News Release

12 September 2024

*For immediate use*

**Better Wellbeing = Better Business**

**Farm Advisory Service and Farmstrong Scotland partner for autumn events**

This autumn, Farmstrong Scotland and the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) will come together to deliver a variety of workshops across Scotland to help farmers and crofters understand the positive impact that a healthy mind can have on your business.

Kicking off in Grantown-on-Spey, the first event on Wednesday 18 September, titled *Better Wellbeing, Better Business*, will be facilitated by Farmstrong trustee Emily Grant with North Highlands farmer Vic Ballantyne as guest speaker.

Vic, who is a 2022 Nuffield Farming Scholar and originally from Australia, farms with her husband Jason near Brora in Sutherland. Their aim is to run low input systems, centred around a work/life balance while still being productive and profitable.

Focused on forage efficiency and livestock selection to complement this, the Ballantynes have previously taken part in the Monitor Farm programme and projects with various other organisations such as Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC).

Chairing the event, Emily Grant has worked in agriculture for over twenty years. Working with farmer groups focused on improving efficiencies, for organisations such as QMS and AHDB.

Emily then set up her own consultancy business - [Forrit](https://forrit.scot/about-us/) – specialising in helping beef and sheep farmers identify opportunities within their businesses to progress the productivity, profitability and sustainability of their systems.

With a strong technical and business background in pasture-based sheep and cattle systems, Emily has worked with farmers who have been successfully making changes to their grazing management systems and improving their profitability.

Farmstrong is a wellbeing initiative to help farmers, crofters and their families to cope with the ups and downs of farming and crofting by sharing things they can do to look after themselves and the people in their business.

The Farm Advisory Service is funded by the Scottish Government, providing information and resources aimed at increasing the profitability and sustainability of farms and crofts.

In these sessions, taking place until the end of October, attendees will hear from speakers like Emily and Vic about the positive steps they have taken to improve their wellbeing and how this has had a positive impact on their businesses.

There will also be tools and practical tips from Farmstrong on how people can improve their own wellbeing to ensure they live well to farm and croft well.

Alix Ritchie, Programme Director said: “It is well known that the challenges we face in farming can be hard to predict and control and as an industry we can’t afford to let these pressures reach the point where they damage productivity and affect the lives of families.

“It’s real-life examples from farmers like Emily and Vic and hearing about the impactful changes they’ve made that will help others to be inspired to make similar changes – together we can learn and share to support our wellbeing.”

Mary-Jane Lawrie, organising for the Farm Advisory Service, said: “We’re proud to partner with Farmstrong to support farmers and crofters to look after their wellbeing. Investing in yourself leads to better outcomes in both your life and your business. We hope these workshops will encourage people to make small changes that can lead to big improvements — not just for their businesses, but for their own peace of mind and quality of life.”

This event is the first in a series of four, with the others taking place at **Stranraer on 2 October, Pathhead on 23 October and Halkirk on the 29 October**. All will take place in the morning and finish with lunch– more details can be found at <https://www.farmstrongscotland.org.uk/events>.

Taking place at the Grant Arms, Grantown-on-Spey, PH26 3HF – 10.00am – 1.30pm free places can be booked here - <https://www.fas.scot/events/event/better-wellbeing-better-business-grantown/>

**Notes to Editor**

Farmstrong Scotland is an initiative to help farmers, crofters and their families to cope with the ups and downs of farming and crofting by sharing things they can do to look after themselves and the people in their business. It is a peer-to-peer led programme, driven by scientific information and real-life stories, so together we can share, learn and support our wellbeing.

The organisation is supported by RHASS, the Movember Foundation and NFU Mutual Charitable Trust, who supported the launch of the organisation.

Movember Foundation are matching every £1 raised by Farmstrong Scotland, to the sum of £350,000. Anyone wishing to donate or find out more about supporting the charity, can get in touch via [hello@farmstrongscotland.org.uk](mailto:hello@farmstrongscotland.org.uk)

**Connect:**

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**Scotland’s Farm Advisory Service**

[Scotland’s Farm Advisory Service](https://www.fas.scot/) is part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme which is funded by the Scottish Government, providing information and resources aimed at increasing the profitability and sustainability of farms and crofts.

The Farm Advisory Service is delivered by SAC Consulting, part of Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC), and Ricardo Energy and Environment on behalf of the Scottish Government under contract arrangements.