



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



CAP Reform
Countdown

The new Common Agricultural Policy schemes in England: February 2015 update



Please read this important information

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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



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 published in December 2014. It provides more details on the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) 2014–2020, as well as important information for current Environmental Stewardship agreement holders.

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, August, October and December 2014. Previous leaflets are on GOV.UK at www.gov.uk/cap-reform.

When full guidance for each of these schemes is published, it will replace what's in these leaflets.

The Rural Development Programme for England 2014–2020

The new Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) was formally agreed by the European Commission on 13 February.

Under the RDPE, we will be investing at least £3.5 billion in rural development schemes until 2020. This includes around £2.1 billion on existing environmental schemes and around £900 million on Countryside Stewardship, which will help rural businesses improve the countryside environment.

The RDPE is made up of four elements:

- Countryside Stewardship
- Countryside Productivity
- Growth Programme
- LEADER

We introduced Countryside Stewardship in our December update. Here, we provide more information about Countryside Stewardship in 2015 and 2016, along with the latest information about Countryside Productivity, the Growth Programme and LEADER.

Environmental Stewardship agreements

This leaflet also contains some important information for farmers and land managers who have existing Environmental Stewardship (ES) agreements (read page 23):

- a new requirement to submit claim forms annually
- a new requirement to register on the new online service
- changes to timing of payments

The new online service for claiming rural payments

Farmers can now use the new online service for claiming rural payments at: www.gov.uk/ruralpayments. Applicants should register now to start their claim, and give themselves enough time to complete it before the deadline. For the Basic Payment Scheme, the deadline for applications to be submitted is midnight on 15 May 2015.



CAP Reform | News and updates Countdown

Latest news and updates about the new Common Agricultural Policy and rural payments.

Countryside Stewardship: Organic conversion and maintenance grants

Under Countryside Stewardship, farmers and land managers will be able to apply for support to convert conventional land to organic production and to maintain organic land once converted. We currently plan that applications will start from July 2015. Detailed guidance about support for organic farmers under Countryside Stewardship will be published on GOV.UK— search for 'Countryside Stewardship'.

New agent authorisation form in 2015 for Environmental Stewardship and Habitat Scheme



Land managers who use an agent to manage their Environmental Stewardship (ES) or Habitat Scheme agreements will need to send a new agent authorisation form to Natural England. This will replace any existing authorisations. The new forms make clear that an agreement-holder is responsible for carrying out the work in the agreement, even though an agent may have been employed to complete the application or claim form.

Agreement holders in some other schemes might also need to send new agent authorisation forms. If this is the case, we'll publish more information as soon as possible.

The form is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-stewardship-agent-authorisation

Alternatively:

- call Natural England on 0300 060 0011
- email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Please quote any agreement number/s.

Submission deadline for Habitat Scheme claim forms

Habitat Scheme claims will now need to be sent to Natural England by 15 May each year.

Previously there was no set deadline for Habitat Scheme agreement holders to submit their annual claim form. The form will be sent to agreement holders in February as usual.

This change is the result of new European regulations. This brings Habitat Scheme claims into line with the deadline for claims for the Basic Payment Scheme and Environmental Stewardship (read page 23).

Land managers can make a late application until midnight on 9 June 2015 but they will get a penalty. For each working day the application is late, the penalty will be 1%.

After 9 June, claim forms cannot be accepted (so no payments made for that year). Claims cannot be rolled over into the next year if the deadline is missed.

Land transfers and amendments in 2015 for Environmental Stewardship

We're confirming the details of how land transfers and amendments to agreements will work in 2015. We'll provide more information by the end of March.





CAP Reform | Claiming rural payments: Countdown the new online service

Farmers, land managers and others can now register to claim rural payments.

Farmers, land managers and other businesses who will apply for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) or Rural Development Programme in England (RDPE) schemes can now register at: www.gov.uk/ruralpayments

The Basic Payment Scheme

The new rural payments online service is the only way to make a claim for the 2015 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). Farmers should register now to start building their claim by checking and updating their personal, business and land details, including the land uses and features.

The application deadline is midnight on 15 May 2015.

A number of people have already registered and are starting to make their claim. Make a start now: www.gov.uk/ruralpayments or call the Rural Payments helpline to find out more on 03000 200 301. The helpline is currently open from 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 2pm at weekends.

