

The logo for the Farming Advice Service, featuring the text 'Farming Advice Service' in a green serif font inside a white house-shaped speech bubble.

**Farming**  
Advice Service

## Welcome to the Farming Advice Service (FAS) newsletter

*Thank you for continuing to subscribe  
to our monthly newsletter.*

*We hope you find the content useful  
and we welcome any feedback  
or suggestions on topics you would  
like to see covered in future editions.*

### Contact us

**FAS technical advice line:** 03000 200 301

[advice@farmingadvice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.org.uk)

[farmingadvice.org.uk](http://farmingadvice.org.uk)

**December 2022  
– Issue 82**

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Stay up to date with us

Please be aware that the FAS telephone and email helpline will be closed from 5pm on Friday 23 December until 08.30 on Tuesday 3 January. Any messages received during this time will be picked up in the new year.

## Key dates to be aware of...

<b>23 December</b>	The FAS telephone and email helpline will be closed from 17:00 on Friday 23 December until 08.30 on Tuesday 3 January. Any messages received during this time will be picked up in the new year.
<b>31 December</b>	If you keep sheep and/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) 2022 scheme year. <a href="#">(BPS 2022)</a>
<b>1 January</b>	You must start following the rules in the <a href="#">cross compliance 2023 guide</a> from this date. The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2023 year starts.
<b>1 January</b>	You can 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 from this date if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity restrictions for application of these manures. <a href="#">(SMR**1)</a>

<b>1 January</b>	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 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs), this is the date from which you can apply manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to grassland and tillage land if conditions are suitable. This is 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>	If you keep sheep and/or goats, you must carry out your annual count of the animals on you holding as of 1 December. You must submit this information by 31 December. You will receive a letter in November which tells you what to do. <a href="#">(SMR** 8)</a>
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<b>1 December</b>	Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship 2022 payment window opens.
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\* GAEC = Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition

\*\* SMR = Statutory Management Requirement

For more details about the information provided in the key dates table, visit the [Guide to cross compliance in England 2022](#) and Rural Payments Agency [\(RPA\) key dates 2022](#) at GOV.UK.

# How can we help you?

## Free and confidential advice

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

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

Our [website](#) hosts our previous newsletters, as well as technical articles and webinars that cover various topics in more detail.



## Contacting the advice line

Farmers requiring telephone advice can contact the **FAS technical advice line** on 03000 200 301, Monday to Friday, between 08:30 and 17:00. The Rural Services Helpline provides a single number for all **FAS, RPA, Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Natural England** and **forestry** enquiries.

You can also email enquiries to [advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.service.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** – we do not disclose any personal or individual information or data obtained during advisory activities.

## Watch our webinar recordings and listen to our podcasts

Did you miss the latest FAS webinar (***Further planning for change – a panel discussion on navigating farming support schemes in 2023***) which took place on 7 November? You can catch up on this and many of our previous webinars on the [FAS website](#).

You can also listen to **podcasts** with expert speakers on the [FAS website](#), as well as through Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

## Technical articles available on the FAS website

The FAS has produced a number of technical articles covering a range of topics, from farming practices to cross compliance. To access these articles, please click on the links below:

- [Reducing agricultural emissions of ammonia](#)
- [Supporting farmers to become resilient](#)
- [Net zero in agriculture](#)
- [Cross compliance inspections – common breaches and guidance](#)
- [Navigating farming support schemes in 2023](#)

## Need extra support?

*We understand it can be difficult to keep up with all the changes affecting the farming industry at the moment, and that the amount of information available can be daunting. The **FAS** is here to help and you can also find the most up-to-date information on grants and payments at [GOV.UK](#).*

If you are feeling overwhelmed and are not sure where to turn, the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution ([RABI](#)) and the Farming Community Network ([FCN](#)) offer support services by email and phone. A range of other organisations also offer complementary forms of support for the farming community; [click here](#) to view support organisations by topic.

The FCN receives between 100 and 150 calls from farmers each month, and they have now produced an article highlighting the learnings from these calls. For information on their top 10 observations from these calls, please [click here](#).

## Cross compliance in 2023

*Farmers and landowners must follow the cross compliance rules if they claim for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), a stewardship scheme or the Farm Woodland Premium Payments element of the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) in 2023. As with previous years, BPS will run for the full calendar year (1 January to 31 December 2023). Those who are intending to claim payments under BPS for 2023 will be required to comply with the BPS requirements for the entire year.*

The full cross compliance guide for 2023 has been published [here](#).

There will be no changes to the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) and Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) in 2023.

