

## Welcome to the Farming Advice Service newsletter

Thank you for continuing to subscribe to our monthly newsletter.

We hope we are providing you with a valuable service, and welcome any feedback or suggestions on topics you would like to see covered in future editions.

All of us at the Farming Advice Service would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy festive season, and a healthy and prosperous new year.

### Contact us

FAS technical advice line: 03000 200 301

[advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk) | [farmingadviceservice.org.uk](http://farmingadviceservice.org.uk)



Please be aware that the FAS telephone and email helpline will be **closed** from midday on Friday 24 December until 08.30 on Tuesday 4 January. Any messages received during this time will be picked up in the new year.

### December 2021 – Issue 70

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# Key dates

**Below are details of forthcoming key dates that you should be aware of.**

<b>24 December</b>	The FAS telephone and email helpline will be closed from midday on Friday 24 December until 08.30 on Tuesday 4 January. Any messages received during this time will be picked up in the new year.
<b>31 December</b>	If you keep sheep or goats, this is the deadline to submit your annual count of livestock into your holding register and to the inventory (online or by post). ( <a href="#">SMR* 8</a> )
<b>31 December</b>	End of the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2021 year. ( <a href="#">BPS 2021</a> )
<b>1 January</b>	You must start following the rules in the cross compliance 2022 guide from this date. The BPS 2022 year starts.
<b>1 January</b>	For any land located in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), you can, from this date, apply organic manure with a high, readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland and tillage land on shallow or sandy soils if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity restrictions for applying these manures. This is also subject to the <a href="#">Farming Rules for Water</a> being complied with and there is agronomic justification. ( <a href="#">SMR 1</a> )
<b>1 January</b>	For any land located in an NVZ, this is the beginning of the year for assessing the annual amount of livestock manure applied to your land. ( <a href="#">SMR 1</a> )

<b>16 January</b>	For any land located in an NVZ, this is the date from which you can apply manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to grassland and tillage land if conditions are suitable. This is also subject to the <a href="#">Farming Rules for Water</a> being complied with and there is agronomic justification. ( <a href="#">SMR 1</a> )
<b>1 February</b>	For any land located in an NVZ, you can, from this date, apply organic manure with a high, readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland and tillage land on all soil types if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity restrictions for applying these manures. This is also subject to the <a href="#">Farming Rules for Water</a> being complied with and there is agronomic justification. ( <a href="#">SMR 1</a> )

## In case you missed them...

<b>1 December</b>	The BPS, Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship 2021 payment windows open. ( <a href="#">BPS 2021</a> )
<b>1 December</b>	If you keep sheep or goats, you must carry out an annual count of the animals on your holding as of 1 December, enter this into your holding register and complete the inventory (online or by post) by 31 December. ( <a href="#">SMR 8</a> )

\* SMR = Statutory Management Requirement

# How can FAS help you?

## Free and confidential advice

The Farming Advice Service (FAS) is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It provides **free, confidential** advice to help farmers in England understand and meet the requirements of cross compliance. These requirements apply to you if you are a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), Countryside Stewardship or Environmental Stewardship claimant.

FAS updates the farming sector on relevant Government farming policy that is applicable in England and the actions that can be taken to help farmers to be compliant with regulations. The FAS newsletter also provides articles on topics that are complementary to cross compliance, such as practices to benefit the wider environment and wellbeing support.

The [FAS website](#) hosts all of the previous FAS newsletters, technical articles and webinars that cover topics in more detail.

## Getting in contact with the advice line

Farmers requiring telephone advice from FAS can contact the **Rural Services Helpline** on **03000 200 301** Monday to Friday between 08:30 and 17:00. The Rural Services Helpline provides a single number for all FAS, **Rural Payments Agency**, **Animal and Plant Health Agency**, **Natural England** and **forestry** enquiries. Please note, the FAS helpline will be closed from midday on Friday 24 December until 08.30 on Tuesday 4 January. Please check with individual deliverers on the Rural Services Helpline for their Christmas helpline closures.

You can also email enquiries to [advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk). Our helpline team aims to respond to all telephone and email enquiries within one working day.

The advice given to individual farmers is **confidential**. Therefore, FAS does not disclose any personal or individual information, or data it obtains during its advisory activities.