Visit our blog for more information and updates about the new service:
<https://capreform.blog.gov.uk>

Get started on the new service

As this is a new service, farmers will need to enter all the information about their claim, so they should register now to give themselves enough time to complete it before the deadline. Once all the information is on the new service, subsequent years will be quicker.

We're continuing to add more features to the new service and we will keep make improvements to it. Once farmers are registered they'll be able to keep building their claim as the new features are released.

Extra help for farmers who can't get online to claim

Extra help is available, including support centres around the country. Those who would like additional support can call the Rural Payments helpline on 03000 200 301. If required, the RPA will book an appointment with a support centre and list what documents to bring, as well as providing updates about the online service in an alternative format.

Rural Development Programme for England schemes



Farmers, land managers and others should register on the new online service before they apply for any of the new RDPE schemes. They should register even if applications for the schemes will not be made online in 2015. Read the 'How to apply' section under each grant for more information.

Environmental Stewardship agreement holders should also register on the new system – read page 23 for more information.



CAP Reform | Countryside Stewardship: Countdown Capital grants in 2015

Capital grants for woodland and water will be available in 2015.
Find out what the grants are for, and how and when to apply.

Most Countryside Stewardship agreements won't begin until 2016, but some grants will be available in 2015.

Water capital grants

Farmers and land managers can apply for grants of up to £10,000 per holding. These grants are for infrastructure works to help reduce water pollution from agriculture.



Who can apply

Water capital grants for works in 2015 are only available for economically viable small or medium-sized farm businesses that have land in a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) target area.

Land managers can use an online tool to check if their land is in a CSF target area - find the tool on the Catchment Sensitive Farming page on GOV.UK.

Land managers with existing Environmental Stewardship (ES) agreements can also apply for these grants where they meet the above criteria.

We strongly recommend that land managers get advice from their local CSF catchment officer before they apply. They will:

- identify the main opportunities to improve water quality
- advise on what capital works are eligible for the grants
- help complete a grant application

What the grants are for

We'll publish a list of what the grants can be used for and how much we will pay for them on the Catchment Sensitive Farming page on GOV.UK.

A grant agreement will run for a minimum of 5 years, during which time the RPA can inspect the works at any point. Any works funded through this scheme must still be used in the way specified in the grant agreement for at least 5 years after the date of the final payment.

Second-hand or recycled materials are allowed in the construction of capital works but applicants will need to provide supporting evidence as set out in the guidance on the Catchment Sensitive Farming page on GOV.UK.

Applications will be scored

The scheme is competitive and applications will be scored and accepted depending on the budget available. Applications are more likely to be successful for land managers who:

- include the high-priority capital items shown on their Funding Priority Statement in their application: see Funding Priority Statements on the Catchment Sensitive Farming page on GOV.UK
- have had advice from the CSF in the last 2 years, for example during a farm visit or at a CSF workshop

Countryside Stewardship: Capital grants in 2015

- have not previously had a CSF capital grant
- are acting to protect a bathing water in a catchment which is at risk of failing to meet EU standards due to farm pollution
- are acting to protect a Natura 2000 site in their catchment which is at risk of failing to meet EU standards due to farm pollution

Find more information about how applications are scored in the guidance, which will be published on GOV.UK— search for 'Catchment Sensitive Farming'.

How to apply for a water capital grant

Applications in 2015 will not be online. Application forms will be available to download from GOV.UK— search for 'Catchment Sensitive Farming'.

Application forms are also available from:

Countryside Stewardship Water Grant Section
Natural England
Apex Court
City Link
Nottingham
NG2 4LA

Telephone: 0300 060 1111 Email: catchmentsensitivefarming@naturalengland.org.uk

Applications must include the following information:

- Copies of all relevant consents, permissions or exemptions.
Examples include:
 - Historic Environment Specialist advice/permits
 - local planning authority consents (including National Park Authorities)
 - Internal Drainage Board consents
 - Environment Agency consents
 - Highways Agency permissions
 - Natural England consents
- Dated photographs of the proposed location of the works, taken at the time of application. Farmers will also need to submit dated photographs showing all work completed when they claim for payment. They might also be asked to take photographs during construction, to show that work meets the specifications
- A map which shows the boundary of the holding and the location of the proposed work, along with an Ordnance Survey map reference for each land parcel that the work is on or near
- A sketch map which shows the exact location of all proposed works
- A Vendor Number and Single Business Identifier (SBI), so that the RPA can make payments.

