

RPA makes full payments to thousands of rural businesses

More than 95% of farmers received their 2020 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) money in the first day of the payment window for recipients of the scheme.

Despite the challenges faced by coronavirus this year, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is on track to achieve its best-ever payment performance. Approximately £1.671 billion was paid to farmers for BPS on the first day of the payment window, which runs from December to June, a further improvement on 2019 where £1.192 billion was released.

In addition eligible farmers were issued Countryside Stewardship (CS) revenue payments totalling £40m; and Environmental Stewardship (ES) payments totalling £60m are expected within the first few days of the window. An improvement on 2019 where no payments were released.

Those who claimed CS and ES agreements in 2020 will receive one full payment this year as part of a wider plan to deliver a better service to farmers and land managers.

This is the first year that these payments have been funded directly by the UK Government rather than by the EU.

RPA Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

We are committed to ensuring timely payments to farmers and land managers, so that rural businesses can plan for the year ahead.

2020 has been a challenging year for many and I have been really pleased at the progress we have made which has resulted in this level of performance despite the difficulties presented by coronavirus. This is testament to the hard work of people within the agency and the measures we have taken to further simplify CS.

Payments are made direct to bank accounts via BACS transfer so farmers should ensure that the RPA has the most up-to-date account details on the Rural Payments service.

On Monday, as part of a wider agricultural transition plan, [the government announced that Direct Payments will gradually be reduced](#) over a seven year period, starting from the 2021 Basic Payment Scheme year.

This money will be 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.

Farming Minister Victoria Prentis said:

I am delighted that the efforts of the Rural Payments Agency during this difficult year has resulted in more farmers getting their payments quickly.

From next year we will start to use funds released from the Basic Payment Scheme to reward farmers and land managers for sustainable farming practices, help them to improve productivity and we will ensure that there is farm resilience support available for the first three years of the agricultural transition period.

Stopping fraudulent activity

Claimants are also urged to remain vigilant against fraud. They should remember:

- Your bank, police or the RPA will never ask you to reveal your online password, PIN or bank account details or ask you to make a payment over the telephone.
- Never disclose personal information to someone you don't know or open unknown or unexpected computer links or emails.
- If in doubt, call the organisation back, ideally on a different telephone, using a number you are familiar with or you know to be official. You can find this on the organisation's website, correspondence or statement. Contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 without delay for advice and to register your concern