

'You Can Farm' - Sharing experiences to support new entrants to agriculture in Scotland

NEFERTITI: 'Networking European Farms to Enhance Cross Fertilisation and Innovation Uptake Through Demonstration'

- NEFERTITI is a 'Horizon 2020' project funded by the European Commission from 2018 – 2021 that aims to support on-farm demonstration activities and farmer-to-farmer peer learning.
- The project involves: 45 national 'hubs' on 10 themes in 12 countries. The James Hutton Institute is one of 32 partner organisations across Europe.
- The NEFERTITI project builds on the earlier [PLAID](#) and [FarmDemo](#) projects that involved demonstration farmers in Scotland and across Europe.

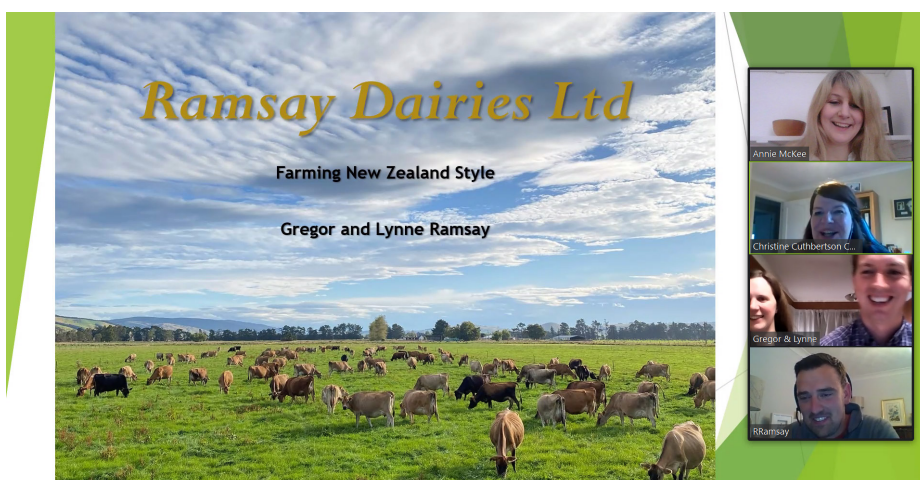
Full details of the project are available online:

<https://nefertiti-h2020.eu/>

Demonstration activities during 2020

Unfortunately, it was not possible to plan any on-farm demonstration events during 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The **NEFERTITI Scottish Hub** was, however, glad to partner with Hub participants who were also shifting to virtual events. During 2020, the **NEFERTITI Scottish Hub** supported the following virtual demonstration activities:

- **'The Ramsays - Farming NZ Style'** which heard from the experiences of Gregor and Lynne Ramsay, a Scottish new entrant farming couple who emigrated to New Zealand in 2015 and are now running a successful dairy enterprise. This webinar was organised by the NFU Scotland's Ayrshire Regional Manager and the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs' Agri-Affairs group. It was chaired by SAC Beef Specialist Robert Ramsay. Catch up on this webinar: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=286503185924409>



Lynne and Gregor Ramsay present their farm business 'Ramsay Dairies' in New Zealand

The **Scottish NEFERTITI Hub** is part of the project-wide network focussed on farm attractiveness for new entrants to agriculture. The Scottish NEFERTITI Hub focuses on three key areas of concern in Scotland:

- The long-term sustainability of sheep farming in Scotland, which has traditionally been a route into farming for new entrants and is currently under-threat with changing policy and markets.
- Access to land and access to capital, and potential innovative routes for new entrants.
- New business models, products, and farming types developed by new entrants, and opportunities for diversification.

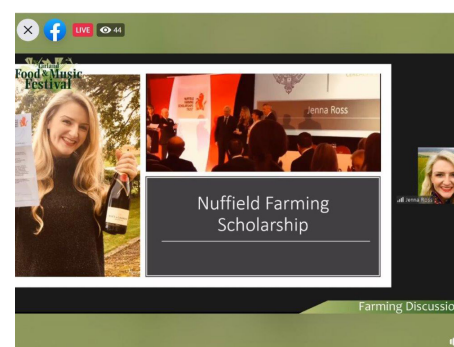
The Scottish NEFERTITI Hub aims to establish a network of people involved in Scottish agriculture with 'shared experiences and expertise to share' regarding these three concerns, through on-farm demonstrations, discussions, and mentoring for new entrants.

