

# Scottish Farm Advisory Service One-to-Many Programme 2020 (April-December) Annual Report



Prepared: February 2021

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### **IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT REPORTING TIMESCALES**

Unlike previous annual reports which have covered the period April to March, this report covers the period April to December 2020 (hereafter typically referred to as 2020, unless noted otherwise).

The reason for this curtailed reporting period is that the contract for delivery of this service concluded at the end of the 2020 calendar year, with an option for the client (Scottish Government) to extend it by up to a further 12 months. In the end, this is what happened – meaning that the service will now run until 31 December 2021. It should be borne in mind that the data in this report relates to a nine-month period and is typically being compared to the 12 months data in the 2019/20 annual report that preceded it.

## 1. Introduction

With the start of the delivery year coinciding with the first COVID-19 lockdown, the early part of the year was focussed on ensuring continuity of service whilst simultaneously reshaping plans for the rest of the year and providing advice on COVID-19 resilience. This was successfully achieved, with the entire programme moving to online only, widespread praise from stakeholders about the support provided to the sector through an unprecedented challenge, and delivery that massively exceeded most targets.

The shift to online-only delivery presented both challenges and opportunities. The challenges included that whilst there was a low bar to participating in an event (i.e. no travel and typically shorter length events), there was a simultaneously lower bar to withdrawing from an event (i.e. booking on and then not taking part). It was also harder, despite initiatives such as a monthly prize draw for completion, to get participants to complete an online evaluation form – leading to a decline in completion from 67 percent to 30 percent of participants. The opportunities included the aforementioned lower bar to participation – meaning much higher average and overall attendances, and no geographical exclusion – and the ability to bring in speakers from across the world (e.g. New Zealand, Argentina, U.S.A.) to talk about a range of subjects.

As the year progressed, engagement continued with stakeholders to ensure that the programme, and plans for 2021 delivery, reflected their and their constituent’s priorities. This constructive dialogue, combined with high and growing levels of awareness and use of the one-to-many programme, many help explain the positive assessment yielded by the Scottish Government’s [own evaluation](#) of the one-to-many programme carried out in 2020.

### “FAS in five”

1. 143 events delivered to 4,247 farmers, crofters and others involved in Scotland’s agricultural community – an average of 30 per event, the highest to date in the programme.
2. 97 percent satisfaction with events, with 75 percent of attendees planning to act on the information gained.
3. 862,554-page views of the website spread across 347,157 sessions – up 277 percent and 209 percent respectively from the previous year.
4. 163,671 downloads of publications from the website, 70,441 views of videos on Facebook, 55,481 views of videos on YouTube, and 13,947 listens to podcasts.
5. 1,674 crofters and 250 small farmers subscribed to Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service, whilst 1,591 farmers and crofters got help from the Advice Line.

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## 2. Vision for the Farm Advisory Service

“Scotland’s Farm Advisory Service is a professional, modern advisory service that continues to facilitate step-changes in the economic and environmental performance of farmers and crofters throughout Scotland. It achieves this through provision of advice, collaboration with industry bodies, promotion and communication of the prevailing themes and policies for the relevant year.”

## 3. Outcomes specified in tender

The following outcomes were specified in the FAS one-to-many tender document. They guide the delivery of the service and aim to help achieve the wider priorities of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) as well as supporting the outcomes derived from the Future of Scottish Agriculture initiative:

- Knowledgeable, 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.

## 4. Executive summary

- The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were met or exceeded in 79 percent of reporting periods.
- 143 events (all online) were run from April to December 2020, with 4,917 attendees and an average attendance of 30. Feedback from participants was exceptionally positive, with 97 percent saying the events were “excellent” or “good”, and 75 percent saying they would implement changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event.
- 299 publications, 142 videos, 90 podcasts and 16 online tools were produced. The FAS newsletter was published monthly and by the end of the year was being distributed monthly to up to 5,371 people – 768 more than the same time the previous year.
- 862,554-page views of the website spread across 347,157 sessions – up 277 percent and 209 percent respectively from the previous year.



The screenshot shows the FAS website's 'Emergency Planning' page. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation links for News, Events, Publications, and Advice & Grants. The main heading is 'Emergency Planning', followed by a sub-heading 'All businesses should have emergency contingency plans.' The text explains the importance of these plans and lists resources available on the website, including 'Emergency Planning Templates', 'Guidance and Information, by sector', and 'Signposting for other sources of support'. A 'News' section lists updates like 'SEPA Temporary Regulatory Guidance Response to COVID-19: Land Application of Uncollected Milk in Scotland'. Below the text are several thumbnail images for different types of emergency plans: 'Farm Emergency Plan', 'Emergency Health Plan', 'Emergency Plans: Sheep', 'Emergency Plans: Cropping', 'Emergency Plans: Beef Cattle', 'Emergency Plans: Dairy Staff', and 'Emergency Plans: Croft & Smallholders'.

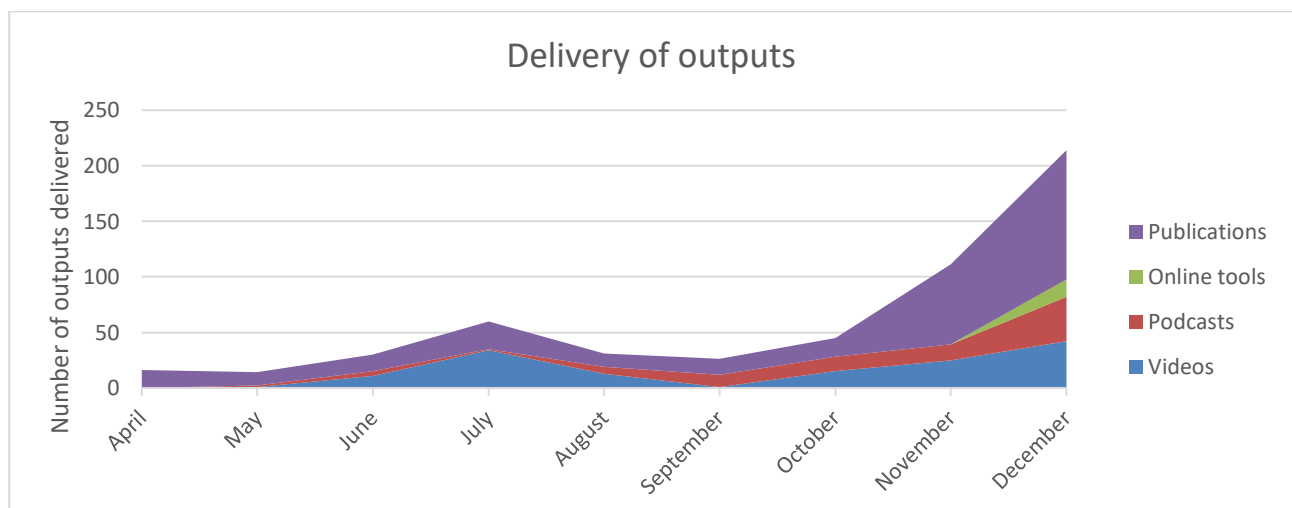
Figure 1 –Emergency planning page of COVID-19 section on FAS website

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- Twitter followers grew by 32 percent to 2,104, whilst Facebook followers grew by 16 percent to 3,654.
- 1,674 crofters and 250 smallholders subscribed to the Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service.
- There were 1,591 enquiries to the Advice Line (up 36 percent on the previous year), where farmers and crofters received up to 30 minutes of free advice.

Target measure	Target	Actual	Number delivered versus target	Percentage delivered versus target
Events	156	143	-13	92%
Event attendees	2,964	4,247	+1,283	143%
Average attendance	19	30	+11	158%
Publications	252	299	+47	118%
Videos	56	142	+86	254%
Podcasts	47	90	+43	191%
Online tools	13	16	+3	123%
Crofter and small farm subscribers	1,642	1,924	+282	117%



## 5. Key performance indicators (KPIs)

The following were the KPIs for delivery of the one-to-many service in 2020:

1. At least 2,964 attendees at 156 events (an average of 19 per event).
2. Attendance exceeds 75 percent of the predicted number.
3. More than 95 percent of those completing a post-event feedback form rate the overall quality of the event as “excellent” or “very satisfactory”.
4. More than 95 percent of those completing a post-event feedback form rate the relevance of the event as “excellent” or “very satisfactory”.
5. More than 80 percent of those completing a post-event feedback form say they will implement changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event.
6. The bounce rate (the percentage of people visiting the homepage and then leaving without going to another page on the site) is below 50 percent.
7. The website is available for at least 99 percent of the time.
8. 95 percent of call-backs are done within six working hours.
9. 95 percent of routine queries are responded to within one working day.
10. 95 percent of detailed queries are responded to within two working days.
11. 95 percent of complex queries are responded to within five working days.
12. 95 percent of e-mail enquiries are responded to within one working day.

