

UTASS Briefing: 3rd October 2014

SPS 2014

The exchange rate for conversion from euros into pounds for 2014 SPS payments is fixed on the last trading day in September each year. Defra have just announced that this year's exchange rate is £0.77730. This is 7.3% less than the rate for 2013. However, there are a variety of other factors which will affect this year's payment which have not yet been calculated. These include:

- An overall budget reduction around 1.6%.
- Inter-pillar transfers which replace modulation roughly 3%.
- Annual validation recalculations for English regions.
- Financial Discipline (the EU's method of keeping within budget and 2.5% last year).

As a result most farmers can expect a reduction in their SPS payment of around 12%.

CAP REFORM: ENTITLEMENTS

On 1st January 2015 all SPS entitlements will become BPS entitlements (entitlements for payment under the Basic Payment Scheme which replaces SPS). Claimants who wish to transfer entitlements before this date need to have a completed RLE1 form received by the RPA **before midnight 21st October 2014**. There will be another opportunity to transfer entitlements once they have been converted to BPS entitlements early in 2015 using the new CAP Information Service. This is of particular relevance to applicants that have less than 5 hectares who will not be eligible for BPS or those who may not meet the requirement of the "active farmer" test when the full details are finally published later this year. RLE1 forms printed with the details of your entitlements can be ordered from the RPA or downloaded online.

CAP REFORM: DUAL USE

Defra have confirmed that they will continue with the existing policy under BPS when there are two different people claiming under different schemes on the same field/land parcel. This occurs for instance where a tenant is claiming the SPS and the landlord ELS/HLS. In such a case there needs to be an agreement in place to demonstrate that both parties have individual areas of management and responsibility relevant to their particular claim. However this may not be the case for the New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS) due to start 1st January 2016 as no decision has been made yet.

DRIVERS CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

It is now a requirement for lorry drivers to have this qualification. All those who passed their test before 10th September 2009 have "acquired rights" so do not have to pass the initial qualification but still need to do the 35 hours periodic training

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every 5 years. There are some exemptions, such as carrying materials related to your job, but this does not extend to carrying livestock for sale. Registration, for both those with “acquired rights” and those without, and details on periodic training are available on the Government website under CPC. Please note that this only applies to rigid vehicles and not to 4x4/trailer combinations. It does however apply to all lorries over 3.5 tonnes.

SOIL PROTECTION REVIEW

Defra have decided to discontinue the Soil Protection Review for the new CAP regime due to begin 1st January 2015. However, farmers would be **well advised to complete the single page “continuation sheet”** sent out earlier this year to demonstrate compliance with the rules in force up to 31st December 2014. For those who cannot find their continuation sheet spare copies are available from UTASS.

SHEEP MEETING

Join **EBLEX** for this **Focus on Nutrition for early Lambing Flocks and Borders ‘Hairy Shakers’ disease on Wednesday 22nd October, from 12 noon – 4.30 pm at Grimston Manor Farm, Gilling East, North Yorkshire, YO62 4HR.** Join EBLEX for this Sheep Focus Farm meeting. Tim Kelsey is one of nineteen Focus Farms across England taking part in a 12 month sheep health project. At this second meeting we will hear updates from Reg Jones of Howells Vets and Fiona Lovatt of Flock Health Ltd, on the lameness and cobalt/copper trace element investigations that have been taking place. We will also discuss Borders disease, what it is, the symptoms in lambs (hairy shaker lambs) and prevention and control. Finally Tim starts lambing his early flock in February; Debby Brown, independent veterinary nutritionist, will discuss nutrition for early lambing flocks to ensure lamb survival and productivity. To register for your FREE place ring the EBLEX events office on 01904 771211 or email brpevents@eblex.ahdb.org.uk

RPA CUSTOMER SERVICE TELEPHONE NUMBER

The RPA have issued a new 0345 603 7777 number which will save money for many callers, particularly those using a mobile phone, though this will depend on the terms of individual mobile or landline contracts. The existing 0845 603 7777 number is being retained, as RPA research shows that it can still be the cheaper option, particularly for landline users.

Claimants who need to use the 0345 or 0845 number can also request a call back from an adviser if they are concerned about the cost of a call.

For further advice and assistance contact UTASS 01833 641010.

Richard Betton.