## Remember to submit your annual sheep and goat inventory

*If you keep sheep or goats, you must carry out an annual count of the animals on your holding as of 1 December, enter this into your holding register, complete the inventory form and submit it online or by post by 31 December. This article provides more information on how to do this.*

Keeping an annual inventory is a requirement in sheep and goat legislation and also a cross compliance requirement under [Statutory Management Requirement \(SMR\) 8: Sheep and goat identification](#). Not completing the annual inventory is a breach under the cross compliance rules and may increase your chance of being selected for a sheep or goat identification inspection and/or a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) inspection.

Once you have carried out the annual count of your sheep or goats, you must enter the information into the online form [here](#) or complete and return a paper form by 31 December. If you are completing a paper form, the pre-paid envelope will be addressed to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), which records the information on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). For guidance on how to complete the forms, [please visit GOV.UK](#).

If you did not receive correspondence from Defra by 3 December telling you how to complete your inventory, please call the Defra Surveys Team helpline on 03000 600 140 or email [surveys@defra.gov.uk](mailto:surveys@defra.gov.uk).

# Sustainable Farming Incentive: how the scheme will work in 2022

On 2 December, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published details about the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI). The application window will be open for 10 weeks and the dates for this will be confirmed early next year. This article provides an overview of the announcement.

## Eligibility

When the scheme launches in 2022, farmers who are eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and have land in England will be eligible for SFI. Cross-border land parcels will not be eligible for SFI in early rollout.

SFI will operate at a land parcel (field) level. This means that farmers can choose how many of their fields to enter into SFI standards – they do not have to enter their whole farm. There is no minimum or maximum amount of land that can be entered into the scheme. To be eligible for BPS, a farmer must have at least 5 hectares of eligible land – but not all of this land would need to be entered into the SFI agreement.

## Agreements

SFI agreements will last for 3 years, with some flexibility for farmers to amend them every 12 months from their start date. This will give greater flexibility than current Countryside Stewardship agreements, which generally last for 5 years with minimal flexibility to amend. During their 3-year agreements, farmers will only be able to reduce ambition or coverage in exceptional circumstances.

Defra expects that the standards and payment rates signed up to in 2022 will remain stable for the full 3-year agreements. After the initial 3-year period, the standards and rates will be adjusted based on what is learned during early rollout.

## Management control

Generally, SFI agreement holders must have management control of the land for the duration of their 3-year agreement. [Read more information about tenant farmers and the SFI](#). Defra has also written a blog on [making the Sustainable Farming Incentive work for tenants](#).

## Standards for 2022

The three standards that will be available in the early rollout of SFI are:

- the Arable and Horticultural Soils standard
- the Improved Grassland Soils standard
- the Moorland and Rough Grazing standard (introductory level)

Defra will also pay for an Annual Health and Welfare Review for livestock – there is more information on [page 5](#).

A summary of each of the standards, [including the requirements and payment rates is on GOV.UK](#). Defra plans to introduce more standards incrementally between 2023 and 2025, with the full range being available from 2025 onwards.

Please remember that this article is providing an overview of the SFI, [read the full announcement on GOV.UK](#). Defra has also produced a blog post on SFI on the Future Farming blog [here](#).



# Defra offers free vet visits as part of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

*Through the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will fund an Annual Health and Welfare Review. The Review is part of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, which is due to launch in spring 2022.*



The Review is a fully funded vet visit that farmers will receive on a yearly basis. Funding for the Review will be available for 3 years and will be reviewed after this time.

A farmer's own vet or vet-led team will carry out diagnostic testing and provide bespoke advice on management to improve the health and welfare of their animals.

By funding the Annual Health and Welfare Review, Defra aims to:

- increase a farmer's awareness of the health and welfare of their livestock, and the options available to them to address any issues;
- encourage and enable farmers to take action to improve animal health and welfare, including directing them towards other sources of grant funding and advice;
- understand more about the health and welfare of the national herd/flock to inform national policy and interventions.

Defra will know if the Annual Health and Welfare Review has been successful when it sees:

- larger-scale adoption of annual reviews as part of normal business practice;
- more farmers taking action to improve health and welfare;
- improved outcomes in relation to endemic diseases, conditions and welfare, resulting in reduced waste and financial loss.

## Who is eligible?

Initially, the offer will be available to farmers in England who have more than 50 pigs, 20 sheep or 10 cattle and are eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). The aim is to extend this offer to those not participating in the BPS as soon as possible.