KPI 1 is measured annually and was partially met. 143 events were held, the total attendance was 4,247 and the average attendance was 30. The remaining KPIs are measured and reported on monthly basis. The table overleaf summarises performance across the year.

KPI	Monthly KPI performance (green = KPI met or exceeded, red = KPI not met)									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
3	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
4	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green
5	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green
6	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
7	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
8	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
9	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
10	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
11	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green
12	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

The above table highlights that the KPIs were met or exceeded 79 percent of the time (11 monthly KPIs measured over 9 months).

KPI 4 (relevance) and KPI 5 (influence to change) have historically been consistently met or exceeded. This year they have proven more challenging – most likely due to the shift to online only events which typically offer a shorter opportunity to engage and stimulate the audience into action. This year, not been met on four occasions. KPI 6 (bounce rate) has not been met for two thirds of the year, but in the most part these were near misses just beyond the KPI value. Regretably there were three months where KPI 11 (complex queries) was not met – in most cases because queries have been answered quickly enough but the relevant member(s) of staff have not completed and returned the necessary paperwork to confirm this.



## 6. Events


Knowledge transfer (KT) events continued to be a very significant element of the delivery in 2019/20, with 249 held between June and March. The total predicted attendance at the events was 2,957 (an average of 21 per event) and the total actual attendance was 4,247 (an average of 30 per event) – 144 percent of the predicted). 57 percent of events met or exceeded their predicted attendance – up from 44 percent the previous year.


Promotion of events to ensure good awareness, attendances and value for money was an ongoing task. The ways in which attendees said they heard about events was as follows: 32 percent by direct mail; 27 percent by Facebook; 20 percent via the website; 16 percent via local SAC Consulting offices; four percent via twitter; and two percent via newspaper adverts.


### Event highlights – Cows vs Cars

This fascinating and topical webinar, with a renowned speaker from the University of California, drew in 131 attendees and generated lively discussion. It is a great example of how a well promoted and run webinar, covering a challenging but topical subject, can engage with a large audience and enable discussion of subjects that are not typically addressed in agricultural events in Scotland.

#### Climate Change – Cows vs Cars

 July 29 2020

 8:00pm - 9:00pm


[Book](#) 

The 'silver-bullet' solution to the climate change crisis is for consumers to stop eating meat – fact or fiction? Topics surrounding climate change and GHG emissions are never far from the headlines and livestock are often in the spotlight when it comes to the 'blame game'. There are many theories and opinions about how we work towards creating a sustainable planet with cleaner air quality.

Join us on this webinar for a unique chance to listen to global expert, Dr Frank Mitloehner, the 'GHG Guru' from the University of California to gain a comprehensive understanding of the cow carbon cycle and the role livestock play in the challenge of nourishing a growing global population.

Dr Mitloehner is currently investigating air quality in livestock production with the main objective being to help establish environmentally benign livestock systems. He will explain the difference between the gases, their life cycle and how the agriculture, transport and industrial sectors contribute. The scientific data will be combined with what improvements can be made within livestock production to benefit both the producer and consumer knowledge to strengthen the industry.

This is one not to be missed, we hope you can join us. Please note that when you join the webinar, you are automatically put on mute so you can sit back and listen. During the presentation you can type in any questions you would like to ask which will be directed to speakers at the end of the session.



Organiser: Hazel Laughton

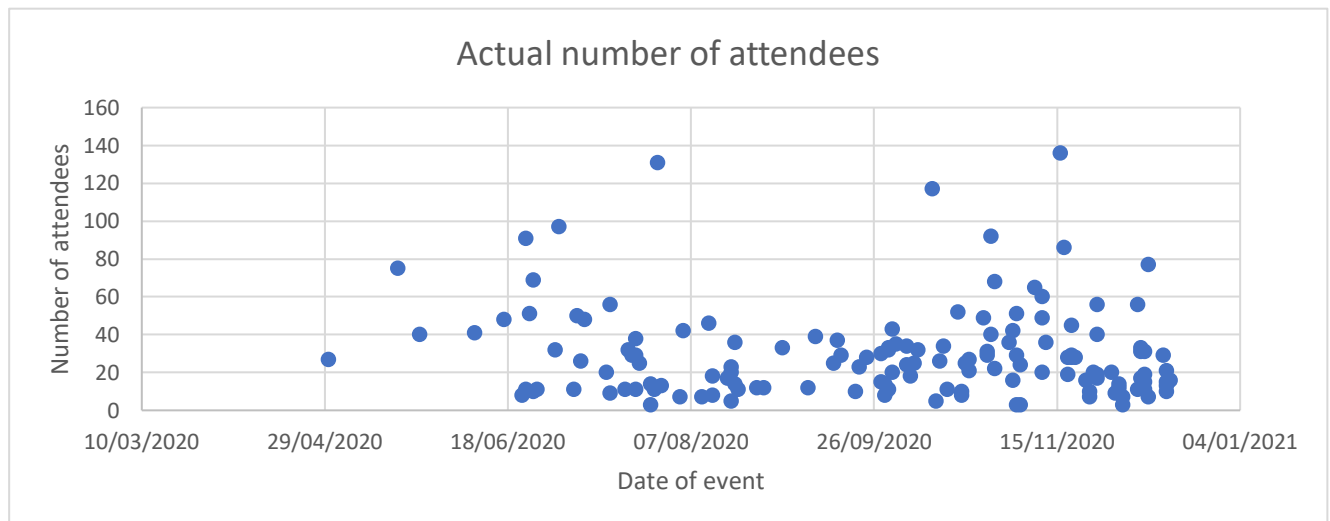
Region: Aberdeenshire & Moray, Angus, Argyll & Bute, Ayrshire & Arran, Central, Dumfries & Galloway, Highlands, Lothian & Borders, Orkney, Outer Hebrides, Shetland, Tayside & Fife

Topic: Rural Business, New Entrants

Figure 2 - Event listing for 'Cows vs Cars' webinar

The average attendance (29.7) was excellent and up 31 percent on the previous year. With all events being online, there was a low bar to participating in an event (i.e. no travel and typically shorter length events). There was a simultaneously a lower bar to withdrawing from an event (i.e. booking on and then not taking part). It was also harder, despite initiatives such as a monthly prize

draw for completion, to get participants to complete an online evaluation form – leading to a decline in completion from 67 percent to 30 percent of participants. Digital delivery also enabled the use of speakers from across the world (e.g. New Zealand, Argentina, U.S.A.) to talk about a range of subjects – all of which were hugely popular and well regarded.



### Event highlights – Bouncing forward from a crisis

Doug Avery, a New Zealand farmer who had previously toured Scotland to talk about the importance of mental health and resilience in farming, was a hugely popular speaker. 136 attendees benefitted from his advice at a time of huge strain on all of society.

#### Bouncing Forward From A Crisis

November 16 2020 [Book](#)

8:00pm - 9:00pm

+++If you missed this event – you can watch the full webinar here+++ [→](#)

Farming is a high pressure industry and while the lifestyle is great, at times of great uncertainty it is easy to become overwhelmed. With the challenges of Brexit and now Covid it is more important than ever to understand our own limitations and reach out for help and support when needed.

In this webinar we host an open dialog with Doug Avery of Resilient Farmer, as he recaps his own story, discusses his "four pillars" of good mental and emotional health, identifying the issues that hold you back and how to bring yourself back from the brink.

Doug has garnered international recognition for his frank, upfront and honest take on managing mental health within the agricultural industry and we are incredibly fortunate to have him speak to the Farm Advisory Service (FAS).

Join us **Monday 16 November** from **8pm** as we discuss managing pressure, building crisis resilience, overcoming adversity and improving your outlook in difficult times.



