

# Review of the implementation of EU-FAS policy in Member States of EU- United Kingdom

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## I- Executive summary

This reports outlines EU-FAS in the UK, and more specifically in Scotland and England from where our case study regions are found. In 2018, the utilised agricultural area of the United Kingdom covered 71% of land (73% of all land in Scotland and 69% of all land in England)<sup>1</sup>. Agriculture's contribution to the national economy was less than 1% and its share of employment 1.53%. The United Kingdom was the largest producer of sheep and goat meat, accounting for around 38% of EU production, and the third largest producer of wheat, milk and beef and veal behind France and Germany. The UK by comparison with other farms in the EU, is characterised as having large farms with an average farm size of 94.7ha compared to the EU average of only 16.1 ha (EC, 2019<sup>2</sup>). Over the most recent reporting period (18/19), the production of all major plant-based commodities decreased from between 0.6% (fruit) to 16% (oilseed rape) (DEFRA, 2018).

Over the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, FAS policies in the United Kingdom shifted from a state-funded, university research-led approach that was predominant until the late 1980s, to a privatised market-led approach. This shift centred around the privatisation of the largest state advisory organisation (ADAS<sup>3</sup>) in 1997 and can be characterised by near-market research funded by private bodies and levy boards. This resulted in a diversification of providers, including from the private and NGO sectors. This was accompanied by the replacement of state-owned with privately-owned demonstration farms, the increased power of supermarkets, and the diminished role of agricultural shows as a centre of agricultural knowledge.

Today, there are a diverse (and increasingly separating) set of advisory systems across the 4 countries that make up the UK (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales). Overall objectives can be characterised as agri-environmental. The key commonalities are: i) a market-led approach, and ii) climate change mitigation/adaptation. Further objectives extrapolated from funding calls include nutrient management and climate change (England); sustainability and profitability of farming, especially disease, pollution, water, and climate change (Scotland); new entrants, animal welfare, women in farming, and climate change (Wales); and education, technological innovation, and nutrient management (Northern Ireland).

EU FAS has, therefore, been implemented into a radically changed political and economic landscape within the UK. During the period 2014-2020, an expected €28 billion is expected to be invested across

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<sup>1</sup> Data from the Factsheets on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme of England and the factsheet for Scotland Available at [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rural-development-policy-figures/rdp-summaries\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rural-development-policy-figures/rdp-summaries_en) (Accessed 01 Oct 2019).

<sup>2</sup> European Commission CAP Factsheet UK, 2019, Available: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/by\\_country/documents/cap-in-your-country-uk\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/by_country/documents/cap-in-your-country-uk_en.pdf) [Accessed 01 Jul 2019]

<sup>3</sup> ADAS: UK's largest independent agricultural and environmental Consulting accessible <https://www.adas.uk/About> [Accessed 10 Sept 2019].

the agricultural sector in the UK from the CAP<sup>4</sup>. This is divided regionally within each nation's rural development programs (RDP). The 2 UK case studies carried out for AgriLink were based in England and Scotland, and as there exists a complete regionalisation of EU-FAS in the UK, this report will focus more upon the RDP in these 2 nations.

The main policy tools that facilitate Pillar I and II FAS services in England and Scotland include the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) FAS, FAS England, and a market-led approach to developing private partnerships and consortia to deliver various services in line with EU FAS goals. These instruments vary in their design and approach. All operate within the boundaries of a devolved regional system, and are funded from various sources, including EU FAS frameworks, national budgets, and private funding. As such, there are many different suppliers responsible for delivering FAS, including NGOs, charities, levy boards, private and public funded bodies.

SRDP FAS has a coordinative and facilitative role in Scotland. Its main objectives are to "provide information and resources aimed at increasing the profitability and sustainability of farms and crofts." <sup>5</sup> This is characterised by a 'one to many/one to one' approach and is administered by the Scottish Agricultural College Consulting (SAC, as part of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)<sup>6</sup>) and Ricardo Energy & Environment<sup>7</sup>. Alternately, FAS England is managed by the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs<sup>8</sup> (DEFRA) who contract to a network of independent advisors from agricultural consultancies, research organisations and industry stakeholders such as the National Farmers Union and the Country Land and Business Association. They work closely with Natural England<sup>9</sup> and a partnership body 'Championing the Farmed Environment'<sup>10</sup> to deliver advice. The Rural Payments Agency<sup>11</sup> is then responsible for administering the relevant subsidies and loans to farmers, landowners and other agricultural partners. Its central objectives are to "help farms understand and meet the requirements of Cross Compliance, Greening (the Basic Payments Scheme) and the European Directives on both water protection and sustainable pesticide use," indicating a more explicit engagement with EU FAS in the national advisory framework. <sup>12</sup> The main policy tools at a national level, however, also evidence central objectives around stewardship and market-based technological

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<sup>4</sup> Figure taken from report by EU Commission called *CAP in your country*, accessible [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/by\\_country/documents/cap-in-your-country-uk\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/by_country/documents/cap-in-your-country-uk_en.pdf) [Accessed 09 May 2019].