When to apply

Applications are open from 2 March to 30 April 2015. Copies of all relevant consents, permissions and exemptions must be sent with the application. In some cases, these supporting documents can be accepted until 29 May 2015, but applicants must first get permission from Natural England.

Countryside Stewardship: Capital grants in 2015

Natural England will tell applicants whether or not they've been successful by 30 June 2015. Applicants must not start works before the start date of their agreement.

When to apply

Farmers can only submit a claim for payment once the works have been:

- completed as specified in the grant agreement, and
- paid for in full by the applicant

Works must be completed and claims submitted to Natural England (with any supporting documents, including dated photographs) before 29 January 2016.

Natural England aim to process all claims by 31 March 2016.

More information

Read detailed guidance about how to apply and specifications for capital works on GOV.UK— search for 'Catchment Sensitive Farming'.

For queries, contact:

Countryside Stewardship Water Grant Section
Natural England
Apex Court
City Link
Nottingham
NG2 4LA

Telephone: 0300 060 1111 Email: catchmentsensitivefarming@naturalengland.org.uk

Woodland capital grants

These grants are for:

- creating and maintaining new woodland
- woodland management plans
- woodland tree health



Woodland creation and maintenance

Who can apply

All land managers can apply. This includes landowners, leaseholders and tenants. Leaseholders and tenants must check that the landowner agrees with their proposal before they apply.

Government departments and non-departmental public bodies can't apply for funding. Their tenants can apply for the woodland creation grant but not for the maintenance grant. Tenants must get consent from their landlord and the work proposed must not already be covered by their tenancy agreement.

Local authorities can apply for the woodland creation grant, but not for the maintenance grant.

Countryside Stewardship: Capital grants in 2015

What the grants are for

Land managers must apply for the main tree planting capital item, and can also add other capital items for protecting woodland, such as various types of fencing.

If eligible, land managers can also apply for the woodland creation maintenance option. This lasts for 10 years, so that land managers can maintain newly planted woodland.

More details can be found in the guidance on woodland grants, at:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-woodland-capital-grants-2015>

Applications for the woodland creation grant must be to create an area of at least 3 hectares, and each planting block needs to be at least 0.5 hectares. However, where the woodland is being planted as part of work to address water quality or flood risk issues, applications need to be for at least 1 hectare, with each planting block at least 0.1 hectares.

Applications will be scored

Applications will get a higher score if they have a positive impact on biodiversity and water (quality and flooding). Applicants working in partnership and those wanting to plant a large area will also be prioritised.

Applications will be reviewed and scored comparatively — not all applicants will necessarily get an agreement.

How to apply

Applications will not be online in 2015. Application forms will be available to download from: <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-woodland-capital-grants-2015>

Application forms are also available from local Forestry Commission offices. Contact details are available on: www.forestry.gov.uk/england

Applicants must provide the following:

- a woodland creation plan
- a map showing the areas to be planted

All land managers must discuss their application with their local Forestry Commission office, who need to visit the site before final applications can be submitted.

When to apply

Applications opened on 17 February 2015. Application forms, maps and woodland creation plans must be sent to the Forestry Commission by 30 April 2015. This is the latest possible date, as the Forestry Commission needs time to visit the site and, if necessary, suggest changes to the application.

Final applications must be submitted by 31 May 2015. The Forestry Commission will let applicants know whether or not they've been successful from July 2015 onwards.

More information

Read more information and guidance at:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-woodland-capital-grants-2015>

Countryside Stewardship: Capital grants in 2015

Woodland management plans

Who can apply

Land managers can apply in 2015 if:

- they do not already have a woodland management plan approved by the Forestry Commission (or they have such a plan but it needs to be completely reviewed), and
- they have more than 3 hectares of woodland (over their entire holding, not necessarily in one block)

All land managers can apply. This includes landowners, leaseholders or tenants. Leaseholders and tenants must check that the landowner agrees with their proposal.

