

# **UTASS Briefing: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022.**

## **RPA CONTACT**

We have expressed concerns to the RPA about the potential effects of industrial action and extra seasonal mail on the postal service. In many cases the RPA give a date by when responses have to be received: this in the current circumstances may not be achievable.

The RPA is keen that we should use email wherever possible to submit applications, claims, evidence of compliance for environmental schemes and other supporting documents. The email address needs to be either the one registered to the business on Rural Payments or of someone empowered to act on behalf of the business: this would normally include one or more UTASS members of staff if you use us to help with BPS or CS work.

Using email will cover most business but the exceptions are HLS extensions and CS agreement acceptance forms that still need to be posted with an original signature.

The RPA are now requesting that agreement acceptance forms should be emailed in addition to sending the original by post. In cases where SSSI consent from Natural England is needed for an agreement it would be sensible to:

- email the signed acceptance form with a note to say that the SSSI consent will be emailed when it arrives from Natural England
- posting a hard copy to the RPA.

The onus is on applicants to comply with agreement terms and conditions. If something should go wrong Force Majeure should apply as industrial action affecting the postal service is outside the control of applicants. However, it is still the duty of the applicant to demonstrate that they have tried to comply with the terms and conditions. In the current circumstances, it is of paramount importance that a proof of posting (recorded or registered mail) and a photo copy of any form should be kept.

Please contact UTASS if you need assistance with photo copying, scanning documents for emailing or have any other concerns.

## **SHEEP AND GOAT ANNUAL INVENTORY**

All keepers of sheep and goats need to complete an annual inventory showing the number of animals on their holding on **1<sup>st</sup> December 2022**. This needs to be done by 31<sup>st</sup> December or it may incur additional inspections and possible penalties.

Those keepers who have done this online in the past should receive an advisory email which will be followed by an email on 1<sup>st</sup> December with a link to a partially prepopulated form. Paper copies should be sent to everyone else. However, if you do not receive a form or link you should contact Defra on 03000 600140 or [surveys@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:surveys@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

**For further advice and assistance please call UTASS 01833 641010.  
Richard Betton.**