<sup>5</sup> SRDP Farm Advisory Service, online at <https://www.fas.scot/about-us/> (Accessed 5th June 2019)

<sup>6</sup> Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) was formed in 2012 after merging SAC with 3 other respected partners to deliver skills, education and business support for Scotland's land-based industries. Online at <https://www.sruc.ac.uk/> [Accessed 23.09.19].

<sup>7</sup> Ricardo Energy & Environment is a public limited company (plc) operating as a global consultancy for which agriculture is one sector they provide expertise (For more information visit: <https://ricardo.com/about-us/what-we-do> for more information). They operate in both Scotland and England receiving separate contracts from the relevant bodies to deliver EU-FAS services.

<sup>8</sup> DEFRA is a ministerial department of the UK Government. Their remit is for England only; however they work closely with the other devolved administrations in the UK and lead on discussions and negotiations for the UK with the EU and internationally.

<sup>9</sup> Natural England is a non-departmental public body, often known as a quango, sponsored by DEFRA (For more information visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about>) [Accessed 28 Jan 2020]

<sup>10</sup> Championing the Farmed Environment is a partnership working with a range of stakeholders to deliver advice and training with a clear environmental focus for all farming activities. (For more information please visit <http://www.cfeonline.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/>) [Accessed 28 Jan 2020]

<sup>11</sup> The Rural Payments Agency is an executive agency sponsored by DEFRA (For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency>) [Accessed 28 Jan 2020]

<sup>12</sup> For more information visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/farming-advice-service> (Accessed 5th June 2019)

innovation. While national objectives differ, the main policy tools in England and Scotland operate in very similar ways, financing the development of private partnerships and consortia to deliver EU and national level FAS.

## II- Extensive description of the implementation of the EU-FAS in UK (England and Scotland)

### A) Introduction – General overview about the EU-FAS implementation

EU-FAS is implemented regionally within the UK with the result that there is no overarching national policy. Rather, each nation with the UK, has their own rural development program (under pillar 2 of CAP) and it is treated as a devolved policy matter. This has led to distinct differing priorities for each region by which advisors provide information. The focus within this report shall be the case study regions in Scotland and England. In Scotland we examined the role of precision farming in the counties of Aberdeenshire and Angus, and in England, farmer collaboration for environmental benefit was the focus for the counties of East Anglia and Cumbria.

Since the 1980s, once state-funded advisory organisations were commercialised and then privatised in large part to the political climate in the UK at that time. A fragmentary sector resulted in specific challenges for FAS in the UK. Since FAS is considered to be a devolved power, it is contracted out to different organisations and as such, there is little exchange between each region.

For the Scottish Rural Development Program, currently € 1.52 billion of public money is available for the period 2014-2020 (of which € 844 million comes from the EU budget, and a further € 338 million of national co-funding plus € 12 million of additional national funding top-ups<sup>13</sup>). In England, there exists a budget of €4.05 billion of public money for the same period, of which €3.47 billion is from the EU budget, plus €495 million of national co-funding, and €90 million of national funding top-ups<sup>14</sup>.

### B) “Boundaries” of the implementation of the EU-FAS regulation

Geographically, FAS services differ amongst the 4 countries that make up the UK. Within each country, distinct policies and service providers operate including a mix of public and private bodies, NGOs and farming unions, with a stronger governmental intervention in Scotland and Northern Ireland (Prager et al 2014). As such, within each country, there are specific priorities that each government sets which determine the advice delivered through EU-FAS. In Scotland, EU-FAS is organized by the Scottish Rural Development Program (SRDP), co-funded by both the EU and Scottish Government and utilizes the services of the Scottish Agricultural College Consulting (SAC Consulting) and Ricardo Energy & Environment (from here on known as Ricardo). In England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) act as the responsible organization who defer largely to Natural England and a host of other stakeholders including NGOs, partnerships and industrial experts. Ricardo also deliver FAS England services but not to the same extent as in Scotland. In addition, the Campaign for the Farmed Environment deliver industry-led advice on greening requirements, pesticide use, nutrient management and implementation of the Greenhouse Gas Plan.

