

# UTASS Briefing: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015

## BASIC PAYMENT SCHEME (BPS).

It seems to have been a long process since we began helping members to register in early February, but, despite the lack of in depth guidance and the change from electronic to paper forms, our members seem to be nearly there with only a handful of forms left to complete.

**The deadline for submission of claims is 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015.**

The Rural Payments Agency's mobile support unit will be at UTASS on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015 between 9am and noon. There will be RPA staff here to help any farmer:

- Get online and register on the rural payments system
- hand in Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), RLE1 forms & docs
- get a basic form check
- get a receipt

If you still need to register with the RPA, a necessary first step to enable a claim to be made, you will need the following: SBI number, National Insurance number, date of birth, bank account details, an email address if you have one and either a passport, driving licence, photo ID or utility bill.

## PAPERWORK.

UTASS has for many years held copies of forms, letters and receipts for members. Our filing cabinets not surprisingly are bursting at the seams (we simply cannot get any more into them). As we are now established in a new round of the CAP it would seem to be an appropriate time to "rationalise" what is being kept to just items relating to 2013 onwards. We would therefore request that members who would like these copies call in and collect them before the end of June 2015. Anything relating to 2012 and before not collected by then will be shredded and disposed of responsibly.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP.

The deadline for submission of the annual claim (see previous briefings) is the **15<sup>th</sup> June 2015.**

## MEADOW SURVEYS 2015.

For many years farmers throughout Teesdale and Weardale have been involved in the work of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership's flower-rich land management and upland hay meadow restoration projects.

Over the past two years the Partnership's Nectarworks project has built on work already done and the lessons learnt throughout its predecessor, Hay Time. Nectarworks focusses on the conservation and enhancement of the very best remaining flower-rich grassland.

Botanical surveys and farmer interviews are undertaken in order to get a better understanding of the locations of the most flower-rich areas. Data continues to grow and is building into a valuable source of information that is used both to advise management and establish the

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importance of the grasslands of the North Pennines which, in turn, has influenced Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme targeting (and future Countryside Stewardship).

What is becoming very clear is just how valuable these flower-rich grasslands are, especially upland hay meadows, steep uncut banks, river banks and meadow edges. Less than 900 ha of upland hay meadows remain in the UK and 40% of them are found in the North Pennines.

Throughout the summer Dr Ruth Starr-Keddle, Nectarworks Project Officer, will continue to carry out baseline and monitoring surveys across the area and will be contacting individual farmers soon to arrange visits.

## SHEEP SHEARING.

The British Wool Marketing Board will be running a training course on the weekend of 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015 for those aged 16 and over. The course is mainly practical with only 15% demonstration and the minimum of paperwork. Trainees will be assessed for the appropriate BWMB certification. The course costs £180 plus VAT and is at least half funded by the Heart of Teesdale Project. Please contact Julia at UTASS to book a place.

For further advice and assistance contact UTASS 01833 641010.

Richard Betton

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