However, there are some operational changes that will be implemented. Previously, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) had to apply penalties differently between those:

- who claim for the BPS only
- whose Countryside Stewardship (CS) agreements started on or after 1 January 2021 only
- whose CS agreements started on or after 1 January 2021 only and who claim for BPS

and, all other rural payments claimants.

This was a result of funding for different schemes coming from either the EU, the UK or both. As all rural payments in 2023 are now UK funded this no longer applies and this difference has been removed.

FAS will provide a more detailed review of Cross Compliance in 2023 in our January newsletter.

## Remember to submit your annual sheep and goat inventory

*If you keep sheep and/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 of sheep and goat legislation and also a cross compliance requirement under [Statutory Management Requirement \(SMR\) 8: Sheep and goat identification](#). If you do not complete the annual inventory, this is a breach under the cross compliance rules and it 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 and/or goats, you must enter the information into the online form [here](#), or complete and return a paper form, by

31 December. The online inventory form became available on 29 November. If you are completing a paper form, a pre-paid envelope should be addressed to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which records the information on behalf of Defra. For guidance on how to complete the forms, please visit [GOV.UK](#).

You should have received a letter from Defra during November. If you did not receive correspondence by 3 December with information on 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).



## The benefits of taking part in the next Farm Business Survey

On 8 November Defra published [Farming Business Incomes](#) data from the Farm Business Survey. The survey provides a key data source for a range of analyses on farm performance and productivity. Defra are extremely grateful to the farmers and growers who already participate in the survey, many of whom have been involved for a long time.

This year a number of additional farmers and growers will be offered the opportunity to participate in the survey. Following a [recent procurement exercise](#) the Farm Business Survey team are now starting an exciting new period working with [Promar International](#) who have been awarded the next data collection contract. In return for taking part in the survey, Promar will offer the following benefits:

- **Free** access to financial farm management software [Agstute](#), (worth £600/year to the farmer). You can of course continue to use your own accounting and management software if you prefer
- **Free** set of reconciled management accounts for your farm
- **Free** tailored feedback on aspects of your business performance, including benchmark reports (comparing your farm data to that of a similar type and size in your region).

If you are interested in knowing more about participating in the survey, please email [Natalie Stoppard at Promar](#).



## Meet the Farming Advice Service helpline team

*One of the unique services offered by the Farming Advice Service is our helpline, which is open to anyone seeking guidance on cross compliance and related topics. In our latest [podcast](#) we meet some of the helpline team and hear about the kind of questions they can help with, including passing technical queries onto our team of expert farm advisors and signposting to the wealth of information available on [gov.uk](#) and other partner sites.*

Beth starts by saying “I think it’s important for people to know that all calls are confidential; we don’t pass information on to anyone else and if people need some guidance on what the cross compliance rules mean for them, we’re here to help. Sometimes callers are worried about giving their details because they think we’ll share information with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) or Environment Agency (EA) and they might get in trouble, but we’re not linked to any enforcement teams and we really are just there to help people”.

Nicola tells us about the wide range of queries we receive; “for some we can answer directly and for others we can point people in the right direction. The helpline number (03000 200 301) also goes through to the RPA, Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Natural England and a few other teams, and sometimes people just don’t know who they need to talk to. If they have a question about Cross Compliance or a FAS service we can

often answer it there and then, but if not we’ll always do our best to put callers in touch with someone who can help them. We understand there’s a huge amount of information out there and finding what you need can be difficult. As the helpline team use the information on a daily basis, we can usually find what people need.”

Manuela tells us a little more about how we refer technical queries on to expert advisors. “Sometimes someone will call or email ([advice@farmingadvice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.org.uk)) with a question that needs some expert input; maybe it’s about something on their farm that’s very specific and they need help understanding how the rules apply to them. In these cases we can refer their question on to an expert farm advisor, who will call them back within one working day and talk them through a solution. It’s a completely free service and we have some very experienced advisors working with us, who can provide support a caller might not be able to get from anywhere else.”

Listen to our new [podcast](#) for more insight into how the helpline works and how we can help you, and please do make use of it for free, confidential support.

**Farming  
Advice Service**

# Slurry Infrastructure Grant: applications now open

Applications for the new [Slurry Infrastructure grant](#) opened on 6 December 2022, with farmers in England able to apply for grants of £25,000 - £250,000 towards the cost of slurry stores, covers and supporting equipment to improve their slurry storage.

Before you apply, read the [full grant guidance](#) available on GOV.UK to help you prepare. It sets out [who can apply](#), [what the grant can pay for](#) and [the information you'll need to provide](#) when you apply.