## What is involved?

The visits will have common core elements (see below) yet are flexible enough for vet and farmer to focus on the most important areas for each farm.

1. **The farmer applies.** All livestock farmers who fit the eligibility criteria can apply for the Review from spring 2022.
2. **Vet visit takes place (2-3 hours).** The vet and farmer discuss the health and welfare of their animals and agree achievable actions. Testing will take place for priority endemic diseases.
3. **Data collection.** Data will be submitted from diagnostic testing and basic sector specific information about the farm. This will remain anonymised and not used for inspections.
4. **Recommendations.** This includes a report with recommendations most relevant to the farm to improve health and welfare, advice about monitoring and how to record data, and signposts to further support.
5. **Understanding.** With large scale adoption of health and welfare reviews, there will be a greater understanding of the national herd/flock to inform future policy and advice.

## Payment rates

The payment rates for the Annual Health and Welfare Review have been refined based on the priority testing required in collaboration with farmers and vets. The payments will go to the farmer, recognising their personal commitment to the Review, and will cover the full cost of vet time and diagnostic testing. The main difference between payment rates by species will be due to the cost of testing, which varies across the different diseases, and whether farmers are already required to test for these diseases.

The rates (per review) will be:

- pigs - £684;
- sheep - £436;
- beef cattle - £522;
- dairy cattle - £372;

More information on the Review can be found in Defra's recent [announcement](#). The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway as a whole is critical to the farming reforms set out in the [Agriculture Transition Plan](#). The aim of the Pathway is to deliver benefits for UK trade, food security, public health, farm productivity and the environment, and to support continued improvements to the health and welfare of our animals.

## Farming Advice Service

# Webinar programme

*The Farming Advice Service (FAS) invites you to attend a series of free webinars, starting in early 2022. Each online event will have a different theme and will run for 1 hour, including the opportunity to put questions to our expert speakers. If you are not able to make any of the live broadcasts, recordings will be available on the [FAS website](#).*

Booking is essential. To reserve your place, please click on the relevant link and complete the booking form. You will need to do this for each session that you wish to attend. BASIS points will be available. After you have booked your place, you will receive an email with joining instructions. If this does not come through, please check your spam or junk folder.

### What's new in cross compliance 2022

Andrew Wells from Arable Alliance will explain the operational changes to cross compliance for the 2022 scheme year to help you to comply with the requirements. Andrew is an expert in this area and has more than 15 years' of experience in delivering cross compliance advice and events to farmers. He will also highlight the areas that are commonly receiving a high percentage of non-compliances at inspections.



- Monday 17 January, 15:30 to 16:30, [please click here to register for the event](#).

### Future support schemes – what's coming next?

This webinar will be presented by Jonathan Baker (Deputy Director of the Future Farming and Countryside Programme team at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)) and Alice De Soer (Director/adviser at Rural Response Ltd). It follows on from the two webinars FAS delivered earlier this year on the Agricultural Transition Plan. The presenters will provide an update on the offers available to farmers and answer your questions.



- Tuesday 8 February 2022, 15:30 to 16:30, [please click here to register for the event](#).

### Steps to reduce ammonia emissions on farms

John Morgan of Creedy Associates is a specialist in the practical use of inorganic manures within agriculture. In this webinar he will provide an overview of ammonia emissions in agriculture and offer practical information and suggestions on how farmers can reduce their ammonia emissions on farms. John says: 'Ammonia is a nitrogen gas and that retaining this nitrogen, for farm use, via considered storage and application, makes financial as well as environmental sense.'



- Wednesday 16 February, 19:00 to 20:00, [please click here to register for the event](#).

### Livestock movements and identification

Ian Cairns is a sheep farmer and independent adviser with more than 10 years' experience in delivering events and advice on livestock movements and identification. This is an area with high non-compliance rates in inspections and in this webinar, Ian will cover the requirements for livestock movements and ID and make reference to inspection failings. He will highlight the common areas on non-compliance and what to do to avoid these.



- Wednesday 23 February, 10:00 – 11:00, [please click here to register for the event](#).

