

# Water and farming in Scotland

## Rainfall

The average annual rainfall in Scotland varies from 700mm on the east coast to 1,500mm on the west coast. This huge range greatly influences how land can be used for farming and agriculture.

## Hill sheep farming

Sheep graze in the hills where there is plenty rain to water the vegetation. The soil is thin and generally of poor quality.

### Did you know?

Ewes drink 4-10 litres of water per day

## Pigs and poultry

Pigs and poultry should have continuous access to a good water supply, especially when they are reared indoors.

### Did you know?

A sow with baby piglets will drink on average 27 litres of water per day

## Cattle and sheep lowland farming

Cattle and sheep graze naturally on the upper slopes and are brought down to the lowlands for fattening.

### Did you know?

Beef cows in the UK typically consume 50 litres of water per day

## Potato growing

Ware potatoes need around 5-8cm of water per week to grow. This can come from rainfall and extra irrigation over the summer to ensure good quality and a high yield. Seed potatoes are also an important crop in Scotland.

## Dairy farming

Lush grass is essential feed for milking cows, to make dairy products such as butter, cheese and yoghurt. These pastures are mainly found in west/central Scotland where there is high rainfall.

### Did you know?

Dairy cows drink between 50-150 litres of water per day

## Arable farming

During dry spells, farmers have to irrigate crops, especially potatoes, vegetables and soft fruit. Other crops are watered by whatever natural rainfall occurs.

## Land management

Water can be conserved on farmland by constructing ponds, creating wetlands and wader scrapes, and planting trees on the banks of rivers and streams. Planting trees on river banks can help stabilise them and cool rivers for both animals and for fish habitats.

## Horticulture

Horticulture crops of fruit and vegetables demand a lot of water. Water irrigation needs specialised equipment that is expensive to buy and operate. Often, costly water-storage is also required. Modern indoor plant-growth facilities rely heavily on stored water facilities.

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