Government departments and non-departmental public bodies can't apply for these grants. Their tenants can apply if they obtain consent from their landlord and the work proposed isn't already covered by their tenancy agreement.

Local authorities can apply.

What the grants are for

The grants are to help with the cost of producing a detailed 10-year management plan. Plans must use the Forestry Commission template, and comply with the UK Forestry Standard.

Payment amounts

Threshold	Payment
First 100 hectares (ha)	£20 per ha, minimum payment of £1,000
Over 100 ha	£10 per ha

There are no payments for an area of woodland that is 'newly created' (that is, less than 10 years old) if it makes up more than 20% of the area covered in the management plan. The Forestry Commission will not count such areas when they calculate the value of a grant.

How to apply

Applications in 2015 will not be made online. Download an application form from: <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-woodland-capital-grants-2015>

Application forms are also available from local Forestry Commission offices. Contact details are available on: www.forestry.gov.uk/england

Applications must include a map which shows the location of all the woodland on the holding, or for larger holdings, all the woodland in the same landscape setting.

All woodland must be included on an application, even newly created woodland.

When to apply

Applications opened on 17 February 2015.

Countryside Stewardship: Capital grants in 2015

Woodland tree health

Who can apply

Land managers can only apply for the woodland tree health grant in 2015 if one or more of the following apply:

- they have been served a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN) regarding larch infected with *Phytophthora* species
- as part of the SPHN, they have rhododendron infected with *Phytophthora* species
- they have felled an area of larch that was under an SPHN
- they have felled an area of young ash infected with *Chalara fraxinea*, if that ash was planted using English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) funds

All land managers can apply. This includes landowners, leaseholders or tenants.

Leaseholders and tenants must check that the landowner agrees with their proposal.

Government departments and non-departmental public bodies can't apply for funding. Their tenants can apply if they get consent from their landlord and the work proposed isn't already covered by their tenancy agreement.

Local authorities can apply.

What the grants are for

Grants are available for:

- help to fell diseased larch, if it's a young larch and can't be used for commercial timber
- help to remove diseased rhododendron
- restoring or restocking areas where diseased larch has been felled
- restoring or restocking areas where infected ash has been removed, if that ash was planted using EWGS funds

How to apply

Applications in 2015 will not be made online. Download an application form from:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-woodland-capital-grants-2015>

Application forms are also available from local Forestry Commission offices. Contact details are available on: www.forestry.gov.uk/england

Applications must include both:

- a map which shows the boundary of the holding and location of the proposed work
- copies of any SPHN and any disease confirmation letters from either the Forestry Commission or the Food and Environment Research Agency

When to apply

Applications opened on 17 February 2015.



CAP Reform | Countryside Stewardship: Countdown | Facilitation funding

This is the latest information about facilitation funding under Countryside Stewardship.

Facilitation funding

Facilitation funding is funding for people or organisations who support cooperation between farmers and other land managers. Read about facilitation funding on page 28 of our December update, at: www.gov.uk/cap-reform.

When to apply

The aim is to start accepting applications in March and issue agreements by the end of June. This is so facilitators can be ready to help farmers and land managers with their applications for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier agreements.

Natural England will manage applications for facilitation funding.

More information

Details of the scheme are still being developed, including:

- eligibility and selection criteria
- the information that applicants will be required to submit
- the control and verification checks

More information will be available in March 2015.





CAP Reform | Countryside Stewardship: Countdown | Agreements starting in 2016

Most applications for Countryside Stewardship agreements that start in 2016 will be scored. This is the latest information about how scoring will work.

How applications will be scored

In the December leaflet, we said we would provide more information about how applications will be scored as and when we have it.

We'll only offer agreements to Countryside Stewardship applications that meet the scheme priorities. These are set out in the Countryside Stewardship targeting framework and targeting statements, which are described below.

All applications will be scored against these priorities except applications for:

- woodland management plans
- Hedgerows and Boundaries Capital Grant
- facilitation funding
- woodland tree health
- organic conversion and maintenance

The scoring system is still being developed. Higher Tier applications will be scored by Natural England and the Forestry Commission. Applications for Mid Tier agreements and the Hedgerows and Boundaries Capital Grants will be scored by an automated process in the new online service for rural payments.

