Ricardo.

## 4. Performance Measures

### 4.1.1 National One-to-Many Programme Measures

The National One-to-Many Advisory Service is a programme of activity that incorporates meetings, workshops, discussion groups and publications (e.g. newsletters, articles, technical notes and case studies). In 2017/18 the programme will be organised and delivered under eight main topics.

Events and discussion groups will form the largest proportion of delivery. Performance measures for these activities are:

- Number of events and discussion groups (176)
- Number of attendees (4,048)
- Average attendance (23)
- Satisfaction feedback scores (>3 very satisfactory)

Table 1, below, presents proposed outputs by topic. The aim for 2017/18 is to achieve an average attendance of 23 (+2 per event from 2016/17). It should be noted that for certain events (for example the new entrants programme and other workshop formats) 10 to 12 attendees is the preferred attendance level, which increases the average attendance at all other events to be in excess of 25. Postponement of events will be considered where there is the likelihood of a poor turnout.

**Table 1: Proposed outputs by topic**

Outputs - 2017-18 Plan						
Topics	Events, Meetings & Workshops	Secondary Events	Documents for Publication	Video/ Podcast	Newsletter	Student Lectures
Animal Health & Welfare	17	0	162	0	0	0
Soil and Nutrient Network	24	0	18	4	0	0
Water Resource Management	12	44	11	6	0	0
Climate Change & Environment	31	6	33	5	2	0
Crop Health	8	0	22	0	0	0
Business Efficiency	14	0	7	0	12	0
New entrants	46	0	11	8	2	5
Farm Woodlands	5	20	34	0	0	2
Croft & Small Farm	0	0	14	9	4	0
Discussion Groups	19	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>

Note: Secondary events are those “events” that will be delivered in conjunction with another topic, where the other topic will be the primary focus. A secondary event will not be counted as an output if that output is recorded under another topic.

The balance of delivery reflects the provision of knowledge, data, guidance and advice in other forms, both digital (social media etc.) and more traditional formats (Technical Notes and publications). In addition to the performance metrics noted in table 1, the following metrics will also be monitored - Number of technical notes available; Number of press articles produced; Number of tweets, farm texts, Facebook updates produced; Number of hits, likes and shares on website and social media; Number of times tools/apps are used; Publication circulation levels; Levels of on-line data capture.

#### 4.1.2 Croft & Small Farm Advisory Service Measures

The Crofter and Small Farm Advisory Service provides discounted subscription and consultancy services for generic advice to crofting businesses and small farm businesses, where the latter is broadly defined as a business operating on less than 30Ha. The inclusion of workshops/training and guidance materials for small holders is an addition for 2017/18, and reflects a demand and need for delivery to this sector. Performance measures are, therefore, largely based on the predicted uptake of subscriptions and consultancy between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018:

- 2,250 croft subscriptions started
- 300 small farm subscriptions started
- 2,925 hours of discounted crofter consultancy time
- 150 hours of discounted small farm subscription time

The key consultancy subject areas of anticipated delivery under the Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service and the outcomes they are expected to achieve are listed:-

<b>Subject areas</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Business, finance and planning including advice on grant schemes.	Development of financially and environmentally sustainable businesses.
Specific crofting advice	Targeted and relevant advice relating to the complex legislative nature of crofting
Regulations including cross compliance	Reduced pollution risks and improved water quality. Smallholders and crofters more aware of obligations under cross-compliance rules and regulations. Reduced number of breaches
Conservation and biodiversity	More habitats under active management enhancing biodiversity and minimising damage to natural and built heritage and improved public access and integration.
Woodland	Development of land management plans to help Scottish Government meet woodland creation targets
Livestock enterprises - including health planning and animal welfare	Improved animal welfare through better nutrition, management and housing leading to better carbon efficiency. Improved biosecurity to reduce risks of animal disease epidemics and zoonosis.
Crop advice including Pollution Prevention and Organic farming	Improved crop health and less environmentally damaging use of pesticides through the use of integrated pest management techniques which see sustainable intensification and food production as important.
Climate change and environment	Improved efficiency and awareness of climate change issues leading to more carbon efficient systems

#### 4.1.3 National Advice Facility

The following performance measures are proposed for the delivery of the National Advice Facility:

- Website availability (97%)
- Website bounce rate (<50%)
- Response time for call-backs - 90% within 6 working hours.
- Response time for routine queries - 90% within 1 working day.
- Response time for detailed queries - 90% within 2 working days.
- Response time for complex queries - 100% within 5 working days.
- Any email queries must be responded to within 1 working day of receipt.