# Avian influenza (bird flu) update

An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) came into force across Great Britain on 3 November 2021, and in Northern Ireland on 17 November 2021, following multiple findings of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in wild birds at various sites and at premises in England, Wales and Scotland. Additional housing measures were introduced across the UK from 29 November 2021. This makes it a legal requirement for all bird keepers across the UK (whether they have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) to keep their birds indoors and follow strict biosecurity measures to limit the spread of avian influenza.



As the situation is rapidly changing, this article provides links to pages where you can find the most recent updates.

All bird keepers are reminded that high standards of biosecurity must be maintained as good practice for the health of your birds. Good biosecurity is an essential defence against diseases such as avian influenza and is key to limiting the spread of avian influenza in an outbreak.

Defra has published [Biosecurity guidance](#) and a [biosecurity self-assessment checklist](#) to assist all bird keepers in instigating and maintaining good biosecurity. Further information on the latest situation, together with biosecurity advice, can be found in [Defra's avian influenza guidance on GOV.UK](#).

In addition to the measures in place across the UK in the AIPZ, further disease-spread control zones are put in place surrounding infected premises. Within these zones, additional control measures apply, including movement restrictions on poultry, other captive birds, eggs, poultry products or materials associated with their keeping, or mammals from/to premises where poultry or other captive birds are kept (unless licensed). Bird keepers can check whether they are in a disease control zone on the [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\) Interactive Map](#). Further information on the cases, movement restrictions and licensing in the disease control zones can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

According to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds and the risk to the general public's health is very low. Based on current scientific evidence, the

Food Standards Agency advises avian influenza poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

Keepers must keep a close watch on their birds for any signs of disease and seek prompt advice from a vet if they have any concerns. Clinical signs indicative of avian influenza must be reported in England to Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301. In Wales, contact 0300 303 8268. In Scotland, contact the local Field Services Office. Failure to do so is an offence.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) carries out year-round avian influenza surveillance of dead wild birds submitted via public reports and warden patrols. If you find dead wild waterfowl (such as swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds (such as gulls or birds of prey), you should report details to the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77). Defra collects some of these birds and tests them to help to understand how the disease is distributed geographically and in different types of bird. Not all birds will be collected. Do not touch or pick up any dead or visibly sick birds that you find. For further information see [Defra's advice to the public](#).

Defra encourages all keepers to [register their poultry](#), even if only kept as pets, so the APHA can contact you during an outbreak. This is a legal requirement if you have 50 or more birds. The APHA also has a service that notifies subscribers if there is an outbreak of animal disease in Great Britain. [Subscribe to disease alerts via text or email](#).

# Cross compliance in 2022

As with previous years, the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) will run for the full calendar year (1 January to 31 December 2022). Those who are intending to claim payments under BPS for 2022 will be required to comply with the BPS requirements for the entire year. The [cross compliance guide for 2022 has been published on GOV.UK](#).

There are not going to be any changes to the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) and Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) in 2022. However, there are some operational changes that will be implemented.

Area of cross compliance	New for 2022
Inspections	<p>To improve communication with farmers, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will send a letter shortly after an inspection.</p> <p>This will confirm whether the inspection was found to be compliant or non-compliant and give any necessary guidance.</p> <p>Where the inspection was found to be non-compliant, the letter will give an initial overview of the results and explain what to expect next.</p>
Penalties/reductions	<p>For many farmers, penalties for non-compliance will be more proportionate.</p> <p>For example, where record keeping is non-compliant under SMR 1: Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, this will take account of any possible harm to the environment. The RPA is also making the penalty levels (percentages) more proportionate under SMR 7: Cattle identification and registration and SMR 8: Sheep and goat identification.</p>

The information in this article has been taken from the [RPA's November 2021 update booklet](#). We recommend reading through this booklet as it includes information on the changes to the BPS, and updates on Countryside Stewardship and other schemes.

For further help with the cross compliance rules, please contact the FAS helpline on 03000 200 301 or email [advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk).



## Nitrate Vulnerable Zone designations and appeals 2021-2024

If you have land that has been designated as being in a [Nitrate Vulnerable Zone for 2021-2024](#), you will receive a letter from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) informing you of your right to appeal against this decision.

Two-thirds of the letters have been issued, the remainder will be sent out in early January. You can appeal the decision **within 28 days of the date on the letter** if your land (or part of it):

- does not drain into water that has been identified as polluted;
- drains into water that should not be identified as polluted.

