

Practical advice at NSA event in Devon

THE National Sheep Association's (NSA) South West event, Sheep South West, is all set to focus on how producers can improve the health of both their flock and bank balance in a practical situation.

Bryan and Liz Griffiths, who will host the event on Tuesday, June 18, have applied practically-trialled science to their fields and flock for the past 15 years at Southcott Farm in Burrington, North Devon.

Working closely with Torch Vets and Liverpool University on issues varying from lameness, colostrum quality to worm and antibiotic resistance, the resulting facts and advice have been applied through changes to their management practice over the years.

The ensuing efficiency in flock health will be there for all to see on the farm tours taking place throughout the day. Seminars explaining the science behind the changes in management will run in tandem.

Mr Griffiths, chairman of NSA's board of trustees and a member of the technical committee for the beef and lamb sectors of Red Tractor Assurance, explained: "There are so many positives which have come out of this collaborative work. What has evolved is the appliance of science in the field, a real situation, not a theoretical one."

He is also involved in antibiotic resistance with Ruma (Responsible Use of Medicine in Agricultural Alliance). Meanwhile, Mrs Griffiths has worked closely with Torch Vets on worm burden and resistance.

A record 150 trade stands are booked with Shearwell Data coming forward as NSA's SSW major sponsor. Main sponsors include Animal and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), Crystallix, Harpers Feeds, Jaspers in conjunction with Dalehead Foods and Waitrose, Mole Valley, MSD, Townergate Insurance and British Wool.

With wool's popularity as a sustainable natural fibre continuing to rise, Mr Griffiths is looking forward to hosting a talk on the history of shearing. He will be joined by Alan Derryman who, at 60-years old, sheared 413 sheep last year in nine hours to raise £11,000 for the Exeter Leukemia Fund (ELF) and world shearing champion Matt Smith.

Nearly 50 breed societies will be on site for the day, many running their own competitions. There will also be the popular and professionally-contested Next Generation Young Shepherd and Student competitions sponsored by Mole Valley Farmers and Volac, respectively.

■ **For further information about Sheep South West visit the website www.national-sheep.org.uk/sheep-south-west**

Still time to make a BPS claim – and to correct errors on submissions

YOU can still make a 2019 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim up to June 10, and also correct errors on submitted claims. There is a 1% penalty per day on any parcel where an error is notified after May 31, but this is not applied to the whole claim.

And a new claim submitted after May 15 suffers a 1% penalty per day on the whole claim. The maximum penalty therefore can only be 26% if a new claim is submitted on June 10.

Below is a summary of the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) penalties for errors they might discover when processing BPS applications or following an inspection:

Errors

■ **Obvious errors**
If whilst checking a BPS application the RPA finds an error which is an obvious mistake from a simple check, they may be able to make the amendment without applying a penalty. The RPA will only allow this type of amendment once for each mistake. If the same mistake is made on multiple applications the RPA may not accept it as an "obvious error" the second time, and a penalty will be applied.

■ **Notified errors**
For 2019 applications, farmers are able to notify the RPA of errors relating to their application at any time, even after the final deadline dates have passed (being the May 15 submission deadline, the May 31 amendment to submitted claims without penalty deadline and the June 10 submission and amendment subject to penalty deadline). Applicants can notify the RPA of an error for the purpose of avoiding a penalty at any time providing they have not:

- Already been told of any non-compliances in their application, or
- Received advance warning of an inspection.

It is therefore vital that any errors are reported to the RPA as soon as possible to avoid receiving a penalty.

Penalties

The RPA will apply penalties for the following:

- Submitting an application late;
- Changing an application after the May 31 deadline (this includes changes to supporting information or evidence submitted as part of the application);
- The application doesn't contain all the agricultural land on a farmer's holding;
- The area of eligible land the farmer claims payment on is significantly

Hugh Townsend, WMN Farming's land agent / surveyor expert, says it's not too late to make a BPS claim and correct errors



larger than the area the farmer actually has;

- Non-compliance with the greening rules;
- A farmer provides false evidence in an attempt to qualify for the young farmer payment;
- Being found to have breached the cross compliance rules.

■ Over-claiming penalty

If the over-claim is either more than 3% of the area determined or two hectares, the RPA will apply a penalty which will be 1.5 times the size of the over-claim (the 'standard rate'). The standard penalty for over-claiming won't be more than 100% of the amount the farmer claimed. If the size of the penalty is more than 100%, the excess will be written off (ignored). The RPA will reduce this penalty by 50% if both of the following apply:

- It is the first time a farmer has received a penalty under this new rule (starting from claim year 2016);
- The difference between the area claimed by the farmer and the area determined by RPA is not more than 10% of the area determined.