Organiser: Alex Pirie & Robert Ramsay

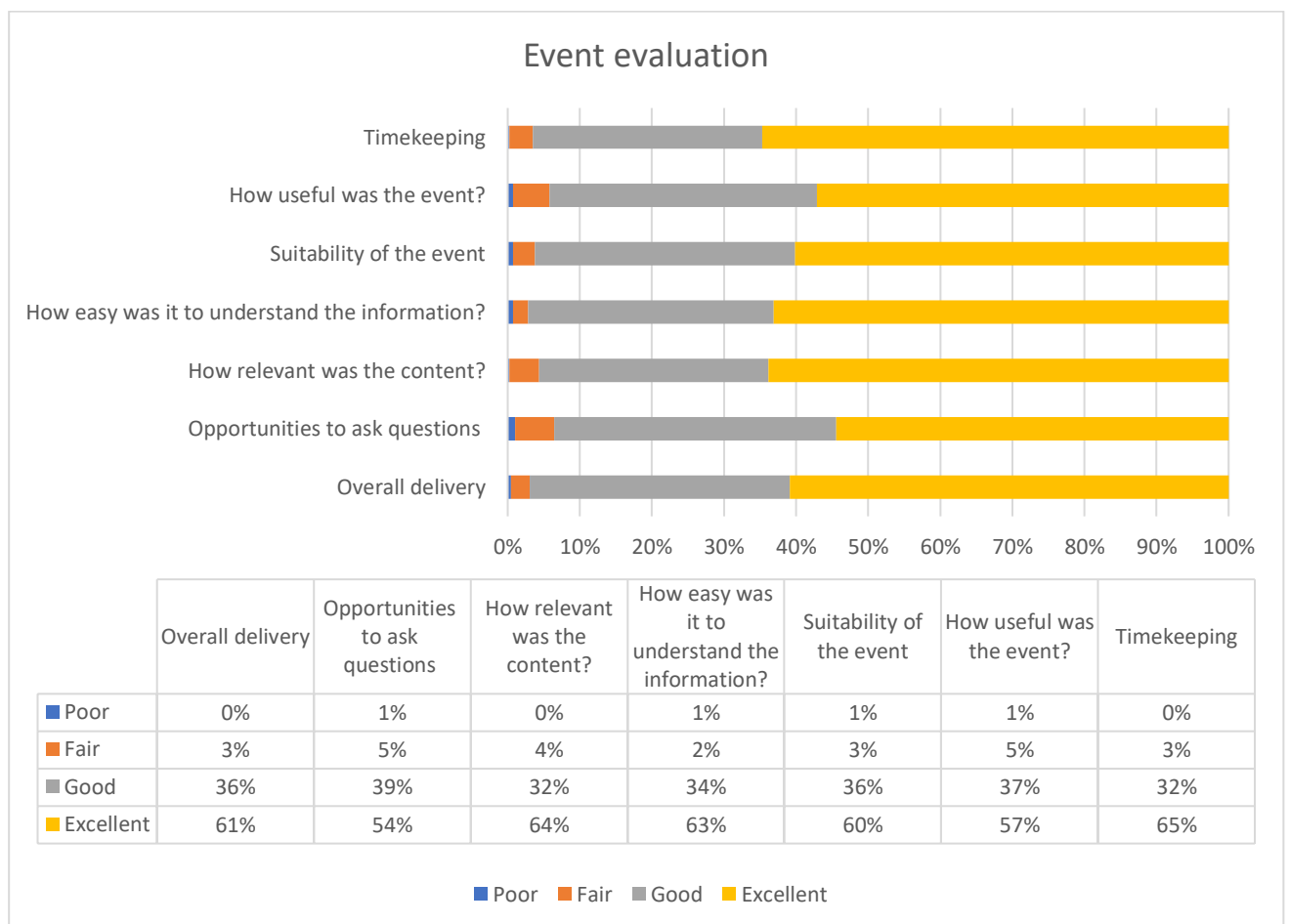
Region: Aberdeenshire & Moray, Angus, Argyll & Bute, Ayrshire & Arran, Central, Dumfries & Galloway, Highlands, Lothian & Borders, Orkney, Outer Hebrides, Shetland, Tayside & Fife

Topic: Livestock, Crops and Soils, Environment, Rural Business, New Entrants, Discussion Groups

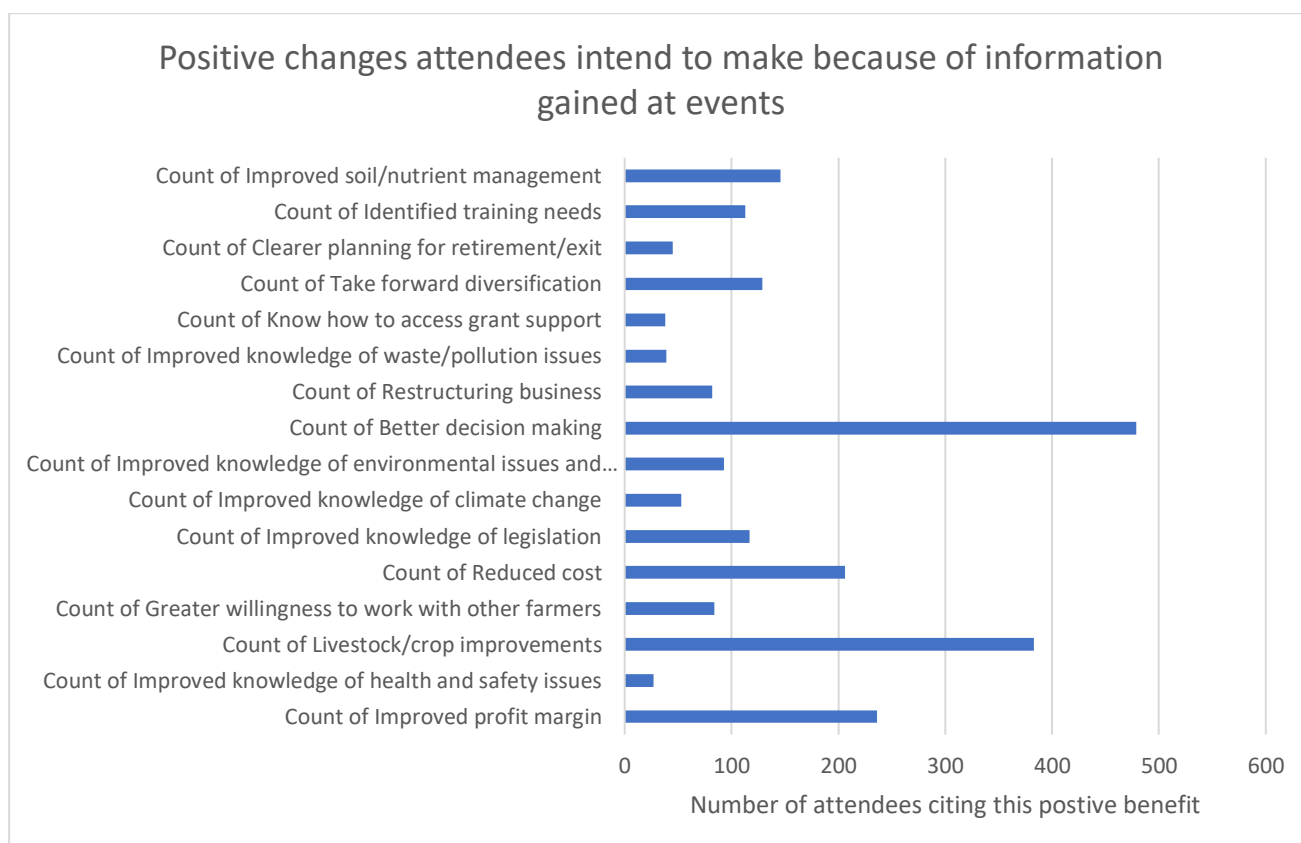
Figure 3 - Event listing for 'Bouncing Forward From A Crisis' webinar

Across 2020, all events were delivered online as webinars or smaller online discussion groups. Not only did this shift to digital delivery enable the programme to continue despite COVID-19 restrictions, it also helped expand access to the subject materials as it removed geographical barriers and reduced the barriers for those who would otherwise (e.g. due to caring requirements) be unable to attend events. Considering COVID-19 restrictions, event delivery for much of the first half or more of the 2021 delivery year is expected to be in the form of webinars and online meetings.