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<sup>13</sup> Rural Development Program factsheet for Scotland available at [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/uk/factsheet-scotland\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/uk/factsheet-scotland_en.pdf) (Accessed 01 Oct 2019)

<sup>14</sup> Rural Development Program factsheet for England available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/uk/factsheet-england\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/uk/factsheet-england_en.pdf) (Accessed 01 Oct 2019)

The FAS objective in Scotland is to “facilitate step-changes in the economic and environmental performance of farmers and crofters throughout Scotland” (SRDP, April 2019, p.13). The priorities in Scotland are 1.) Integrated Land management plans (ILMP), 2.) mentoring for new entrants, 3.) carbon audits and 4.) one-to-one advice for farmers and businesses (SRDP, 2019). In Scotland, FAS is administered through 2 programs, the ‘one-to-many’ program for which SAC Consulting is the responsible body and the ‘one-to-one’ program, awarded to Ricardo, both effective from September 2016 to December 2020 (Victor & Field, 2019). The ‘one-to-many’ program was launched in September 2016 and is the biggest component of the Scottish EU-FAS delivery. During the initial introductory period, it faced challenges due to a lack of cohesive branding to encompass all farmers and crofters in Scotland (SRDP Report, 2019). The report also highlights that small farmers and crofters made use of the small farm advisory service whilst other farmers outside these parameters benefited from the more general advice line (ibid). The program offers advice via a range of specifically designed FAS events across Scotland including; podcasts, videos, a new website, social media publications and advertising, publications, a croft and small farms subscription and a telephone advice line offering 30 minutes of free advice to eligible farmers and businesses. The advice can range from general queries about an upcoming FAS event to more technical advice. There are currently 23 SAC offices across Scotland, and this significantly aids the delivery and visibility of these services and events.

The ‘one-to-one’ program is responsible for delivery of Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMP), Specialist Advice, Carbon Audits and mentoring for new entrants. The program covers a series of grants that farmers can apply for with up to 80% of the cost recoverable through the program. ILMPs offer a holistic view of the farm business and associated with this they can have 2 hours of specialist advice which can look into more detail to a specific aspect of the business i.e. organic farming or soil nutrient management. Every farmer who has a registered agricultural business number (BRN) in Scotland is eligible to receive one ILMP, a carbon audit and 2 hours of specialist advice through the program. However, you can have one carbon audit in a 12-month period and farmers are thus encouraged to pursue more than one. It allows both the adviser and farmer to assess the business and have an action plan going forward that can be monitored and reviewed. Of interest to the Scottish case, there is a separate tier for crofters and small-farms who are subsidized significantly through EU-FAS. This subscription service is available to farms and crofts under 30 ha and offers up to 2 hours of advice and independent recommendations per year from a local adviser either on the telephone or at a local SAC office. A specific newsletter is also produced, access to relevant case studies and the option to have a further 2 more hours of advice either on the farm, in a SAC office or again by telephone (SAC Consulting interview, Sept 2019). FAS events that are specific to crofts and small-farms are often over prescribed suggesting there is a high demand for these events.

FAS in England identifies as a “national network of qualified, independent advisers under contract to DEFRA...[that] provide free government advice confidentially to farmers and farming industry advisers” (Gov UK, 2019). FAS objectives for England are to provide “free, confidential advice on cross compliance and the greening requirements, some aspects of the Water Framework Directive (such as silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil (SSAFO) and waste exemptions) and the Sustainable Use (of pesticides) Directive” (FAS Newsletter, Sept 2019). This is delivered through a free helpline, email service, the organization of events and training days, workshops, technical newsletters and articles in farming press<sup>15</sup>. In England, the priorities for advice are 1.) compliance, 2.) greening, 3.) the Water

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<sup>15</sup> See the FAS overview from the UK Government’s website, accessible at <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/farming-advice-service> (Accessed on 9 June 2019).

Framework Directive and 4.) the Sustainable Use (of Pesticides) Directive. The Countryside Stewardship scheme (CS) is the leading agri-environmental scheme available for farmers in England and is managed by DEFRA, Natural England and the Environment Agency. They work with other national and local bodies such as Rivers Trusts, NGOs and AHDB to provide training opportunities and information. There is thus a wide range of organisations both public and private delivering EU-FAS services in England. The fragmentary and varied nature of EU-FAS and the privatization of advisory services, has led to suggestions that some farmers (particularly small-scale) and in some particular geographical regions find it more difficult to access advice (Prager, 2014). However, DEFRA advocate that their EU-FAS services are said to be for all farmers.

