

UTASS Briefing: 15th November 2024

Labour Budget

Labour's first budget has caused dismay across the farming sector. The key changes are listed below:

Agricultural Property Relief (APR) on Inheritance Tax (IHT) will only apply to the first £1m of farming assets from 6th April 2026. This is in addition to the existing personal nil rate bands of £325k + £175k house allowances for individuals. Gifting land avoids IHT if the donor lives 7 years.

Business Property Relief (BPR) on IHT to also only apply to the first £1m.

Increase in Employers National Insurance: likely to adversely affect both food prices and production costs.

Unused private pension funds to be subject to IHT from 6th April 2027.

Capital Gains Tax to increase from 10% to 18% with higher rate up from 20% to 24%.

Twin-Cab 4x4s to be treated as a car rather than a van for tax purposes from 1st April 2025.

This is obviously not good news for landowners and with high land prices will adversely affect even relatively small farms. It is also highly likely to have an effect on the availability and rental value of land to rent. Most farming businesses will need to seek professional advice as a matter of urgency to check that their plans and wills minimise the impact of these changes.

On the plus side the Defra farming budget has been retained at £2.4b for the next two years with an undertaking to try and avoid the underspends that have deprived the farming community in the transition from the Common Agricultural Policy. This doesn't inspire confidence when the budget was accompanied with the announcement that Delinked Payments in 2025 would be only 24% of the reference amount up to £30k and 0% for payments above that amount. This means that the maximum delinked payment in 2025 will be £7,200 with many considerably less than this.

2024 Payments

All delinked payments should have been made in 2 instalments in August and September this year apart from those with additional complications such as probate. The payment window for 2024 annual revenue payments for Countryside Stewardship and Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) opens on the 1st December 2024 and closes on 30th June 2025. It is important for claimants to respond as soon as possible to any queries or requests for evidence from the RPA to avoid delays to their payments. SFI continues with quarterly payments in arrears but an Annual Declaration has to be completed on Rural Payments before the final instalment is paid.

Sheep and Goat Annual Inventory

All keepers of sheep and goats will need to complete an Annual Inventory of the number of animals on their holding(s) on 1st December 2024. DEFRA will be sending a letter or email by the end of November reminding farmers. Paper forms will only be sent to farmers who completed a paper form last year. The online version is relatively easy to complete (assistance available from UTASS) and must be done by the 31 December 2024.

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SFI

Defra have announced that there is no longer a need to make an “expression of interest” to request a SFI 2024 Expanded Offer application to be created. This can now be done directly on Rural Payments.

Waste Exemptions

The Environment Agency are consulting on charges for waste exemptions to be introduced in April 2025. They are obliged to recover “the full cost of the chargeable services we provide”. For farmers a £56 registration fee is proposed with an additional compliance fee of £88 for a range of 15 exemptions most commonly registered by farmers. The charge will cover three years (£48 per year). The consultation closes on 20th January. Please take part in the Waste Crime Charges Consultation, if you haven't the time to respond on behalf of your own business we would welcome your comments for a UTASS response.

Bluetongue

Following the confirmation of further cases the risk zone has been extended to include parts of North Yorkshire, please see map.

If you have any concerns regarding bluetongue please contact your local vet for assistance.



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Farming Families Walk-in Clinic

Old Forge Surgery in Middleton-in-Teesdale and UTASS are working together to better understand the health needs of local farming families. We know that it can be hard to arrange appointments around farming life. A new drop-in session for farming families is being planned for 29th November 2024, between 1pm & 5pm, at Old Forge Surgery. No appointment needed.

UTASS Christmas Cards & 2025 Calendars

Our Christmas Cards & 2025 Calendars are now on sale! They can be purchased from the UTASS Office, on our website (www.utass.org/shop/), at The Moorcock Inn, Eggleston & The Fox & Hounds, Cotherstone.



Middleton Mart Christmas Fair

The 12th Middleton Mart Christmas Fair will take place on Saturday 30th November, 11am-3pm!

The fair is set in the Auction Mart, with fairy lights, foliage and festive music setting the scene with an eclectic mix of OVER 60 stalls!

Refreshments are available, and there is also ample FREE parking.

Santa's Grotto is returning by popular demand... some say it was the BEST Santa they have ever seen!! Santa's Grotto will be open from 12 noon.



The Fair is held prior to the Annual Christmas Lights Switch-On event in the village at 4.00pm, with mulled wine, mince pies, and Carols around the tree (no better way to kick start the festive season!).

Afterwards, from 5pm everyone is welcome to Middleton Sports & Social Club for a family night.

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We're Recruiting!!

We are looking for a driven and motivated individual who has a passion to help people to join our busy reception team at UTASS.

UTASS works with and for the communities across the Durham Dales, helping people gain access to services, advice and resources they need.

You must have a solution-focused 'can do' attitude and have a proactive and friendly approach to helping people. Proven experience of working with people is key, as you will provide a friendly and positive welcome to visitors. A caring and empathetic approach is essential, as is the sound understanding of how to process sensitive information and data.

For more information, please contact the office on 01833 641010 or email emma@utass.org

Join our team... **WE'RE RECRUITING**

Job Title: Reception and Administration
Support Officer

Location: UTASS, Middleton-in-Teesdale

Salary: £12.53 per hour

Contract: Part-time, Permanent

Hours: 14 hours per week - Mondays & Fridays



Closing Date: Sunday 1st December

Shortlisting: Week commencing 2nd December

Interviews: Week commencing 9th December

Start Date: 3rd January 2025

For an application pack:

email emma@utass.org

or visit utass.org/vacancies

**“UTASS...
A place for everyone,
supporting people living and
working across the Durham Dales.”**