## Appendix 1: Delivery and Programme Management

### Context

For 2017/18 a total of eight core topics have been identified, around which meetings and workshops will be created. Each topic will be led by a specialist core topic leader who will determine the agenda for a set number of events based on their discussions with Scottish Government policy leads, their work with the Main Research Providers (in particular the outputs from the Strategic Research Programme) and their understanding of the sector. The eight core topics are:

5. Animal Health & Welfare	9. Farm Woodlands
6. Soil Nutrient Network Farms	10. Business Resilience
7. Water Resource Management (includes Farming & Water Scotland)	11. Crop Health
8. Climate Change & Environment (includes Farming for a Better Climate)	12. New Entrants

The proposed programme is aimed at providing the advice and guidance to crofters and farmers that will improve the integrated management of Scotland’s natural resources. A number of initiatives inform and underpin the delivery of the programme. These include Farming for a Better Climate (FFBC), Farming and Water Scotland (FWS) and PLANET. Cross Compliance, Climate Change & Biodiversity and Business Efficiency & Viability will therefore be **cross-cutting** across all eight topics.

This business plan has been developed in liaison with Ricardo AEA. The two components of the Farm Advisory Service (one-to-one and one-to-many) are complementary and key elements of delivery within each, (in particular the advice hub within the one-to-many component) are very closely coordinated to ensure a consistent service and brand that is identifiable as one coherent FAS.

### Management Structure



The management structure, shown in the figure opposite, has been designed to place delivery of the FAS at the centre of SAC Consulting, to ensure that the programme is fully integrated and that specialists are employed to deliver high quality events and resources.



## **Programme Board**

The Programme Board's purpose is to:

- Have overall control of the programme, ensuring fully integrated delivery
- Oversee the implementation and delivery of the FAS programme across Scotland.
- Lead the preparation of the FAS Business Plan ensuring that it meets the requirements of the client and the recipients.
- Coordinate activities across SAC and SRUC in the key performance areas of: finance, quality, development, integration, customer service, innovation, processes and people.

## **Programme Management**

The role of the Programme Management Team is to:

- Manage the implementation and delivery of the FAS programme across SAC and SRUC to ensure effective coordination and that the needs of the client are met.
- Manage, monitor and report on KPI and other agreed performance measures.

## **National Advice Facility**

The FAS website and advice line form a hub of information and resources available to farmers and crofters across Scotland. The advice line is managed by Ricardo as a subcontractor to SAC, and the website is managed and delivered by SAC. The purpose of this function is to:

- Manage the delivery of the National Advice Facility to ensure it provides excellent customer service and delivers the targets expected using agreed and relevant performance measures.

## **Programme Integration Team**

This team has been established to ensure that the entire FAS programme meets the integration requirements of the Scottish Government. The team will coordinate the resources and expertise to develop and deliver a programme that meets the requirements of the Scottish Government. The purpose of the Programme Integration Team is to:

- Co-ordinate and integrate the programme of activities delivering comprehensive provision across Scotland.
- Provide overall guidance on cross compliance, climate change and environment, business efficiency and crofting and small-scale farming.

