

Press release: Farmers advised to apply early for this year's funding schemes

Farmers were today (13 March) encouraged to submit their Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) applications before the 15 May deadline.

From today they can also claim for their Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmental Stewardship (ES) agreements. The timings for all payments schemes have been aligned by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) to simplify and improve the experience for farmers.

The Government has confirmed that all eligible BPS, CS and ES payments will be funded this year, regardless of the outcome of negotiations with the EU.

Farmers and land managers must ensure that they continue to follow all the current regulations to avoid penalties, including on cross-compliance.

RPA Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

We are working hard to deliver year-on-year improvements to the BPS scheme, and this year we delivered our best performance for paying farmers since the scheme opened in 2015.

We know there is more to do on CS and ES schemes to get payments out promptly, which is why we are making a number of improvements to the administration of these schemes.

It's important that farmers and their agents complete their applications and claims promptly and ensure they are submitted before 15 May.

Applicants to BPS and CS can quickly update their personal and business information by applying through the [Rural Payments service](#), where farmers and their agents can also view and transfer their entitlements and land parcels.

ES agreement holders will receive a claim form in the post to fill out and return to the RPA leaving time for the post to arrive ahead of 15 May. This year CS customers can take advantage of even more options online, and now also benefit from simplified rules on evidence requirements. They can also contact the RPA to request a claim form.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The RPA has published guidance on applying for BPS [here](#)

- Guidance on how to claim online for CS can be found [here](#)
- BPS, CS and ES payments will continue in 2019, regardless of whether the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal deal. You can find out more information on the potential impact of a 'no-deal' Brexit on farm businesses [here](#)