The Scottish NEFERTITI Hub is linked with the activities of the [H2020 NEWBIE project](#) in the UK, which aims to facilitate the development and dissemination of new business models, for all new entrants – from successors to complete newcomers - to the agricultural sector. Further information can be found here: <http://www.newbie-academy.eu/>

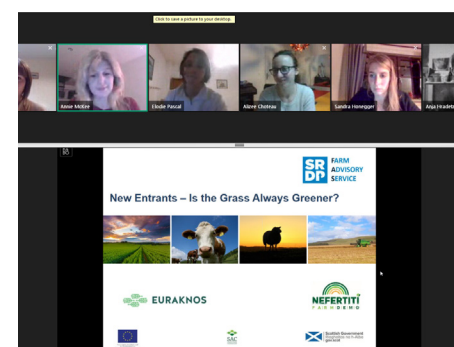
- **'New People, New Pathways:** routes into arable production and alternative crops' an 'Arable Conversation' as part of the online Arable Scotland programme, organised by the James Hutton Institute, AHDB, SRUC, and other partners. This discussion aimed to share lessons from those who have established innovative and alternative arable enterprises with aspiring new entrants to arable production in Scotland. The webinar featured presentations from Alison Milne of 'Crafty Maltsters', Harriet Ross and Ben Lowe, new entrant farmers in Aberdeenshire, and Robert Ramsay of Soil Essentials. Catch up on this webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVmt8jaErOs>
- **'Integrating woodland on new entrant farms and crofts':** This interactive lunchtime webinar shared new entrant experiences of woodland and agroforestry design and planting, navigating grant systems, and practical advice. Lynn Cassells of Lynbreck Croft provided an excellent visual presentation of their experiences with agroforestry. Lyn White of Scottish Forestry provided an overview of grant funding and other support available to new entrants wishing to plant woodland. The webinar also featured a virtual tour of the Glensaugh Farm Agroforestry Project. Catch up on this webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjJe4UE9zY&feature=youtu.be>
- **'Sustainable farming post-Covid: experiences of young farmers from Tarland':** This webinar featured a group of young people from the Aberdeenshire village of Tarland who have emerging agricultural careers. Each gave an introduction to their current role in agriculture and shared their thoughts on how the pandemic has affected their job or farming practice, as well as the threats and opportunities for sustainable agriculture brought about by the Covid-19 outbreak. The panel comprised agricultural scientist Dr Jenna Ross, small-holder Megan Albon, and livestock agronomist Gavin Robertson. The discussion was chaired by Eddie Gillanders, editor of Farm North East magazine. Catch up on this webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtMhQZ57DcM&t=484s>
- **'Is the Grass Always Greener?'** This exciting online discussion featured new entrant farmers from across Europe, brought together by the NEFERTITI project. Contributions were made from new entrants in Orkney, Ireland, France, and Germany, and who currently run dairy, beef, and sheep farms. They shared videos and presentations about how they began in the agricultural industry and what they are doing differently from their predecessors. This webinar was hosted by the Farm Advisory Service (FAS), in conjunction with the Scottish NEFERTITI Hub and EU EURAKNOS project. Catch up on this webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mizvyWQtwvc&feature=youtu.be>



Panellists during the virtual Arable Scotland



Dr Jenna Ross describes her Nuffield Scholarship during the Tarland new entrant farming discussion



New entrants from across Europe share experiences

The **Scottish NEFERTITI Hub** has provided funding and facilitation support to knowledge exchange events held on farms and online, where the host farmers are new entrants to agriculture, and/or the topic relates to encouraging young people to consider farming careers. Rather than duplicate ongoing efforts, the NEFERTITI Hub aims to support initiatives for new entrants that are organised by agricultural groups, including the National Farmers' Union for Scotland's (NFUS) Next Generation Committee, the FAS (Farm Advisory Service) New Entrant Programme, and the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs (SAYFC), amongst others. If you or your organisation are considering similar events, or know of an event with which NEFERTITI could collaborate, please don't hesitate to get in touch (see details below).

