



Planning for Change:

What is Whole Farm Planning?

Colleen McCulloch

Senior Farming Programmes Manager



Whole Farm Planning:

- Requirements for SGRPID Basic Payments
- Using the data to benefit your farm or croft



Whole Farm Plans



SGRPID Letter:

"The more you understand about the farm or croft, the more productive and profitable your business can be, and the more you can contribute to Scotland's climate, biodiversity and emissions targets. This is the foundation of the WFP"

The 5 Key Areas...

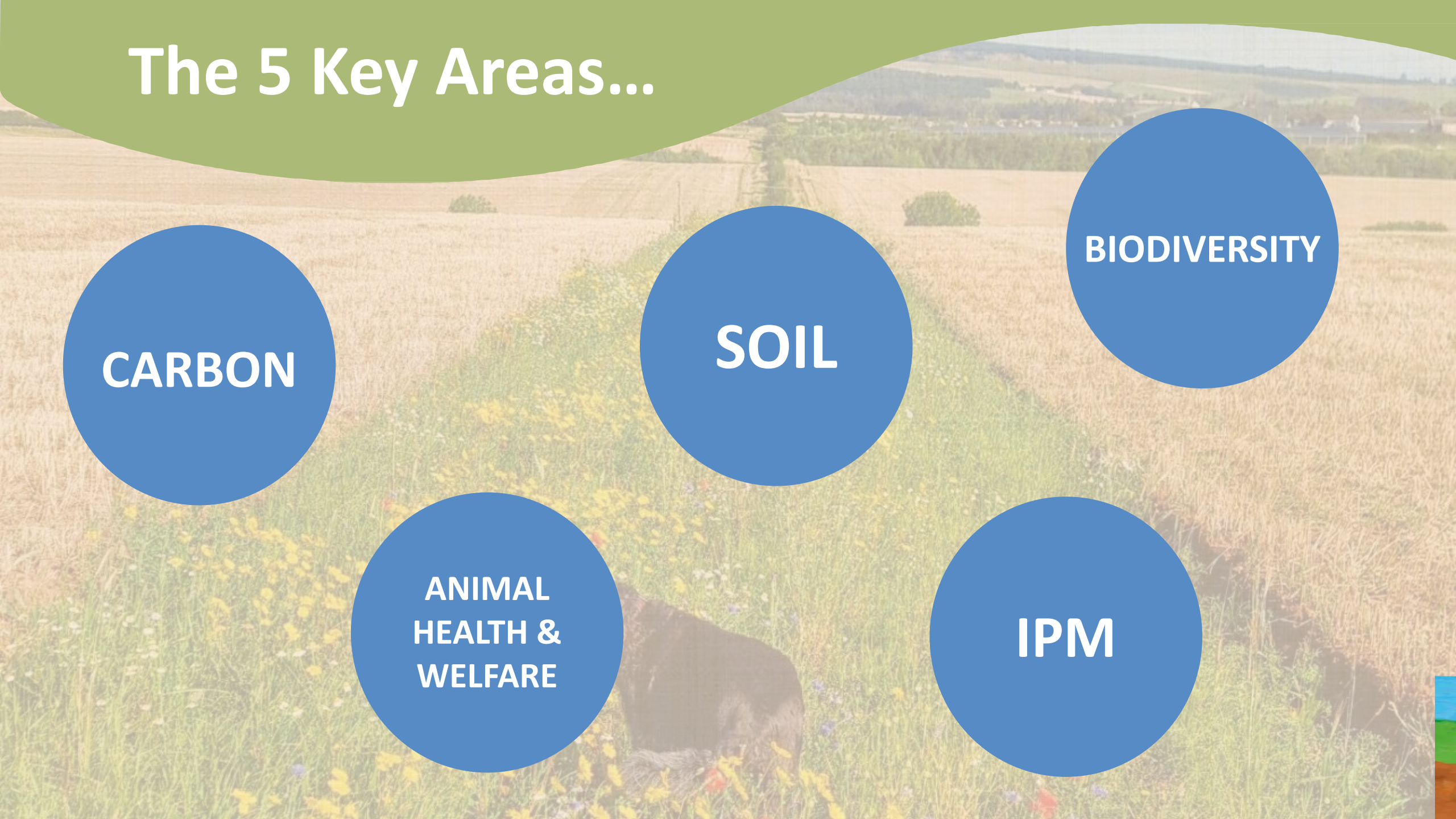
CARBON

SOIL

BIODIVERSITY

**ANIMAL
HEALTH &
WELFARE**

IPM



WHOLE FARM PLANS

Soil Analysis

5 Years

- Improve soil health, productivity
- Reduce chemical inputs/emissions
- Improve biodiversity

