



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



CAP Reform
Countdown

The new Common Agricultural Policy schemes in England: October 2014 update



Please read this important information

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If you want to know more about CAP, more information is at the end of this leaflet.

What the icons mean

This icon: Means that this information:



is important information



has been decided and will be part of the new schemes



hasn't been agreed yet – more information will be available later this year



Since we published our last leaflet more decisions have been made. These 2 icons next to each other mean that this information wasn't agreed in an earlier leaflet, but is now.



CAP Reform Countdown | Introduction

This leaflet follows the one we sent in August, called 'The new Common Agricultural Policy schemes in England: August 2014 update'. It explains what has happened over the last few months, provides updates about the new schemes and more information on the greening rules.

As we noted in our last leaflet, throughout the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) implementation process we have been determined to meet our European Union obligations, while at the same time ensuring maximum flexibility for farmers to manage their business in the way they see fit. We want to have a system that minimises red tape and bureaucracy and keeps things as simple as possible. We do not intend to change rules for the sake of it and where the opportunities have presented themselves we have consolidated or simplified existing ones.

Through this document and our other leaflets we are seeking to provide farmers and landowners with as much clarity as possible, so they can plan for the future. Where issues remain unresolved, we aim to give a clear indication of the way we would like to do things, with a commitment to provide further information in due course.

The Basic Payment Scheme

This leaflet provides more details on the new parts of the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS): the active farmer rules, the young farmer payment and the national reserve for BPS entitlements. As promised in our last leaflet, we have also included more detailed guidance on the new greening rules, particularly around hedges.

The Rural Development Programme

The work to develop the new Rural Development Programme is progressing well and more information on the impact of CAP rule changes on current Environmental Stewardship agreements is included in this leaflet. We will publish more information on the new schemes later this year.

The new online service

We have also included more information on the CAP Information Service, the new online service for the CAP schemes from 2015. Farmers planning to apply in 2015 can start to get ready now by making sure they have what they need to get online – so when they get their Registration Pack they can get started straight away. Page 30 has more details.

Since our last leaflet, we have released more information on the extra help we will be giving farmers to get online in 2015. This includes the launch of regional digital support centres, offering one-to-one sessions for those most in need. Farmers who think they will need extra help should contact RPA to let them know.

This leaflet

Each of our CAP Reform Countdown leaflets is designed to build on the one before it and is intended to be read as part of a series of updates. This leaflet adds to the information we published in April and August. We will publish another leaflet before the end of 2014. Previous leaflets can be found on GOV.UK at www.gov.uk/cap-reform.



'Dual use' will still be allowed for existing Environmental Stewardship agreements

In September, we announced that we will continue to allow 'dual use' arrangements for all existing Environmental Stewardship and Woodland Grant Scheme agreements (including those still to be signed in 2014).

This means that one farmer will be able to receive a BPS payment and another farmer or land manager will be able to receive an Environmental Stewardship or Woodland Grant Scheme payment for the same piece of land. However, they must meet all the rules of the scheme that they are in.

As we said on page 35 of our August update, where land is let out under a tenancy agreement (Agricultural Holdings Act or Farm Business Tenancy):

- the tenant will need to include that land when working out their greening requirement (because the land is 'at their disposal')
- the landlord would not include that land when working out their greening requirement.

Both parties must keep written records

Anyone in a dual use situation must have written records to show that they are eligible for the scheme they are claiming a payment for. For example, under BPS written records would be needed to show that a person has land 'at their disposal'.

They should also read our leaflet called 'Extra guidance on dual use of land'. We sent this to SPS applicants with the SPS 2013 guidance, but it's also on GOV.UK (on the 'Single Payment Scheme: guidance for 2014' page).

Dual use and the new environmental land management scheme

In our next update, we will publish more information about whether dual use will be allowed for the new environmental land management scheme (which will replace Environmental Stewardship and the English Woodland Grant Scheme in 2016).

Land with solar panels will not be eligible for BPS

Land parcels with solar panels on them will not be eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). This includes the land between, underneath and around the panels, even if it is being grazed, or is accessible for grazing.



This also means that farmers cannot count this land, or any features on it (such as buffer strips), as an Ecological Focus Area (EFA).

If the solar panels are concentrated in a single area within a land parcel (for example, a corner or one end), and the farmer wants to claim for payment on the rest of the land, they must fence off the panels. The 2 areas will then need to be mapped as separate land parcels. The land parcel containing the solar panels will not be eligible.

Exchange rates for BPS

For BPS, applicants will still be allowed to decide each year if they want to be paid in sterling (£) or euro (€).

The way the euro exchange rate is set will change under BPS. From next year, the euro exchange rate used will be the average of the European Central Bank rates during the month of September in the scheme year.



Hedge cutting

We are currently working on a derogation which will allow the cutting of hedges in some prescribed circumstances during August for farmers intending to sow Oilseed rape or temporary grass during that month. This derogation will be reviewed after one year so that we can assess its impact. More details about this will be available soon.

Cross compliance: exemptions and new guidance about soils

The full 2015 cross compliance guidance and soils guidance will be published in December 2014.

Exemptions

From 2015 there will be limited changes to exemptions from those that already exist under the current cross compliance rules. Most changes will be in line with the new GAEC rules – more information on the new GAEC rules can be found in our last leaflet.

The cutting ban will apply to both hedges and trees from 2015 onwards. The ban will only apply to trees protected under GAEC 7c. Orchards will not be included in the ban.

New rules for soils

From 2015 the paper-based Soil Protection Review will no longer be required. A new set of national minimum standard rules – which are outcome focused and require no paperwork – will be used instead. These will mean that more emphasis is put on actually farming the land rather than keeping a paper log. These rules are shown on the next page.

The new rules for soils

GAEC 4 – Maintain minimum soil cover

Farmers must protect soil by having a minimum soil cover – except where there is an agronomic justification for not doing so, or where establishing a cover would conflict with requirements under GAEC 5. Information on acceptable agronomic justifications and soil cover will be in the soils guidance available later this year.

GAEC 5 – Minimum land management reflecting site-specific conditions to limit erosion

Farmers must put measures in place to limit soil and bankside erosion caused (for example) by:

- cropping practices and cropping structures
- livestock management, including outdoor pigs and poultry, causing overgrazing and poaching
- wind
- vehicles, trailers and machinery.

Where compaction may cause soil erosion, farmers must, where appropriate, cultivate post-harvest land and late harvested crops using primary cultivation methods such as ploughing. Alternative primary cultivation methods will be included in the soils guidance.

A reduction in a farmer's agricultural payments could happen where erosion is over a single area greater than 1 hectare, or along a continuous stretch of more than 20 metres long and 2 metres wide of a bankside or a watercourse.

Examples of appropriate measures to limit soil erosion will be provided in the soils guidance later this year.