If you wish to appeal, please read the following guidance on [how to make an NVZ appeal](#), complete the notice of appeal form and send it to the [first-tier tribunal](#).

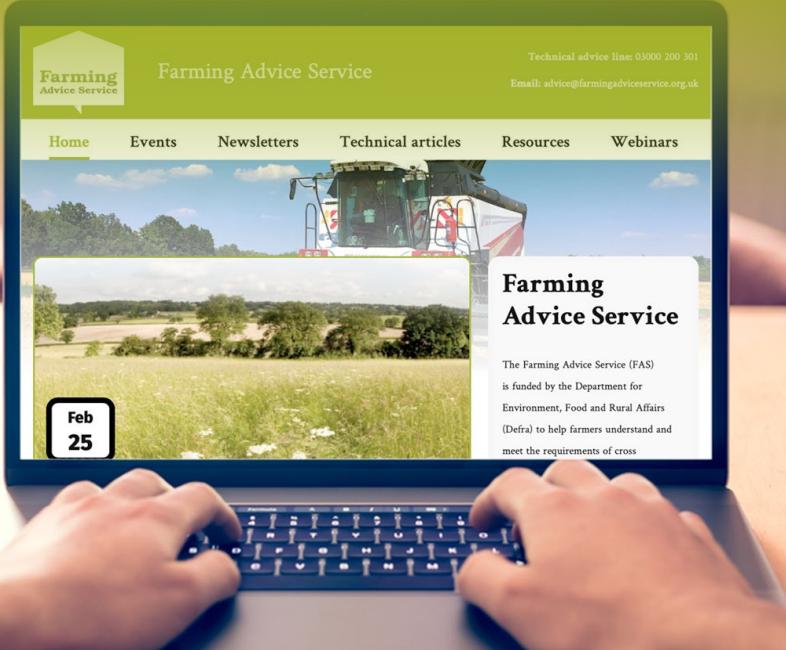
To check if your land is located in an NVZ, please use the interactive map [here](#). If you have difficulty checking the map, need a printed map, or have any questions regarding the letter that you have received, please call the Environment Agency on 03000 203791.

### Grassland derogations for 2022

Defra is reviewing the offer of grassland derogations for livestock manure in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones for 2022. It recognises the timeframes the sector is working under and a decision on the derogation will be communicated soon.

## Farming Advice Service

# Resources to help you



The FAS website has resources such as technical articles and webinar recordings that are free to use. This article provides links to some of them.

### FAS technical articles

- FAS has produced an article summarising the rules for land located in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). This includes information about record keeping, manure/slurry storage and spreading, [read it here](#). The [July 2021 FAS newsletter](#) includes a summary of other useful resources to help you to understand the NVZ rules.
- Livestock cross compliance inspections commonly receive a high number of non-compliance breaches during Rural Payments Agency (RPA) inspections. To help understand the cross compliance rules, FAS has produced two 'top tips' articles:
  - [Top tips for compliance with cattle identification & registration rules](#)
  - [Top tips for compliance with sheep and goat identification](#)
- In 2021, the greening requirements previously attached to 30% of farmers' Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payment came to an end. In collaboration with Championing the Farmed Environment (CFE), FAS has produced an article that provides examples of how features that were previously tied to greening payments could be retained and upgraded to benefit your business and the environment. [Read the article here](#).

### FAS webinar recordings

FAS has delivered webinars covering different topics in cross compliance. Below are links to the recordings of the webinars that have taken place recently, which you can watch for free on the FAS website:

- The [heading towards net zero emissions in agriculture](#) webinar was delivered by Dave Freeman, Agriculture Business Area Manager at Ricardo Energy & Environment. Dave explained the basics of net zero and what this means for farming businesses.
- Briony Burge of Creedy Associates delivered a webinar covering the basics of NVZs, including record-keeping requirements and the spreading rules. The webinar recording and supporting Q&A document [can be found on the FAS website](#).
- Ross Cherrington, Senior Farm Adviser from the West Country Rivers Trust, delivered a webinar covering the Farming Rules for Water. The webinar recording and supporting Q&A document [can be found on the FAS website](#).

FAS is delivering four hour-long webinars early in 2022, details of these and links to register are on [page 6](#).

The FAS website also hosts all of the previous newsletters [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact the FAS helpline by calling 03000 200 301 or emailing [advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk).