| <b>Scope of EU-FAS</b> |   | <b>DEFRA</b> | <b>Scottish Government</b> |
|------------------------|---|--------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Mandatory</i>       | <b>(a) CROSS-COMPLIANCE</b><br><i>Standards for Good agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC)</i>   | x            | x                          |
|                        | <b>(b) PRACTICES BENEFICIAL FOR THE CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT</b><br><i>(chap. 3 – Reg. No 1307/2013)</i><br><i>Crop diversification, Permanent Grassland, Ecological areas</i>         |              | x                          |
|                        | <b>(c) FARM MODERNISATION,</b><br><i>Competitiveness, Market, Entrepreneurship</i>  |              | x                          |
|                        | <b>(d) WATER DIRECTIVE</b><br><i>Article 11(3) of directive 2000/60/EC</i>  | x            | x                          |
|                        | <b>(e) PESTICIDE DIRECTIVE</b><br><i>Good practices for pesticide use &amp; Integrated pest management. Article 11(3) of Directive 2000/60/EC and article 14 of directive 2009/128/EC</i> | x            | x                          |
| <i>Optional</i>        | <b>(a) DIVERSIFICATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES</b><br><i>and conversion of farms (to organic farming??)</i>  |              | x                          |
|                        | <b>(b) RISK MANAGEMENT</b><br><i>Vis-à-vis natural disasters; catastrophic events, animal &amp; plant diseases</i>  | x            |                            |
|                        | <b>(c) AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEMES &amp; ORGANIC FARMING</b><br><i>Articles 28(3) and 29(2) of Regulation No 1305/2013</i>   | x            | x                          |
|                        | <b>(d) INFORMATION related to CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY, WATER</b>   |              | x                          |

Table 1: Scope of EU-FAS in the UK

### C) “Identity” of the suppliers selected for the implementation of the EU-FAS regulation

Within Scotland, EU-FAS is ascribed to the Scottish Rural Development Program (SRDP) who work with the Consulting branch of the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC Consulting) and Ricardo to officially deliver programs and training events out to farmers across Scotland. In general, increasing profits was noted as the main motivator for farmers to engage with EU-FAS services whilst environmental priorities were reserved for larger farm estates and businesses (Prager, 2014).

The latest report from SAC (available to view on the SRDP website), indicates the results of the ‘one-to-many’ campaign across Scotland. The specific tools used to implement their FAS priorities included; the launch of a FAS newsletter, dedicated events and training opportunities, increased social media presence and engagement from users, their advice line offering 30 minutes of free advice to all farmers and crofters as well as a separate Croft and Small Farm Advisory Service, online tools and publications and webinars to reach out to farmers unable to attend certain events. Importantly, of the feedback received from the different events held over the year, over 90% of respondents reported that they would go on to implement changes to their farm management due to the information received at these events. There are currently 23 SAC offices across Scotland, each staffed with a senior consultant as well as other consultants of differing grades and a generalist consultant<sup>16</sup> (a graduate with an agricultural practice-based degree).

Meanwhile, Ricardo is the responsible organisation to deliver the ‘one-to-one’ FAS in Scotland. Ricardo are responsible for delivering “Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMPs), Specialist Advice, Carbon Audits and Mentoring for new entrants” (Ricardo, April 2019). They provide training to all advisors who implement ILMPs and provide grant management services. They deliver their objectives through an adviser newsletter, direct mail to new entrants, engagement with stakeholders at various meetings and a strong online social media presence. Currently there are 81 advisers and 19 associates from across the farming community who meet certain criteria to provide training advice in line with their objectives.

In England, it is the Ministerial body Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) that is responsible for delivering FAS contracting a network of private and public bodied organisations to deliver its Rural Development Program for England (RDPE) , with Natural England ultimately responsible for coordination of the network through meetings between Ricardo and other public agencies and NGOs. Most recently, Natural England have transferred responsibility for the Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmental Stewardship (ES) schemes to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) from 1 October. Ricardo also deliver FAS in England operating on much the same basis as the one-to-many program that is delivered by SAC Consulting in Scotland (*Interview with Ricardo, Sept 2019*). There are currently 72 advisers in England contracted to Ricardo from across the sector including ADAS and various local action groups and trusts.

The Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme in England for 2019 was launched in January 2018 having undergone improvements from the previous round to make it easier for farmers to make their applications. The CS scheme is designed for farmers and land managers to apply for grants to receive payment for making deliberate environmental benefits on their land, including habits for wildlife, pollinator plots for increasing biodiversity and restoring existing farm boundaries and hedgerows (DEFRA 2018). It is hoped that farmers who are successful with the CS grants will be in a good position to benefit from future priority grants to safeguard the natural environment post 2020. The CS scheme

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<sup>16</sup> Information from Interview with SAC Consulting (September 2019).

exists as the agri-environment scheme for England offered under the Rural Development Program for England, administered under the Rural Payments Agency with a mid and higher tier level. The Mid-tier is for applicants making simple improvements that have discernible local benefits, and the higher tier represents more complex cases often in already sensitive environmental areas. In 2019, the CS scheme offered a simplified guidance handbook for applicants as well as the option to now make all the applications online. They are also flexible, meaning that farmers have the option to select which parts of their land are entered into an agreement, and other parts are then available for different priorities.