GAEC 6 – Maintenance of soil organic matter level through appropriate practices, including a ban on burning arable stubble except for plant health reasons

Farmers must:

- not burn crop stubble, except for plant health reasons. Where burning is needed for plant health reasons, it must comply with the Crop Residues (Burning) Regulations (1993) (Regulations 4 (b) and 5).
- comply with the Heather and Grass Burning Regulations (2007) (Regulations 5(2) and 6(1)(a)).
- comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (EIA) (2006) (Regulations 4, 9, 26 and 28). Do not plough, cultivate or intensify species-rich and semi-natural habitats so as to conserve organic matter and carbon levels in soils.



CAP Reform | Countdown | The greening rules: some questions answered

Since we published our August update, more information about the greening rules – and Ecological Focus Areas in particular – has been agreed.

Organic land and the greening rules

Any land which is certified as organic (including land 'in conversion') will qualify for the greening payment automatically – as long as its been certified by an accredited body.

If some – but not all – of a farmer's land is certified as organic, only the non-organic land will count when the farmer works out how many crops they will need to grow, and what Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs) they need. If they have to meet the Crop Diversification or EFA rules, the crops and EFAs they use to meet them can only be on their non-organic land.

Farmers can choose for their organic land not to automatically qualify for the greening payment. If they do this, they will have to meet the crop diversification and EFA rules on all their organic and non-organic arable land. This means they can grow crops and have EFAs on their organic and non-organic land to meet the rules.



Permanent grassland

In our last leaflet we provided information about permanent grassland. Even if farmers are not claiming BPS, they must get consent from Natural England before they plough up or improve land which has not been cultivated for 15 years or which is semi-natural grassland (or another semi-natural area).

Farmers can do this by making an initial Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening application to Natural England. For more information about EIAs, visit www.gov.uk/eia-agriculture-regulations-apply-to-make-changes-to-rural-land.

Crop diversification

The 'inspection period'

On page 22 of our August update, we explained how many crops, and in what proportions, farmers have to grow on their arable land. These crops must be in the ground from 1 May to 30 June each year – we call this the 'inspection period' for crop diversification.

To make sure farmers are following the rules, RPA will inspect 5% of these farms during this period.

If a farmer has harvested their crops before the end of the inspection period (30 June), RPA will accept that the crop was present if stubble or other crop residue is still there.

Some farmers will grow late-sown crops or crops with a very short cropping period. These may not be visible (or present) at the exact time of the inspection.

We're still talking to the European Commission about what sort of evidence we can accept if RPA inspects and a farmer hasn't planted their crops in the ground at the time of inspection. We are also still talking to them about what will happen if crops fail during the inspection period.



The Basic Payment Scheme

The greening rules: some questions answered

Spring or winter crops

More guidance about how to decide if a crop is a winter or spring variety for greening is now available.

Page 26 of our August update said that farmers should look at the National List or the Processors and Growers Research Organisation's Recommended List.

If you are growing a variety that isn't on these lists and you want to find out if it is a spring or winter variety, check the EC Common Catalogue at:

www.ec.europa.eu/food/plant/propagation/catalogues/database/public/index.cfm.

In this catalogue, winter varieties are called 'forma hibernalis'. Spring varieties are called 'forma aestiva'. If a variety isn't described as forma hibernalis or forma aestiva, count it as a spring crop.

If you have a crop that is not on any of the lists, check the list for the genus of that crop. If the genus is not on any of the lists, contact RPA on 0345 603 7777 or email csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk.



We have reached agreement with the farming industry that we will count winter and spring varieties of brassicas as separate crops.



We are working with the industry on a list and will publish it as soon as we can.

What counts as a 'crop' for the crop diversification rules?

In our August update we gave examples of the most commonly grown crops in England. Coriander has been added to this list. The most up-to-date list is on GOV.UK at www.gov.uk/cap-reform.

If you have a crop which is not on this list, contact RPA on 0345 603 7777 or email csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk.

Minimum area for crop diversification

In our last leaflet we provided information on the minimum area farmers could count for EFA (0.01 hectares). We can now confirm that the minimum area for crop diversification is also 0.01 hectares.



Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs)

More than one EFA in a land parcel

We are still talking to the Commission about how to measure EFAs if farmers have 2 or more different types of EFA in a land parcel. We will publish more details as soon as we can.



Hedges

On page 29 of our August update, we explained that we would publish more information about hedges and how they can be counted as an EFA feature. All the new information is below.

What is a 'hedge' for EFA?

The definition of a hedge for EFA is the same as it is for cross compliance. A hedge will only qualify for EFA if it meets the definition below.

A 'hedge' is any hedgerow (a row of bushes) growing on or adjacent to (next to) arable land which forms part of a holding **and** has:

- a continuous length of at least 20 metres, or is part of any such length, or
- a continuous length of less than 20 metres where it meets (at an intersection or junction) another hedgerow at each end.

The hedge does not have to contain trees, but any trees growing in it form part of the hedge.

Hedges can include gaps, such as gateways. See the table below for more information.

Hedges on banks are eligible.



What size does a hedge need to be to count as an EFA feature?

Width	There is no minimum or maximum width for a hedge.
Length	The minimum length for a hedge is 20 metres. Hedges can include gaps. There is no limit on how many gaps a hedge can have – as long as each individual gap is not more than 20 metres it will be treated as part of the hedge.
Height	There is no maximum or minimum height for a hedge. This means newly planted hedges can be used for EFA if they are in the ground when the application is made.



The location of the hedge

To count as an EFA feature, a hedge needs to be on or 'next to' eligible arable land. 'Next to' means that the longest edge of the hedge must touch the arable land on at least one side.

If the only thing separating the hedge from the arable land is a feature which is eligible for BPS (for example, a ditch of less than 2 metres wide), the hedge can be counted as an EFA feature. The European Commission has also confirmed that fences located on eligible arable land or on a potential EFA feature do not prevent a feature from being 'next to' eligible arable land. This applies to all potential EFA features, not just hedges.



We currently understand that if the hedge is separated from the arable land parcel by an ineligible feature (for example, a stone track with a man-made surface, road, or a ditch greater than 2 metres wide) the hedge can't be counted as an EFA feature. We are checking this with the Commission and will provide more information as soon as we can.



The Basic Payment Scheme

The greening rules: some questions answered

What's on either side of the hedge	How much to count as an EFA
Arable land on both sides	As long as the farmer is responsible for the land (has it at 'their disposal') on both sides of the hedge, they can count the whole hedge as an EFA feature. If the farmer is responsible for one side only, they can count only that half of the hedge as an EFA feature.
Arable land on one side and non-arable land on the other	If the farmer is responsible for both sides of the hedge, they can count the whole hedge as an EFA feature. If the farmer is responsible for the arable side only, they can count only that half of the hedge as an EFA feature.
Arable land on one side and non-agricultural land (for example, a road or woodland) on the other	If the farmer is responsible for both sides of the hedge, they can count the whole hedge as an EFA feature.
Arable land on one side and land under someone else's control on the other (for example, land that belongs to a neighbour)	If the farmer is responsible for the arable side only, they can only count that half of the hedge as an EFA feature.



If a farmer is counting a whole hedge as part of their EFA, 1 metre of length is worth 10 square-metres of area. If they are counting half a hedge, 1 metre is worth 5 square-metres of area.

