



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
farmingadvice.org.uk

You can view a text-only version of the April
Newsletter [by clicking this link](#).

**April 2023 –
Issue 86**

Key dates to be
aware of...

How can we help you?

Watch our webinar
recordings and listen to
our podcasts

Technical articles
available on the FAS
website – updated
Environment Agency
prospects for irrigation
2023 forecast.

Basic Payment Scheme
(BPS) 2023 applications

Delinked payments are
due to replace BPS in
2024

Directory of farmer
support organisations
– here to help the
farming community

Future Farming
Resilience Fund –
a reminder of what's
available

Trees on farms –
the latest updates

Updates from the
Future Farming
blog and industry
announcements

Stay up to date with us



Key dates to be aware of...

1 May	You must not carry out hedge or tree coppicing or hedge laying from this date. (GAEC*7a and GAEC*7c)
15 May	The deadline for Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2023 applications without penalty is 11:59pm on 15 May (including young and new farmer applications). This is also the deadline to transfer land with entitlements and to have the land at your disposal. (GOV.UK)
15 May	The deadline for Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship revenue claims without penalty is midnight on 15 May.

For more details about the information provided in the key dates table, visit the [Guide to cross compliance in England 2023](#) and the [Rural Payments Agency key dates 2023](#) pages of GOV.UK.

In case you missed them...

31 March	<p>If you hold a water abstraction licence (GAEC*2) that authorises abstraction during the winter and all-year period (the authorised period of abstraction does not fall wholly between 1 April to 31 October), at the end of March 2023 the Environment Agency will ask you to report your water abstraction return for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.</p> <p>You will need to submit your return by 28 April 2023; you can submit your return online by registering with the Environment Agency's Water Resource Licensing Service.</p>
1 April	You must not burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land, other than in upland areas, from this date. (GAEC*6)
16 April	You must not burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium in upland areas from this date. (GAEC*6)
30 April	You must have recorded the number of 'specified' livestock kept on your farm during the previous calendar year and calculated the amount of nitrogen they produced. You must also record the number and type of livestock in a building or hardstanding during the previous storage period. (SMR**1)

*GAEC = Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions

** SMR = Statutory Management Requirements

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 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 the relevant regulations. Our newsletter also provides articles on topics that are complementary to cross compliance, such as practices that benefit the wider environment and wellbeing support.

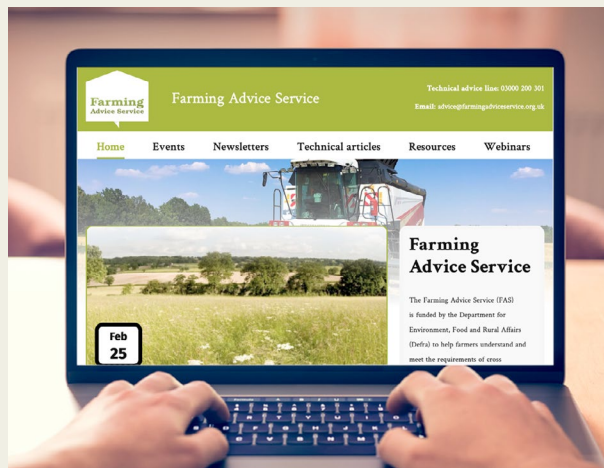
[Our website](#) hosts our previous newsletters, as well as technical articles and webinars that cover various topics in more detail.

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.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

If you missed our latest webinar “**Practical Nutrient Management Planning**” on 29 March, you can watch the recording on our [webinar pages](#).

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

The latest podcast on the **Future Farm Resilience Fund**, as well as an **introduction to nutrient management with Mel Holloway**, is [now available online](#).

Technical articles available on the FAS website

The FAS and partners have 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:

- [Nutrient Management and Farming Rules for Water](#)
- [Reducing agricultural emissions of ammonia](#)
- [Supporting farmers to become resilient](#)
- [Net zero in agriculture](#)

Update on technical articles:

- [Environment Agency updated prospects for irrigation – forecast for 2023](#)

The Environment Agency has released its updated irrigation prospects for England, which are published on our Technical Articles page. The prospects now range from good through to moderate, reflecting a generally improving hydrological position across the country. The Environment Agency’s [guidance on water abstraction during prolonged dry weather and drought](#) includes a section on planning for the future and improving the resilience of your water supply.



Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2023 applications

You can apply for BPS 2023 until **11:59pm on Monday 15 May**. This includes young and new farmer applications. You are encouraged to apply as soon as possible to give you enough time.

You can submit supporting evidence and changes to the application (without penalty) until **11:59pm on Friday 9 June**, but penalties will apply for any late applications submitted after 15 May (except in cases of force majeure and exceptional circumstances).

The RPA updated the [BPS rules for 2023](#) on 16 March, where you will find information on what you need to complete your application.

Here are some top tips from the RPA to make the BPS application process as smooth as possible:

- 1 Check all personal details in the [rural payments service](#) to ensure they are correct and up to date.
- 2 Make sure that you check your land and the entitlements that are held against the business claiming BPS are correct, paying particular attention to any previously leased to ensure they are in the right control for 2023.
- 3 If you apply online, check the 'Activate less BPS area' screens to make sure that any changes to activated areas have been captured. If you are claiming BPS for your use of common land and shared grazing, check the 'Activate less common land area'. For more information, please read through the guidance on ['How to apply online'](#)
- 4 Remember to post supporting documents (or email where allowed) to arrive at the RPA in good time (SBI on every page), having also retained a copy of what is sent:
 - Continuation sheets/hemp labels
 - Young Farmer Payment
 - Any paper RLE1 form and supporting maps
- 5 And, most importantly, apply for BPS 2023 as soon as possible. This gives you and the RPA more time to deal with any problems or issues that may arise and will ultimately avoid any subsequent difficulties with payments.

The [RPA blog](#) includes news and updates on the rural payments system and on rural grants and payments, including the BPS and Rural Development Programme schemes. You can [subscribe to the RPA blog here](#).

Keeping your mapping up to date

If you hold land after the BPS scheme has closed, you will still need to keep your land data up to date by checking your digital maps in the rural payments service. Not doing so could affect your payments under any existing schemes you are part of and future schemes you enter into.

Delinked payments are due to replace BPS in 2024

This is the final year the RPA plans to run the BPS in England. Instead, the RPA plans to make delinked payments each year from 2024 to 2027. Legislation will be introduced later this year to make these changes.

What do you need to know?

- You must claim, and be eligible for, BPS payments in England in the 2023 scheme year to receive delinked payments for 2024–2027 (apart from some inherited land cases)
- You will not need any land or entitlements to receive delinked payments from 2024
- Delinked payments will be based on your BPS payments in a reference period, which is the BPS 2020 to 2022 scheme years. Please read the RPA [guidance](#) for exceptions
- Reductions will be applied each year as the RPA phases the payments out by the end of 2027
- You can receive delinked payments even if you choose to stop farming
- Delinked payments will not be affected if your farm size changes, or if you change what the land is used for after BPS 2022 (the end of the reference period) – as long as you meet the requirement to have claimed BPS 2023
- You will not receive delinked payments if you have received a Lump Sum Exit Scheme payment
- You will not have to do anything differently when you fill in your BPS 2023 application
- Entitlements will not be needed for delinked payments

Find out more on delinked payments [here](#).

Entitlements to end

Entitlements will end with the BPS scheme. This means:

- You will need to hold entitlements on 15 May 2023 if you want to use them to claim BPS in 2023
- Entitlements will not be needed after 15 May 2023
- You will not be able to make entitlement transfers after 15 May 2023

For transfers of land with entitlements or entitlements only, the 'effective date of transfer', or (where applicable) the date the lease agreement starts, can be no later than 15 May 2023.



Directory of farmer support organisations – here to help the farming community

*We understand it can be difficult to keep up with all the changes affecting the farming industry, and that the amount of information available can be daunting. The **FAS** is here to help.*

A range of organisations offer complementary forms of support for the farming community and both the [National Directory of Farm and Rural Support Groups](#) and [RABI](#) provide comprehensive lists of these organisations. However, in this article, FAS provides a selection of recognised farmer support organisations (chosen due to their national coverage) which offer a range of support to the farming community, including information on how they can help, links to further information and how you can get in touch.