D) “Control” of the quality of the services implemented under the EU-FAS regulation

| Country  | Responsible for EU-FAS                           | Suppliers Contracted                                      |
|----------|--|---|
| Scotland | Scottish Government<br>Consulting<br><br>Ricardo | SAC Consulting  |
|          |  | Ricardo   |
|          |  |   |
| England  | Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)    | Natural England   |
|          |  | Champion for the Farmed Environment                       |
|          |  | Various NGOs, Trusts, partnerships, industry stakeholders |

Table 2 List of Accredited Suppliers for delivery of EU-FAS in Scotland and England

The Scottish Government has contracted two organisations to be responsible to deliver EU-FAS: SAC Consulting and Ricardo Energy & Environment. The two firms bid for the contract and began implementing the latest SRDP in September 2016. Whilst the two firms have their separate contracts, they are very much involved with the other’s program. For example, the free telephone helpline is managed by Ricardo but since they are not an agricultural consultancy, if there are any technical questions, the call is forwarded to SAC Consulting who would then administer the appropriate advice. Similarly the majority of ILMPs and carbon audits delivered by Ricardo, are carried out by advisers organised through SAC Consulting. Much of the online tools and social media content for the one-to-many program is then produced through Ricardo (Interviews with SAC Consulting and Ricardo, Sept 2019).

SAC Consulting currently operates from 23 offices across Scotland with 180 full-time staff and 120 of those as agricultural consultants. Each office is staffed with a senior consultant and various other consultants of different grades, and a generalist consultant. All consultants are encouraged to continue CPD training (continuous professional development) and are linked with SRUC across Scotland offering a unique opportunity for research and development. There are also specialist teams of advisers who work on specific sectors i.e. livestock, crops, woodland, rural business and these are more project

focused with further opportunities to research on specific subjects and apply for external funding for project research.

Ricardo who operate the one-to-one program and manage the delivery of ILMPs and carbon audits similarly stipulate that all advisers must meet FBAASS<sup>17</sup> accreditation. Farmers can apply for grants for an ILMP and carbon audit and search from their list of FBAASS accredited advisers. For specialist advice, Ricardo stipulate that advisers must be 'adequately qualified' and their CVs are checked so that they can be matched to a farmer as appropriate.

Within Scotland, both Ricardo and SAC Consulting have to submit regular reports to the Scottish Government and the EU. The EU requests mandated reporting on a monthly basis, namely an invoice of costs and a monthly report of deliverables from that month. In addition, monthly and annual reports are submitted to the Scottish Government. An annual report from both organisations is published and available to view online to the general public which provides an overview of each service provided, the level of engagement and attendance as well as a summary of the outcomes specified in the original tender for the contract<sup>18</sup>. Within the report, SAC must include the attendance levels of events held across the year, the number of evaluation forms received, farmer responses to the events attended as well as statistical feedback on the engagement with social media and website traffic.

Ricardo hold the contract to deliver Scotland's one-to-one program which includes the ILMPs, carbon audits, mentoring for new entrants and specialist advice. Whilst Ricardo is not an agricultural consultancy firm, they include a team of 81 advisers and 18 associates from a range of different farm advisory organisations who all hold FBAASS accreditation (only farmers with this accreditation are able to deliver FAS services as part of the SRDP), in accordance with Lantra training.<sup>19</sup> SAC Consulting also deliver advice but not training services as per the conditions of their contract to deliver FAS. The advisers that Ricardo work with are not contracted to deliver the FAS programme but because the main route for farmers to learn about the one-to-one program is through advisers, Ricardo issue training to advisors to make sure they are equipped with the specific knowledge and skills required as well as producing an advisers' newsletter to regularly update the team (Wood, 2019). Training consists of an online training portal, face-to face training workshops and ongoing communication through the advisers' newsletter.

For every on-farm visit, ILMP, specialist advice, a written report is produced by the adviser which contributes towards the monthly and annual reporting produced by Ricardo and SAC Consulting. Similarly, advisers in England also must submit reports and these importantly allow for the contracted bodies such as Natural England and Ricardo to be recompensed for the delivery of EU-FAS services.

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<sup>17</sup> FBAASS is the accepted standard in Scotland for advisers and is administered through Lantra: a nationally recognised awarding association to provide training, skills and qualifications recognised and certified by regulatory bodies. See <https://www.scotland.lantra.co.uk/about-us-scotland> for more information.

<sup>18</sup> For both the SAC and Ricardo reports visit <https://www.fas.scot/about-us/>

<sup>19</sup>

## E) “Attributes” of the services implemented under the EU-FAS regulation

Ricardo who are the responsible body to deliver the one-to-one program in Scotland have a team of advisers to help deliver advisory services. All advisers delivering ILMPs and the carbon audits must hold an FBAASS accreditation from Lantra (official awarding body in Scotland), which is the nationally recognised standard for Scotland. All advisers who are available to Ricardo to deliver official EU-FAS advice, are also in receipt of a specific adviser newsletter which enables the adviser to be kept up to date with the latest news and training advice available.