Looking after hedges

Farmers must manage their hedges according to the cross compliance guidance (for example, following the cutting restrictions). Other than that, there are no more management rules for hedges under the greening rules.

Farmers with Higher Level Stewardship or Entry Level Stewardship agreements may also have other management requirements for their hedges.



In our last leaflet we advised that if a farmer wants to use hedges as part of their EFA, this could delay their 2015 BPS payment. However, we are now planning an approach that would mean farmers who make claims involving hedges as part of EFAs will not be at a disadvantage in the timing of their payments.

Buffer strips

In our last leaflet we confirmed that, to count as an EFA feature, a buffer strip must be:

- next to a watercourse, or
- parallel with and on a slope leading to a watercourse (known as an in-field buffer strip). An in-field EFA buffer strip is a buffer strip which must:
 - be within the parcel that is alongside the watercourse
 - have arable land on both sides
 - be located on a slope which must lead down to the watercourse
 - have a land use on either side that is any of the eligible arable crops (read our August leaflet for more information on crops). If the land use is fallow or temporary grass, these crops should be managed so that the in-field EFA buffer can be distinguished from them
 - have a minimum width of 1 metre
 - be parallel to the water course. There is no set distance that should be maintained between the water course and the in-field EFA buffer strip but it should be placed in a position on the slope where it can significantly influence run-off. So, ideally, it should be placed in the middle of a slope or where the slope is at its steepest.



More than one buffer strip

Each side of a watercourse can potentially be associated with one EFA buffer strip (directly alongside) and/or one EFA 'in-field' buffer strip.



The location of a buffer strip

You can count buffer strips that are next to a watercourse and/or in-field buffer strips that meet the definition above.

The buffer strip must not be separated from the watercourse by any man-made or landscape feature. However, the Commission has confirmed that this does not include fences (read page 7).



Where a hedge is next to a watercourse and is carrying out the function of a buffer strip, it can be used for EFA (as a hedge), but the area cannot be counted as an EFA buffer strip.

How to measure the width of a buffer strip

For EFA, farmers should measure buffer strips from edge to edge. Or, if the strip is directly next to the watercourse, they can measure it from the top of the bank, then away from the watercourse.

To count as an EFA feature, a buffer strip must have a minimum width of 1 metre.

Counting grass strips as fallow land

If a farmer has a strip of grass that:

- meets the definition of both an EFA buffer strip and fallow land, and
- is wider than 1 metre

They could choose to count the first metre as an EFA buffer strip, and the extra area as fallow land, as long as it meets the other rules for fallow land. You can find more



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The greening rules: some questions answered

information on fallow land for EFA in our August update.



If fallow land is alongside an EFA buffer strip, these areas must be 'visually distinguishable' from each other. This means that an inspector should be able to tell the difference between the fallow land and the buffer strip when they carry out an inspection.

Fallow land

On pages 13 and 31 of our August update, we defined fallow land and explained how farmers will be able to count it as part of their EFA. We can now give more information about how to manage fallow land – both during and outside of the EFA fallow period.

Managing EFA fallow land during the EFA fallow period

We can confirm that on EFA fallow land, during the EFA fallow period (1 January to 30 June), farmers can:



- use herbicides and cultivation to control weeds (for example, Blackgrass, Ragwort, Hemlock). However, they must follow the relevant cross compliance guidance.
- sow wild bird seed mixes. However, they cannot harvest or graze it (during or after the fallow period).
- carry out drainage work. However, they must follow the relevant cross compliance guidance.

During the fallow period farmers must not declare land as 'fallow' if they store bales of hay, silage, straw, muck or farm machinery on it.

This will apply to fallow land counted for both the crop diversification and EFA rules (but they do have different fallow periods).



On page 31 of our August update, we said 'Land under temporary grass can be used as fallow land, but grass can't be sown on this land during the fallow period'. However, the European Commission has released more information and this has now changed.

A farmer can sow grass on fallow land during the fallow period as long as they do not carry out any agricultural production during the period. This will apply to fallow land counted for both the crop diversification and EFA rules (but remember that these have different fallow periods). The crop diversification fallow period is 1 May to 30 June.

Grazing and harvesting fallow land outside of the EFA fallow period



The fallow period for EFA is from 1 January to 30 June. There are no restrictions on how farmers use their fallow cover outside of this period except those relating to unharvestable wild bird seed mixes (see above). This means if the land has a grass cover, it can be grazed or made into hay/silage after 30 June.

Nitrogen-fixing crops



On page 33 of our August update, we explained that the European Commission was planning to increase the amount nitrogen-fixing crops are worth for EFA from 0.3 to 0.7. This has now happened and the regulation has been published. Therefore 1 square-metre of nitrogen-fixing crops is worth 0.7 square-metres of area under the EFA rules.

Managing nitrogen-fixing crops

There are no specific restrictions on the use, location or inputs (for example, pesticides and herbicides) for nitrogen-fixing crops, but farmers must have the crop in the ground during the inspection period (read page 5).

Evidence of nitrogen-fixing crops

We are checking with the Commission what evidence RPA will need for nitrogen-fixing crops that are not in the ground at the time of inspection (because they will be sown later in the inspection period).



Growing catch crops and cover crops as an EFA

On page 30 of our August update, we said we would publish more information about which catch and cover crops will count as an EFA.

Catch and cover crops are designed to protect the soil and use available nutrients between harvest and sowing. The crops farmers can grow as an EFA are those that give the best chance of:

- establishing within the sowing period
- growing quickly
- achieving ground cover
- having different rooting depth types.

Farmers must use a sown mix of at least 2 different cover types (1 cereal and 1 non-cereal). However, grass can be used as either a catch crop or a cover crop as long as it was undersown in the previous crop and is sufficiently established.

Crops that farmers can grow in the sown mix are:

- Rye
- Mustard
- Vetch
- Oats
- Phacelia
- Lucerne
- Barley

This list is based on the crops that have been used successfully for Environmental Stewardship in recent years. The regulations don't allow farmers to include crops that are usually grazed, so we haven't included kale or stubble turnips.

Using crops from this list will give the soil surface the best chance of protection from erosion. It will also help to make sure that available nutrients are taken up by the plants.

Once the catch/cover crop is destroyed, farmers should take care to ensure that all those benefits are not lost. So, they should avoid grazing and establish the next crop quickly.

Farmers can include other crops in their catch crops or cover crops, but these areas cannot count as an EFA.





CAP Reform Countdown | The Basic Payment Scheme Entitlements

Existing SPS entitlements become BPS entitlements on 1 January 2015. BPS entitlements relate to 3 regions of land – find out what they are and how to use the entitlements.

Under BPS, for each entitlement a farmer wants to activate (use) to claim for payment, they must have a hectare of eligible land to support it. They must have at least 5 entitlements and 5 hectares of eligible land to claim BPS (known as the 'minimum claim size').

Entitlement 'regions'

Under BPS, entitlements relate to 3 regions of land (this is the same as SPS):



- Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA)
- Non-Severely Disadvantaged Area (non-SDA)
- Moorland.