Organisation	How can they help you?	Where to find more information/get in touch
Royal Agricultural Benevolence Institution (RABI)	<p>RABI is a charity and offers mental wellbeing support. Support is provided via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A free and anonymous online mental wellbeing platform • Free in-person mental health counselling • Farming-focused accredited/certified mental health training 	<p>Royal Agricultural Benevolence Institution</p> <p>Support is available via RABI's freephone 24/7 helpline (0800 188 4444) or by emailing help@rabi.org.uk.</p>
The Farming Community Network (FCN)	<p>FCN is a voluntary organisation and charity that supports farmers and their families through challenging times. Pastoral and practical support is available on topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial difficulties • Animal disease • Mental health • Family disputes <p>FCN also run the FarmWell platform, which provides information on business and personal resilience including mental health, bereavement, physical health, financial management and succession planning.</p>	<p>Farming Community Network</p> <p>Volunteers, who often have a background in farming, run the FCN helpline.</p> <p>The helpline number is 03000 111 999 and it is freely available from 7am to 11pm every day.</p>
National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) and Rural+	<p>NFYFC has launched Rural+, which offers guidance on recognising and understanding stress and anxiety, often the first step towards improvements.</p> <p>NFYFC has also created an online learning module called Curve, which is delivered by other farmers and gives guidance on how to manage your mental health.</p>	<p>National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs</p> <p>Read more on how to become a member</p> <p>Read more information and watch videos on Rural+ Curve</p>
You Are Not Alone (YANA)	<p>YANA is a service specifically for those involved in farming or rural businesses who are affected by stress or depression. Types of support available include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing up a plan of action for yourself or getting advice on how to help someone you know who is struggling with depression or anxiety (this can be found on the website). • There is funding available for up to six counselling sessions for anyone in Norfolk, Suffolk and Worcestershire. This is non-means tested, is available to anyone involved with the farming community and can be accessed by calling the helpline. 	<p>You Are Not Alone</p> <p>You can get in contact with YANA on their telephone number 0300 323 0400 or email helpline@yanahelp.org</p>
Farm Safety Foundation (Home of yellow wellies)	<p>The Farm Safety Foundation is a small UK-wide charity dedicated to raising awareness of farm safety and mental wellbeing in farmers.</p> <p>'The little book of minding your head' is a document that presents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triggers and signs of mental ill health • Tips for coping with stress • Tips for starting a conversation • Sources of help 	<p>Farm Safety Foundation/YellowWellies.org</p>

Future Farming Resilience Fund – a reminder of what's available

*Farming In England is going through the biggest change in a generation and one of the ways the Government are supporting those affected by the way farming is funded is by providing free, confidential support through the Future Farming Resilience Fund. The Future Farming Resilience Fund is now in its final phase and will run until **March 2025**.*

The Future Farming Resilience Fund is funded by Defra and is designed to provide free business support to farmers and land managers during the early years of the agricultural transition period. This support is provided by independent advisors from a number of different organisations.

Who is eligible?

The Future Farming Resilience Fund is available to farmers and land managers who are in receipt of the BPS and farmers who have a Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement but are not currently claiming BPS. To have an HLS agreement, farmers must have management control of the land in the agreement. Please note, farmers or land managers who have a Countryside Stewardship agreement but do not claim BPS are **not** eligible for support.

Type of support?

The support and discussion between farmers/land managers and the advice provider are confidential and can take the form of:

- Understanding the changes brought about by the agricultural transition, including the impact of basic payments reductions
- Pinpointing what and when changes may be needed in business models
- Tailored adaptation support, including business planning, succession planning and performance recording

The above support can be provided through:

- Expert-led workshops and webinars
- Farm visits and one-to-one consultations
- Written reports that include recommendations
- Networking opportunities with other farmers

There are a large number of organisations providing this free advice through the Future Farming Resilience Fund and these are listed by county.

The Government website details the relevant farm sectors each organisation can support and provides contact information and a link to the organisation website, all of which can be found [here](#). As places are limited and provided on a first-come first-served basis, FAS would encourage you to engage with organisations delivering advice in your sector/area.