The first stage of the applications process is an online checker. You can find it on the [Slurry Infrastructure grant page](#) on GOV.UK.

Defra have developed the checker to give you an easy way of checking if you are eligible for a grant and how much funding you could get. The checker also tells Defra how many farmers want a grant and the size of projects across the country. This helps them control how many people are invited to submit a full application in this round. It also means you will not waste time filling in an application if Defra cannot prioritise you in this round.

As you use the checker, it's important to be as accurate as you can about your slurry storage needs and project plans. Once the online checker closes, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will look at how many projects can be funded.

The Slurry Infrastructure grant is part of the [Farming Investment Fund](#).

# Free business advice: latest list of providers

Through the [Future Farming Resilience Fund](#), any farmer or land manager in England who receives Basic Payment Scheme payments is eligible to receive free business advice from an independent provider during the early years of the agricultural transition.

Defra have been offering this support in phases. The final phase of support is now underway. It will run until March 2025. In this phase, 17 known and trusted organisations in the farming community have been funded by Defra to give advice to 32,000 people. To access this advice, take a look at the [list of advice providers](#) on GOV.UK. It is arranged by county.

Check what each adviser offers and choose the one that suits your needs. You can contact them directly.

If you have trouble accessing the list online, call Defra on 0345 933 5577.

Defra will share a list of advisers in your county, describe the type of support on offer and provide you with contact details. You will need to contact that adviser directly by email or phone.

There are various types of support to choose from. For example:

- farm business reviews with recommendations - this is something most providers offer
- access to workshops, webinars and tours
- carbon audits
- benchmarking tools

You are welcome to get introductory help and information from multiple providers and you can attend as many opening webinars or workshops as you like, but you can only receive detailed 1-to-1 support from a single provider.

To help you prepare, visit the [funding for farmers page](#) on GOV.UK. It gives an overview of the new ongoing payments and one-off grants available to farmers in England.





## Updates from the Future Farming blog and industry announcements

Defra regularly updates the [Future Farming blog](#). Please [subscribe to the blog](#) to ensure you receive all the latest news.

- [How RPA ensures land data is kept up to date.](#)  
During a three-month period between December and February each year, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) systematically reviews and updates data held on the Rural Land Register each year through a process called Proactive Land Change Detection (PLCD).  
If, as part of PLCD, a mapping update is made to your land and you will be notified through the Rural Payments service. During the last round of PLCD updates, only 4% of the land parcels updated were returned to RPA for further amendment. However, if you have any concerns about the changes, you can use a [RLE1 form](#) to request further mapping changes.
- [Top Tips for a farmer to prepare for a site visit,](#)  
RPA's Field Officers undertake more than 6,500 site visits each year, supporting the farming, food production and food trade sectors across England. In this blog the RPA offers some advice to farmers on how they can best prepare for a site visit.
- The [Forestry Commission also has a blog page](#) on GOV.UK where it posts information and advice about trees and woodlands. You can [sign up here to the Forestry Commission's e-alerts](#) to receive updates.
- [Flooding advice for farmers and land managers](#) on GOV.UK; information has been added relating to the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme to the guidance on flooding advice for farmers and land managers.
- [Basic Payment Scheme: December 2022 Payments](#)  
In November the RPA published a blog on progress and plans for December 2022 Payments.
- Winter is the ideal time to review your water needs. [The Environment Agency \(EA\) guidance on water abstraction](#) during prolonged dry weather and drought also includes a section on planning for the future and improving the resilience of your water supplies.
- [An update on the first round of Landscape Recovery projects.](#)
- From 9 January 2023, farmers, growers and agritech businesses in England will be able to apply for funding to develop innovative ideas in the areas of robotics and automation, learn more by reading this [blog post](#).
- The government has announced 45,000 visas for seasonal workers will be available for businesses next year providing a boost for the UK's horticulture industry, for more information please visit [GOV.UK](#).

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## Stay up to date with us



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

Follow us on [@DefraFAS](https://twitter.com/DefraFAS) for up-to-the-minute updates on publications, events and industry information.



### Subscribe to our free monthly newsletter

If you don't already receive our monthly FAS newsletter, please visit [farmingadvice.service.org.uk](https://farmingadvice.service.org.uk) and enter your email address into the newsletter sign-up box.

Alternatively, please email [bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto:bookings@farmingadvice.service.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.farmingadvice.service.org.uk/events/privacy/](https://www.farmingadvice.service.org.uk/events/privacy/).