

# News from the Farm Advisory Service:



## Natural Capital Podcast - Islay Geese

In this episode of Natural Capital, we visit the beautiful island of Islay, finding out about the unique habitats, species, and important natural capital assets the island supports. The RSPB Islay reserves have populations of wintering Barnacle and Greenland White-fronted geese, as well as other populations of wildlife.

In this episode, we are joined by farmer Craig Archibald, and Eion Brown and Jack Fleming from RSPB to discuss how these species depend on farming practices and the correct land management to thrive.

To listen, use the QR code below or visit us at [www.fas.scot/sounds](http://www.fas.scot/sounds)



## Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF) 2023

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

Claim 2023 works by 28th Feb 2024

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

## Crofter's plan through FAS specialist advice

**Crofters often face different challenges to that of larger farming businesses. Operating on a smaller scale can mean that crofters cannot take advantage of economies of scale and the associated savings that come with it. As such, operating as a smaller business can be more expensive and feel less secure.**

Through the Farm Advisory Service (FAS), you can receive funding for specialist advice tailored to your croft or smallholding to help you overcome the challenges of crofting and keep your croft profitable and sustainable.

A crofter's plan through FAS will provide you with an opportunity to discuss ideas, plans for the future, and any issues or concerns, resulting in a tailored advice plan written for you. This

could cover finances, crofting legislative status, opportunities for environmental sustainability, and finding a good work life balance.

Up to £2,000 of funding is available through FAS for a crofters plan plus another specialist advice option, which will also be tailored to your business. To find out more, contact FAS at [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot) or **0300 323 0161** and apply online at: [www.fas.scot/specialist-advice](http://www.fas.scot/specialist-advice)



## Seeing is not always believing

**If you struggled your way through school with reading, spelling, writing and maths, not because of lack of intelligence or work ethic, it could simply be because your eyes and brain interpret things differently from each other. Don't keep struggling – seek help today.**

Dyslexia Scotland has estimated that 1 in 4 people in the rural community have dyslexia. Common signs include difficulties in learning to read, write, spell and often confusing your left from your right. During December, the RSABI together with Dyslexia Scotland are offering undiagnosed farmers/crofters over 40, a free confidential assessment. (RSABI Tel: **0808 1234 555**)

Meares Irlen Syndrome can occur if the brain is hypersensitive to certain wavelengths of light. Common signs of Meares Irlen include difficulty reading text on white paper due to the brightness of the background, eye strain, fatigue, difficulty judging depth/distances and/or identifying maths symbols correctly. If these sound familiar, your optician can refer you to a specialist Orthoptist. Coloured acetates/ screen backgrounds or coloured glasses can help alleviate some of the symptoms, making reading easier/more enjoyable.

If you have always struggled with numbers, and often write down tag numbers wrong by mixing up the numbers, you may have Dyscalculia. Common signs include difficulty with arithmetic and/or difficulty understanding money, time, distances, and directions. As there is no 'cure' for dyscalculia, the best advice is to tell friends and family and ask them to help you with stock records, calculating chemical rates and/or dosages for livestock.

*Christine Beaton, SAC Consulting*

**This article is part of December's Agribusiness News. To read the full article and more, visit: [www.fas.scot/publication/agribusiness-news-december-2023/](http://www.fas.scot/publication/agribusiness-news-december-2023/)**

## 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.

### Morayshire Women in Agriculture - Business Resilience Planning

**Fochabers, 24th January, 10:00am - 12:00pm**

The last few years have been challenging for farm businesses. However, resilient farm businesses are adaptable and can recover from setbacks. Come along to our event to learn how to measure the resilience of your own business and top tips to improve resilience, so your business is fit for the future.

### Sustainable Beef Systems - Grazing Strategies Webinar

**Online, 24th January, 7:30pm - 8:30pm**

Considering outwintering on deferred grazing? Join our webinar where Daniel Stout, SAC Grassland Specialist, and Duncan Miller, Tullochgorum Farm, explain how outwintering on deferred grazing can slash wintering costs and how to plan, assess suitability and feed budget.



### FAS Connect Conference

**Edinburgh, 31st January, 10:00am - 4:00pm**

Join members from all 45 FAS Connect groups across Scotland to take a step back from the day to day and look to the future at the first FAS Connect Conference. A series of interactive panel sessions will cover topics such as Global Outlook, Time and Technology and Carbon and Biodiversity. There will also be an opportunity to network with members of other groups as well as visit trade stands from relevant industry bodies.

## Outwintering heifers on brassicas, is iodine deficiency an issue?

**Typically in the UK, dairy heifers will be outwintered on forages or brassicas such as kale, fodder beet or a grass grazing system, with baled grass silage as supplementary feed. Iodine deficiency can be a particular challenge when heifers are outwintered on brassicas due to the high levels of goitrogens. A deficiency in iodine impacts thyroid function which can influence the production of hormones, affecting:**

- Growth – reduced daily liveweight gains.
- Fertility – irregular cycles, low conception rates, abortions and still births.

Identifying any trace element deficiencies in your cattle can be a good starting point to determine the level of supplementation required and your nutritionist should be able to advise you on this.

It is important to consider supplementing with iodine when outwintering on brassicas due to the two to four-fold increase in requirement due to the lack of iodine available for uptake by the animal.

There are a variety of options that are available to use for supplementation: -

- Boluses – daily release in the rumen, can last up to 6 months
- Drenches – needs to be administered every 4 to 6 weeks
- Mineralised concentrates – daily supply if heifers are fed every day
- Powdered minerals – variable intakes if offered as free access
- Buckets – variable intakes, reliance on every heifer using it

If you are outwintering heifers on brassicas this year, check that your method of mineral supplementation contains sufficient iodine to meet their requirements to ensure optimal growth rates and health over this period.

*Dr Cara Campbell, SAC Consulting*

**For the full article, please visit:**

[www.fas.scot/article/outwintering-heifers-on-brassicas-is-iodine-deficiency-an-issue/](http://www.fas.scot/article/outwintering-heifers-on-brassicas-is-iodine-deficiency-an-issue/)

*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.*

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)