If you have technical difficulties accessing information about the organisations providing free business support, you can call the Defra helpline on 0345 933 5577.

To watch videos from farmers who have benefited from the Future Farming Resilience Fund please follow the link to the Government farming blog [here](#).

To keep up to date with the details of the scheme, please subscribe to [Defra's Future Farming blog](#) and sign up to [Defra's e-alerts](#).

Trees on farms – *the latest updates*

How trees can benefit your land, crops and livestock

Farm diversification can help generate additional sources of income and help your farming business become more sustainable (e.g. offsetting emissions).

In 2020/21, 66% of farm businesses in England had some diversification activity, with a further 29% of farms expecting to make a major change in the following year.

The Forestry Commission has provided a [Grow your farm business](#) guide, which covers important factors to consider and different ways to integrate trees into your farm, as well as providing case studies for reference.

Woodland creation – financial case studies

Woodland creation is a long-term commitment that can provide new, reliable income streams with benefits, and the size of land required doesn't need to be large.

The Forestry Commission has provided a couple of case studies on how woodland creation financials work on both a [10-hectare site](#) and a [100-hectare site](#).

Advice for small farmers dealing with tree health issues

Defra offers funding to help land managers deal with tree health issues through the [Tree Health Pilot](#), which operates in the South East, North West and West Midlands.

Recognising that some smaller land managers may not be used to dealing with tree health issues, Defra has increased levels of support. The pilot now offers a [new advice package](#), which is available to land managers issued with [Statutory Plant Health Notices](#).

This £475 package contributes to the costs of forestry or land agent advice, a biosecurity kit, signage and training, and will improve land managers' ability to identify and deal with tree health issues.



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.

Plan for water: New funding available for farmers

Defra announced on 4 April that farmers will benefit from more funding as part of a new integrated [Plan for Water](#) to improve water quality for people, businesses and nature.

The measures see more funding for farmers to improve their slurry storage, with nearly £34 million available through the first round of the Slurry Infrastructure Grant – more than double the original budget following very high demand from farmers.

Round one of the Slurry Infrastructure Grant has now closed for applications, but round two and stage one of the application process are planned for later this year.

Defra has also outlined the second round of the [Water Management Grant](#), which opened on 19 April. It will provide £10 million in funding to help farmers manage their water use through more efficient irrigation and securing water supplies through the construction of on-farm reservoirs.

The integrated [Plan for Water](#) covers both the quality of the water environment – how clean it is – and how much water we have. It will transform the whole water system, tackling every source of pollution including from storm overflows, agriculture, plastics, road run-off, chemicals and pesticides. Find out more by reading the Defra farming blog posts about the [Slurry Infrastructure Grant](#).

New regulatory reform for the pig sector

Defra has outlined new support for the pig sector, including a commitment to bring in regulation on pig contracts to support the supply chain and provide greater certainty across the whole sector.

These new regulations will help to bring stability and security to the pig supply chain, strengthening the sector's ability to deal with the challenges currently being faced, such as rising costs and labour shortages caused by global pressures.

The move follows a public consultation last year, which received nearly 400 responses from producers, processors and others in the supply chain. A majority of respondents supported Defra's approach to implement legally binding, written contracts through legislation. Defra will also develop regulations to collect and share more supply chain data, particularly in relation to wholesale price transparency and national slaughter numbers.

Find out more by reading the [full summary of responses and UK Government response](#) to last year's consultation.

All farming regulations in one place

A reminder that Defra has now made it easier for farmers to find out which rules apply to them by producing the [Rules for Farmers page](#), which contains all the rules in one place. To find out more about the work, read this Defra [blog post](#).

Countryside Stewardship: Delivering for farmers and the environment

Countryside Stewardship provides financial incentives for farmers, foresters and land managers to look after and improve the environment. Through the scheme, thousands of farmers are being paid for the valuable work they do. Defra has created [this blog post](#), as a refresher, to share some facts and figures and explain how you can get involved.

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 and enter your email address into the newsletter sign-up box.

Alternatively, please email 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/.