



An overview of how your flock and business can benefit from forestry grants

Sheep farming with trees

Farming with trees can bring you many benefits including: improving the productivity of your land and livestock; managing flood risks; helping to address climate change and **growing your business**.

The Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS), part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP), offers sheep farmers attractive funding opportunities to plant new or manage existing woodlands. Open to applications all year round, the scheme provides welcome flexibility and avoids any requirement to complete your application during peak lambing periods.



You can create woodland and maintain stock numbers with little or no impact on your Basic Payment Rate.

Ewes will benefit

Can you afford to lose a lamb? Spending too much keeping pregnant ewes indoors? As your woodland grows, you will soon appreciate the added benefits of the shelter they provide your expectant ewes or new-borns. Reducing wind speed on exposed ground has the potential to avoid loss to hypothermia, extend overwintering periods, increase dry lie options and improve grazing pasture. Tups also move better amongst ewes when not seeking shelter.

Each hectare of hill ground – land that will support only one or two ewes producing one or two lambs a year – can produce 15 to 20 tonnes of timber each year in perpetuity once the first rotation has matured.

Deciding to plant

Have a clear, strategic vision from the outset for the future of your woodland - this will ensure maximum return for your investment. Is timber production important to you or are you more interested in improving habitats on your land? Would you like to use your woodland for sporting use or as a source of woodfuel? Knowing what you want to get from your woodland, soil type and climatic conditions, will influence the choice of trees you plant.

Where to plant?

Planting on hill slopes can improve the quality of upper lying grazing pasture, and improve water quality on lower lying land. It is important at the planning stage to think about how you will access and extract the timber when it is ready to harvest. Planting on an inaccessible slope, for example, will increase harvesting costs and reduce profit.

You should also discuss your woodland creation plans with your neighbours who might be directly affected – you will need to do this as part of your application. There may be mutual business benefits for planting

on adjacent land and for achieving grant approval for collaborative working. It could also help you realise the potential of smaller areas of marginal land, redefine boundaries and improve biosecurity with no loss of grazing land.

When to plant and maintain?

The best times to plant trees are October/November or in Spring, giving you the flexibility to schedule planting around your core business needs and peak lambing period. Maintenance thereafter of trees can be done throughout the year at periods when it suits you.

Harvesting time

Knowing when and what to harvest may not be something you are familiar with. Your local FCS Woodland Officer or forestry agent will be able to offer advice. You may already have access to the equipment and skills onsite that you need for the process. Many machinery rings offer forestry contracts and there are training events run frequently across Scotland to gain basic forestry skills.

Tenant farmers

There are both short and long term economic gains from woodland creation which are worth considering even if you do not own the land. You can apply for woodland creation grants providing you submit a Landlord's Declaration with your application and the control of the land extends for the duration of the proposed contract. (Similarly if you are a contractual licensee then a Contractual License must be submitted with your application.) If you are a Crofter then you may have to notify the Crofting Commission of your application.

**You can apply for forestry grants all year round.
The sooner you plant the sooner you will benefit.**

Let us help you

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