

UTASS Briefing: 31st March 2015

CAP REFORM UPDATE.

We appreciate that the announcement to suspend all but the business registration part of the new BPS computer system has left many of our members wondering if there is anything that they need to be doing now to ensure that they get a valid claim made on time. The RPA are in the process of introducing a pre-populated replacement paper form which will be sent by email to applicants during April. Registration will trigger maps being posted out unless already received within the last few months.

We will let you know in a Briefing when these start being sent out and the date by which all applicants should have received a form. There is a lot of other important information that we do not yet know, such as the deadline for entitlement trading and whether forms can be returned electronically, so please do read the Briefings. The deadline for receipt of valid claims has been extended to 15th June 2015 but we would like to get claims made in good time and are therefore planning to do this by the **29th May 2015**. To achieve this will require the optimum use of time so UTASS staff will be contacting you to make appointments when the system is ready for use. We appreciate that this could not come at a worse time of year for most of our members (and staff) and thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation.

The RPA will be completing customer registrations utilising a mobile satellite and running an advice session at Woodland Village Hall on Tuesdays 7th and Wednesday 15th April, we have just been informed that Stuart Foster will attend to deal with any land queries. We will also be running an appointment service in Stanhope on Thursdays when the pre-populated forms arrive.

UTASS MEMBER SURVEY.

Please could completed surveys be returned by 14th April 2015. This is an important requirement for our funders as well as helping us to provide the services which are of most benefit to you.

SATELLITE BROADBAND

One of our members has advised us of an offer for satellite broadband from Mole Country Stores (01325 504666) which they have taken advantage of and is only open to their members (annual membership £50 for farmer members and £10 for smallholders). Offer valid till 24th April and requiring a two year contract, with download data speeds up to 22Mb and upload speeds of up to 6Mb, the monthly cost for up to 10Gb is £29.50 and up to 25Gb, £44.50, to provide:-

Free hardware (although may need to buy a new router - approx. £60)

Free installation

Free connection fee

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Free rental of the equipment for two years

SPRAY TRAINING & ASSESSMENTS

More training and assessments are planned for May, to comply with legislation effective from 26.11.15 and currently. These are for the NPTC Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Pesticides (“PA” route for those born after 31.12.64) or Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Pesticides replacing Grandfathers’ Rights (“Unit” route).

Gaining the qualification requires one day’s training for the Theory - Tues 19th May at UTASS and one practical training day at Middleton Mart on Thurs 21st/Fri 22nd or Tues 26th May. The “PA” Theory assessment is at the end of the training day at UTASS and all other assessments will be timetabled for shortly afterwards.

The training costs are approximately £100 plus VAT for 2 days’ training (one theory and one practical) and £190 for registration and assessment fees for Theory & Handheld applicator or £200 for Theory & Mounted Sprayer.

PASTURE FED BEEF.

Farmers elsewhere in the UK are looking for certified pasture-fed stores that could be finished on pasture and high quality silage and hay. We have been asked if there would be any interest in this area given the high number of suckler cows in the Durham dales.

For further advice and assistance contact UTASS 01833 641010.

Richard Betton

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