The value of entitlements will be calculated before payments begin each year. The value of SDA entitlements will be almost the same as non-SDA. The value of these entitlements will be lower than for SPS as 30% of the budget for each region will be used for the greening payment and 2% for the young farmer payment.

Moorland entitlements plus the greening payment, will be higher than for SPS, as a higher percentage of the overall BPS budget will be used for the Moorland region.

Getting entitlements

SPS entitlements will automatically become BPS entitlements on 1 January 2015 (but their values will change).

'Active farmers' can get more BPS entitlements in different ways:

- they can buy or lease BPS entitlements from someone else
- young farmers and new farmers can apply for entitlements from the 'national reserve', if they are eligible (read page 15).

Using BPS entitlements

To be paid for BPS each year, active farmers must:



- make a BPS application
- declare all their agricultural land
- tell RPA how many of their entitlements (at least 5, supported by at least 5 hectares of eligible land) they want to activate (use) for payment.

A farmer must activate all their entitlements in a single year, at least once in every 2 years. This means entitlements can't be 'rotated' by swapping which ones are used from year to year, so as not to lose them.



Excess BPS entitlements in 2015

In 2015, if a farmer holds more entitlements than hectares of eligible land they declare on their BPS application, they will lose the 'excess' entitlements. When RPA works out if a farmer has excess entitlements, they will look at how many hectares a farmer has declared

on their BPS application – not how many they claim for payment.

If a farmer doesn't apply for BPS in 2015 (and therefore doesn't declare any land) they will lose all their entitlements as 'excess' entitlements.

If a farmer holds some entitlements which they lease in and some which they own, any excess entitlements will be taken away from these proportionately. This means that some or all of the entitlements that were leased in won't be returned to the person who leased them out.

RPA will apply the rules on excess entitlements separately within each BPS region.

For example:

At 15 May 2015, a farmer who farms in one region only:

- has 90 hectares of eligible land
- holds 100 entitlements
 - owns 60 entitlements and
 - leases in 40 entitlements

This means there are 10 excess entitlements: 6 of the entitlements they own and 4 of the entitlements they have leased in would be lost.

At 15 May 2015, a farmer who farms in more than one region:

- has 70 hectares of eligible land
 - 40 hectares in the non-SDA region and
 - 30 hectares in the SDA region
- holds 80 entitlements
 - owns 40 entitlements in the non-SDA region and
 - leases in 40 entitlements in the SDA region

This means there are no excess entitlements in the non-SDA region and 10 excess entitlements in the SDA region. The excess SDA entitlements will be lost.

After 15 May, the value of any 'excess' entitlements will be put back into the BPS budget.

Transferring entitlements

The deadline for transferring SPS entitlements was 21 October and farmers can no longer transfer SPS entitlements unless they are part of an inheritance. Leased entitlements that are due to be returned to their owner (even after 21 October 2014) will still be returned.

From early 2015, farmers can use the CAP Information Service (read page 30) to transfer



The Basic Payment Scheme

Entitlements

BPS entitlements. They can be transferred (including by lease) with or without land.

Under BPS, the person transferring entitlements to another person does not need to be an 'active farmer', but they must be registered on the CAP Information Service.

However, the person receiving the entitlements must be an 'active farmer' at the time of the transfer.



If we find that the person receiving the entitlements (either as the owner or person leasing them) wasn't an 'active farmer' at the time of the transfer, the entitlements will be taken away and the value put into the national reserve. They will not be returned to the original owner.

Where entitlements have been leased out, the owner does not have to be an active farmer for these entitlements to be returned to them, as this is not classed as a transfer.

When to transfer BPS entitlements

BPS entitlements can be transferred at any time of the year. Unlike SPS, farmers won't need to give 6 weeks' notice before transferring entitlements. However, the farmer receiving the entitlements must already be registered as an active farmer on the CAP Information Service before the transfer can take place.



The deadline for transferring entitlements is midnight on 15 May for them to be used in that same scheme year. However, the deadline for BPS applications for that same scheme year is also midnight on 15 May. The person transferring the entitlements must leave enough time for the BPS application to be made. Late BPS applications can be received up to midnight on 9 June but the payments will be reduced by 1% for each working day the application is late after the 15 May deadline.

Farmers who hold entitlements but who aren't eligible for BPS, for example those who are not an active farmer and those who do not have at least 5 hectares of eligible land and 5 entitlements, can:



- transfer (including lease) their BPS entitlements to an active farmer (read page 19)
- do nothing – after 15 May 2015, they will lose their entitlements
- change their circumstances so that they meet all the BPS rules. For example, buy or lease in more land and/or entitlements to meet the minimum claim size.



Approximately 3% of the total BPS budget for England will be used to set up a 'national reserve' in 2015. Each year, a national reserve will be used to create entitlements for young farmers and new farmers. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be setting up their own national reserves.

'Active farmers' (read page 19) will be able to apply for entitlements from the national reserve if they are:

- a 'young farmer', or
- a 'new farmer' (also known as 'new entrant').

They must also have at least 5 hectares of eligible land 'at their disposal' on 15 May.

Young farmers and new farmers will both have to show that they are 'in control' of their agricultural business. They must be either:

- a sole trader
- a partnership, or
- a legal person (for example, a limited company).



What 'in control' means

To be 'in control' of an agricultural business, a person must be directly exposed to (at risk of) personal financial benefit or harm resulting from the success or failure of the business. A majority of shares and votes will give 'control' over the business.

More than one person can 'control' the business if:

- there is a formal agreement between them to vote together, giving them a majority of the business votes and shares, or
- they jointly own shares, giving them overall majority control.

Organisations which don't expose the people directing the business to the risk detailed above are not eligible to apply for these entitlements. For example, charities, trusts and public bodies.

Young farmers

The BPS definition of a 'young farmer' is on page 18. The definition is the same for the young farmer payment and the young farmer category under the national reserve.

A young farmer must support their application for entitlements from the national reserve with evidence that they took control of the agricultural business within the past 5 years, and they are still in control of it, and must be at least 18 years old and not more than 40 years old in the year they apply for the scheme.

More information on the evidence needed to show that someone is a young farmer will be available later this year.



The Basic Payment Scheme

Entitlements from the national reserve for 'young farmers' and 'new farmers'

New farmers

To qualify as a 'new farmer' in 2015, an active farmer must be at least 18 years old. They must also have started their agricultural activity (farming) in 2013 or later. They must not have carried out, or been in control of carrying out, any agricultural activity (at their own risk) in the 5 years before this.



New farmers must provide evidence to support an application for entitlements from the national reserve. More information about how new farmers qualify, including what evidence they need to provide, will be available later this year.

New farmers must apply for BPS no later than 2 years after the calendar year in which they started farming. For example, if a farmer started their agricultural activity in 2013 they would have to make a BPS application by 2015 to qualify.

How to apply for entitlements



Farmers will need to apply for entitlements using the CAP Information Service (read page 30). They will need to confirm that they are applying as a young farmer or a new farmer and send supporting evidence to show how they are eligible.