Carbon Audit

5 Years

- ID areas of high emissions
- ID ways to lower them
- Sequestration potential

Habitat Survey

5 Years

- ID key habitats, new areas
- ID natural capital
- Multiple biodiversity/carbon benefits

IPM Plan

Annual

- Reduce chemical inputs, emissions
- Improve biodiversity
- Crop resilience

AHWP

Annual

- Improve livestock welfare, efficiency
- Reduce emissions
- Improve profitability

Soil Analysis

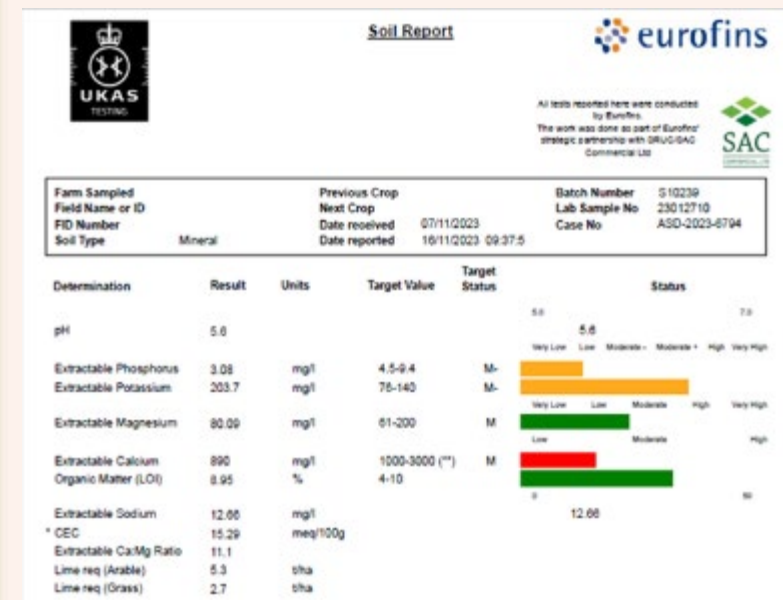
5 Years

AIMS:

- Improve soil health, productivity
- Reduce chemical inputs/emissions
- Improve biodiversity

Soil analysis enables you to target nutrient applications where they are needed most, improving efficiency of fertiliser use.

- Applies to Region 1 land which receives applications artificial fertilisers and/or organic manures
- Samples from 2024 onwards must include soil carbon
- NRM labs
- Soil Essentials
- JHI
- SAC Consulting
- Costs vary - £60+/sample



Carbon Audit

5 Years

AIMS:

- ID areas of high emissions
- ID ways to lower them
- Reduce costs (e.g. fertiliser)
- Sequestration potential

- Agrecalc; Cool Farm Tool; Farm Carbon Calculator Tool; Solagro (JRC) Carbon Calculator; Farm Carbon Toolkit, SA Exchange
- Costs vary: Free > £99/yr
- Can use existing audit if still valid on 15 May '25 and to PAS2050 standard (<5 yrs)
- Funding was available via PSF /FAS for Carbon Audits (*currently paused*)
- FAS carbon audits have been paused for the time being.