Applications for Countryside Stewardship agreements will be scored in comparison with the other applications and according to the available budget. As a result, the standard which successful applications have to meet will vary each year. Where necessary, we may also adjust the scoring weightings to reflect policy objectives, uptake of agreements and options, environmental prioritisation and developments to the scheme.

The targeting framework and targeting statements

Countryside Stewardship aims to benefit:

- biodiversity
- water quality and natural flood management
- climate change adaptation and mitigation
- historic environment and landscape
- educational access

The Countryside Stewardship targeting framework and targeting statements set out the priorities for each of the objectives in the list above. These priorities reflect different targets and actions, for example, to achieve the UK's ambitions for Biodiversity 2020 and the Water Framework Directive.

We've found the best possible data about these priorities and linked it to each land parcel on the new online service.

Countryside Stewardship: Agreements starting in 2016

The data is from a variety of sources, including bodies such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission and a range of partners. In 2014, there was a validation exercise with local stakeholders to check the data. Feedback from the validation exercise was used to refine the targeting framework.

What this means for farmers and land managers

The new online service will show land managers:

- the Countryside Stewardship priorities for each land parcel on their holding
- the appropriate Countryside Stewardship land management options to address those priorities

For example, land managers will be able to see online if one of their land parcels has a water issue, like a sediment or nitrate problem. They will also be able to see a list of land management options they can use to address that water issue.

The service will highlight the most appropriate option to choose. It will also tell applicants to contact Natural England or the Forestry Commission if an option is only available for Higher Tier agreements.

Scoring for Higher Tier applications

Higher Tier applications will be scored by Natural England and the Forestry Commission.

The selection process will be similar to the way that Higher Level Stewardship works currently.

Every year, Natural England and the Forestry Commission will create a 'pool' of potential applicants. These might be:

- holders of Higher Level Stewardship and England Woodland Grant Scheme agreements that are due to end
- nominations and referrals from, for example, CSF, the Environment Agency, or English Heritage
- new applicants

There will be a first round of scoring to rank the 'pool' and create a shortlist for that year. This initial scoring will be based on both:

- the priorities in the targeting framework and statements
- applicants' plans to meet the priorities on their holding

Natural England and Forestry Commission advisers will then work with shortlisted applicants on their applications. Applications will be submitted on the new online service.

Scoring for Mid Tier applications

Applications for Mid Tier agreements will be scored automatically through the new online service.

This uses:

- data from the application
- the targeting framework
- the options chosen in each land parcel

Countryside Stewardship: Agreements starting in 2016

The online service will show which scheme priorities will score the most points. Farmers will have an accurate view of their application's score as they proceed.

The scoring criteria for Mid Tier applications

We plan for there to be 2 aspects to the way we score Mid Tier applications:

- a basic score for meeting scheme priorities by choosing the appropriate options in a land parcel
- a top-up score for meeting other important criteria

We're working out the practical details and will provide more information about this as soon as possible.

Scoring for the Hedgerows and Boundaries capital grant

We are planning for land managers to apply online for these grants between February and April 2016. We will provide more details about how these applications will be scored nearer the time.



CAP Reform Countdown | Countryside Productivity

Farmers can apply for a range of grants, including to invest in innovative equipment and, later this year, start-up grants for new farmers.

Under the Countryside Productivity scheme we will be investing £141m over the course of the Rural Development Programme, on a range of different support for farm and forestry businesses. In the first of a series of capital grant offers, an initial £5 million will be available to farmers, foresters and other land managers to invest in equipment and innovative technology.

Funding will be also available for projects to develop innovative ways to improve productivity or sustainability in farming and forestry. This is through the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-Agri).

Grant funding for capital investment

Farmers, foresters and land managers can apply for capital grants to invest in equipment and innovative technology. Applications must be submitted between March and June 2015. RPA will announce when applications can start.

What the grants are for

Grants between £2,500 and £35,000

These grants are to cover up to 40% of the actual costs of investments in specific types of innovative equipment, in the following areas:

- for improvements to animal productivity, health and welfare
- LED lighting systems for livestock housing
- LED lighting with wavelength control
- remote crop sensing
- small-scale forestry processing and wood harvesting and extraction
- slurry management
- recycling ammonia and heat emissions

Grants above £35,000

These grants are for up to 40% of the actual costs of projects that improve productivity through investments in the following areas:

- small-scale forestry processing and wood harvesting and extraction
- controlled atmosphere storage
- crop robotics
- poultry litter drying systems
- farm water management through reservoirs and irrigation

Later in 2015, there will be more funding available:

- to help farmers improve their skills
- start-up business grants for young farmers starting their first farm business
- for specific projects working to reduce important animal diseases, improve the woodfuel supply chain and reduce ammonia emissions on farms

Countryside Productivity

More information

The Countryside Productivity guidance will be published on GOV.UK in March.

