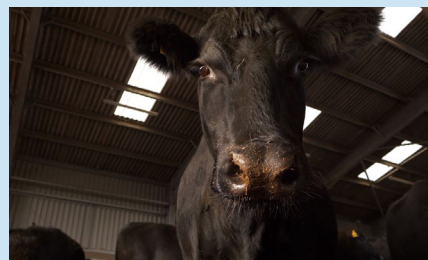


# News from the Farm Advisory Service:



## Calving vlogs summary

Have you been following our Calving Heifers Vlog series?

In this short summary video, SAC Consultant Robert Ramsay highlights the key findings from the Calving Vlog series, which follows three farmers that are calving heifers at 2, 2.5 and 3 years. Despite running different systems, these farms are very technically efficient and successfully get heifers to rebreed through careful management.

Catch up on this video or explore the whole series by visiting the link or QR code below

[www.fas.scot/livestock/calving-heifers-vlog-series/](http://www.fas.scot/livestock/calving-heifers-vlog-series/)



## Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF) 2023

- Carbon Audits
- Soil Sampling and Analysis
- Animal Health and Welfare Interventions

Claim 2023 works by 29th Feb 2024

Find out more information at:  
[www.ruralpayments.org](http://www.ruralpayments.org)

## Finding quality time for you and your family

Time is the most precious resource that farmers and crofters have. It is a finite resource that must be shared between your business and your family and friends, which can be hard to manage. Using the time you spend on your business efficiently and ensuring you take the time to eat properly, sleep enough and enjoy yourself can make a big difference to your mental and physical health and your relationships.

Grant-funded advice through the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) can help you make the most of the hours in a day. Specialist advice options like business efficiency can help find opportunities to make your day-to-day operations more efficient,



and resilience planning, and Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMPs) will allow a qualified adviser to analyse your finances, land and business strategy to see if they can be changed to fit the lifestyle you want.

Up to £3,200 of funding is available for ILMPs and specialist advice through FAS. To find an adviser and apply, contact FAS on [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot) or 0300 323 0161.

## The plight of Atlantic salmon

For many farmers, the water environment is a thing over the fence-line, but this last year has done a lot to raise the profile of resource management, including water. From drought conditions in the summer to flooding and heavy rainfall events in autumn, it has impacted us all. One Scottish species also having a hard time in the water environment is the Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), whose preferred habitats and populations are so fragmented that the conservation status of the species was recently updated, going from “least concern” to “near threatened”.



Challenging times ahead for this iconic Scottish species.

But what can farmers and crofters do for the species? Fundamentally, salmon require clean, well oxygenated water to survive, thrive and spawn in, so efforts to minimise diffuse pollution are a must in key salmon spawning locations. Climate change now means that average water temperatures can often exceed the comfortable range for the species, leaving them in a state of stress, where spawning is more challenging and they are more vulnerable to pollution, pests and disease. But actions can and are being taken to support this iconic Scottish species.

Tree planting and livestock exclusions from watercourses are tried and tested practices that provide shade, contribute to cooling watercourses and limit the potential for bank erosion and pollution. FAS have a range of materials relating specifically to water management on the farm and the options available for those looking to take positive actions. Working closely with our partners at Farming and Water Scotland, materials available cover issues like riverbank restoration, ditch management and riparian planting options.

*Alexander Pirie, SAC Consulting*

To read the full article online, please visit:  
[www.fas.scot/news/protecting-atlantic-salmon/](http://www.fas.scot/news/protecting-atlantic-salmon/)

For more information on water management, please visit:  
[www.fas.scot/environment/water-management/water-margins-2/](http://www.fas.scot/environment/water-management/water-margins-2/)

## Free events

At the Farm Advisory Service we run a range of events both online and in-person.

Visit [www.fas.scot/events](http://www.fas.scot/events) to sign up or contact the advice line and we'll help you get booked on.

