

SCOTTISH FARMERS AND LAND MANAGERS GENERATE ENOUGH RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY TO POWER MORE THAN



24,000

HOMES FOR ONE DAY (SCOTTISH ENERGY STATISTICS HUB)

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE

GREEN FOR GO



Champions for Change case studies

NFU Scotland and the Scottish Wildlife Trust have developed an exciting initiative.

‘Champions for Change’ highlights the positive action some farmers are already taking, such as creating woodland, improving soil health, reducing inputs and restoring peatlands.

This project also sees Scottish Wildlife Trust and NFU Scotland jointly calling for the wider benefits that farming can provide, which go beyond food production, to be better recognised and rewarded.

We are taking positive action to protect and improve our surroundings





**You
Tube**

Watch Neil telling his story at
**Champions for Change: Neil
White, Championing precision
farming and minimum tillage**

[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=W_Hf8pnf1Lc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_Hf8pnf1Lc)

Neil White, above

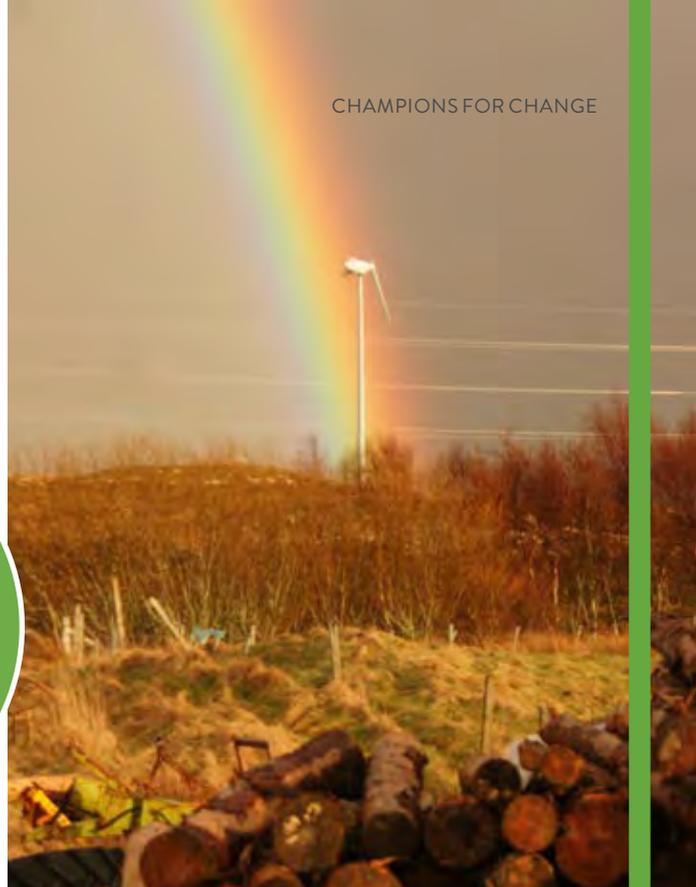
I farm in Berwickshire in south east Scotland, an area recognised as the most biodiverse in Scotland.

Biodiversity and habitats are very important to me. Over the years, I've entered into various different schemes which have helped me improve them all. We created a pond, grass margins, beetle banks, water margins, species rich grassland, and unharvested crops – all of which have improved insect, bird, and small mammal numbers, and kept watercourses pollution-free.

But I recently found it impossible to get a farm of my size into the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS). I would like a pick list of options, like an LMO scheme, where I could pick the things that would suit my farm and this area, and then I could continue to improve target species, habitats, and biodiversity on the farm.

The biggest change I made on my own farm came around five or six years ago. I moved to a strip till system, a form of direct drilling, and this has made an enormous difference to my soil health. The organic matters are rising while reducing establishment fuel usage by around 60%.

I think soil health is key for Scottish farming. This can make a huge difference to the amount of carbon we're sequestering and locking up in our soils. I would like to see no till or direct drilling recognised as a greening option, or a greener option at least, and cover crops, over-wintered stubbles, and companion cropping researched, rewarded, and encouraged. All of these are proven to benefit the environment and biodiversity.



I grow a very wide rotation of crops and I think Scottish farming is ahead of the game in this respect. I would like to see this rewarded in policy.

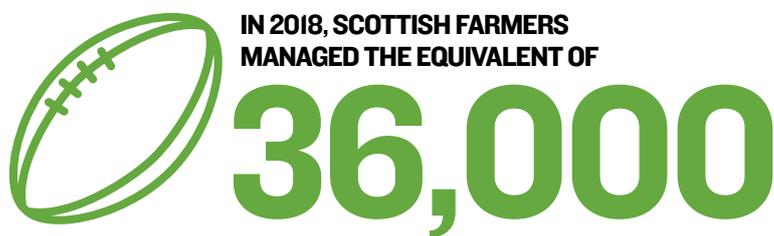
The removal of the mandatory three crop rule was necessary, but I think if you are able to grow two, three, four, five, even six different crops on your farm in a year, that can only be a positive thing. The outcomes for biodiversity and soil health should be rewarded. It brings about a reduction in nitrogen usage and chemical usage if you have that rotation, and so I would like to see that come through policy.

I've always grown pulses on the farm – beans or peas – and the soil condition and benefits and reduction in Nitrogen usage should be recognised and promoted. Now, more than ever, homegrown protein must be encouraged. We used to get a protein payment in Scotland, and I think this could be reinstated. We must encourage homegrown protein.

Sandy Murray, below

I have been crofting all my working life since coming home from college in 1967 and was brought up on the croft.

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I have done a lot of conservation work on my own crofts. I've carried out grassland management for birds, species rich grassland management, water margins with amenity tree planting, created two ponds and created and managed wetland. This has attracted wildlife, including breeding ducks, herons, frogs, and water voles.

I have also done a lot of tree planting and have just over 90 hectares of woodland planted with support from different schemes. I have two conifer blocks, four conifer shelter belts, three native woodland shelter belts, five native woodland blocks and two woodland regeneration blocks. I also have seven blocks for Christmas trees, which we take firewood for central heating from.

We have also put up a 20-kilowatt wind turbine, and produce enough energy for around eight households.

I have been involved in various peatland schemes since the start of the Peatland Management Scheme, and now carry out work through the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS). This is mostly under grazing

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management, but I've also done work with NatureScot through the LIFE project. We are now planning more drain blocking by machine under the new scheme with the North Sutherland Community Forestry Trust, which I am chairman of.

In the face of both a nature crisis and a climate emergency, support that is currently provided by the AEC Scheme is more important than ever. This is of substantial importance in crofting areas and for smaller farmers, and those in more marginal farming areas who particularly rely on AECS to help them maintain beneficial farming practices will also face greater uncertainty. ♦

**BETWEEN 1990 AND 2018,
AGRICULTURE SAW A**

15.9%

**DECREASE IN NET EMISSIONS
(1.4 MTCO₂E)**