UK agriculture greenhouse gas emissions

based on GWP100

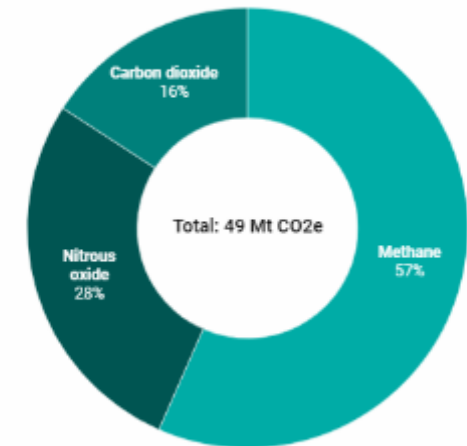


Chart: Farm Carbon Toolkit - Source: Department for Business, Energy - Get the data - Embed - Download image - Created with Dataswrapper



Habitat Survey

5 Years

AIMS:

- ID key habitats, new areas
- ID natural capital
- Multiple biodiversity/ carbon benefits

- All businesses will need to have a Biodiversity audit by 2028.
- A biodiversity audit completed in the five years prior to May 2025 will be accepted for 2025 support claims.
- Natural capital – ‘you can’t manage what you don’t measure’
- Nature Scot App (2025)
- Land Parcel ID System (LPIS) on Rural Payments website
- Paper map + crayons



**Farm Biodiversity
Scotland**
For Farmers & Crofters



IPM Plan

Annual

AIMS:

- Reduce chemical inputs, emissions
- Improve biodiversity
- Crop resilience

- Must be completed by anyone who uses PPPs (Plant Protection Products) incl. pesticides, herbicides and fungicides
- Different plans (& approaches) for arable, grassland and horticulture
- Red Tractor
- Scottish Quality Crops , Red Tractor
- Voluntary Initiative (VI)
- Plant Health Centre Website
- Organic equivalent: Crop management plan



Principle	Component	Description
1	Prevention and suppression	Crop rotation, cultivation techniques, varietal resistance, phytosanitary measures, beneficial organisms
2	Monitoring	Field monitoring, forecasting, seeking expert advice
3	Informed decision making	Protection measures based on expert advice, action thresholds
4	Non-chemical methods	Preference for biological and physical control methods over chemical
5	Pesticide selection	Using pesticide that minimise negative effects on human health and the environment
6	Reduced pesticide use	Reduced doses, reduced application frequency, considering the risk for development of pesticide resistance
7	Anti-resistance management	Alternation/mixing pesticides containing multiple modes of action
8	Evaluation	Assessment of the efficacy of control treatments used to inform future management decisions

AHWP

Annual

AIMS:

- Improve livestock welfare, efficiency
- Reduce emissions
- Improve profitability

- Must be completed by all livestock keepers
- SAHPS; HerdPlan; QMS templates
- Organic equivalent: Livestock management plan
- Must include:
 - Disease risk assessment & management plan
 - Livestock health management calendar
 - Euthanasia policy
 - Fallen stock management details
 - Veterinary input in last 12 months (crofting)

QMS
Quality Meat Scotland

Animal health and welfare plan

This animal health and welfare plan is for use on all animals on the premises. It can be completed by the customer or a professional adviser. It is not intended to be used by a veterinarian. It is not intended to be used by a veterinarian.

Animal health and welfare plan				
Animal health and welfare plan (to be completed by the customer)				
Animal health and welfare plan (to be completed by the customer)				
Name of responsible veterinary surgeon				
Species this plan applies to (please tick)	CATTLE <input type="checkbox"/>		SHEEP <input type="checkbox"/>	
Specify number of livestock covered by the plan	Breeding Cows		Breeding Cows	
	Bulls		Wethers	
	Stoona		Stoona	
	Producers		Producers	
Name completed by (please tick) (SOP stockperson)	Name:		Signature:	
	Date:		Date:	
Name completed by (vet)	Name:		Signature:	
	Vet Practice:		Date:	





Building resilience

This is arguably the most important long-term objective. Farmers across the UK are facing multiple challenges – rising costs of production; uncertainty in future government support policies; supply chain disruption due to the Covid pandemic, Brexit and the Ukraine war; the increasing frequency of extreme weather events. Every farmer should have a pathway to sustainable, profitable farming, and a Whole Farm Plan should be the starting point.