Not only are FAS events largely well attended, they are also very highly regarded by those who attend. All attendees are asked to complete an evaluation form, and across the year 30 percent (1,258) did so. The graph below summarises the results, but the headline message is that those who attend are overwhelmingly very positive in their feedback. 96 percent of responses are “Good” or “Excellent”.

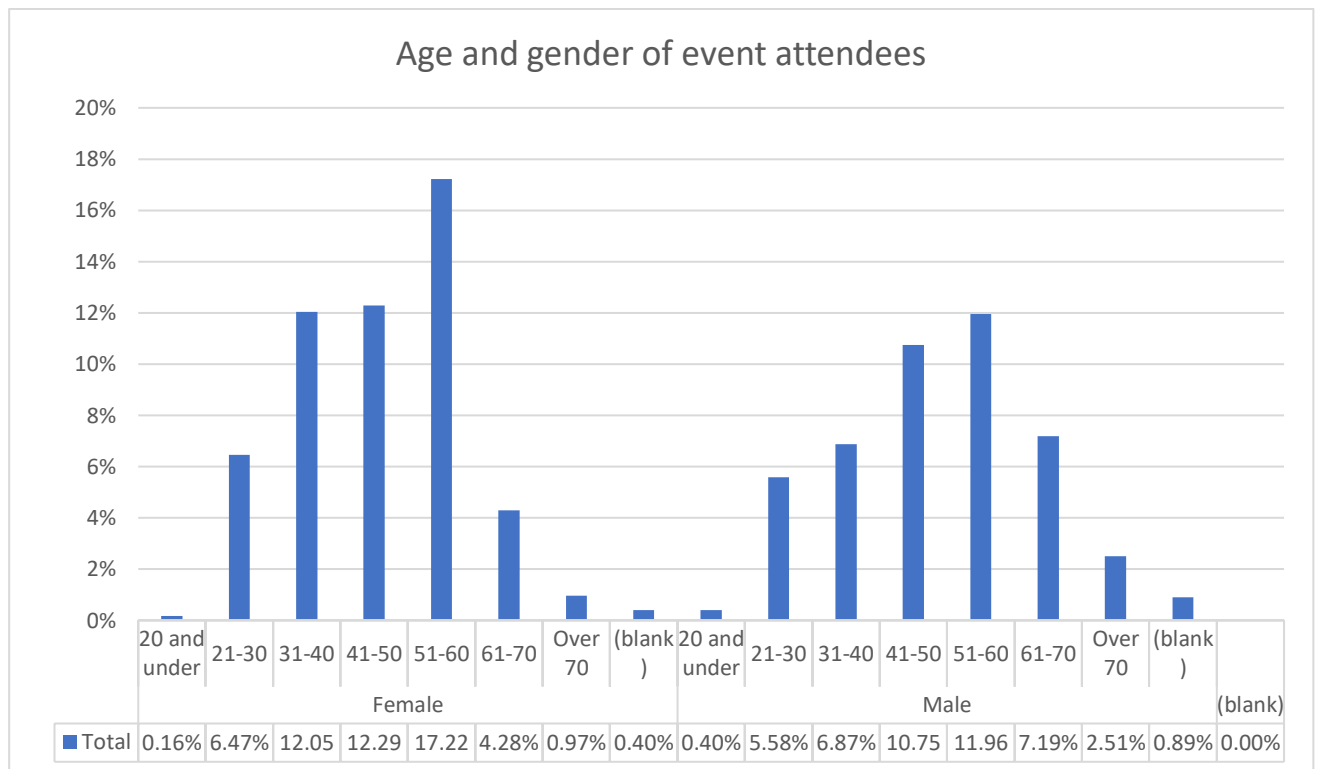


The objective of FAS is to “facilitate step-changes in the economic and environmental performance of farmers and crofters throughout Scotland”. It is therefore important that event attendees do something positive with the information they have gained. It is therefore very positive that of those who answered the question, 75 percent of these said they would implement changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event. The graph below shows the positive changes the attendees thought there were likely to be on their businesses because of the knowledge they had gained at the event.



Seven percent (306) of attendees said that they would not implement changes to their farm management because of information gained at the event. Of those who provided reasons why, two percent said it was because to make the necessary changes would be too expensive, three percent said they did not have enough time, 17 percent said they needed more information, 21 percent said they had learned nothing new, and 56 percent said “other”. Whilst it is regrettable that 21 percent of this cohort said they had not learned anything new, it must be borne in mind that it represents only 68 attendees of a total of 4,247.

In 2020 the majority (54 percent) of attendees were female, although this varies greatly between events depending on the topics being covered. The age profile and gender of attendees is diverse and outlined in the graph below.



## 7. Publications

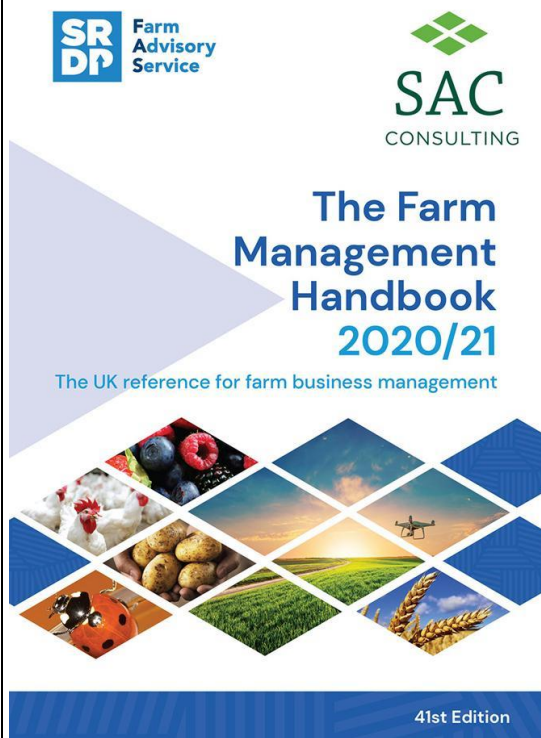
As the national advisory service covering a diverse agricultural sector, it is not surprising that a wide range and large number of publications were produced in 2020. In total, 299 were produced (119 percent of the planned number) – ranging from large, detailed publications like the Farm Management Handbook and Agribusiness News, to technical notes, through to case studies and advertorials in the farming and mainstream press.

There is a wealth of information on the website – some of it produced in 2020 and some prior to that. During 2020, publications were downloaded 163,671 times – a 306 percent increase on the recorded value for 2019/20. The table overleaf shows the most popular downloads.

	<b>Top 20 downloads</b>	<b>Downloads</b>
1	<a href="#">Farm Management Handbook 2019/20</a>	9,027
2	<a href="#">Beef Cattle Housing</a>	7,887
3	<a href="#">Farm Management Handbook 2018/19</a>	6,714
4	<a href="#">TN691 Plants Planting Methods</a>	4,352
5	<a href="#">TN689 Cattle Housing Ventilation</a>	3,863
6	<a href="#">Farm Management Handbook 2017/18</a>	3,768
7	<a href="#">TN694 Alternative Forages Sheep Fodder Beet</a>	3,603
8	<a href="#">AHDB: Herd fertility benchmarking</a>	3,245
9	<a href="#">TN701 Control of Rushes</a>	2,918
10	<a href="#">New Entrants Guide to Buying and Selling at the Mart</a>	2,511
11	<a href="#">Lambing three times in two years</a>	2,360
12	<a href="#">TN571: Pneumonia in Beef Cattle</a>	2,328
13	<a href="#">Introduction To Crofting</a>	2,306
14	<a href="#">TN702 Body Condition Scoring Mature Sheep</a>	2,215
15	<a href="#">SGRPID Area Offices Contact Details</a>	1,841
16	<a href="#">Rotational Grazing</a>	1,791
17	<a href="#">Understanding cattle and carcasses for better returns</a>	1,782
18	<a href="#">A Guide to Bull Selection and Management</a>	1,768
19	<a href="#">TN733: Forage Crops for Livestock</a>	1,733
20	<a href="#">The Importance of Liming</a>	1,435