More information will be available later this year about applying for entitlements from the national reserve.

When to apply for entitlements



Applications can be made to the national reserve for entitlements in any year of the scheme from early 2015 onwards.

Farmers applying for entitlements in 2015 must apply by midnight on 15 May. Their supporting evidence must be received by RPA by the same deadline.

Applications received after this, but before midnight on 9 June 2015, will have the value of any payments (relating to their entitlements from the national reserve) in that year reduced by 3% for each working day they are late.

RPA will not accept applications for entitlements for 2015 received after 9 June 2015.

How entitlements will be allocated



If the farmer doesn't already have entitlements, RPA will give them the same number of entitlements as the number of hectares of eligible land they declare.

If the farmer already has some entitlements, RPA will give them enough to make their total number of entitlements the same as the number of hectares of eligible land they declare.

After 15 May farmers will be told whether they are eligible to receive entitlements from the national reserve. Then later that year they'll be told how many entitlements they have been allocated.

Entitlements created from the national reserve will have the same value as other BPS entitlements and farmers will need to use them in the same way (read pages 12 to 14).

Artificiality

You will not get entitlements from the national reserve if we find that you have artificially created the conditions to qualify for them, with a view to obtaining an advantage contrary to the objectives of the scheme.





CAP Reform | The Basic Payment Scheme

Countdown | The 'young farmer' payment

2% of the BPS budget will be used to give extra money to young farmers if they have taken control of their farm in the last 5 years.

A 'young farmer' is someone who:

- is an active farmer (read page 19)
- is at least 18 years old, but not more than 40 years old in the year of their first BPS application. (This means they cannot become 41 years old during the calendar year of their first BPS application), and
- took control of their holding within the 5 years before their first BPS application.

Read page 15 for more information about being 'in control'.

How much will the young farmer payment be worth?

The payment will be worth up to 25% of the average value of a young farmer's entitlements – up to a maximum of 90 entitlements. All young farmers who apply for the young farmer payment and who are eligible will receive a payment, but the exact percentage will depend on how many young farmers apply.

They can receive the payment for up to 5 years after the year they started or took over control of their business. This means that young farmers will not get the payment for 5 years if they started or took control of the business before 2015.

How to apply for the young farmer payment

Farmers will need to apply each year as part of their BPS application on the CAP Information Service.

They must provide evidence to show their date of birth, and that they have control of the business (including when this started). More information about what evidence young farmers will need to provide will be available later this year.

When to apply

In 2015, farmers must apply by midnight on 15 May 2015. Their supporting evidence must be received by RPA by the same deadline.

RPA will not accept applications for 2015 young farmer payments received after 9 June 2015.

Artificiality

You will not get the young farmer payment if we find that you have artificially created the conditions to qualify for it, with a view to obtaining an advantage contrary to the objectives of the scheme.



Under BPS rules, most existing SPS customers will qualify as a 'farmer' and an 'active farmer'. However, businesses operating certain non-agricultural activities will not be able to apply for BPS unless they can prove that they carry out a significant agricultural activity.

What is a 'farmer'?

A farmer is a person or business that carries out an agricultural activity, which means:

- producing, rearing or growing agricultural products. This activity can include harvesting, milking, breeding animals and keeping animals for farming purposes or
- maintaining an agricultural area so that it is kept clear of dense scrub. Our next leaflet will give more information on the requirements on dense scrub.



An 'active farmer'

To apply for BPS, and to receive BPS entitlements (by transfer or from the national reserve) a farmer must be an 'active farmer'. A farmer will not automatically qualify as an active farmer just because they carry out an agricultural activity or have a large farm.

A farmer who received €5,000 or less for the previous scheme year (before any penalties were applied or cross compliance reductions were made) – for either SPS or BPS (including the greening payment and any young farmer payment) – will automatically qualify as an active farmer.

If a farmer didn't claim for SPS or BPS in the previous year, RPA will work out whether they reach the €5,000 threshold. They will do this by multiplying the number of eligible hectares of land the farmer declares in the scheme year, by the average payment rate for England for the previous scheme year.

The rule focuses on 5 'non-agricultural activities'. Farmers will qualify as an 'active farmer' unless they operate any of the following non-agricultural activities:

- airports
- railway services
- waterworks
- real estate services
- permanent sport and recreational grounds.



Read pages 21 to 24 for more information about these activities. Farmers who do operate any of the above may still qualify as active farmers if they can confirm that they also carry out significant agricultural activity – read page 20 for more information.

The active farmer rule only applies to the farming business that makes a BPS application – not to any other businesses connected to it. Applicants should seek professional advice if they are not sure whether the farming business applying for BPS and the business operating a non-agricultural activity are different.

The Basic Payment Scheme

Who is an 'active farmer'?

For example:

A farmer can apply as an individual for BPS and be an active farmer even if they are also a director of a limited company which operates an airport. The individual and the limited company are not the same business.

For example:

An employee of a business that operates one of these activities can still qualify as an active farmer for their own holding.

Where a farmer doesn't qualify as an active farmer, they must not put in place, or have recently put in place, arrangements intended to allow them to qualify. This is known as 'artificiality' (read page 27).

For example:

An operator of an airport claimed under SPS but doesn't qualify as an active farmer under BPS. If the operator sets up a separate company to manage their farmland and to claim under BPS, with the intention of qualifying as an active farmer, then their BPS application will be rejected.

What does 'operate' mean?

Under the active farmer rule, 'operate' means to make decisions on how the non-agricultural activities of a business function.

A farmer may be considered the operator of an activity although it does not take place on their land.

A farmer who has licensed or allowed someone else to operate an activity on their land under a formal, written agreement will not normally be considered the operator. But if that farmer retains significant control of the activity, they may still be considered the operator.

You may still qualify as an active farmer

Operators of any of the 5 non-agricultural activities may still qualify as an active farmer if they can prove that agriculture is still a significant part of their business. They can do this by showing that they meet one of the following 3 criteria (known as the 'readmission criteria'):



- their annual payments for SPS or BPS (including the greening payment and any young farmer payments) are at least 5% of their total non-agricultural receipts in the most recent financial year
- their total agricultural receipts are at least 15% of their total receipts in the most recent financial year, (read page 27 for more information about receipts) or
- their principal business or company 'objects' include an agricultural activity.



We haven't received clarification on the last criteria yet from the European Commission, but more information will be available later this year.

If a farmer operates one of the 5 non-agricultural activities, they must send a report from an accountant showing that they meet one of the first two criteria above, or evidence that they meet the third criteria. RPA must receive this by midnight on 15 May. Some information about what form the evidence or report must take is on pages 25 to 27.

Declare before you apply for BPS

To apply for BPS, farmers must declare each year on the CAP Information Service that they are an active farmer for the whole calendar year or supply evidence that they qualify under one of the criteria above.

If a farmer declares they are an active farmer and it is later found that they are not, they will not be able to apply under the criteria on page 20 for the year involved. If this affects their 2015 BPS application, they will lose all their BPS entitlements. They will also have to repay any amounts involved, and additional penalties may apply.



