

# Consultation into Basic Payment Scheme allocations in the New Forest launched

Press release

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New Forest commoners can apply for BPS and be allocated a notional share of the Forest's eligible agricultural area. At present, the allocated area is based on the number of marking fees they paid for animals turned out to graze in the previous year.

Marking fees are a fee that commoners must pay to the Verderers (a body which regulates and protects the interests of the New Forest commoners) in order to have their animals marked before being turned out to graze in the forest, so they can be identified and traced back to the keeper in the case of need.

This method has recently been challenged as having the effect of encouraging commoners to keep more animals in order to be paid more subsidies, and therefore impacting the environment.

The Rural Payments Agency is now seeking views on ways to replace or amend the present allocation method for BPS 2021 and the remainder of the life of the scheme. It does not intend to continue with the present method after this year.

The consultation is directed at anyone who:

- has an interest in the ownership or management of the New Forest;
- has a property or holding to which New Forest grazing rights are

attached;

- already claims BPS using New Forest grazing rights or has an interest in doing so in the future;
- represents the interests of individuals falling into one of the categories above.

The consultation period will be open for a period of just over nine weeks and end on 3 February 2021. Responses submitted after that date will not be considered.

The RPA is writing directly to all commoners who claim BPS in the New Forest and the consultation is also being published on Gov.uk. The outcome of the consultation is expected to be published in the Spring.

The Government has also today published the [‘Path to Sustainable Farming’](#) which includes a wide-range of support measures that will help farmers adapt to a new agricultural system. One of the key changes is the reduction in Direct Payments. Starting from the 2021 Basic Payment Scheme year and phased out entirely by the end of 2027.

Payments will reduce by around 50% by 2024 for the majority of farmers and the money used to fund new grants and schemes to boost productivity and reward environmental improvements. Support and advice will be available to help those most affected by the phasing out of Direct Payments during the agricultural transition period.

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