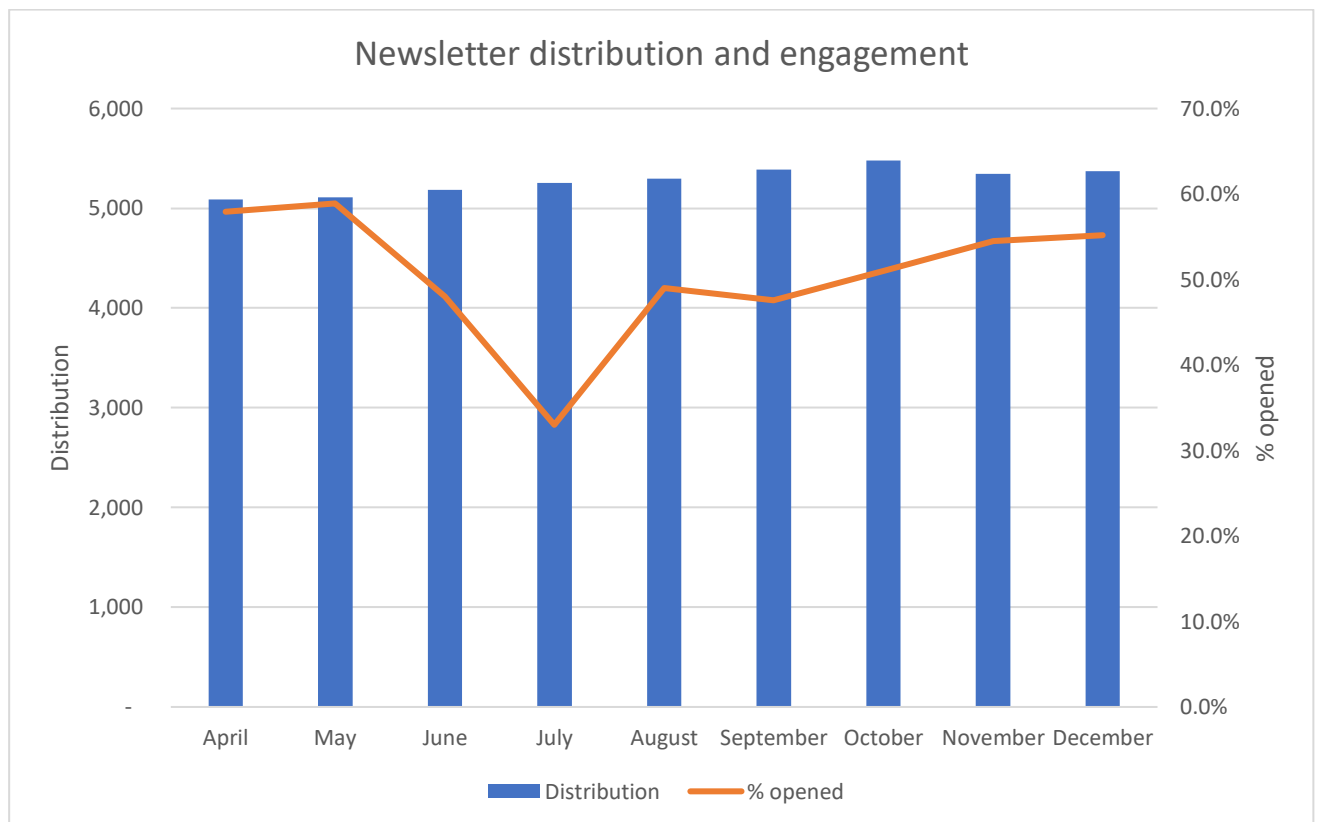
**Publication highlights – Farm Management Handbook 2020/21**

The ever-popular Farm Management Handbook marked its 41<sup>st</sup> edition in 2020. Recognised as an essential tool for any progressive farm business, it provides a comprehensive and up-to-date source of information for farmers, rural professionals, students and consultants. outputs of the one-to-many programme. As we go into 2021 it will almost certainly become (as previous editions have) the most popular download from the FAS website. It is a good example of how evidence-based decision making by Scottish farmers is supported by the one-to-many programme – and the number of downloads will evidence the demand for this.



**Figure 4 - The 2020/21 Farm Management Handbook**

In addition to documents that are downloaded, there are also documents such as the monthly newsletter that are pro-actively sent to those who are registered to receive them. By December 2020 the distribution list for the newsletter had grown to 5,371. As the graph overleaf shows, the distribution of the newsletter grew overall. The percentage of recipients who open it (an average of 51 percent through the year) is far ahead of the benchmark figure (16 percent) for similar publications.



## 8. Videos, podcasts and online tools

In a year when face-to-face engagement became impossible, it is no surprise that videos became an ever more important aspect of the one-to-many programme’s output. Building on the experience and engagement of previous years, 142 videos were produced and posted online – on both YouTube and Facebook – during 2020. Engagement with them grew significantly, particularly on YouTube, as shown in the coming pages.

This growth in engagement with videos, and the fact that it overcomes some of the barriers to knowledge transfer imposed by COVID-19 are two of the reasons behind a major new development for the one-to-many programme in Spring 2021. FAS TV is an ambitious project which aims to bring an agricultural programme to our screens via a dedicated YouTube channel. Over the course of 25 episodes, This magazine style show will build on the success of programmes such as “This Farming life” but will be made entirely with farmers and crofters in mind.



### Video highlights – ‘Exploring Joint Venture Farming - Farming Partners’

This very popular video is an example of how people focussed videos, especially those focussed on new entrants to farming, are very popular. This video not only explored the experience of one new entrant to the dairy industry – a farming enterprise with traditionally particularly high establishment costs - it also explained how partnership models can work.



Figure 5 - ‘Exploring Joint Venture Farming - Farming Partners’ on YouTube







The FAS YouTube account has seen significant growth in use and time spent watching videos, as outlined in the table below.

Measure	2020	Monthly	2019/20	Monthly	2020 vs 19/20	2020 vs 2019/20 (%)
Minutes watched	156,000	17,333	57,120	4,760	+12,573	+264.1%*
Sessions	55,481	6,165	26,763	2,230	+3,934	+176.4%*
Average minutes per session	2:46	N/A	2:13	N/A	+0:33	+24.8%

\*% change 2020 versus 19/20 is monthly rate comparison







**FAS Webinars** ▶ PLAY ALL

FAS Webinars are hosted throughout the year on a range of different subjects. For more information about our entire events calendar please visit <https://www.fas.scot/events/>

 <p>Winter Agronomy Digital Roadshows – Soil Health Scotland's Farm Advisory Serv... 28 views • 1 day ago</p>	 <p>Winter Agronomy Digital Roadshows – Business... Scotland's Farm Advisory Serv... 25 views • 3 days ago</p>	 <p>Winter Agronomy Digital Roadshows 2021 - Crop... Scotland's Farm Advisory Serv... 39 views • 1 week ago</p>	 <p>Winter Agronomy Digital Roadshows 2021: IPM... Scotland's Farm Advisory Serv... 80 views • 3 weeks ago</p>	 <p>Animal Health Is Wealth Scotland's Farm Advisory Serv... 94 views • 3 weeks ago</p>	 <p>Farm Resilience - Driving Forward Scotland's Farm Advisory Serv... 78 views • 1 month ago</p>
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**Popular uploads** ▶ PLAY ALL

 <p>Controlling rushes on your farm. 11K views • 2 years ago</p>	 <p>Forage Crops: Kevin Stewart 5K views • 1 year ago</p>	 <p>Introduction to the Pasture Pump 4.3K views • 2 years ago</p>	 <p>Making Anaerobic Digestion Fit Your System 4.2K views • 2 years ago</p>	 <p>Fighting bank erosion with willow spiling 3K views • 1 year ago</p>	 <p>Forage Crops for an organic system case study: Giles... 2.5K views • 1 year ago</p>
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**Uploads** ▶ PLAY ALL

 <p>Winter Agronomy Digital Roadshows – Soil Health 28 views • 1 day ago</p>	 <p>Winter Agronomy Digital Roadshows – Business... 25 views • 3 days ago</p>	 <p>Slurry Application &amp; Management – Making A... 130 views • 1 week ago</p>	 <p>Winter Agronomy Digital Roadshows 2021 - Crop... 39 views • 1 week ago</p>	 <p>VLOG - Road to Market 27 views • 1 week ago</p>	 <p>VLOG - Tagging and Vaccinating 56 views • 1 week ago</p>
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**Created playlists**


