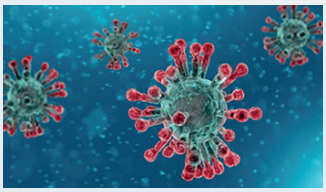
Working for you

November 2020

Coronavirus Response - record hits on NFUS website

NFUS reacted immediately to the Coronavirus crisis, providing invaluable support and advice to members on a huge range of practical and policy issues. This included a dedicated hub for employment opportunities on farms and a website page for all the up to the minute business information. This page provided information directly to over 110,000 visitors on issues ranging from public access to on farm inspections.



Trade and Agriculture Commission

NFUS was instrumental in the formation of the Trade and Agriculture Commission which will now have a statutory role in advising that secure opportunities for UK farmers whilst ensuring that production standards are not undermined. Going forward, the Commission will also work on development of export opportunities for the agricultural industry.

Big push on beef and lamb

In 2020 the Livestock Committee agreed that marketing levies collected on Scottish cattle and sheep processed elsewhere in Great Britain should be returned to Quality Meat Scotland in order to bolster marketing efforts for Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb.

NFU Scotland was also instrumental in calling for emergency marketing of beef in response to the overnight closure of the hospitality sector resulting from coronavirus lockdown that helped boost sales and prices in 2020.

Cattle Traceability

NFU Scotland has been central to industry discussions on the development of future cattle traceability by chairing the Scottish Bovine EID Stakeholder Group at which industry agreed a need to delay the transition from BCMS CTS to ScotEID for all cattle registrations and business to business movements during the coronavirus epidemic to ensure third party farm software providers had time to prepare.

The stakeholder group has also been instrumental in agreeing how to proceed with physical electronic tags in Scotland and has successfully overseen the ongoing pilot into UHF (ultra-high frequency) tags.

Securing Seasonal Staff

Access to migrant workers remains a huge area of concern and NFUS is lobbying hard for an expansion of the Seasonal Workers Scheme from the end of the transition period. NFUS has emphasised the urgent need for a decision to allow scheme operators to be ready to recruit many more workers for the 2021 season.

NFUS continues to lobby the Scottish Government on the importance of plant breeding to help Scottish agriculture meet its climate change commitments as well as to ensure a competitive industry in the future. We believe that access to the new, non-GM breeding techniques is key to speeding up the development of varieties that meet the sometime conflicting demands of growers and end users while contributing to environmental gains.

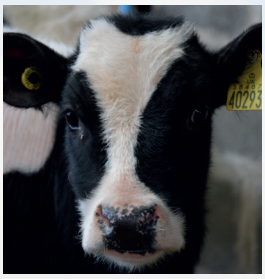
Hard won victories on convergence and Greening

Following sustained lobby from NFU Scotland, Scottish Government announced that the £130 million Greening element of the current Common Agricultural Policy will continue but with significant changes from 2021.

After years of intensive NFU Scotland lobbying, the UK Government finally committed to £160 million of direct support funding owed to Scotland through external convergence under the CAP.

NFU Scotland continues to advocate for changes to current schemes to improve and simplify these where possible and engage with Scottish Government on the future direction of Scottish rural support policy post 2024, or completely reform existing policy.

Milk contract consultation



NFUS was at the forefront of the work carried out to lobby Defra on the milk contract consultation. Our strong links with other UK Unions at this time cannot be underestimated. Inward processing investment and export opportunities of Scottish dairy products remain top of the agenda on the work we help contribute to as part of the Scottish Dairy Growth Board outcomes. Other key lobbying actions have been focussed on the implications of Covid, Brexit and issues around consumer perception of dairy, in particular on farm bull calf strategy.

Next Generation

The Next Generation Group has led on several initiatives such as NFUS Family Membership, and the AgRespect pledge to promote and support an open and inclusive industry. The group continues to highlight the challenges such as opportunities for new entrants, loss of direct support for new entrants and young farmers, and the need to stimulate a dynamic and fluid land sector.

Livestock Worrying

NFUS lobbying shone a spotlight on the rural crime of livestock worrying and ongoing issues of access with dogs. This has resulted in extensive political discussion, Scottish Government consultations, parliamentary scrutiny of existing legislation and a recent Members Bill. The result is recognition that further legislative action is required. NFUS will continue pressure to ensure that this happens.

Tackling the Climate Change Challenge

NFU Scotland believes that Scottish agriculture must also be recognised for the work it has done in reducing emissions and enabling sequestration of carbon.

Partnership working has led to the publication of science-based factsheets on climate change and Scottish agriculture. NFU Scotland continues to work with to support the Farming for 1.5 Inquiry, which aims to find consensus on the best way for Scottish agriculture to meet the challenge of limiting global warming to 1.5C.

In 2020, NFUS established an internal Climate Change Advisory Panel. The Panel, made up of a mixture of active farmers and land use and climate change experts, will support NFU Scotland in its work to ensure that Scottish agriculture can remain vibrant and productive while delivering benefits for the climate and wider environment.