Improving profitability

There should not be a trade-off between environmental sustainability and profitability. In fact, sustainable farming makes good business sense, and the process of whole farm planning can look at all the different elements of the farm and assess where costs can be reduced, where value can be added and where there are opportunities to bring in different sources of income. Striking a balance between food production and nature can lead to increased profitability.



Restoring soil health

Healthy soils are the foundation of a productive and profitable farm. Regular soil testing and monitoring of soil organic matter can be the starting point to inform management decisions, such as reducing inputs or integrating livestock into arable rotations. This is a fundamental part of the whole farm planning process and setting an objective of restoring or improving soil health – and reducing soil erosion – can lead to improvements in plant and animal health as well as benefit the long-term sustainability of the farm business.



Managing nutrients

Using the soil analysis data, the next step can be a management plan for nutrients including the application of manures and slurry. This can have an impact on crop yield, help reduce the use of artificial fertilisers, minimise the risk of soil erosion and nutrient leaching, reduce GHG and ammonia emissions and improve air quality, and reduce damage to waterways and sensitive habitats. Where possible, farmers should aim for a circular, 'closed loop' system to keep all nutrients on farm.



Sustainable water management

This element of whole farm planning applies both to understanding how water flows around the farm and considering how farming practices impact upon water – and thinking about climate adaptation and the challenges posed by water scarcity or flood risk management. It should also extend to measures to reduce water pollution.



Pest and disease management

Setting a goal for a more biologically diverse farm environment and taking a strategic and preventative approach can help to reduce the burden of pests and disease. Promoting healthy soils with good structure and high biological activity with sufficient nutrients can lead to vigorous plants that will be less attractive or resistant to pests. The use of extensive crop rotations, including the use of cover crops and green manures, can provide effective control against a wide range of pathogens and avoid the build-up of weed burdens.



Improving animal health and welfare

A focus on preventative health, the ethical responsibility of providing a good life for all farmed animals as well as recognition of the long-term productivity and product quality from high standards of animal health and welfare should be central to a whole farm plan. This should be closely linked to the objectives around pest and disease management.



Integrating trees

The careful planning of agroforestry and farm woodland can provide shade and shelter for livestock, regulate growing conditions for crops, increase biodiversity, sequester carbon above and below ground, enrich soil fertility and reduce soil erosion and the risk of flooding downstream. In addition, there are productivity benefits to consider, for example in dairy or free-range poultry systems, and the potential for new income streams from timber, fruit and nuts.



Protecting and enhancing habitats

The initial assessment should identify the vulnerable species and habitats on farm that should be supported and protected. Consideration could also be given to the creation of new habitats, for example through the creation of ponds or scrapes for wading birds. This can be linked back to strategic objectives around nature restoration or increasing biodiversity.



Generating renewable energy

Many farms across the UK have already fitted some forms of renewable energy generation, such as solar panels, wind turbines or biomass boilers to provide power, heating or fuel. The Whole Farm Plan could consider the benefits to the rest of the farm from power generation or heating, such as cutting costs, income generation or reducing the overall carbon footprint of the business. It may also consider grid connection constraints and options for battery storage.

Useful Links...

WFP Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.soilassociation.org/our-work-in-scotland/scotland-farming-programmes/current-scotland-programmes/planning-for-change-a-whole-farm-approach/
WFP Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing For The Future Helping farmers in Scotland Farm Advisory Service (fas.scot)• Whole Farm Plan full guidance (ruralpayments.org)• WFP---Q-A-Document---June-2025.pdf (ruralpayments.org)
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soils resources for farmers from Farm Advisory Service• Soil health
Carbon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to Get Prepared for a Carbon Audit Helping farmers in Scotland Farm Advisory Service
AHWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.sahps.co.uk/• QMS Cattle & Sheep Standards• https://herdplan.co.uk/
IPM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scottish IPM Assessment Plan Plant Health Centre• Integrated Pest Management Helping farmers in Scotland Farm Advisory Service• Voluntary Initiative
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/social-and-economic-benefits-nature/natural-capital/farming-nature/biodiversity-audit• https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/lpis/introduction-to-lpis-and-its-purpose/
Extras	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• whole-farm-plans-sa-report.pdf• https://soilassociation.exchange/

Thank you