# *New study calls for ‘culture change’ in farming to address loneliness, isolation and mental health*



*A major new study shows that long hours, working alone, and feeling undervalued and disconnected from the wider public are among the key factors causing loneliness in the farming community. The research was carried out by the University of Exeter's Centre for Rural Policy Research (CRPR) and national charity the Farming Community Network (FCN). It has identified reasons why farmers and farming families can feel isolated and lonely, and lays bare many of the challenges and pressures farmers regularly face in their occupation.*

The study revealed that loneliness was linked to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. The research involved in-depth interviews with 22 farmers/members of farming families and six farm support practitioners in England – these were conducted by telephone or video-call between March and July 2021.

Farmers said the long hours they work trying to keep their business going, despite low returns, leaves little time for socialising, relaxing or spending time with their family. Other challenges include a lack of social opportunities, geographical isolation and declining business-related contact.

Poor rural broadband and transport connections add to this sense of isolation. There was a general feeling that the public has a limited understanding of what is involved in farming and the array of challenges farmers face in producing food and managing the countryside.

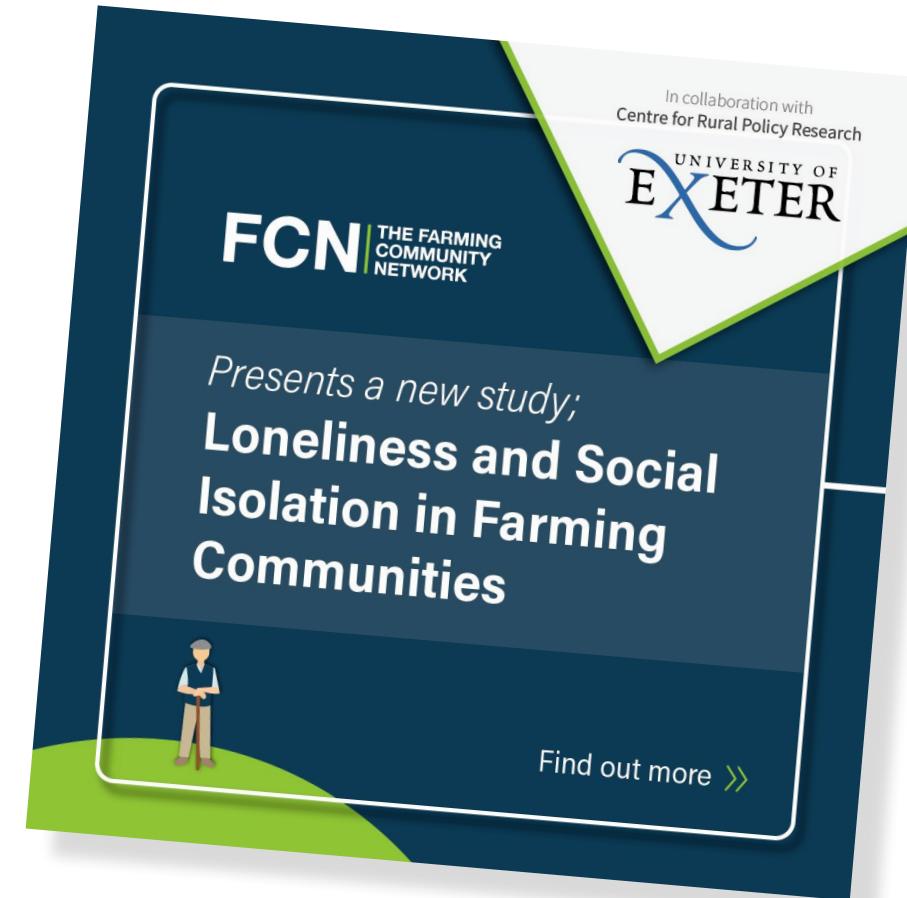
The research found that farmers are keen to highlight the vital role they play in producing food, and the positive actions they are taking to care for and improve the environment. However, they feel these are often overlooked in media stories about agriculture and environmental issues such as climate change. This can lead to farmers and their families feeling unappreciated and isolated from wider society.