European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability

The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-Agri) is an EU-wide programme. It aims to bring researchers and practitioners together to test ideas and apply research, finding innovative ways to solve issues of productivity and sustainability in farming and/or forestry.

In March, we'll ask for ideas for projects which the scheme could support. The full application process for grant funding will open later in 2015. We'll provide more information about how to apply before then.

Projects will need to be proposed and carried out by 'operational groups' made up of combinations of:

- farmers
- forest managers
- researchers
- land based agricultural businesses or agri-food businesses
- non-governmental organisations

Operational groups can vary in size depending on the project, but must include at least 2 people from different organisations. These can either be new groups or ones that already exist.

Projects may run for up to 3 years, and will be able to bid for funding of between £5,000 and £150,000 in a competitive process. Project results must be explained and shared by the group through the European EIP-Agri network.

More information

For more information about EIP-Agri and to find possible participants in an operational group, read the European EIP-Agri Service Point website: www.ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/content/EIPAGRISP

More information on how and when to send in proposals will be available in the Countryside Productivity guidance, which will be published on GOV.UK in March.



Information about grants under the Growth Programme, including how and when to apply.

Under the Growth Programme, £177 million will go to people and business to help them support their local rural economy. Grants will be available for:

- starting up a business
- developing a business
- tourism
- renewable heat and energy projects

Later in 2015, there will be advice and training available to small and micro businesses in certain rural areas to help them increase productivity and innovation and develop new markets.

From 2016, there will also be grants for broadband investments. These will be linked to Local Broadband Plans developed by local authorities.

What the grants are for

Business start-up grants

These are for new, small and micro enterprises. They can apply for grants of between €40,000 and €70,000 for both capital and running costs.

Read the definition of small and micro enterprises here:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/sme_definition/sme_user_guide_en.pdf

To be eligible for a grant, applicants will need to:

- show market demand for the business
- have a realistic business plan showing how they will create new jobs
- show in their business plan how they aim to achieve a minimum annual turnover within a given period (these will be specified in the 'calls for projects' – see page 17)

Start-up grants are not available for people who are self-employed.

Business development grants

These are for new or existing businesses. They will cover some of the costs of investment projects to develop new products, processes or markets.

To receive a grant, applicants will need to show how their project will:

- increase business turnover, and
- create new jobs and/or growth in the local economy

Grants are usually only available to small and micro businesses. However, medium-sized food processing businesses (that process 'Annex 1' products) may also be able to apply in some cases.

Growth Programme

Tourism grants

These are for rural businesses, community groups and collaborative partnerships, for example local businesses, public bodies and communities working together to develop and promote a particular destination.

Grants can fund investments in:

- attractions
- developing tourist products
- small-scale tourist infrastructure (such as signboards and shelters on trails)
- developing destination organisation and management plans

Renewable energy grants

These are for businesses to invest in renewable energy production or heat distribution, particularly where this will deliver economic benefits or benefits to the local community.

A business cannot apply for this grant if it already qualifies for Feed-In Tariffs or the Renewable Heat Incentive scheme.

How grants and applications will be managed

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will manage and assess all applications.

RPA will use the local strategies published by the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to help decide what grants will be available in different areas of the country. These local strategies will be available on local LEP websites. Find local LEPs at: www.lepnetwork.net/leps.

The RPA will then publish 'calls for projects'. These 'calls for projects' will be for the specific LEP areas. This is how potential applicants will know what kinds of projects can apply for funding at any given time. 'Calls for projects' will be published on GOV.UK.

RPA will get information about local funding priorities from local partners, including LEPs. Applicants should contact their local LEP when they are planning their application.