SAC Consulting who deliver the one-to-many program is strongly affiliated to Scotland’s Rural College, after merging SAC in 2012 with three other partners. This connection with SRUC allows SAC Consulting to be kept up to date with research and innovation, as well as have access to developing new talent amongst the rural sectors. The scope of SRUC and SAC across Scotland helps promote this particular brand of advice.

In England, the CS scheme is a partnership between Defra, the Environment Agency and Natural England administered by the Rural Payments Agency. In order to deliver the CS funding scheme, it works with many different partners including water companies, local authorities, agricultural and environmental bodies and national partners such as AHDB, Campaign for the Farmed Environment and the Rivers Trust among others, to run events and deliver information. All applicants are firstly encouraged to contact a local Countryside Stewardship Fund Officer (CSFO)<sup>20</sup> to find out more and begin the application process.

## F) “Financing” of the services implemented under the EU-FAS regulation

For the Scottish Rural Development Program, currently € 1.52billion of public money is available for the period 2014-2020 (of which, € 844 million comes from the EU budget, and a further € 338 million of national co-funding plus € 12 million of additional national funding top-ups<sup>21</sup>). In England, there exists a budget of €4.05billion of public money for the same period, of which €3.47billion is from the EU budget, plus €495 million of national co-funding, and €90 million of national funding top-ups<sup>22</sup>. Of this budget, €45.6 million has been allocated to the delivery of Measure 2 (M02) in England.

Within England, the administration process as to how payments are claimed by the organisations delivering EU-FAS services are calculated as lengthy and laborious. For example, according to an interview with Ricardo (Sept 2019), in order to pay an adviser for their services related to EU-FAS, the bank account of the adviser must be shown in order to prove payment has been made for the organising body to then request a payment through EU-FAS.

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<sup>20</sup> For more information on the CS fund and for a list of contacts, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-get-paid-for-environmental-land-management> for more information. (Accessed 10 Oct 2019)

<sup>21</sup> Rural Development Program factsheet for Scotland available at [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/uk/factsheet-scotland\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/uk/factsheet-scotland_en.pdf) (Accessed 01 Oct 2019)

<sup>22</sup> Rural Development Program factsheet for England available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/uk/factsheet-england\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/uk/factsheet-england_en.pdf) (Accessed 01 Oct 2019)

As it currently stands, farmers can apply for grants to cover up to 80% of the service, i.e. 80% costs of an ILMP and then pay the remaining 20% themselves. In Scotland, where crofts and small farms also can apply for grants to cover 80% of the cost, the remaining 20% is still considered by some to be off-putting. However, the costs are calculated based on the size of the farm and for a croft or small farm it is considerably less compared to a larger arable farm. However the 20% figure is still perceived as a hurdle for many small farmers and crofters.

According to the AUK report by DEFRA, direct payments across the UK are expected to increase over the 2018-19 reporting period by 0.7% to £2.75 billion, with payments linked to agri-environmental schemes are expected to increase by 9.1% to \$436 million, and payments under the Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS) are expected to be 9.8% lower at £74 million.

|   | England (Euros)        | Scotland (Euros)    |
|---|------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>CAP Payments in 2018 (Euros)</b>                         | 2, 474,000,000 (Euros) | 698,000,000 (Euros) |
| <b>Total direct payments</b>                                | 2,177,000,000          | 549,000,000         |
| <b>Pillar 2 funds</b>                                       | 780,000,000            | 390,000,000         |
| <b>Direct Payments made through key measures of the RDP</b> |                        |                     |
| <b>Less favoured areas</b>                                  | 0                      | 66,000,000          |
| <b>Agri-environmental and animal welfare measure</b>        |                        |                     |
| <b>Country Stewardship Scheme</b>                           | 361,000,000            |                     |
| <b>Land Managers Option</b>                                 |                        | 10,000,000          |
| <b>Rural Priorities</b>                                     |                        | 9,000,000           |

Table 3: CAP Payments in England and Scotland

### III- Effectiveness of EU-FAS

In this section, we gather evidence regarding the outcomes of the EU-FAS implementation. We present an overview of data collection with some key data related to farmers access to advisory services and beneficiaries of measure M02.1. (Pillar II Rural Development).

Evaluation of implementation of FAS is carried out by means of annual surveys and feedback forms. Outreach is assessed by the percentage of farm holdings in receipt of EU direct payments.

#### A) Facts and figures about EU-FAS implementation

The aim of the EU-FAS is to facilitate the sustainable development of agriculture through national farm advisory frameworks. As we have discussed in Section 2 of this report, the national farm advisory system (FAS) is characterised by: i) a devolved system; ii) a lack of cohesive national policies, and; iii) a market-led approach, historically based in a project to diversify and privatise national FAS which

started in the late 1990s and continues today. The radically changed political-economic landscape of FAS in the United Kingdom impacts the implementation and the effectiveness of EU-FAS, as the system adjusts to a diverse (and increasingly separating) set of advisory systems across the 4 countries that make up the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales).