When it is safe and possible to travel in 2021, the Scottish NEFERTITI Hub will visit demonstration farmers in Ireland – hub members are warmly invited to participate in this cross visit. Please watch out for further details to be sent to the hub mailing list in coming months.

Key lessons from Scottish NEFERTITI Hub activities in 2020 and other resources from the NEFERTITI project

No one can dispute that 2020 was an unexpected and uncertain year for all. Almost all the usual agricultural events and opportunities for on-farm demonstration events were cancelled or postponed, due to the restrictions arising due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was a great disappointment to the Scottish farming community, and to the Scottish NEFERTITI hub's plans for 'demo' activities. Nonetheless, as farming activity continued despite the national lockdown, the NEFERTITI project and partner agricultural organisations shifted events from in-person to online. This change was hugely successful from the perspective of the NEFERTITI Scottish Hub, not least in terms of the availability of opportunities for virtual demonstrations, but also due to chance to connect with new entrant farmers internationally.

The key learning points arising from the past year of virtual demonstration activities may be helpful for future on-farm and online events:

(i) The most popular virtual demonstrations comprise the magic formula of knowledgeable and engaging speakers, providing lived experiences, highly visual presentations, and where possible, involving short videos. Live-streaming from an on-farm/on-croft location should be explored where broadband or mobile signal allows.

(ii) Those hosting/chairing online discussions will benefit from practice sessions with speakers and IT support prior to the event. Negotiating technical issues when 'live' is challenging and stressful! Check that all the speakers are familiar with the software before the event. With speakers' permissions, remember to record the event for future reference and wider distribution.

(iii) Involve the audience as much as possible, with pre-event surveys, during event polls, and inviting questions or discussion points shared via the 'chat' function or asking audience members to 'unmute'. Limiting numbers for virtual demonstrations can sound counter to the accessibility of an online event, but it can help to support greater discussion between audience members and speakers/host farmers.

The NEFERTITI project management also provided resources to help and inspire virtual demonstrations and to improve knowledge exchange during on-farm demonstrations, when it is possible to meet again. Please find the '**Farm Demo Training Kit**' and other resources available for download here: <https://nefertiti-h2020.eu/downloads/>.

Please also catch-up on the webinar by film-maker [Thomas Alföldi](#) on how to produce high-quality videos of farming activity or demonstration events here: <https://nefertiti-h2020.eu/webinar/>

Connecting with the Scottish NEFERTITI Hub:

To learn about innovations relevant to new entrants to agriculture across Europe, as well as other training and demonstration opportunities within Scotland (and beyond), please register on the NEFERTITI demonstration platform, either as a 'demonstration farmer' or 'innovation actor' (i.e. farm advisor, industry representative, etc.).

- To register as a 'Demo Farmer', please click [here](#) or as an 'Innovation Actor', please click [here](#) or follow links via the NEFERTITI webpage: <https://nefertiti-h2020.eu/>
- Tick 'Farm Attractiveness' option (this is the new entrant theme).
- A guidance document for the registration process can be found [here](#).

Please 'like' the Scottish NEFERTITI Hub Facebook page for ongoing project updates and to connect to other Hub members: <https://www.facebook.com/NEFERTITIScottishHub/>

Please contact the Scottish Hub Coach (Annie McKee) if you would like support for an on-farm demonstration activity that will involve new entrants to agriculture. This year we plan to support at least 5 demonstration activities – we look forward to hearing your ideas.

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The award-winning new entrants Lynbreck Croft provided a virtual demonstration describing their experience of agroforestry and woodland expansion on their croft