## Recommendations made in the report include:

- the work of the Farming Help charities, including FCN, is vital and these charities must be properly funded;
- regulatory inspectors and farm assurance assessors should be trained to recognise mental health issues;
- rural GPs and community psychiatric nurses should have greater information and training on the specific issues and challenges faced by members of the farming community;
- there should be an expansion of practical and business support for farmers;
- continued investment in rural broadband access from local authorities/providers is essential to improve connectivity and reduce isolation;
- there should be more local social opportunities and networks (in-person and online) for farmers, farm workers and farm family members;
- further education of young people on food production, farming and the environment is necessary in helping to attract more people into farming and to reduce the feeling of 'disconnect' from wider society many farmers experience;
- spending time with family and getting away from the farm should be normalised via promotion of a culture change within farming communities.

This project has been funded by the Loneliness & Social Isolation in Mental Health Research Network, which is funded by UK Research and Innovation. [Read or download the report.](#)

## 'Who's Your Julie?' – an FCN campaign to encourage people across agriculture to help others and recognise support networks



A new campaign by FCN encourages people across farming and agriculture to recognise the people in their lives that help to support them during difficult times by asking them one simple question: 'Who's Your Julie?'

'Julie' represents the reliable people in our social circles who are there to listen and support us. Your 'Julie' might even be your pet cat or dog. FCN is encouraging people to share social media posts and videos using the hashtag #MyJulies to talk about their support networks, tagging them in the post to create a chain of support across agriculture, and helping to reinforce the message that it's OK to ask for help and to talk to others. [Find out more.](#)

# Updates from the Future Farming blog and industry announcements

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) regularly adds updates to the [Future Farming blog](#) on GOV.UK. In this article, FAS provides links to some of the recent posts and to other recent industry announcements.

- On 2 December, Defra published more information on its new environmental land management scheme, the Sustainable Farming Incentive, which launches next year. [Read the latest information on GOV.UK](#), or [subscribe to the Future Farming Blog for updates](#). Watch Secretary of State's speech at the CLA Conference or [read the transcript](#).

- Two new funds for farmers, foresters and growers are still open for applications. The Farming Innovation Programme encourages people to embrace innovative ways to maximise productivity and drive sustainability. [Learn more about the Farming Innovation Programme](#). The Farming Investment Fund is for grants to buy new equipment and infrastructure to help to improve efficiency and boost productivity. Application deadlines for these vary, [so check GOV.UK for the latest dates and more information](#).
- In a recent Future Farming Blog post, Defra explores [how farmers in protected landscapes have been using Defra funding](#). From filling gaps in New Forest hedgerows, to protecting the Duke of Burgundy butterfly in Dorset, there is plenty of inspiration for farmers who wish to apply for the fund, which is still open for applications. [Subscribe to the Future Farming Blog for updates](#).
- Hundreds of thousands of trees will be planted in communities across England thanks to funding through the Nature for Climate Fund announced by Defra and the Forestry Commission. Defra announced a package of funding as part of National Tree Week, which began on Saturday 27 November, to help to regenerate natural spaces across the country for the benefit of all. [Read more about Nature for Climate Fund on GOV.UK](#).
- Defra and the Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, are seeking your views on proposals for a reformed Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), to deliver greater accountability and value for money for farmers across the UK. The consultation closes on 10 January 2022. [Read more about the consultation on GOV.UK](#).
- The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) paid just over 97,500 claims, totalling £1.725bn, for farmers in the first few days of the payment window, which runs between December and June. Payments cover Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmental Stewardship (ES) schemes. Direct Payments will be gradually reduced over the next seven years from this year. Defra has produced a [helpful tool that shows how your BPS payments may decrease](#). More details can be found at [Rural payments and grants](#). The RPA has written a [blog post about payments on schemes](#).

## Sign up to FAS services



### Get the latest updates by following FAS on Twitter

Follow us on [@DefraFAS](#) for up-to-the-minute updates on publications, events and industry information.



### Subscribe to the free FAS Newsletter

If you don't already receive the FREE monthly FAS newsletter, please visit [farmingadviceservice.org.uk](#) and enter your email address into the newsletter sign up box.

Alternatively, please email [bookings@farmingadviceservice.org.uk](mailto:bookings@farmingadviceservice.org.uk) with  
'Register for newsletter' in the subject line.

In line with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018, FAS has updated its privacy policy to explain how your data is kept safe.

To view the policy, please visit  
[www.farmingadviceservice.org.uk/events/privacy/](http://www.farmingadviceservice.org.uk/events/privacy/)