As mandated by the EU, the responsible bodies for delivering EU-FAS must produce specific reports about the services provided in both Scotland and England. In Scotland, both SAC Consulting and Ricardo produce annual reports summarising the number of farmers.

Feedback forms are collected as standard from all FAS events organised in Scotland, as well as special case study reports. These are used to form the basis of the reports produced by both FAS contractors to the Scottish Government and subsequently the EU. Yet one critique remains that it can be difficult to know exactly the impact from attending certain events. The Scottish Government have recently published a report (September 2019) titled "*Farm Advisory Service: enhanced monitoring and evaluation*" to address these concerns about evaluating the effectiveness of the services offered by both Ricardo and SAC Consulting.<sup>23</sup> The report essentially leads on from the annual publications received by the Scottish Government to comment further about the impact of the FAS services to farmers. The report focused upon the delivery of the one-to-one program delivered by Ricardo since this was believed to deliver the most significant behavioural changes for farmers. In total there were 116 farmers selected for the sample and satisfactory levels were high (79% recorded high or somewhat satisfactory) amongst this sample for all outputs. Areas noted for improvement included an Improved marketing of the service, less paperwork in the provision of the service, more specific, detailed, relevant advice, speed of service and more follow-up. Importantly this feedback can be reviewed by Ricardo to allow changes in the final months of delivery of the service.

The major annual report on agriculture in the UK (DEFRA, AUK) has limited data on farmer demographics. Data is instead focused on total spending across devolved regions. In 2018, there was a total labour force of 477,000 including farmers and spouses.

The term 'policy objective' is a broad concept ranging from the ideal to the actualised. Within the devolved system of UK FAS, each country has key objectives: For example, the key objectives of SRDP FAS are to provide information and resources aimed at increasing the profitability and sustainability of farms and crofts."<sup>24</sup> ; FAS England instead states its objectives are to "help farms understand and meet the requirements of Cross Compliance, Greening (the Basic Payments Scheme) and the European Directives on both water protection and sustainable pesticide use". These national level objectives are not necessarily aligned with the broader objectives of CAP implementation within the UK. This comparison is perhaps one of the areas in which FAS policy exhibits a cohesive front, but in doing so, highlights discontinuities in nation-country objectives. CAP implementation objectives in the UK emphasises the role of 'fairer and greener direct payments' as a means to achieving policy objectives across the 4 countries; support for rural development, and growth and jobs. There is a further emphasis in the implementation reporting on two key achievements: i) value adding through emphasis on quality schemes, and ii) responding to market difficulties.

Within Scotland, the 2 separate programs are said to enable delivery of services for all farmers including the delivery of a separate crofters and small farmers subscription, subsidized by the SRDP.

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<sup>23</sup>Victor, L., Field, C., (2019), Farm Advisory Service Enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation, Report to Scottish Government, Sept 2019 (Available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/farm-advisory-service-enhanced-monitoring-evaluation/pages/8/>) [Accessed on 23.09.2019].

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.fas.scot/about-us/> (Accessed 5th June 2019)

However, after interviews with both advisory bodies, there remains concerns that there still exist some farmers who are not benefiting from the service. For geographical reasons, farmers in remote areas of Scotland remain under-represented and this is also a reflection that delivery advice on the farm to these areas is considerably more expensive too. There is a perception that form filling and applications are too time-consuming for many and that larger farms (particularly arable farms) are also more likely to use and apply for these grants.

In England as there exists only one program, the breadth and scope is limited when compared to Scotland. Ricardo have specified that due to budget constraints in England, the focus on the program is to deliver cross compliance, water directive and sustainable use of pesticides and in particular, cross compliance is noted as a focus where more farmers can be served.

## IV- Discussion

As the SRDP exists of a mixture between EU funds and Scottish Government, there is a large degree of interpretation from the Scottish Government to set their priorities for delivering FAS. Whilst the EU have specific rules, namely cross-compliance and greening measures, there is a degree of interpretation for the Scottish Government to set their own priorities. In England, it can be said that the FAS service is not to the same scale as the one that currently exists in Scotland (SAC Consulting interview, September 2019) and the smaller budget allocated for delivering EU-FAS in England reflects this outcome too. There is a noted more long-term plan to move beyond cross compliance and greening as set by the EU within Scotland, as evidenced by the scale and scope of their program deliverables. Furthermore, it was understood that some farmers and businesses in Scotland were not aware of the differences in FAS organised services between Scotland and England. Advisors were reporting that due to the high number of events and regularity of events across Scotland, some farmers were “quite blasé”, and choosing not to attend as they could always attend another time (SAC Interview, September 2019). The challenge for advisors here was to try and make each event as appealing as possible to encourage attendance. In addition, farmers often couldn’t distinguish between a SAC event and an EU-FAS event.

