

Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS)

Background

Do you have an innovative challenge or business idea on your farm that benefit from collaborating with other farmers and industry experts from academia or the private sector? If **YES** then the **Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS)** may be able to help

The Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS) is a Scottish Government funded project to encourage a “bottom-up” approach to rural innovation and provide support to farmers, crofters or foresters who require expertise and assistance to help them adopt innovative ideas or practices.

SRUC are project partners in the delivery of RISS and our role is to provide a facilitator and the “**brokerage service**” linking farmers with researchers, commercial companies and the best expertise available to take your innovative or business idea off the ground. Innovative ideas can vary from developing and implementing a new technology to establishing a new quality standard.

Opportunities for Farmers

We will form a working group around you and your farm, bringing in members from any useful sector depending on what kind of knowledge or experience you need, be it from the tech, supply chain, business or research sectors. As well as brokering a group and identifying the correct expertise, SRUC can also

- Complete survey work and carry out small feasibility, field labs or demonstration projects
- Identify suitable funding to help support the project
- Identify technologies and areas of best practice from out with Scotland which can be duplicated

How does RISS work?

Step 1: You become part of a group

- You tell us briefly about your idea: get in touch
- We link you up with the right facilitator and you talk it over in more detail with them
- They bring in the other group members you will need (from any sector)
- The facilitator applies for group approval

Step 2: You work as a group

- The facilitator enables a period of group working: defining, developing and testing ideas and solutions. The way the group works and the time it will takes depends on what you are trying to do

- The group produces a project plan, with next steps in mind

Step 3: You have everything you need to get going

- You have a final project plan that can be used to access funding if necessary, or just to get started

Examples

The first RISS Group was set up earlier this year and was investigating the **Speeding up of dairy breeding** and involved

- Three dairy farmers interested in harnessing genetics to improve the quality of their herds.
- Identify the genetic make-up of their cross-bred cattle, starting with being sure of the parentage.
- Find an economical system of embryo transfer, so they can get 10 calves from one cow, keep the calves and get them back into the herd more quickly therefore speeding up breeding.



To this end, the group's facilitator, a project manager from the SAOS, is recruiting a geneticist, a data specialist and an agricultural scientist to complete the group.

Other examples of ongoing projects include

- **Fighting liver fluke disease** sustainably in sheep
- **Investigating oat quality** – from a producer and processor perspective (collaborative innovation across the supply chain)
- Exploring different avenues to **improve profitability of hill farms**

If you are interested in finding out more on RISS please speak to your local SRUC Agricultural Consultant or contact Alistair Trail, Food and Drink Consultant.

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