More information on non-agricultural activities

Airports

This only involves airports licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority for public use or ordinary use. Military airbases or unlicensed aerodromes and landing strips are not included.

Railway services

This involves licensed train operators, rail infrastructure owners and operators, and rolling stock leasing companies as well as any other business (including charities) operating a timetabled railway service on standard or narrow gauge track (including heritage railways). Operators of tramways and miniature railways are not included.

Waterworks

This only involves the 27 utility companies licensed to put water into the public supply.

Real estate services

This is likely to involve property developers and estate agencies. We don't have all the details on these activities yet, but more information will be available before the end of the year.

Permanent sport and recreational grounds

This includes operators of permanent sport and recreational grounds where all of the following apply:

- the grounds are dedicated and kept throughout the year for sporting or recreational use. For example, a golf course, football pitch, or a manège (surfaced riding arena) for horse riding. This applies even if the land is also used for agriculture, as agriculture is not the primary use.
- the grounds include one or more permanent structures used so people can take part in sport or recreation – or permanent structures for spectators, to make them more comfortable (for example, changing rooms, showers or toilets, cafe, spectator seating or viewing cabin). Car parks are not included. When a manège is near a livery or riding school, a spectator stand or viewing cabin for the manège will be considered to be a permanent structure, but the buildings and stables of the livery or school will not.
- the grounds or facilities are not just for personal use.

An indoor facility that is completely enclosed (for example, a bowling alley or permanently covered stadium) is not considered to be 'a ground'.



The Basic Payment Scheme

Who is an 'active farmer'?

Examples (where the facilities are not just for personal use):

Operators of:	Will the applicant need to confirm they are an active farmer?	Details
Car parks (but nothing else)	No	
Nature reserves	No	Unless maintained primarily as a nature reserve and any agricultural use is at most subsidiary (so that the land is not eligible for BPS) and there are permanent structures (such as viewing hides).
Formal or ornamental gardens (for public use or paid access)	Yes	If maintained for the purpose of visits by the public or paying guests and any agricultural use is at most subsidiary (so that the land is not eligible for BPS) and there are permanent structures (such as a shop or toilets specifically for the use of visitors).
Linear trails for motorsport, cycling, walking, running, horse riding	No	These are not a 'ground'.
Track (enclosing an area of land) for motorsport, speedway, cycling, running, horse riding	Yes	If the area of land enclosed is maintained for the purpose and any agricultural use is at most subsidiary (so that the land is not eligible for BPS) and there are permanent structures such as spectator stands or saddling boxes.
Fields on which game shooting takes place	No	These are not a 'ground'.
Moorland on which game shooting takes place	No	These are not a 'ground'.
Wooded or non-agricultural areas used for the breeding of birds for shooting	No	These are not a 'ground'.
Shooting ranges, clay pigeon shooting	Yes	If the range is maintained throughout the year for the purpose of shooting and any agricultural use is at most subsidiary (so that the land is not eligible for BPS) and there are permanent structures for shooting (for example, shooting stalls, targets).

Woods, quarries or other non-agricultural areas used for recreation (such as paintball, orienteering, climbing, assault courses)	No	Unless the area is maintained for that purpose and there are permanent structures (such as a cabin or changing rooms).
Cricket, football or rugby pitch	Yes	If the pitch is maintained throughout the year for the purpose of cricket, football or rugby and any agricultural use is at most subsidiary (so that the land is not eligible for BPS) and there are permanent structures such as a spectator stands or pavilions.
Golf course	Yes	If the course is maintained for the purpose of golf throughout the year and agricultural use is excluded or subsidiary (so the land is not eligible for BPS), and there are permanent structures (such as a club house, driving range with nets or stalls) or spectator stand.
Cinemas, theatres, billiard rooms, bowling alleys, bars, museums, libraries	No	Indoor facilities are not a 'ground'.
Large, permanently enclosed, wholly indoor arenas for sports or recreation (for example, football or dressage)	No	Indoor facilities are not a 'ground'.
Buildings storing recreational equipment (bicycles, kayaks, boats, show jumps) but nothing else	No	Indoor facilities are not a 'ground'.
Manèges (surfaced riding arena)	No	Unless they include permanent structures (such as spectator stands, judge's cabin, stables provided for use of competitors).
Point-to-point courses, eventing course	Yes	If the course is permanent and maintained for the purpose and agricultural use is subsidiary (so that the land is not eligible for BPS) and there are permanent structures to enjoy the sport (such as spectator stands).

The Basic Payment Scheme

Who is an 'active farmer'?

Cross-country jumping course	Yes	If the cross-country course is permanent and maintained for the purpose and agricultural use is subsidiary (so that land is not eligible for BPS) and there are permanent structures such as spectator stands.
Stables, livery stables, riding school	No	Unless they include grounds which meet the criteria (for example, a manège with permanent facilities such as a judge's cabin or spectator seating).
Fields or village greens used for village fêtes, music festivals, sports days	No	These are not normally dedicated and maintained throughout the seasons of the year so as to be suitable for sporting or recreational use, nor are there usually permanent fixtures or structures for enjoyment or spectating.
Lake used for fishing, rowing, canoeing	No	A lake is not a 'ground'.
River, river banks	No	A river is not a 'ground'.
Waterpark	Yes	A complex of pools and other structures (such as slides) would be a ground dedicated to recreation and which contains permanent structures.
Outdoor swimming pool	No	A pool by itself is not a 'ground'.
Camping ground and caravan sites	No	Unless dedicated and maintained throughout the year and agricultural use is subsidiary or excluded (in particular by hard standing) and there are permanent structures (for example, toilet and washing blocks).

More information on eligible land for BPS will be in our next leaflet.

The evidence needed to confirm a farmer is an active farmer

Page 20 explained that farmers could still qualify as active farmers if they could prove that they met one of 3 readmission criteria. More detail on the evidence needed against the first two criteria can be found below. More information on the evidence needed against the third criteria will be available before the end of the year.

1. Evidence showing that annual payments for SPS or BPS (including the greening payment and any young farmer payments) are at least 5% of total non-agricultural receipts in the most recent financial year:
 - The 'annual payments for SPS or BPS (including the greening payment and any young farmer payments) will be taken as the payments received or due to be received for the scheme year for which the farmer is submitting evidence for their other receipts. It will be the amount before any penalties are applied or cross compliance reductions are made. It will also not take account of amounts paid or recovered relating to other scheme years. If an aid application was not submitted for the year in question, RPA will work out whether a farmer reaches the €5,000 threshold by multiplying the number of eligible hectares of land they declare in the scheme year by the average payment rate for England for the previous scheme year. RPA will publish this average rate early in 2015.
 - Receipts from non-agricultural activities will be regarded as being all of the receipts received by the business, but excluding those specifically identified as relating to agricultural activity in the table on the next page.
2. Showing that total agricultural receipts are at least 15% of total receipts in the most recent financial year:
 - Receipts from agricultural activities include all receipts from payments for SPS or BPS (including the greening payment and any young farmer payments) and from the Rural Development Programmes (whether or not the receipts are related to farming). It also includes receipts from SPS or BPS and from the Rural Development Programmes which are received in the first instance by another body (such as a co-operative, producer association, or commoners' association) and passed on to the applicant.
 - Only receipts obtained by a farmer from their agricultural activities on their holding are considered for this test. A receipt from working on someone else's holding (as with most agricultural contracting and contract farming) will not be considered a receipt from agricultural activities – but it will count towards total receipts.
 - Receipts from the processing of agricultural products are considered agricultural receipts if the product remains in the ownership of the farmer and remains an agricultural product.
 - Receipts from the breeding of animals (for example, receipts from the selling on of animals after the breeding of the animals) are considered agricultural receipts, irrespective of the nature of the animal or the final use of the animal.