## **Core Topic Leaders**

The Core Topic Leaders have responsibility for proposing and delivering projects relating to the eight topics. Their role is to define the core of the FAS programme, incorporating feedback from the Scottish Government and industry partners and coordinating resources across the office network to deliver events, publications, guidance, tools and other resources. The purpose of these topic leaders is to:

- Identify key priorities and issues that will be addressed through the events programme.
- Liaise with the Scottish Government, industry bodies, the FAS delivery network (SAC offices) and the Programme Integration Team
- Capture relevant research outputs and incorporate into the FAS programme



## Appendix 2: Delivery Proposals by Topic

Delivery of the One-to-Many FAS is split into three main components:

- The National One-to-Many Advisory Service
- The Crofter and Small Farm Advisory Service
- The National Advice Facility - The “Hub”

Each of these is addressed in the sections that follow.

### One-to-Many Advisory Service - Descriptors

The objective of the programme is to deliver an integrated advisory service where the interdependency and benefits of the subjects delivered can be recognised by the recipients leading to multiple gains and improvements in levels of environmental, economic and compliance performance of the industry. This part of the programme constitutes 67% of the programme and will continue to develop and evolve throughout the year.

In addition to long established programmes relating to new entrants and crop health, new themes have been adopted to reflect SACs understanding of both Scottish Government priorities and the issues being faced by the sector. The proposed topics and the issues they will set out to address are:

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Issues</b>
Animal health & welfare	Resilience planning; Cattle housing and ventilation; Lameness in cattle and sheep; Cow and Bull Management; Estimated breeding values; Dairy calf nutrition
Soil management	Soil biodiversity; management techniques; assessing and valuing soil; protecting and improving soil resilience
Water resource management	Reduction of diffuse pollution risks; Value of biodiversity; Management techniques; valuing and protecting water resources
Climate Change & Environment	Energy use; renewables; carbon sequestration; nutrient use; optimising livestock productivity; Renewables
Crop health	Crop disease and insect monitoring; integrated pest management
Business resilience	Succession; business efficiency; integrated farm management; climate change; planning; risk management; supply chains; diversification and renewables
New entrants	Succession; cross compliance & greening; business management; animal welfare; diversification
Farm woodlands	Woodland for shelter; Woodland planning and management; Woodland planting financial viability; Woodlands and farm succession planning; Post-establishment management; renewables; biodiversity; improved public access provision and integration; forestry and hedges as EFA greening options.

These will form the core of the events programme, with the rest being developed through the local office network in response to local need. This means that the programme retains a high degree of flexibility enabling the programme to be responsive to new or changing priorities.

A broad range of delivery techniques will be deployed. This programme is not based solely on “events”, (where events are typically on-farm meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars etc.) but a significant proportion of delivery over the life of the programme will be in other forms, such as case studies, websites, mobile applications, technical notes, guidance notes, podcasts, smart tools and datasets.

## **Animal Health & Welfare**

### ***A. Desired Outcomes***

The outcomes that this programme aims to support are:

- Improved animal health and welfare throughout Scotland
- Compliance with regulatory standards
- Improved profitability of the Scottish livestock sector

### ***B. Priority topics***

The priorities for the animal health and welfare topic are:

- Resilience planning
- Cattle housing and ventilation
- Lameness in cattle and sheep
- Cow and Bull Management
- Estimated breeding values
- Dairy calf nutrition

### ***C. Outputs***

The specific deliverables proposed for the year are:

- A programme of campaigns and events that are designed to aid the implementation of Scottish Government policy and address the resolution of animal welfare issues.
- A series of articles written for the FAS website, newsletters and other publications to address topical animal welfare issues. Many will be integrated with other themes such as cross compliance, pollution and climate change.
- Provision of advice to the Scottish Government and other organisations involved with the livestock industry in Scotland.
- New technical notes will be written in response to demand from the Scottish Government.
- 12 existing technical notes will be reviewed and updated during 2017/18. Others will be rebranded or archived to ensure that the information available to farmers and crofters is current.
- Provision of specialist services to the statutory enforcement authorities.