Successful applications will be for projects that:

- fit with local strategic priorities set by LEPs
- help create new jobs and economic growth
- are good value for money

When deciding whether a project is good value for money, RPA will look at whether a project needs public funding and what benefits will come from it. For example, Growth Programme grants will help create new jobs, at an average cost per job of £26,000.

When to apply

We are working with LEPs and hope to launch the first local 'calls for projects' in March 2015. These will depend on the readiness of local areas and are likely to be limited to a few parts of the country. From June 2015, these grants will be available in more areas of the country.

Growth Programme

More information

Detailed guidance for applicants will be published on GOV.UK in March. The guidance will be updated as new kinds of grants (such as the grant for rural broadband) become available in future.

Applicants can also contact the RPA for more advice and information. Call the Rural Payments helpline on 03000 200 301 and choose the 'Rural Development' option.



CAP Reform Countdown | LEADER

Local action groups for LEADER will be announced in February.

Through the LEADER element of the RDPE 2014–2020, £138 million will be available to local businesses, farmers, foresters, land managers and communities.

Funding is allocated to local action groups (LAGs) in order to create jobs and growth in rural areas, mainly via small grants.

LEADER grants will cover 6 important priorities:

- increasing farm productivity
- increasing forestry productivity
- support for micro, small and start-up businesses, and farm diversification
- support for rural tourism
- provision of rural services
- support for cultural/heritage activity

LAGs are made up of people from local public and private sectors and civil society. LAGs will decide which projects to fund in line with their local development strategies and with RDP objectives.

Local action group selection

Decisions on which LAGs have been selected for funding will be announced in February 2015. We'll publish the details about the selected groups, including contact details and their individual budget allocations on GOV.UK— look for updates on the RDPE page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/rural-development-programme-for-england-network>.

LEADER start date

We're currently agreeing contracts with LEADER groups, and organising training for their staff. LEADER is expected to fully begin in June, when groups will be able to start asking for expressions of interest for potential projects for funding. Further details will be made available in spring, including on GOV.UK and through the LEADER groups themselves.



CAP Reform Countdown

When to apply in 2015

The table below shows when the different RDPE schemes will open for application in 2015, according to current plans.

When to apply for an RDPE scheme in 2015

Schemes open for application in February 2015	
Countryside Stewardship	Woodland capital grants These are for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• woodland creation• woodland management plans• woodland tree health
Countryside Productivity	Grant funding for capital investment For farmers, foresters and other land managers to investment in equipment to support farm and forestry productivity EIP-Agri For grant funding for projects under the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability. (Open for Notifications of Idea).

Schemes open for application in March 2015	
Countryside Stewardship	Water capital grants These are for infrastructure that helps reduce water pollution from agriculture. Facilitation funding This is for projects that help land managers work together on Countryside Stewardship priorities.
Growth Programme	Growth Programme grants In some areas only, grants for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• starting a business• developing a business• tourism• renewable heat and energy projects

When to apply in 2015

Schemes open for application in June 2015

Growth Programme	Grants In remaining areas grants for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tourism • renewable heat and energy • business start-up and development
LEADER	LEADER funding Applications for projects open.

Schemes open for application in July 2015

Countryside Stewardship	Higher Tier agreements For site-specific, high-priority situations. Mid Tier agreements For simple yet effective improvements in the wider countryside.
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Schemes open for application from July onwards 2015

Countryside Productivity	Skills and training Funding to help farmers improve their skills. Start-up business grants for young farmers For young farmers starting their first farm business. Integrated projects Funding for a few specific projects working to reduce important animal diseases, improve the wood-fuel supply chain and reduce ammonia emissions on farms. EIP-Agri Open for applications.
Growth Programme	Advice and training For small and micro businesses in certain rural areas to help them increase productivity and innovation and develop new markets.



CAP Reform | Environmental Stewardship agreements: changes in 2015

Environmental Stewardship agreement holders must register on the new online rural payments service and submit a claim form every year. Timing of payments will also change.

Agreement holders must register on the new online service for rural payments by midnight 15 May 2015

Agreement holders must register on the new online service for rural payments before they submit their ES claim. This is because EU regulations require that, to receive CAP payments, agreement holders must have all their land (both agricultural and non-agricultural) correctly registered. ES agreement holders were previously required to make sure all of their land was correctly registered on RPA's Rural Land Register, and they now must do this on the new online service.