The Basic Payment Scheme

Who is an 'active farmer'?

Definitions of receipts obtained from agricultural activities

Under the active farmer rule, only certain activities count as agricultural activities. This table gives more information on the activities that the European Union has decided will, or will not count.

	Are they agricultural receipts?
Receipts from production (sale of products) from the holding	Yes
SPS and BPS payments (including the greening payment and any young farmer payments)	Yes
Rural development payments including those not related to farming (including any national co-financing)	Yes
Receipts from rural development or direct payments paid to another body and passed to the applicant (for example, by a commoners association, producer organisation or co-operative)	Yes
Income from the operation of on-farm diversification activities. For example, receipts from bed and breakfast or rents from holiday lets (even if the diversification itself was funded by rural development payments)	No
National aid granted for agricultural activities	Yes
Grants for forestry other than rural development payments	No
Receipts from a product of the holding that has been processed and remains in the possession of the farmer. A full list of products is in the Treaties of the European Union at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/AUTO/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2012.326.01.0001.01.ENG#C_2012326EN.01033101	Yes
Receipts from a product processed into a product not in the full list of products in the Treaties of the European Union at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/AUTO/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2012.326.01.0001.01.ENG#C_2012326EN.01033101	No
Receipts from agricultural products produced off the holding and then processed or sold on the holding	No
VAT or excise duty received in the first instance by the applicant from the eligible agricultural receipts set out in this table (if applicable, please note that food products attract no VAT)	Yes
Selling of game birds shot in sport or bred for sale	Yes
Receipts from providing shooting, hunting or fishing	No
Receipts to compensate for loss of production (for example, for flooding)	No, if from a private insurer. Yes, if compensation is paid from the Rural Development Programme
Receipts from contracting and contract farming	No
Receipts from renting land out	No
Receipts to compensate for destruction of animals testing positive for tuberculosis, or similar	Yes

Important things to know about submitting evidence

Receipts

Under the active farmer rule, 'receipts' are gross amounts received for ordinary business activity.

Receipts from the sale of capital items such as a tractor should not be included (unless the business also trades in the buying and sale of tractors). Personal receipts that are not related to a business activity should also not be included (for example, from inheritance, pensions, private investments or the sale of personal property).



The financial year

More information on the financial year will be available later this year.



Types of evidence

The right types of evidence have to be sent to RPA for all of the figures submitted by a farmer who wants to confirm they are an active farmer. For the value of payments for SPS or BPS (including the greening payment and any young farmer payments), applicants should use the information provided to them by RPA as evidence. Information on other receipts must be provided in an accountant's report. More information on the accountant's report will be available in early 2015.



When to send evidence

Applicants who need to send in evidence to confirm they are active farmers must do this early enough for RPA to receive it (and their application) **by the BPS application deadline (midnight 15 May)**. This includes evidence that is being sent by post. If this is not received by RPA by the deadline, then the application it relates to will not be accepted as being received by the deadline. If the evidence is received after the deadline, penalties will be applied in the same way as if the application was late. The application will be rejected if the evidence is received after midnight on 9 June.



The same deadline and rule about RPA receiving the evidence by the deadline applies to evidence being sent to support a young farmer payment application (read page 18 – When to apply), and young farmer or new farmer applications for entitlements from the national reserve (read page 16 – When to apply for entitlements).

Artificiality

You will not be able to apply as an active farmer if we find that you have artificially created the conditions to qualify, with a view to obtaining an advantage contrary to the objectives of the scheme.





New payment schedules for existing Environmental Stewardship agreements

From January 2015, all payments for existing Environmental Stewardship (ES) agreements will relate to a January to December calendar year (not the start date of the agreement). However, this does not apply to payments for capital works, which can be claimed for and paid throughout the year.

The total value of payments over the life of the agreement is not affected, nor is the end date of each agreement. However, the timing and value of individual payments are likely to change. During 2015 in particular, payments may not be the same as agreement holders would normally expect.

These changes apply from January 2015 and it is important that agreement holders understand how this will affect their payments for the remainder of their ES agreements.

Natural England wrote to all affected ES agreement holders in March to explain the changes, and will do so again in late October or early November.

In late 2014 or early 2015, Natural England will send revised payment schedules to all agreement holders who are affected.

There are questions and answers and a 'Payment Timing Tool' on the GOV.UK website at www.gov.uk/environmental-stewardship-how-to-get-paid-under-your-agreement.

For more information, call Natural England on 0300 060 0011.

From 2015 Environmental Stewardship agreement holders must submit a claim each year

From 1 January 2015, Environmental Stewardship (ES) agreement holders must submit a claim by 15 May each year to receive their scheduled ES payments. This is because the EU rules that apply to these agreements have changed under the new Rural Development Programme.



Natural England is clarifying what will be needed in the claim and will write to all ES agreement holders with more information.

Environmental Stewardship and the greening rules

On page 35 of our August update, we included some information about how the new greening rules on 'double funding' may affect some Entry Level Stewardship and Organic Entry Level Stewardship payments. Natural England has written to the majority of agreement holders who may be affected, to explain the changes in detail, the choices available and the deadline for replies.

If you need help to understand how 'double funding' affects your agreement and the choices available to you, contact Natural England on 0300 060 0011.

ES customers can use land under existing options to meet the Ecological Focus Area (EFA) and crop diversification rules under BPS – as long as they continue to meet their ES option requirements.

Environmental Stewardship land transfers and amendments in 2015

We aim to include further information on ES land transfers and amendments in the next leaflet, which we will publish before the end of 2014.

New environmental land management scheme

In the first year of the new Rural Development Programme in 2015, the funding opportunities for environmental land management through water capital grants and woodland grants will be introduced in stages.

From January 2016, multi-year agreements will be available, starting on the first of January each year. From 2016 onwards capital only agreements will be available to start at any point during the year.

Woodland grants in 2015

Before the full suite of agreements and grants become available in 2016, we intend to make woodland grants available to support woodland creation.

This meets Ministerial commitments to ensure woodland grants are available during the 2015 planting season. More information on woodland grants will be in our next leaflet.

Water capital grants in 2015

Capital grants will be available in 2015 for infrastructure which helps improve the water environment. More details will be available in our next leaflet.