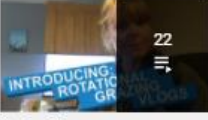



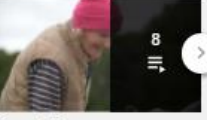
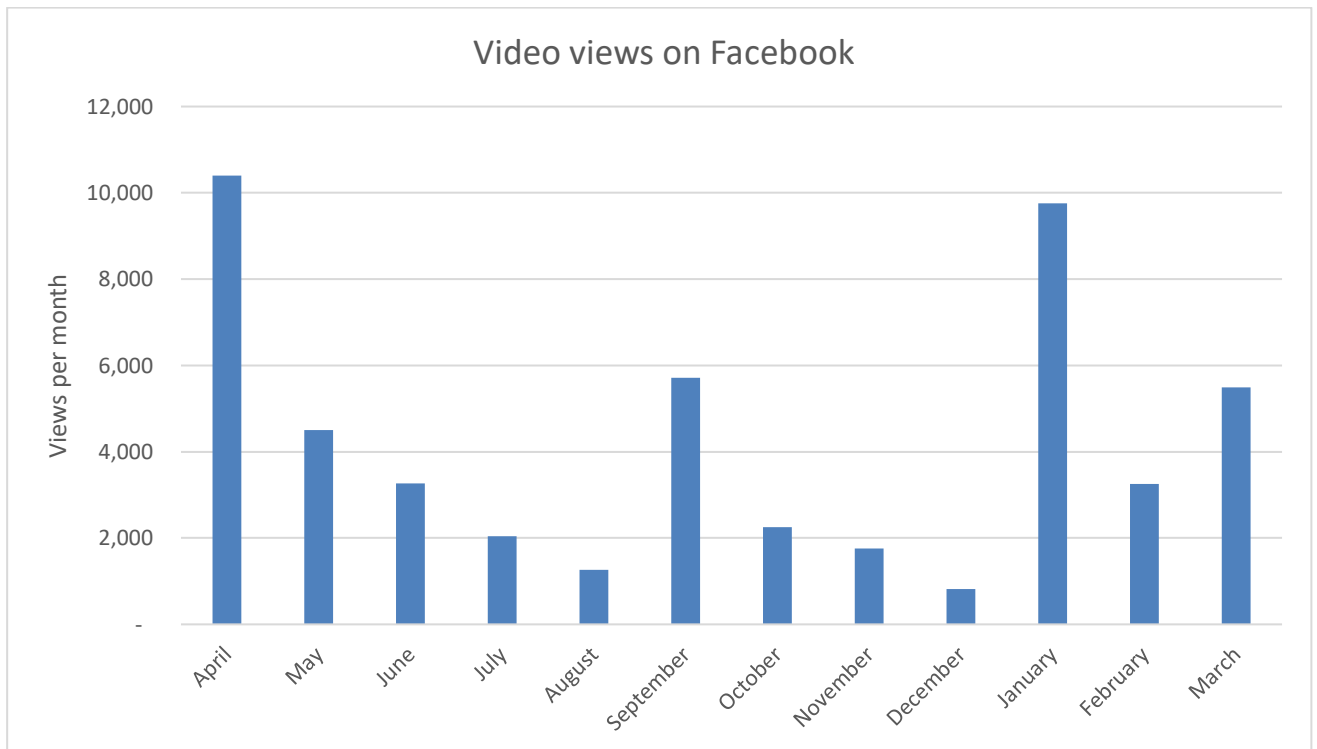
 <p>Forages &amp; Feeds VIEW FULL PLAYLIST</p>	 <p>Grazing Vlogs VIEW FULL PLAYLIST</p>	 <p>FAS Webinars Updated yesterday VIEW FULL PLAYLIST</p>	 <p>Rumen function VIEW FULL PLAYLIST</p>	 <p>Digital Security VIEW FULL PLAYLIST</p>	 <p>Case studies VIEW FULL PLAYLIST</p>
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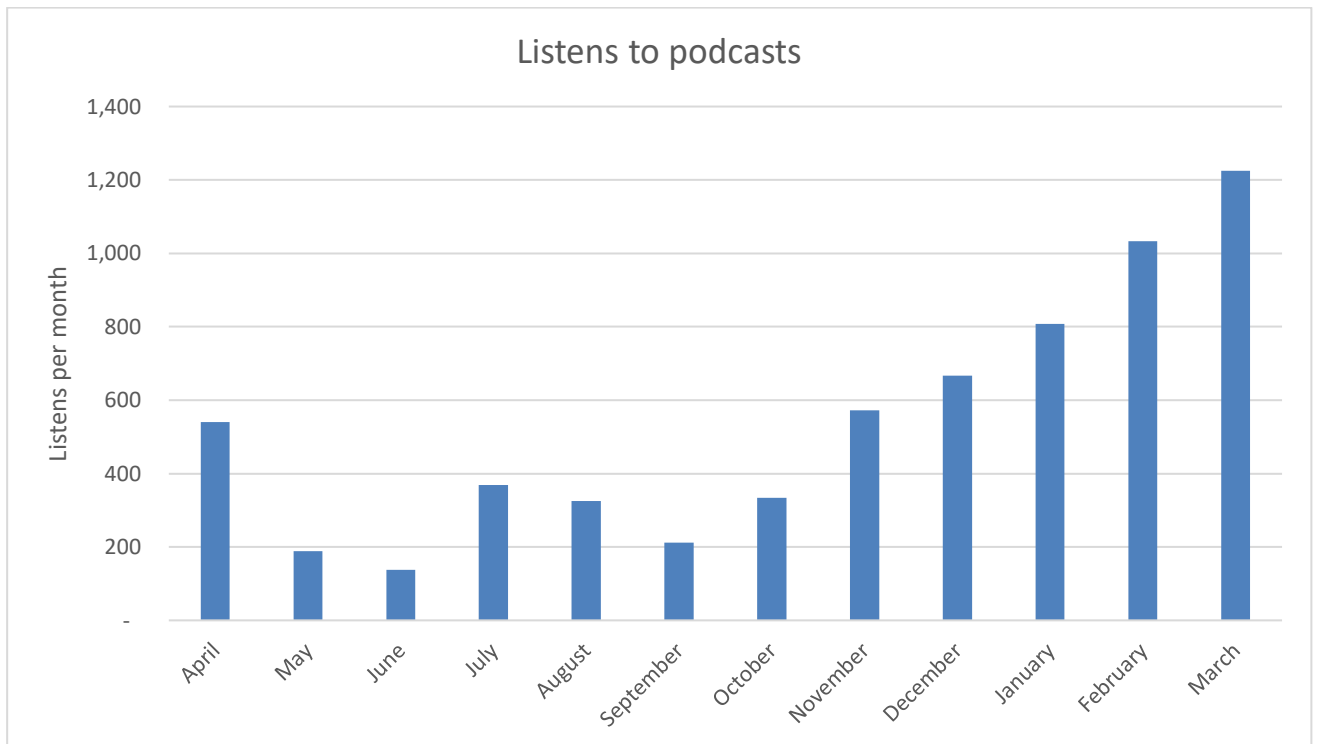
Figure 6 - FAS videos on YouTube

During the year, FAS videos were viewed 70,441 times on Facebook during the year (up 39 percent from the previous year).



Top five videos on Facebook 2020 (70,441 views)	Views
<a href="#">Exploring Joint Venture Farming</a>	12,406
<a href="#">Crofting &amp; the Uist Machair</a>	10,250
<a href="#">Jamie Leslie's back with an update on his lambs</a>	3,558
<a href="#">Weaning management at Scholl and farm</a>	3,078
<a href="#">Assessing Forage Stocks</a>	2,534

During 2020, 90 podcasts were produced, covering a wide range of subjects. These were then put online on five podcast streaming services (Apple podcasts, Spotify, Google podcasts, Deezer, and RadioPublic). During the year, all FAS podcasts were listened to a total of 13,947 (up 118 percent on the previous year).



<b>Top five podcasts 2020 (13,947 total listens)</b>	<b>Listens</b>
<a href="#"><u>Resilience and Business Skills: An Interview with Colin McGregor</u></a>	495
<a href="#"><u>New Entrant Case Study - Laura Hinnekens</u></a>	430
<a href="#"><u>A Conversation with Hannah Jackson: The Red Shepherdess</u></a>	271
<a href="#"><u>Using outcome based agri-environment schemes on your farm</u></a>	270
<a href="#"><u>In Conversation with New Entrant Sheep Farmer Cammy Wilson</u></a>	260

### Podcast highlights – ‘Resilience and Business Skills: An Interview with Colin MacGregor’

Much like with videos, many of the most popular podcasts are people-focussed. This one, examining the topical subject of resilience and business, was with a successful Scottish Borders arable farmer.