### Farm Tenancies Webinar with Tenant Farmer Andrew Marchant

Online, 15th February, 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Come along to the first part of our Tenancies Applications webinars to hear from Andrew Marchant from Clonhie Farm. Andrew will share his experience of taking on a tenanted farm and building up his business along with some top tips on how to prepare yourself for applying and taking on a tenanted farm.

### Forage Budgeting & Rationing

Mulben, 15th February, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Inclement weather during the silage season in 2023 has led to silages of highly variable quality and increasing concern over fodder shortages. In this hands-on workshop, you will learn how to assess forage quality, develop a ration based on your own context and determine if your forage stocks are sufficient for the rest of winter.



### Women in Agriculture - Policy Update Webinar

Online, 15th February, 7:30pm - 8:30pm

Are you starting to prepare for policy changes? Are you taking full advantage of the available grant funding? Change is afoot with agricultural policy, so join us for a webinar where Steven Thomson from SAC Consulting will provide an insight on what is ahead of us as we move forward with the new schemes.

## Spring block calving, how does your herd measure up?

Measuring reproductive performance of the herd can allow comparison between years, areas for improvement can be identified and you can check the effectiveness of management changes made.

In a spring block calving herd, measuring calving performance can be quite simple when the correct data is collected. Data that can be collected over the calving period includes:-

- Planned start of calving date
- Actual start of calving date
- Date the last cow calves
- Calving details – including date, assisted calvings, stillbirths, deaths
- Cow exits – date of cow sold, death or culled and reason

Once calving has finished and data has been collected, then key performance indicators (KPI) can be easily calculated in a spreadsheet. An important KPI for block calving herds is cows and heifers calved within the first six weeks as a percentage. Following calving, the next area to investigate is how well the cows and heifers get back in calf, two KPIs which can be monitored are the 6 week in-calf rate and the empty rate.

Determining how the herd compares to targets can then allow you to make decisions about what areas need improving to bring your indicators up to the target set for the herd. It is important to consider whether meeting a target is easily achievable for the following year.

Regularly reviewing targets throughout the year is key to making sure the business is making good progress and timely decisions can be implemented if required. If you are heading towards spring calving, then this is an excellent opportunity to collect data to determine your herd performance and compare it against industry targets.

*Dr Cara Campbell, SAC Consulting*

To read the full article please visit:

[www.fas.scot/article/mmn-january-2024-spring-block-calving-how-does-your-herd-measure-up/](http://www.fas.scot/article/mmn-january-2024-spring-block-calving-how-does-your-herd-measure-up/)

This article is part of January's Milk Manager News. To read more from this publication, please visit:

[www.fas.scot/publication/milk-manager-news-january-2024/](http://www.fas.scot/publication/milk-manager-news-january-2024/)

*Scotland's Farm Advisory Service (FAS) is funded by the Scottish Government, providing information and resources aimed at increasing the profitability and sustainability of farms and crofts. Grant support, a full programme of events, a subscription service for crofts and small farms, and a range of articles and publications form the core of this service which is designed to provide integrated advice for farmers and crofters across Scotland.*



National Advice Hub  
T: 0300 323 0161  
E: [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot)  
W: [www.fas.scot](http://www.fas.scot)

If you need more advice on any topic, the Farm Advisory Service has a range of support and help available:

### Advice line

For free telephone advice on a wide variety of topics including cross compliance, water framework directive requirements, climate change and other technical issues call us on 0300 323 0161 or email [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot). The advice line operates between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

### Bespoke Advice and Grants

FAS can also help you to increase the profitability and sustainability of your farming business through Scottish Government grants including Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMPs) – worth up to £1,200.

The ILMP will identify opportunities and cost savings for your business, based on an independent and confidential assessment of your business by an experienced farm business adviser of your choosing. As part of your plan you can choose to benefit from up to two further specialist advice plans.

### Online

Our website contains articles, videos and much more at [www.fas.scot](http://www.fas.scot)



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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