



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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Dear Colleagues,

Government provides more detail on Environment Land Management schemes

I'm writing to draw your attention to our plans for supporting our farmers and rural communities, following our publication of the [Environmental Land Management Update](#) on 26 January.

As you know, we are moving away from the bureaucratic Common Agricultural Policy of the EU which did nothing for farming or the environment, to deliver a new system which rewards farmers for their role as environmental stewards. My Department has listened to feedback from the nation's farming sector and co-designed this system in partnership with them. I will continue to listen as we deliver the transition to ensure the schemes work for every farmer. Last month we set out detailed plans for this system, which will support farmers to be profitable and resilient as they produce food sustainably while protecting nature and enhancing the environment.

The announcement provided clarity and certainty to farmers, allowing them to make business decisions and cover costs as direct payments are phased out and get involved in Environmental Land Management schemes. There's something for everyone in our schemes and grants and we have made them much more straightforward, flexible and workable for farmers. Making the shift towards a more sustainable, resilient food system is critical to feeding a growing population, and to meeting our world-leading commitments to halt the decline of nature by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

Expanding the Sustainable Farming incentive offer in summer 2023

We have published details of six new Sustainable Farming Incentive standards which will be available this summer. We know that farmers need clarity and certainty to allow them to plan ahead. That's why we're going much further and faster in rolling out the Sustainable Farming Incentive in 2023 than we originally intended, bringing forward three more standards than originally planned.

Farmers can receive payment for actions on hedgerows, grassland, arable and horticultural land, pest management and nutrient management. They build on the three existing standards to improve soil health and moorlands introduced in 2022 – which nearly 1,900 farmers already have in agreements. This will make sure there is a wider range of actions available to farmers, this year instead of next year. Making our offer more wide-ranging will help us to achieve our ambitions for the environment and climate.

The Sustainable Farming Incentive has been made as straightforward as possible to apply for online with farmers giving positive feedback over the simplicity and speed of the application. The 2023 offer itself is also flexible and accessible to enable farmers to get started in the scheme and start to deliver the outcomes for their business and the environment. These improvements are based on learnings from extensive pilots and feedback to make it simpler, clearer and more workable for farmers.

Further detail on enhanced Countryside Stewardship

We have detailed what farmers will be paid to deliver through an enhanced version of the Countryside Stewardship scheme, which will see around 30 additional actions available to farmers by the end of 2024. The expansion builds on the more than 250 actions farmers can take at present with the scheme seeing a 94% increase in uptake since 2020 and is now part of thousands of farm businesses. The next round of Countryside Stewardship Higher-Tier will open this month, with Mid-Tier following in March.

Countryside Stewardship Plus will reward farmers for taking coordinated action, working with neighbouring farms and landowners to support climate and nature aims. It will deliver the same high environmental ambition previously planned for Local Nature Recovery, including managing floodplain meadows to reduce flood risk and improve biodiversity, restoring and maintaining peatland for carbon capture and storage, and enhancing and managing woodland to mitigate against drought and enhance its resilience to climate change.

What's next?

The UK Government's manifesto guaranteed the current average levels of investment in farming of £2.4 billion per year in England over the life of this parliament.

The second round of Landscape Recovery will open in spring to support ambitious large-scale nature recovery projects. These will focus on net zero, protected sites and habitat creation. This could include projects creating and enhancing woodlands, peatland, nature reserves and protected sites such as ancient woodlands, wetlands and salt marshes. They involve groups of land managers and farmers, including tenants, working together to deliver a range of environmental benefits across farmed and rural landscapes. 22 projects began last year aiming to restore nearly 700km of rivers and protect and enhance 263 species.

We will also continue to support farmers by rolling out our one-off payments to support innovation and productivity – starting with the slurry grant available now, then expanding our funded vet visits, and adding animal welfare grants to our package of support in the spring. We know that no one farm is the same as another. There are a range of open grant offers which your farmers can apply for right now, to choose what best fits their business.

All farmers can also receive free business advice to help them adapt to these changes. See the [full list of providers](#).

Yours sincerely,



RT HON THÉRÈSE COFFEY

Annex A – Farming schemes and grants open to farmers and land managers in England now

Ongoing payments:

- **The Sustainable Farming Incentive** pays farmers for the actions they take to manage their land in an environmentally sustainable way. [Full guidance on GOV.UK](#)
- **Countryside Stewardship** encourages farmers to take action to protect our environment via revenue options and capital items. [More information on GOV.UK](#)
- **England Woodland Creation Offer** pays landowners, land managers and public bodies to plant trees and create woodland. [Full guidance on GOV.UK](#)
- **Woodland Creation Planning Grants** pay landowners, land managers and public bodies (other than Forestry England) to support the design of new woodland. [Full Guidance on GOV.UK](#)

One-off grants to support productivity

- **Slurry Infrastructure Grants** provide farmers with an offer to upgrade their slurry management systems, offering strong environmental benefits. [Full guidance on GOV.UK](#)
- **The Farming Resilience Advice** allows any farmer or land manager in England who receives BPS (Basic Payment Scheme payments) to receive free business advice from an independent provider. The full list of providers is available [here](#).
- **Farming in Protected Landscapes** provides funding to farmers/land managers to support and improve Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), National Parks and the Broads. [Full guidance on GOV.UK](#)
- **Tree Health Pilot** provides funding for those who manage certain trees or woodlands affected by some pests and diseases in some regions of England. [Full guidance on GOV.UK](#)
- **Farming Innovation Programme** provides funding for farmers and growers who want to work to develop and use new, innovative methods and technologies. Competitions are run throughout the year and full details can be found on [UKRI.org](#)
- **Farming Investment Fund** provides grants to improve productivity and bring environmental benefits. [Full guidance on GOV.UK](#)
 - Within the farming Investment Fund **Slurry Infrastructure Grants** provide farmers with an offer to upgrade their slurry management systems, offering strong environmental benefits. [Full guidance on GOV.UK](#)