Keeping Scotland's pigs and poultry healthy

NFU Scotland worked to encourage increased awareness around the risk posed from African Swine Fever, with messaging at ports, reminders about not swill feeding and warning foreign students to not bring in meat products. Following NFUS lobbying NFUS also secured commitment from Scottish Government for a dedicated detection dog for illegal meat products within Scotland's border entry points. NFUS carried out a poultry shelf watch exercise, with positive response, to assist Scotland's broiler industry negotiating retailer contracts within Scotland.

Leading on Animal Health and Welfare

NFU Scotland supported the introduction of Phase 5 of the BVD eradication scheme, tightening the existing regulations making not-negative herds test for PIs and remove them from the herd or protect their own and neighbouring herds from PIs. NFUS has been in discussions with Scottish Government following the FAWC report on live animal transport and will be working hard to ensure that member's views are represented when responding to future consultations looking at changes to animal transport regulations.

Less Favoured Areas must be supported

The NFU Scotland LFA Committee has been clear that the Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme (LFASS) should be fully reinstated and retained until at least 2024. In 2020 the LFA Committee published a clear policy document outlining this request, while detailing changes to be made to both the Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme (SUSSS) and the Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme.

Regional Land Use Partnerships

NFU Scotland has engaged extensively regarding the development of Regional Land Use Partnerships and made strong representations about the role that farmers and crofters must play in these. This has included written and oral representations to key stakeholders and Scottish Government. The Partnerships will provide a more integrated and strategic approach to land use in Scotland, and NFUS will ensure that the interests of Scottish farmers and crofters are at the forefront of discussions

Crofting

The Crofting Highlands and Islands Committee steer the policy priorities and this year that included crofting law reform, the Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme, and the Crofters Bull Hire Scheme.

COVID-19 has focused market opportunities to local food supply chains and discussions about adding value and connecting crofters with consumers have taken a renewed focus going into 2021.

Union takes lobbying lead

NFU Scotland has worked hard to build a strong and enduring profile amongst governments and parliamentarians in Holyrood and Westminster. Officeholders and staff spend hundreds of hours engaging politicians and lobbying for our members' interests across a vast range of issues, and NFU Scotland is among the top three organisations in Scotland that have met the most Scottish Government Ministers in the last twelve months. Our respected political profile and strong working relationships with all political parties have cemented NFU Scotland's reputation amongst key decision-makers as the go-to organisation on agriculture, environment and rural matters.

Scottish Dairy Hub

Now in its 6th year, the Scottish Dairy Hub has helped hundreds of farmers with thousands of enquiries since it was established. The Hub acts as a signposting service for farmers connecting the dairy sector throughout Scotland. It identifies the best sources of advice and training to improve dairy farm competitiveness, technical efficiency, and sustainability. NFUS continues to part fund the Hub in conjunction with Scottish Government.

Drive for balance in Species Management

NFU Scotland secured an extension to the existing goose management schemes for a further two years and remains at the forefront of efforts to find ways to reduce the impacts of beavers, sea eagles and geese on farmers and crofters across Scotland. NFUS has secured commitment from Scottish Government that there will be no further beaver releases, allowing their population to expand naturally with control options available where there is risk of serious agricultural damage. NFUS has signed up to a commitment with SNH to take a 'shared approach' to species management going forward, seeking a more balanced approach across stakeholder interests.

ScotGov must deliver fly-tipping strategy

In partnership key organisations, NFUS has delivered an emotive campaign to raise awareness of fly-tipping to the public, parliamentarians, and Scottish Government.

NFUS has collectively called for the Scottish Government to take the lead in tackling fly-tipping through the delivery of a dedicated fly-tipping strategy, to help private landowners who are victims of fly-tipping, and to strengthen the legislation to extend householder responsibility and ensure those guilty of fly-tipping are convicted.

Scottish Land Matching Service has early success

NFUS was instrumental in setting up the Scottish Land Matching Service to help those seeking or wishing to offer an opportunity in relation to land. The Service builds on the pilot NFUS Joint Venture Hub and is hosted by NFUS. The service has extensive cross sector support, is staffed by Ian Davidson OBE, and is a dedicated free service available to those offering or looking for opportunities in relation to land in Scotland. The service has already made four successful matches and provided information to many others.

Scottish LAND MATCHING SERVICE

Fuel Filter Blocking

Fuel filter blocking issues response to over 400 farmers and crofters between November 2019 – January 2020 was led by NFUS. Following significant lobbying of UK and Scottish Governments, alongside the UK fuel supply chain, an Agricultural Fuel Filter Blocking Taskforce was created. Tasked with changing the specifications and standards of fuel to ensure lessons from the filter blocking fiasco are implemented, NFUS continues work in holding the UK fuel supply chain to account on this complex issue

NFU Scotland

Keep in touch with events as they happen, register your email address with info@nfus.org.uk to be added to our mailing lists. For more information on any topic covered in this leaflet, call 0131 472 4000.

CONTACT US AT:

NFU Scotland
Rural Centre, West Mains
Ingliston, Newbridge
Edinburgh, EH28 8LT

FIND US AT:

Download the NFUS App
Scan the QR Code or search for NFUS to download the app

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

twitter
Search for @NFUStweets

facebook
Search for NFU Scotland