

Press release: RPA confirms 2018 BPS and CS bridging payments

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has confirmed today that farmers will start receiving bridging payments from Friday 12 April. This will cover Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2018 claims and Countryside Stewardship (CS) 2018 advance payments.

While more than 99% of BPS 2018 claims have now been processed, a significant improvement on previous years, today's announcement means that remaining eligible claimants will receive a payment for 75% of the estimated value of their claim. This will help with farm business cash flow while the remaining amount on their claim is processed.

Bridging payments will also cover unpaid 2018 Countryside Stewardship advance payments. More than 95% of these payments have been made to farmers who are delivering important environmental work.

The RPA has written directly to farmers to provide an update on bridging payments and on how these payments will be calculated. All eligible BPS claimants and CS 2018 advance claimants will start receiving bridging payments from 12 April.

RPA Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

We have worked hard to improve our performance on the Basic Payment Scheme, and this year just a small number of farmers will be receiving bridging payments. We are also committed to driving up performance on the CS and ES schemes since taking those on in October last year.

Our focus remains on processing the remaining claims and paying farmers as quickly as possible. I would like to thank all those involved for their continued efforts on this.

A bridging payment is an interest-free loan to customers ahead of their full payment, providing them with 75% of the current estimated value of their claim. Once the full payment has been processed and made, the amount already issued through a bridging payment will be held back.

This year the RPA has so far issued 98% of CS 2019 Mid Tier agreements and 95% of CS 2019 Higher Tier agreements. Farmers and land managers are reminded to sign and return these agreements, and to submit their BPS 2019 applications as early as possible. The claim window for BPS, CS and ES schemes closes on 15 May 2019.