Multi-year land management agreements starting from 1 January 2016

Multi-year agreements under the new environmental land management scheme will start on 1 January 2016. Applications can be submitted from July 2015.

More detailed information on when and how to apply will be available over the next few months.

Capital only agreements can start at any time once they have been approved.

Increasing farm and forestry productivity

Work is continuing to develop a £140 million scheme to provide support for farming and forestry businesses. More information will be available in our next leaflet.

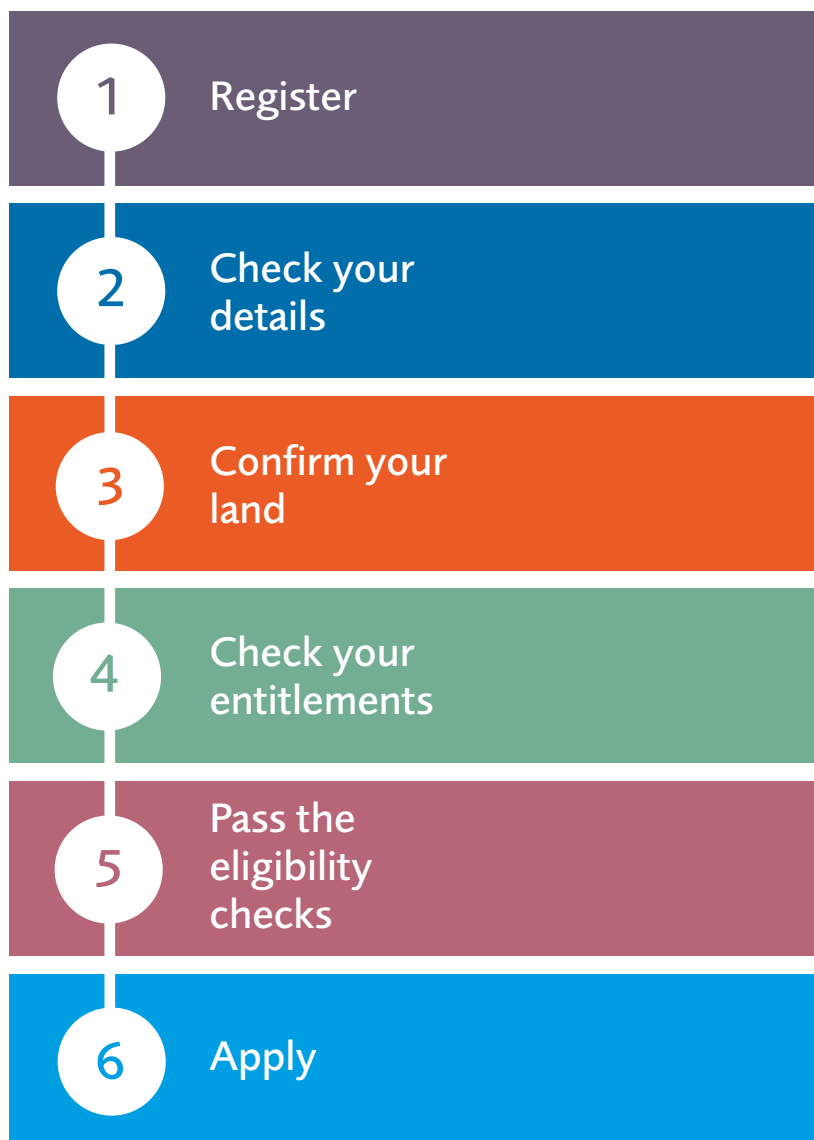


The CAP Information Service is the new online service for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) schemes. Defra has begun to invite customers onto the new service. Start now by making sure you have what you need to go online – or by letting RPA know if you will need extra help to apply.

The Registration Pack

From later this year until early 2015, SPS applicants will be sent a Registration Pack. The pack will explain how to get started on the new service.

To apply for the Basic Payment Scheme in 2015, applicants will need to complete 6 steps (below). The Registration Pack will explain how to complete step 1 and start steps 2 and 3. More information on how to complete the rest of the steps will be available in early 2015.



To be in the best position to apply for CAP payments in 2015, get started on the CAP Information Service as soon as you get your Registration Pack.

All applicants will need to register, even if they are using a colleague, friend or agent to help them with their application.



What you need to use the new service

You can start to get ready for the new service now by making sure you have everything you need. To use the new online service, you will need an email address and access to a computer or tablet with:

- an up-to-date operating system – such as Windows (preferably Windows 7, 8 or 8.1), Apple OSX/iOS, Linux or Android
- a modern web-browser – such as Microsoft Internet Explorer (version 8 or above), or the latest versions of Google Chrome, Firefox, Opera or Safari
- a broadband internet connection with a download speed of 1Mbps or more – if you have a slower connection, the service won't work as well. There are lots of websites that can tell you what your internet connection speed is.
- a screen with a resolution of 1024 by 768 pixels or more.

Older versions of operating systems may still work if you have a modern web browser, an internet connection and the screen resolution shown above.

Applicants won't be able to apply for BPS in 2015 using the farm software packages that were used for SPS.



Helping you check that you meet the greening rules

Applicants can use the CAP Information Service to tell RPA about their land use and the EFA features they have on their land. When these details are completed, the service will help applicants to check if they meet the greening rules.

Extra help

If you think you will need extra help to use the new online service, call RPA on 0345 603 7777 to find out what support might be available to you.



More information will be published throughout the rest of the year. Meanwhile, there is more information at:

- **www.gov.uk/cap-reform** – this web page is dedicated to CAP reform. It's got all the latest news, as well as all the leaflets and publications we've released so far.
- **'The new Common Agricultural Policy Schemes in England: August 2014 update'**
- **'CAP Reform: How we will manage double funding (greening and Environmental Stewardship)'**. This document provides guidance on how we plan to deal with the risk of double funding between greening under CAP Reform and Environmental Stewardship agreements.
- **'An Introduction to the new Common Agricultural Policy schemes in England'** – this leaflet was published in April 2014 and can be found on GOV.UK at the address above. It gives a simple summary of the new schemes.

Regulations

The main European regulations governing the Basic Payment Scheme and greening are EU Regulation No. 1307/2013 and EU Regulation No. 1306/2013.

Farming Advice Service

The Farming Advice Service offers advice about the greening rules and cross compliance. For more information call 0345 345 1302 or email advice@farmingadvice.org.uk.

The Farming Advice Service also organises events. To see if there are events planned near you, visit www.farmingadvice.org.uk/events.

Campaign for the Farmed Environment

The Campaign for the Farmed Environment provides information on how to protect and enhance the environmental value of your farmland. Visit their website for more information: www.cfeonline.org.uk.

Disclaimer/legal notice

This leaflet is our interpretation of the current regulations for the Common Agricultural Policy schemes from 2015. Only the courts can give a definitive interpretation of the law.

You may want to get independent professional or legal advice before you change anything about your business. We cannot advise you or your legal representatives on your business structure.

The latest information on the new CAP schemes is at
www.gov.uk/cap-reform

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