## Soil Management and the Nutrient Network Farms

### A. Desired Outcomes

The outcomes that this programme aims to support are:

- Farmers with a better understanding of soils, nutrients and soil biodiversity
- Improved efficiency of production through more targeted nutrient applications
- Compliance with regulatory standards
- Increased number of farmers doing soil analysis and nutrient budgeting
- Increased awareness of impact of relevant agricultural activities on climate change, soil biodiversity and pollution prevention

### B. Priority topics

The priorities for the Soil and Nutrient Network farms are:

- Understanding soils
- Soil Structure and compaction
- Soil pH
- Nutrient planning
- Making best use of Organic fertilisers and manures
- Soil Biodiversity
- Organic matter and soil erosion

Twelve Nutrient Network farms have been established across Scotland in the following areas:

Locations (No of meetings in 2017/18)			
Skye (2)	Aberdeenshire (2)	Roxburghshire (2)	Lewis & Harris (2)
W Lothian (2)	Ross-shire (2)	Caithness* (2)	Dumfriesshire (3)
Peeblesshire* (1)	Lanarkshire* (2)	Angus (2)	Argyll - Kintyre (2)
Total of 24 Meetings in 2017/18		*Another 3 farms will be sought to replace those NN farms finishing in 2017	

### C. Outputs

The specific deliverables proposed for the year are:

- Farmer meetings on the individual farms
- Case studies from each farm will be posted on the Farming & Water Scotland website (within the FAS website)
- A summary of the data collected such as slurry and manure analysis and soil analysis and soil biodiversity will be collated and made available on the FWS website
- One new technical note will be developed and two existing technical notes will be reviewed and updated.
- Encourage farmers to carry out nutrient budgeting using PLANET and SRUC fertiliser technical notes.
- Provision of content for FAS social media

## **Water Resource Management**

### ***A. Desired Outcomes***

Working closely with the Farming and Water Scotland brand, this topic aims to:

- Raise awareness of the important role farmers can play in improving water quality and reducing diffuse pollution risks
- Assist farmers to understand how they can achieve compliance with regulations which support water quality
- Highlight the business benefits to farmers from taking an active role in water protection
- Improve profitability and efficiency within Scottish agriculture
- Help to protect and improve water quality within Scotland

### ***B. Priority topics***

There will be an increased focus on:

- Improving and maintaining soil quality
- Watercourse management; ditching and dredging
- Managing steading drainage and Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Alternative watering Systems for field grazed livestock
- Introduction to Diffuse Pollution Priority Catchments

### ***C. Outputs***

The specific deliverables proposed for the year are:

- On-farm demonstration events (x10)
- Events in new Diffuse Pollution Priority Catchments (6 events; tbc)
- Input to other FAS events as required
- Produce videos at on farm events for promotion via FWS webpages and social media
- Provision of information for promotion via FWS via social media (Facebook and Twitter)
- Contribution to FAS newsletter
- Completion of Steading Drainage and RSuDS Technical note

## Climate Change & Environment

### A. *Desired Outcomes*

The outcomes that this programme aims to support are:

- Raise awareness of the important role farmers can play in climate change mitigation
- Promote the need for farmers to consider measures to adapt to climate change
- Maintain and promote the Farming for a Better Climate brand and web provision as a source of practical information and ideas
- Ensure integration of messages into the FAS core topics
- Improve profitability and efficiency within Scottish agriculture
- Reduction in emissions from the Scottish agricultural sector.

### B. *Priority topics*

The five key action areas listed in section 1 will be prioritised within the strategic programme, with an increased focus on:

- livestock performance
- nutrient use efficiency
- soil health, improvement and management
- using technology (e.g. precision farming techniques)

### C. *Outputs*

The specific deliverables proposed for the year are:

- Support **integration of Farming for a Better Climate topics within the FAS programme** to maximise opportunities for promotion of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures
- On-going development of the Farming for a Better Climate **website** and its migration to within the FAS website, changing the emphasis towards topics and providing practical adaptation and mitigation ideas tailored to the Scottish agricultural sector
- On-going development of **practical guides** to highlight key mitigation and adaptation options
- Production of farmer **case studies**, highlighting how others have reduced emissions, adapted to a changing climate and improved their farm business
- Regular posts via **social media** (Facebook and Twitter) accounts, promoting practical mitigation and adaptation measures
- Provision of **articles** for the farming press
- Production of **video** content. This could be from meetings, allowing other farmers to benefit from ideas at FAS events, or focusing on content within the five key action areas. Three farmer friendly 'explainer' videos will be produced focusing on climate change and agriculture.