Figure 7 - Audioboom post for most popular podcast of 2020

During 2020, 16 online tools were produced. These tools covered such subjects as liver fluke, farm safety, antibiotic use, and a wide range of tools for common grazings groups. Also launched during the year was the FAS Companion app. Building on the foundations of the FAS Soil Nutrient Guide app, this new app represents a very significant increase in functionality and is now relevant for a wider range of farmers and crofters. Over the course of 2021, the new app will be promoted, data on its use examined, and proposals for its further development will be constructed.

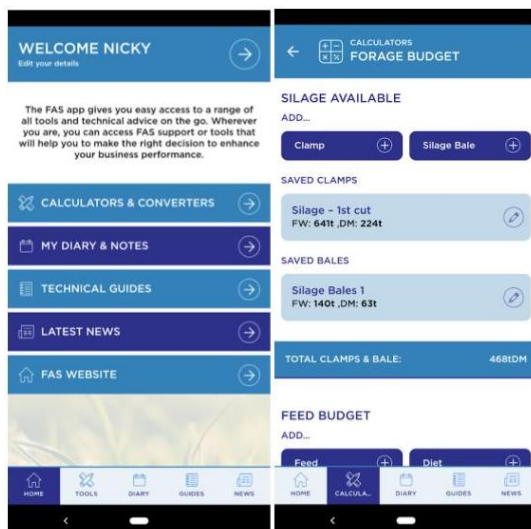


Figure 8 - FAS Companion App

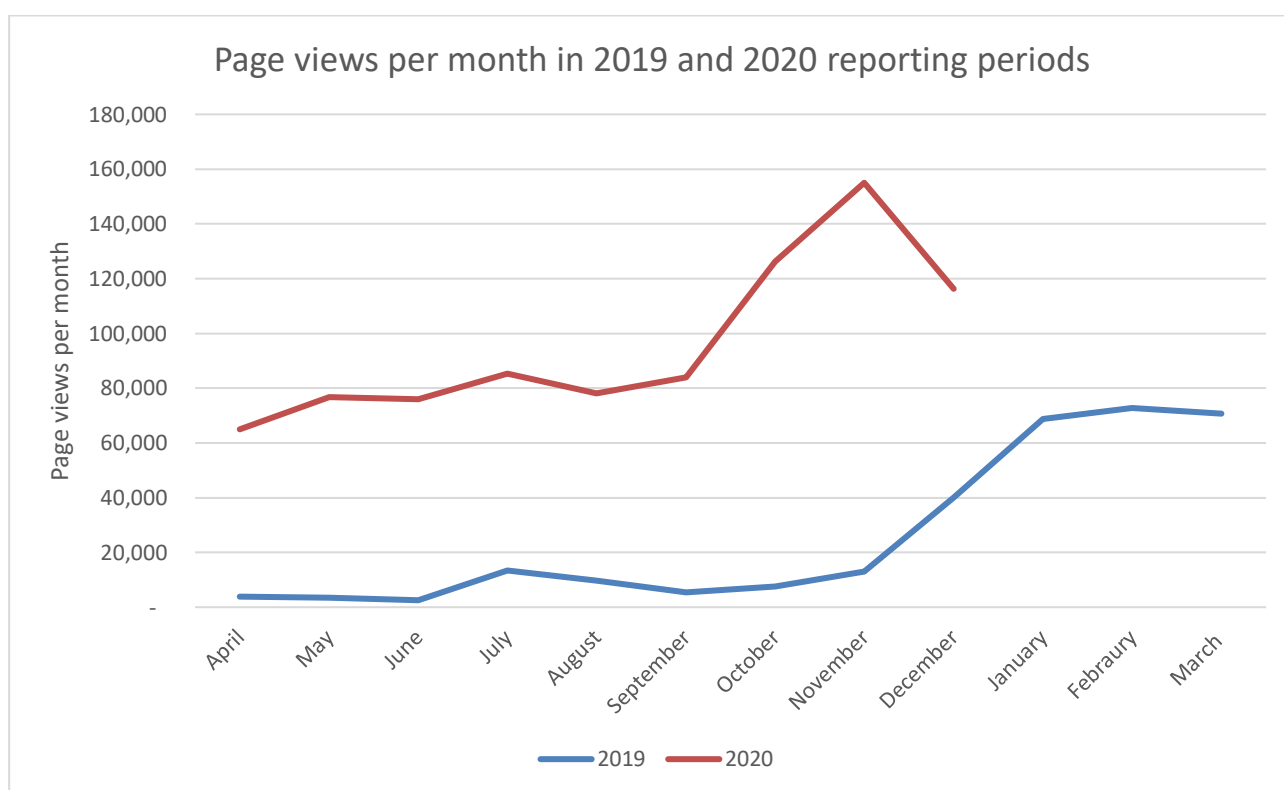
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## 9. Website and social media

During 2020, the website enjoyed significant growth in use, with the period October to December seeing in excess of 100,000-page views per month. Indeed, nine of the ten busiest months on the FAS website came in the 2020 reporting year. The early part of the year saw a significant and well-regarded effort to support farmers and crofters through the early stages of the pandemic by producing the posting a wide range of resources on the website’s dedicated COVID-19 section.

Later in the year, there was a focussed effort to ensure that any sections of the website that were identified as needing updating or expanding, were addressed. Sections such as the livestock section underwent a major overhaul. This is an ongoing area of work, and 2021 the organic farming section will be expanded and updated. Collectively this work should ensure that when the programme ends in December 2021, the website can continue to serve as a comprehensive resource for Scottish farmers and crofters.



*N.B. Data from April to November 2019 is a significant under-record due to a problem with website analytics*

Measure	2020	% change 2020 versus 2019/20	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17
Sessions	347,157	+108.7%*	166,356	67,899	49,775	19,149
Users				38,587	25,543	9,828
New users				36,714	25,053	9,828
Page views	860,554	+176%*	311,742	153,737	133,053	72,818
Average page views per session	2.48	+32%*	1.87	2.26	2.67	3.8

\*comparison of monthly average

There are several ways that users to website find their way to it, outlined in the table below.

Route to website	Audience (%)	
	2020	2019/20
Organic search (using a search engine to find us)	138,046 (39.8%)	36,247 (22.1%)
Social (accessing the FAS website via link from social media)	27,835 (8%)	19,901 (12.2%)
Direct (direct links to access specific pages)	159,899 (46.1%)	95,115 (58.1%)
Referral (links to FAS from other sites)	9,196 (2.6%)	5,876 (3.6%)
Email (links to FAS embedded within e-newsletter emails)	12,181 (3.5%)	6,512 (4.0%)

## 10. Social media

Both the Facebook and twitter accounts of the one-to-many service have seen growth in followers – by 35 percent and nine percent respectively. Beyond that, the picture is more complicated.

Twitter is a useful tool for informing people (particularly other stakeholders) about what FAS is doing – especially on policy relevant issues – but it is less effective in stimulating dialogue or engagement with technical subjects. Likes and engagement with FAS on twitter are up 18 percent and 35 percent respectively on 2019/20. Retweets – the mechanism by which FAS tweets are

shared more widely by others – are up by 17 percent despite the number of tweets being down six percent.

Twitter measures	2020	Per month	2019/20	Per month	2020 versus 2019/20	% change 2020 versus 2019/20
Followers	2,104	N/A	1,597	N/A	+507	+31.7
Tweets	576	64.0	813	67.8	-3.8*	-5.5*
Link clicks	3284	364.9	2,798	233.2	+131.7*	+56.5*
Retweets	1,013	112.6	1,158	96.5	+16.1*	+16.6*
Likes	1,570	174.4	1,775	147.9	+26.5*	+17.9*
Impressions	790,247	87,805.2	711,708	59,309.0	+28,496.2*	+48.0*
Engagements	16,506	1,834.0	16,283	1356.9	+477.1*	+35.2*

\*comparison of monthly average

Top five tweets	Retweets	Likes	Impressions
<a href="#">Cows vs Cars webinar</a>	17	32	5,653
<a href="#">Doug Avery resilience webinar</a>	12	13	4,631
<a href="#">Patrick Laurie podcast</a>	11	19	3,878
<a href="#">Are You Prepared for Floods?</a>	4	4	3,507
<a href="#">Milk Manager News November 2020</a>	2	1	3,192

Facebook is the most effective social media platform for the one-to-many programme to engage with farmers and crofters. The way in which Facebook operates means that free services such as FAS find it harder to reach users and be visible. This, as well as a desire to boost engagement, means that FAS continued to make significant use of paid Facebook advertising in 2020. Although this comes at a cost, when used to promote events it is cheaper than traditional print media.

