



## The Basic Payment Scheme for England – An Introduction

### Introduction

The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) It will be the main source of direct farm support payments in England. If you are farming in England, you need to know about the BPS. This document will provide you with the main points.

Defra have published their detailed guides to BPS<sup>1</sup> and Cross Compliance<sup>2</sup> and these are available online. Check these for full details.

### Headlines

- All applications must be made online: **Register now** at [www.gov.uk/ruralpayments](http://www.gov.uk/ruralpayments)??
- If you can't get online to claim, ring **03000 200 301** for extra support.
- Application deadline will be 16 May 2016. (There may be penalties for late claims).
- There are different payment rates for Non-SDA land, SDA land and SDA Moorland.
- Payments will be made between 1 December and 30 June each year.

### Eligibility

To be eligible for BPS you must:

- Be a farmer - produce agricultural products or keep land clear of dense scrub.
- Be an active farmer: Businesses that operate airports, railway services, waterworks, real estate services or permanent sports and recreational grounds may not be eligible. Check the BPS Guide for full details
- Have at least 5 ha of agricultural land 'at your disposal' on 16 May 2016.

Land is eligible if:

- It is under arable cultivation (including fallow and temporary grass), permanent grassland or permanent crops.
- Some 'non-agricultural activities' are excluded (eg golf courses, gallops, zoos).
- The Guidance booklet set out how permanent features (such as farm buildings) and temporary activities (such as car boot sales) affect land eligibility.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-basic-payment-scheme-bps-rules-for-2016>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guide-to-cross-compliance-in-england-2016>



**Dual Use** – where a landlord claims the stewardship payments whilst a tenant claims the Basic Payment Scheme on the same land – this **may** be acceptable. You will need a written record of the arrangements. New CS agreements from 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2017 will permit dual use with both higher and mid-tier applications so long as sufficient evidence can be provided confirming each parties rights and obligations.

**Shared Grazing** – you can claim BPS on your ‘notional share’ of the eligible area.

## Entitlements

- To claim BPS you must have ‘entitlements’.
- Entitlements not used in any one year will be lost.
- Entitlements can be transferred by sale, gift, lease, inheritance, or as part of a merger or scission.
- New farmers and Young farmers can apply to a national reserve for new entitlements.

## Obligations

**Cross-compliance** – What is new for 2016?

- Remember the no hedge trimming season now extends from 1 March to 31 August – unless derogation from Secretary of State for Environment from 1<sup>st</sup> August to sow OSR or temp grassland.
- GAEC 1 – Buffer strips along water courses – must now establish a 2m buffer zone from centre of ditch.
- GAEC 7c Trees – cutting of orchard trees and windbreaks allowed between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> August.
- SMR 7 – Cattle identification and registration – no longer a requirement to record dam’s ear tag number of cattle arriving on a holding

Details are available in the 2016 Guide to Cross-compliance.

**Greening** – will be mostly the same as in 2015 other than some EFA features can now be up to 5 metres away from arable land and oil seed radish is now included as an acceptable EFA catch/cover crop in a seed mix.

Farmers with permanent grassland must follow the permanent grassland greening rule.

**Organic land is ‘green by default’.**

- Mixed organic / non-organic holdings will have to meet greening requirements on their non-organic land.
- On non-organic land, greening rules will apply on high nature value permanent grassland and holdings with at least 10 ha of arable land.

## Extras

**Young farmers** - (under 41 during 2015), can apply for a top-up payment.



**Penalties** can be levied for false claims, late applications or not following the cross compliance rules.

### **Contact**

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