

Defra announcement:

Sustainable Farming Incentive – application window now open

**Farming
Advice Service**

**Farming Advice Service
newsletter update**

Contact us

FAS technical advice line: 03000 200 301
advice@farmingadvice.org.uk
farmingadvice.org.uk

Defra has now [opened the Sustainable Farming Incentive \(SFI\)](#) for applications in England.

The scheme is available to all farmers who currently receive Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments. It is designed to be accessible and will reward sustainable practices that support food production and benefit the environment.

The [SFI](#) is the first of three new environmental land management schemes being introduced under the Agricultural Transition Plan. The schemes will ensure long-term food security by investing in the foundations of food production: healthy soil, water, and biodiverse ecosystems.

What farmers can get paid for

The scheme will open with two soil standards and a moorland standard, where Defra will pay farmers to assess the condition of the moorland as a basis for further future action through our existing and new schemes.

In 2022, the three standards are the:

- arable and horticultural soils standard – with payments of £22 and £40 per hectare depending on what level is chosen
- improved grassland soils standard – with payments of £28 and £58 per hectare depending on what level is chosen
- moorland standard – paying £10.30 per hectare plus an additional payment of £265 per agreement.

This is the initial rollout of the scheme. It will be expanded over the next three years as Direct Payments are reduced. The full set of standards will be in place by 2025.

Eligibility and how to apply

The new application service is designed to be quicker and more straightforward for farmers. It includes some new functionality that allows Defra to automate the checks they need to do and process applications much more quickly than previously possible.

There is no 'application window' and no deadline by which farmers must apply, so farmers can apply throughout the year at a time that works best for them.

Defra will be rolling out the new functionality through July in a controlled and careful way, so they can make sure that they are able to offer everyone the right level of service and support during this initial phase.

That means that, while all BPS-eligible farmers can apply for the SFI, during the first few weeks of rollout there will be different ways into the service:

- Those in BPS only can apply directly now through the Rural Payments service
- Those in BPS with an existing Countryside Stewardship or Environmental Stewardship agreement, or farming commons, will be asked to contact the RPA, who will support them to apply.

Before farmers apply for SFI, there are some things they can do to prepare:

- Sign into the Rural Payments service to check their business and personal detail
- check that they and their land are eligible
- [check their land details](#)
- guidance is available here: [get ready to apply to the SFI](#)

Defra has created a [guidance video](#) that shows farmers [how to apply](#).

Defra has published [a blog post about the Sustainable Farming Incentive](#). The Future Farming blog is a great way to keep up to date with programme information – please [subscribe to the blog](#) if you haven't already.

There is also additional content on Defra [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) so please do follow and engage.

Correction: the June survey of agriculture and horticulture for England

To reduce the survey burden on commercial farmers this year's agriculture and horticulture survey for England is a **sample survey** with approximately 30 thousand commercial holdings asked to complete the survey.

The survey opened at the beginning of June and the collection of the information is important and is mandatory under the Agricultural Statistics Act 1979. The 2022 survey gathers information on land use, crop areas, livestock numbers and farm labour.

If you are an active, commercial holding and have been selected to take part, you will have received an email or letter giving information on how to complete the survey. The easiest way to complete the survey is online at: <https://www.gov.uk/agricultural-survey>. A response is required even if you are no longer farming or are retired.

If you would like some help in completing the census, please contact Defra on 03000 600 140 or email surveys@defra.gov.uk. The helpline is available Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 16:30.

If you have already completed the survey, Defra would like to thank you for contributing. The information is important and is needed to agree industry priorities, to make the right decisions on investment, and to design policies which meet the needs of farmers. Similar information is collected by the appropriate authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, allowing Defra to produce results for the UK as a whole.

Survey results will be available from the end August on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Book now for the free online virtual event: 'Planning for change – how to navigate farming support schemes in 2023'

Tuesday 12 July 19:00–20:30

[\(Please click here to register for the event\)](#)

The event will run for 90 minutes and there will be an opportunity to put questions to our expert speaker. If you are not able to make the live broadcast, a recording 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. BASIS-CPD points will be available to claim for attending this event. 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.

Planning for change – how to navigate farming support schemes in 2023

Join the FAS and Richard King, Partner and Head of Business Research at The Anderson Centre, to explore the options available to farm businesses in 2023, considering decision-making rationale. Using a case study farm scenario, we will talk through the thought processes and decisions that a business would have to take and provide professional recommendations of the best options for the specific business example.



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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.farmingadvice.service.org.uk/events/privacy/.