Efforts will also continue to be directed towards facilitating useful discussion on Facebook, particularly via the dedicated FAS Women in Agriculture Facebook group which since its establishment in February 2019 has grown to have 1,590 members engaged in vibrant discussion.



Facebook measures	2020	Per month	19/20	Per month	Change 2020 versus 2019/20	% change 2020 versus 19/20
Followers	3,654	n/a	3,157	n/a	497	+15.7%
Posts	574	63.8	840	70.0	-6.2*	-8.9%*
Post likes	5,724	636.0	8,040	670.0	-34.0*	-5.1%*
Post shares	986	109.6	2,068	172.3	-62.8*	-36.4%*
Comments	665	73.9	633	52.8	+21.1*	+39.9%*
Link clicks	12,346	1,371.8	5,010	417.5	+954.3*	+228.6%*
Other clicks	26,622	2,958.0	23,500	1,958.3	+999.7*	+51%*
Photo views	452	50.2	1,330	110.8	-60.6*	-54.7%*
Video views	2,487	276.3	8,671	722.6	-446.3*	-61.8%*
Total reach	844,608	93,845.3	1,072,767	89,397.3	+4,448.1*	+5%*
Total impressions	1,159,291	128,810.1	1,370,467	114,205.6	+14,604.5*	+12.8%*

\*comparison of monthly average

Top 5 posts	Reach	Impressions	Likes	Shares	Comments
<a href="#">Exploring Joint Venture Farming</a>	28,345	40,366	115	65	7
<a href="#">Digital Agronomy Roadshow promo</a>	16,819	40,945	34	2	0
<a href="#">Fodder Beet – A Focus on Beef event promo</a>	12,394	22,253	14	2	2
<a href="#">Animal Health is Wealth promo</a>	10,678	22,074	27	3	0
<a href="#">Fodder Beet – A Focus on Dairy event promo</a>	9,903	14,084	7	1	0

## 11. Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service

The Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service offers both a subsidised subscription to eligible (typically very small scale) businesses so that they can receive up to two hours of remotely delivered advice from SAC Consulting plus a dedicated magazine, and a subsidised consultancy service that provides up to two hours of face-to-face advice.

### Subscriber case study – Assignment and development of croft

When a young crofter's uncle wanted to assign him a croft on Skye, he was able to use his subscription to access advice on how to do this. Once the tenant, advisors helped him set up as an agricultural business, register as a sheep keeper, and lent him an electronic tag reader to read the tags of the flock he was buying. Knowing what information was needed and having accurate information gave him the confidence to keep his own livestock records. The following year he was advised on how to apply to get entitlements, and he now receives Basic Payment and LFASS. Now he has a croft, he and his partner are working towards applying for the Croft House Grant scheme so they can live as a family in their community. The croft subscription eased some of the paperwork to allow this young crofter to meet his aspirations and give back to his community in so many ways.

Advice is available on many topics, including: livestock rations, analysis of nutrients in silage, animal health planning; horticultural advice; conservation and environmental advice (e.g., management of muirburn, wildflower areas); organic farming; forestry and woodland design and management; renewable energy; livestock record keeping rules and regulations; prevention of pollution, compaction and nutrient loss; and grassland and crop advice including soil analysis, liming, fertiliser, grassland reseeds, removing rushes and weed control.

### Subscriber case study – Affordable livestock housing

Due to a range of factors, the price of building materials and haulage has increased significantly, noticeably out in the islands, meaning that standard steel-framed agricultural buildings are unaffordable for many. David, a crofter on Lewis, was looking to increase his flock of Valais Black nose, lambing them just after Christmas to meet autumn specialist sales. At the same time, he wanted to finish more lambs from the Texel cross ewes within the unit, as the popularity of locally sourced produce has grown. He approached local advisers, asking for advice on housing that were flexible, easy maintained, durable and affordable. The advice given has seen the first substantial livestock polytunnel on Lewis, erected in a matter of weeks, and the performance of which has exceeded David's expectations.

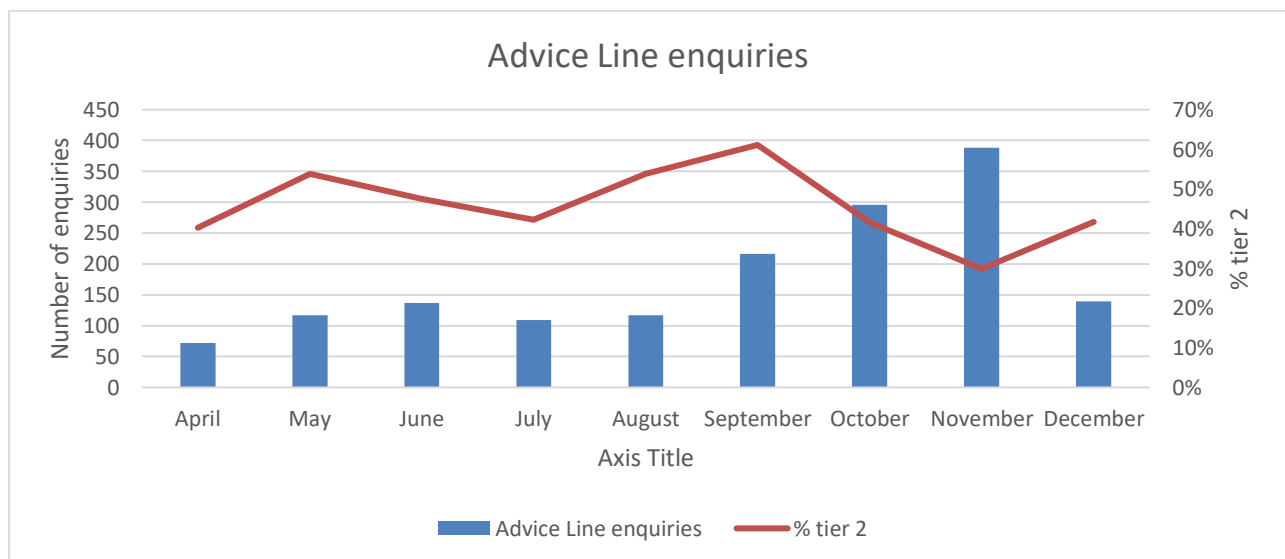
In addition, for crofters, advice is also available on: completion of assignments, decrofting and sublet applications; croft maps for Crofting Commission or SGRPID; advice on the Crofting Register; and advice on available grants.

### Subscriber case study – New entrant to crofting

Robert became a crofter subscriber in April 2020. Through his subscription he has received guidance in getting the tenancy of his croft completed, as well as becoming registered with Rural Payments and Animal Health as a sheep keeper. This has helped him achieve his dream of acquiring sheep. He has now grown his flock to 43 ewes and 10 ewe hogs. His subscription has also allowed him to seek advice on sheep nutrition and husbandry. More recently he has been assisted with building sizes and layouts as he applied for crofting grants and sheep equipment through the Sustainable Agricultural Capital Grant Scheme.

## 12. Advice Line

The FAS Advice Line offers eligible businesses up to 30 minutes of free advice. This can range from advice about upcoming events to more complex regulatory or technical questions. During 2020, 1,591 enquiries were received – a monthly average increase of compared to 29 percent compared to 2019/20. 695 (46 percent) of these were of a more technical nature (referred to as “tier 2”). The graph below shows the total number of enquiries per month and the average percentage of those that were tier 2.



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Since the Advice Line was first established in September 2016, its use by farmers and crofters has grown significantly. In 2020 it received an average of 176 enquiries a month – 40 more than 2019/20. Given that it is only open during office working hours, this equates to approximately one enquiry every 57 minutes the service is available.

### 13. Coming in Spring 2021 – FAS TV



**TV That Puts Farming First**



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