

Case study

One-to-one mentoring for a new entrant to farming

Support provided by FAS: Identifying a suitable mentor and providing funding support



Name & business: **Danielle Troy, 10 Acres Farm**

Though Danielle had been familiar with farming since childhood, it wasn't until she and her partner relocated to a small farm in the Scottish Borders that she realised the extent of what there was still to learn. Despite having experience with various animals, she found herself in need of guidance, particularly in a commercial context.

Here, Danielle explains how a local shepherd who understood small scale farming provided mentoring through the FAS mentoring program, sharing knowledge and helping to build confidence.

How did you get started in farming/crofting?

I have been around farming since childhood, but it wasn't until my partner and I moved to a small farm in the Scottish Borders that we realised how much there was still to learn!

Why did you apply for mentoring support?

I have had various animals over the years but have never 'farmed them' in a commercial way and this is where I really needed help. The farm had been mostly arable and had not a fence in sight when we bought it. I was keen to restore the biodiversity as well as ensuring we kept a high level of animal welfare. I am increasingly frustrated with food miles and strongly advocate for a minimal supply chain, ensuring meat travels directly from the field to the fork.

How did you find the process of applying for mentoring?

It was very straight forward. The forms were easy to fill out and if I had any questions there was always someone to help.

"Having the mentoring has given me more confidence"

How did you find your mentor?

My original choice of mentor was not available but the team at FAS kept me updated the whole way. We then found James who has been a shepherd his whole life and was recommended through a family member. He agreed and everything was smooth sailing. We wanted someone who understood small scale farming on a budget and James was a great help.



What did your mentor help you with?

James was a fountain of knowledge having had sheep his whole life. He lent me books about sheep keeping and was a great help when looking at what fencing we would need and what sort of hedging should be planted to give the best shelter. We had previously tried to restore some of the fencing near to the house, but James showed us a much better way using the limited machinery we had that meant we did not need to bring fencing contractors in. He suggested hedging to provide shelter and spent a long time discussing the best sheep for our needs - low input, hardy but not too wild!

“There is so much to be learned from knowledge sharing”

How did you and your mentor structure your mentoring sessions?

We had a flexible approach to mentoring to suit both sides. When it came down to the practical hands-on side, James travelled to us and spent the full day, but he was also happy to answer a message or take a call if we needed advice.

“I think the fact mentoring funding is provided is a massive bonus as it allows mentors to be compensated for their valuable time and knowledge.”

Would you recommend mentoring to other farmers?

Absolutely. I learnt so much in a short period of time. Even simple things like terminology can be confusing when you are new to grants and commercial farming so having someone that could translate this was great. I think the fact that mentoring funding is provided is a massive bonus as it allows mentors to be compensated for their valuable time and knowledge. As we all know there is never enough time in the day!

What benefits do you anticipate for your business as a result of mentoring?

I have planned what sheep to put in our starter flock and will be purchasing them in the spring. Having the mentoring has given me more confidence to really try and make a strong foundation flock rather than just fattening stores. James has also shared several contacts which I am sure will be a huge help in the future!

“We wanted someone who understood small scale farming on a budget and James was a great help”

Would you recommend FAS support services to other farmers?

Yes! There is so much to be learned from knowledge sharing and we are just at the start of our journey as I am sure many others are.

For further information about the support available, please visit www.fas.scot

Or contact us
T: 0300 323 0161
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