New requirement to submit claim forms

As outlined in the October leaflet, from 1 January 2015, agreement-holders must submit a claim form each year to receive their scheduled payments. Natural England has written to everyone affected to explain what is required.

What the claim is for

This claim is for payments for land management to be carried out in the current year. Claims for capital works can still be submitted at any time.

When to submit the claim form

Natural England must receive claim forms by the deadline of midnight on 15 May in 2015.

Land managers can make a late application until midnight on 9 June 2015, but they will get a penalty. For each working day the application is late, the penalty will be 1%.

After 9 June, claim forms cannot be accepted (so no payments made for that year). Claims cannot be 'rolled over' into the next year if the deadline is missed.

Changing a claim form after it has been submitted

Applications can be changed until midnight 1 June 2015 without getting a penalty.

For each working day after this, a 1% penalty will be applied.

Applications can't be changed after midnight on 9 June 2015.

Where to get a claim form

Natural England will write to ES agreement holders in March 2015 with:

- their individual claim form
- further details on how to claim

If applicants have not received their ES claim form by mid-April, they should call Natural England on 0300 060 0011.

Environmental Stewardship agreements: changes in 2015

New payment timings for Environmental Stewardship

From 1 January 2015, the timing of ES payments will change. Natural England has written to all those affected to explain this.

The changes are necessary to bring the timing of these payments into line with other CAP payments.

This may affect the amount customers are paid during 2015, but it won't change the amount paid over the length of an agreement. Payments for capital works are not affected.

How payment timings will change

The timing of when land managers receive their payments will depend on when their agreement started.

Agreement-holders can use the Payment Timing calculator to see the impact on their payments. Find the calculator here: <https://www.gov.uk/environmental-stewardship-how-to-get-paid-under-your-agreement#changes-to-payment-timings-from-1-january-2015>

Generally, we expect that:

- agreements which started before 1 February 2007 will receive a lower payment in 2015 and at a different time of the year.
- customers with agreements which started on or after 1 February 2007 in the months February to June will receive a lower payment in 2015 and this will be slightly later than originally scheduled.
- customers with agreements which started after 1 February 2007 in the months July to December will receive an increased payment in 2015.
- customers with agreements which started after 1 February 2007 in the month of January may experience a slight delay in their 2015 spring payment but no change in the amount.

The re-scheduling will also affect future years' payments.

If a payment is lower in 2015, the outstanding amount will be added to the payment in 2016. However, that will also be reduced because of the rescheduling, and the outstanding amount added to the 2017 payment, and so on until the agreement ends and the final balance is paid.



We recognise that this may cause financial difficulties for some agreement-holders. Natural England has contacted the banks and other support organisations to explain these changes, in case anyone affected needs to approach them for help.

For help with the Payment Timing calculator, or to discuss concerns over payments, contact Natural England on 0300 060 0011.



CAP Reform Countdown | More information

Natural England started sending out the revised payment schedules to agreement holders in November 2014. Most will be issued by March, but some may take a little longer to process.

Full BPS scheme guidance will be published in 2015 — search for 'Basic Payment Scheme guidance' on GOV.UK.

Detailed guidance about Countryside Stewardship will be published on GOV.UK — search for 'Countryside Stewardship'.

For more information, call the Rural Payments helpline on 03000 200 301.

Read more about CAP reform

Read everything we have published so far at: www.gov.uk/cap-reform. This page includes all the latest news and all previous publications, including:

- 'The guide to cross compliance in England 2015'
- 'The new Common Agricultural Policy schemes in England: December update'
- 'The new Common Agricultural Policy schemes in England: October 2014 update'
- 'The new Common Agricultural Policy Schemes in England: August 2014 update'
- 'An Introduction to the new Common Agricultural Policy schemes in England' (April 2014)

Regulations

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

The main European regulation governing the Rural Development Programme is EU Regulation 1305/2013.

Campaign for the Farmed Environment

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

The Farming Advice Service

The Farming Advice Service (FAS) is funded by Defra to provide free, confidential advice to farmers and farming industry advisers to help them understand and meet requirements for cross compliance, Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 'greening' rules and, from 01 January 2015, water protection and the sustainable use of pesticides.

For more information call 0345 345 1302 or email advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk.

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

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.

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