Within the UK, EU-FAS is implemented through each country’s separate rural development program, and as such, there has not been a strong political will to implement an overarching EU-FAS policy. With the UK set to exit from the EU at the end of January 2020, the role of the EU-FAS is likely to be undermined further not least from a general sense of uncertainty. Current guidance on the SRDP indicates that the advisory services are guaranteed financing until 31 December 2020, and this has been safeguarded until this end period. Current FAS in England is similarly safeguarded until this period and have recently published a leaflet (also available online<sup>25</sup>) outlining expected changes to FAS during a transition period between 2021 and 2027. Despite increasing uncertainty, both RDPs in England and Scotland continue to view cross-compliance as a measure likely to be continued and supported in the UK (Interviews with SAC Consulting and Ricardo, Sept 2019). In addition, the Scottish Government have also allowed farmers to apply for resiliency planning funding. Usually farmers have one ILMP then specialist advice following the ILMP. However for resilience planning, farmers can apply directly for specialist advice (up to £1000). There has been a noted hiatus on spending for specialist advice likely in part due to the uncertain times, the addition of these extra funds is hoped to boost the uptake of applications to the SRDP FAS programme.

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<sup>25</sup> DEFRA, August 2019, *Farming is Changing - here’s what you need to know*, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-farming-changes-to-farming-in-england/farming-is-changing-heres-what-you-need-to-know-august-2019-web-version>

## Factsheet about FAS assessment in United Kingdom 2018

### Some Key facts about CAP implementation in United Kingdom

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| - Number of farmers in the country <sup>26</sup> .....                   | <b>296,000 farmers</b> |
| - Share of 2 <sup>nd</sup> pillar in CAP expenditure <sup>27</sup> ..... | <b>19.3%</b>           |
| - Share of Knowledge measures (M01&M02) in the 2nd pillar of CAP.....    | <b>Unknown</b>         |
| - Planned expenditure per farmer (M01&M02).....                          | <b>Unknown</b>         |

### Some Key facts about the implementation of the EU-FAS in United Kingdom

#### Pillar one (Regulation n°#)

##### Level of application

✓ Regional  National

##### Domain selected for the EU-FAS regulation

#### Mandatory

- ✓ Cross-compliance
- ✓ Payment for environment & climate
- ✓ Modernisation
- ✓ Pesticides directive
- ✓ Water directive

#### Optional

- Diversification
- ✓ Risk management
- Organic
- ✓ Information on climate

#### Types of suppliers accredited

##### Indicate the type of suppliers accredited

- ✓ Private independent consultant/firms
- SME or start-ups
- ✓ Public extension organisation
- ✓ NGO
- ✓ Charities

- ✓ Chambers of agriculture
- ✓ Farmers' rings or associations
- Farmers' cooperatives
- ✓ Private firms or retailers (inputs/outputs)
- Bookkeepers
- Other (specify).....

#### Method required for advisory services

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| ✓ One to one on the farm ( <b>Scotland Only</b> ) | ✓ Telephone helpdesk |
|---|----------------------|

<sup>26</sup> Number derived from DEFRA (2018) Farming Statistics : Final crop areas, yields, livestock populations and agricultural workforce at June 2018 - United Kingdom. Report revised May 2019.

<sup>27</sup> Data taken from DEFRA (2018) Agriculture in the United Kingdom (AUK), Available at : [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/815303/AUK\\_2018\\_09jul19.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/815303/AUK_2018_09jul19.pdf) [Accessed 01 Sept 2019] Figure is for the whole of the UK (not only England and Scotland)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One to one outside the farm ( <b>Scotland only</b> )<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small group advice on the farm ( <b>Scotland only</b> )<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small group outside the farm   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General information via Internet<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publication (paper copies)<br><input type="checkbox"/> No requirement |
| <b>Conditions required to be accredited for advisory organisation</b>   |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Competences of advisors<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training of advisors<br><input type="checkbox"/> Data base   | <input type="checkbox"/> Networks<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitoring of advice activities<br><input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge platforms                          |
| <b>Target public (categories of farmers or farm workers)</b>  |   |
| Target group specified..... <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No<br><input type="checkbox"/> Farms with more than 15000 € direct support<br><input type="checkbox"/> Smaller farms.....<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other farms' criteria .....  | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning criteria.....<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other criteria.....   |
| <b>Pillar Two</b>   |   |
| Use of measure M02..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |   |
| Number of beneficiaries.....  |   |
| Average expenditure per farmer.....   |   |
| Domain selected<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cross-compliance<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payment for environment & climate<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modernisation<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pesticides directive<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water directive<br><input type="checkbox"/> occupational Health<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farms setting up for the first time (Scotland Only) |   |

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