## Crop Health

### *A. Desired Outcomes*

The outcomes that this programme aims to support are:

- Maintain Scotland's high crop health status
- Reduced reliance on pesticides
- Increase uptake of integrated and sustainable crop protection methods
- Compliance with regulatory standards
- Improved profitability of the Scottish crop sector

### *B. Priority topics*

The priorities for the crop health activity are:

- Integrated pest management (IPM)
- Safe and sustainable use of pesticides

**Winter workshops** (4 events). These workshops will be held in partnership with AHDB and will promote best practice. Integrated pest management and the sustainable use of pesticides will be priority topics. In January 2018, events will be held in Inverness, Carfraemill, Inverurie and Perth.

**Articles and technical notes.** A series of articles will be published through the farming press highlighting the key issues of the season and promoting the sustainable use of pesticides and the use of integrated pest management

**Advice to policy.** Support to SG policy staff in relation to pesticide, crop health or IPM will be supplied as requested.

### *C. Outputs*

The specific deliverables proposed for the year are:

- A series of articles in the farming press on crop health / IPM issues
- Advice to the Scottish Government and other organisations involved with crop production and crop health.
- Technical Notes written in response to specific demand. Updating previous technical notes to ensure they are current.
- Arable farmers receiving advice under the programme are aware of their obligations with respect to under cross-compliance applied to certain support payments.

## **Business Resilience**

### ***A. Desired Outcomes***

The outcomes that this programme aims to support are:

- Improved access to market and economic information for farmers in Scotland.
- Provision of tools and benchmarks to help farmers understand current business performance, identify areas for improvement and strengthen business resilience.
- Raise awareness of the link between business efficiency, resource use efficiency and environmental impact.
- Improve the profitability of the Scottish agricultural sector and so ensure continued support for the food processing sectors which it supplies.

### ***B. Priority topics***

The priorities for the business efficiency topic are:

- Business publications - Agribusiness News (12 issues) and the Farm Management Handbook
- On-going management of datasets
- Publication and promotion of National Priority Indicators
- Creation and management of online business tools
- Events to ensure cross compliance and adaptation to new legislation

### ***C. Outputs***

The specific deliverables proposed for the year are:

- Agribusiness News - monthly market and industry newsletter
- Farm Management Handbook - annual enterprise margin data
- Datasets – provision and maintenance of Scottish relevant agricultural commodity data on-line (prices, output, inputs, supply and demand)
- National Priority Indicators – guideline national benchmark data by sector to provide guidance on farm performance and areas for improvement.
- Online tools – user-friendly tools and guides for farmers to assess the current technical and financial performance and sign-post towards improvement steps and resources.
- Specific events for stand-alone topics and support for events delivered under other FAS topics.
- Briefing notes – periodic concise guides to topical business and financial issues.



## **New Entrants**

### ***A. Desired Outcomes***

The outcomes that this programme aims to support are:

- Increasing the number of young entrepreneurs entering farming
- Better prepare those entering the industry to build profitable and resilient businesses
- Encourage higher value job opportunities within agriculture and rural communities
- Support transition of responsibility and farm business succession
- Improve linkages and raise awareness of available support and networks for new entrants

These outcomes will promote a more dynamic and competitive land based sector, with an improved age demographic.

### ***B. Priority topics***

The priorities for the new entrant topic are:

- Business skills (incorporating cashflows, accounts and benchmarking)
- Commodity and added-value markets and marketing
- Technical efficiency
- Opportunities through joint venture farming arrangements
- Succession planning
- Networking and support.

### ***C. Outputs***

The specific deliverables proposed for the year are:

- Regional new entrant meetings (13 x 2 meetings)
- Regional workshops (17 workshops focusing on marketing, joint venture farming, innovation and entrepreneurial activity)
- Student engagement seminars (5 meetings)
- New Entrants Gathering (1 conference)
- Case studies (3 – Crofting, tenancies, succession)
- Guidance note resource to support the wider sector (2 new and 6 updates)
- Social media and website information hub (on-going).

## **Farm Woodlands**

### ***A. Desired Outcomes***

The outcomes that this programme aims to support are:

- Woodland creation and improved woodland management
- Compliance with the UK Forest Standard
- Increased diversity and resilience of farm businesses

### ***B. Priority topics***

The priorities for the Farm Woodlands topic are:

- Woodland Creation
- Benefits of woodlands for biodiversity; water quality and flood prevention; climate change; animal welfare; new entrants; business efficiency.
- Management of existing woodlands
- Restructuring and restocking

### ***C. Outputs***

The specific deliverables proposed for the year are:

- A programme of promotional activities of forestry issues
- Two editions of Farm Woodland News distributed to all participants in Farm Woodland Schemes
- Articles on forestry issues with many integrated with other themes such as biodiversity, new entrants, pollution and climate change in newsletters and other media
- Advice to the Scottish Government and other organisations involved with forestry in Scotland, on the integration of forestry and farming
- Technical Notes written in response to specific demand. One technical note will be reviewed and updated during the year.
- Farmers receiving advice under the programme, or creating and managing woodlands, are aware of best practice and the various forestry guidelines

## **Discussion Groups**

10 discussion groups have been established during 2016/17, with more planned in 2017/18. These have followed a topic or enterprise-type based approach with groups established for Small farms, Common Grazings, Islands Business groups, Farmland Biodiversity and Organics.

At least 2 further common grazing groups are proposed, along with at least one further small farm group. Grassland groups (3) are being identified as are priority catchment groups. Up to 10 more groups will be formed in 2017/18, based on local focus/topics, but all with an underlying emphasis on benchmarking and the use of physical and financial data to measure and assess performance. The number of meetings and the content varies between the different discussion groups.

## **Crofter & Small Farm Advisory Service**

Occupiers of croft land or small farms engaged in primary agricultural production are eligible to participate in this service. Small Farms are businesses using 30 Ha or less of land

An initiative to provide guidance and workshops to smallholders is included within the Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service. Within the scope of this service advice will be provided on good practice that goes beyond the legal minimum for cross compliance.

### *Subscriptions*

Recipients of these subscription services will receive a service at a 65% discount and be informed of the Scottish Government support they receive through the FAS service. The subscription includes 2 hours of advice delivered by phone or at the local advisory office. (Including “clinics” at remote locations). Details of the topics and services covered by the subscription are provided at the commencement of the subscription. Each subscriber will be allocated a local “client manager” who shall be responsible for ensuring the delivery of services to the subscribers.

### *Discounted Consultancy*

Where required/requested by the subscriber further discounted consultancy time will be available at a lower rate of discount (40%), subject to a maximum of 2 hours per subscriber. This consultancy time can be delivered on the holding, by phone or in the office, covering the same wide range of topics covered under the subscription itself. Delivery will continue to be mainly by local agricultural consultants who will generally also be the client manager for that subscriber

When delivering the discounted consultancy on holding the consultant’s travelling costs (time and expenses) will not be charged to the recipient and will be met as part of the crofter and small farm advisory service. This is included to allow for the significant travel times associated with crofts in particular where ferry travel (for example) is often required.

### *Other deliverables to Crofter and Small Farm Subscribers*

In addition to the provision of the discounted subscription delivered a series of one-to-many type services will also be targeted at crofts and small farms and will be delivered as part of the Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service.

#### - Event Attendance

In order to disseminate key Scottish Government policies efficiently as well as showcase technological innovations and sustainability, FAS will contribute to crofting and smallholder conferences and roadshows, such as the Crofting Commission roadshow and the Scottish Smallholder Festival. By providing speakers, facilitating workshops and promoting the FAS services at these events the objectives of efficiently obtaining profile for FAS whilst delivering information will be achieved.

#### - Written material: Newsletters, Case Studies and Practical Guides

Quarterly newsletters for crofts and small farms will be produced and distributed with relevant and topical editorials guaranteeing local relevance. Authors will be drawn from across SRUC and

occasionally articles will be provided by external contributors. Local case studies will tailor messages to local areas and highlight benefits of innovative practice.

Practical Guides and Technical Notes specifically for small farms and crofts will be produced and displayed on the FAS website and available in paper copy (by post) if required.

- Webinars, Videos, Podcasts, Social Media and Website

A section of the main national advice facility will be dedicated to the Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service. Topical information and news for smallholders and crofters will be added to the FAS Facebook and Twitter feeds. Farmtext will continue to be available and used for notification of key events, critical dates as well as timely technical updates.

The website will host all the relevant publications and events. Many of the events will be supported by podcasts and information notes so that materials are available after the event.

Some stand-alone podcasts and video clips will also be made; useful for those living in remote locations and less able to attend events. The website will also provide links to other sources of information. (e.g. FAS information note and video clip on succession planning will link with the Crofting Commission video on making a will.)

- Events and Smallholders:

In addition to one-to-many FAS events that are open to all attendees, specific events will be organised in response to small farm and croft requirements. To address the specific needs of Small Farms a series of workshops and guidance notes will be prepared during the year.

- Advice to Scottish Government

The manager for the Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service and deputy will also be expected to maintain an important link between the Scottish Government policy leads, crofting stakeholders (e.g. the Scottish Crofting Federation, Scottish Land and Estates, NFUS, SNH, HIE) and the FAS programme. This includes representing FAS at various fora such as the Crofting Stakeholder Forum and the Cross Party Group on Crofting.

Objective:

- To provide a discounted subscription service to crofters and small farm businesses across Scotland, focussing on generic advice that is delivered on a one-to-one basis.
- To provide relevant technical information on business efficiency, conservation, biodiversity and cross compliance.

Delivery 2017/18:

- 2,550 new and renewed subscriptions
- 3,075 hours of discounted consultancy to subscribers
- Production of 4 newsletters
- Production of podcasts, technical notes and information notes as identified

## **National Advice Facility – “The Hub”**

The Advice Facility has been operational since September 2016

The purpose of the National Advice Facility is to:

- provide a focus point for FAS activities through the Website with an events calendar and access to data and information.
- provide a telephone advice-line to answer questions from farmers and crofters on a range of topics including Cross Compliance, Water Framework Directive, Climate Change and the environment etc.
- manage the website and other advice facility functions to provide access to and uptake of ILMP, New Entrant Mentoring and Carbon Auditing schemes.
- undertake promotion activities for the FAS programme.

### *Advice Line*

The advice line has become a recognised component of the FAS and will continue to develop its capacity to respond efficiently with enquiries. To date all performance metrics have been met, but further efficiency gains will be sought to continually improve customer care and responsiveness.

The advice line QA team will listen to calls from advice line operators to assess technical and customer skills. The programme KPIs will include the following quality expectations of the advice line:

- Response time for call-backs - 90% within 6 working hours.
- Response time for routine queries - 90% within 1 working day.
- Response time for detailed queries - 90% within 2 working days.
- Response time for complex queries - 100% within 5 working days.
- Any email queries must be responded to within 1 working day of receipt.

### *Website*

The FAS website has been visited by over 7,000 “users”, with more than 34,000 unique page views. The “bounce rate” is below 40%, which indicates that a significant proportion of users are moving around the site. Nearly 2,000 event registrations have been received on-line.

There is a significant volume of information on the FAS website. The FAS web strategy will focus on enhancing the web structure to manage the diversity of content and output.

The website is also being used as a means to coordinate activities across the SRDP programme using an active calendar that allows event organisers to check dates, content and location across the programme, to avoid date, topic and location clashes.

### *Awareness & Promotion*

Promotion from the mail-shot of letters, leaflets and plastic cards undertaken in 2016-17 is likely to have a lasting effect into the 2017-18 financial year. Thereafter promotion will be through the programme of events, Twitter, Facebook etc. and through attendance at Agricultural Shows and Fairs, in addition to regular FAS features in the Scottish Farming press.