This means the RPA in these circumstances will apply a rate of 0.75 times the size of the over-claim (the 'reduced rate'), and not the 'standard rate'. In these cases, the RPA may carry out an inspection next year.

If, in the year after the reduced rate has been applied, a farmer over-claims again, the RPA will apply both of the following:

- Use the standard rate of 1.5 for the second penalty, regardless of the size of the over-claim; and
- Cancel the 50% reduction from the previous penalty.

This means the previous year's penalty is increased to the standard rate. The RPA will apply the 1.5 standard rate penalties to any other over-claims made by the farmer in future years.

■ Greening penalties

Greening penalties are applied for not meeting the crop diversification and Ecological Focus Area (EFA) rules:

- If the crop diversification two crop rule is breached the penalty will be 2 x [the payment due on the area the main crop exceeds];
- If the crop diversification three crop rule is breached the penalty will

be [the payment due on the area of the main crop which exceeds 75% of the arable land determined on your holding] plus 5 x [the payment due on the area the combined two main crop exceeds 95% of your determined arable area];

- Ecological Focus Area (EFA) rule: 10 x the payment due on the equivalent amount (in hectares) of missing EFA.

■ **Greening Administrative Penalty**
The Greening Administrative Penalties calculation is based on the size of the reductions applied to the Greening payment for non-compliance with the Crop Diversification (CD), EFA and/or Environmentally Sensitive Permanent Grassland (ESPG) Greening requirements.

Greening Administrative Penalties will apply for non-compliance with the greening rules as follows:

- If area of non-compliance is up to 3% of total claim, or two ha (calculated on difference between the total of CD, ESGP or EFA area reductions for non-compliance with the greening rules as a proportion of the reduced determined area that the Greening payment is based on) – no penalty;
- If area of non-compliance is more than 3% or two ha and up to 20% of the determined area that the greening payment is calculated on then the area of greening payment is reduced by twice the total non-compliance reduction (subject to penalty limitations explained below);
- If area of non-compliance is more than 20% and up to 50% then the area of greening payment is reduced to zero (subject to penalty limitations explained below);
- If area of non-compliance is more than 50% of the area of greening payment is reduced to zero and a further penalty based on the [originally claimed greening payment] x area of penalty reduction (subject to penalty limitations explained below).

For the 2018 scheme year onwards, the size of the Greening Administrative Penalty is still limited but it is higher than 2017. It is divided by four and will not exceed 25% of the total greening payment due for that scheme year.

■ **Not Declaring All Agricultural Land Penalty**
When submitting a BPS application, applicants must declare all the land



Difference between land declared and

Difference between land declared and (as a % of land declared)

up to 3% of the area determined

more than 3% and up to 20%

more than 20% and up to 50%

more than 50%

they have at their disposal on the application, even if they do not wish to claim the payment on all parcels. The penalty for being in breach of this requirement is determined by the difference between the area declared and the area at the applicant's disposal.

■ Other penalties

It is also worth remembering that breaches of cross compliance can also reduce the payment you receive from your BPS application. Artificiality is another issue which can

Dairy industry being put 'at risk'

GREAT opportunities for Britain's dairy industry are being put at risk due to "crippling" uncertainty over Brexit, sector leaders have warned.

Michael Oakes, chairman of the National Farmers' Union (NFU) dairy board, fears investment is being "put on hold" and essential jobs "not being filled" as a result of the continued political impasse on Britain's departure from the European Union.

The largest international trade partner for the UK dairy sector, between 2013 and 2017 more than 90% of UK dairy exports were sent to the EU.

Mr Oakes explained: "Dairy farming, like all businesses, requires long-term planning. But after months of negotiation, we still haven't got any certainty about our future which is hugely damaging. This means investment is being put on hold and essential jobs are not being filled."

"We're still in the dark about what trading environment we will be operating under and whether we will have access to a sufficient workforce to carry out essential roles on our dairy farms, or what the UK's future domestic agricultural policy will look like."

British dairy farmers are keen to "make the most" of trading with the rest of the world post-Brexit, Mr Oakes added, but he stressed the sector must not be "undermined by Government trade policy which ignores the country's high environmental, animal welfare and food safety standards, and ultimately "fails to recognise the importance of domestic milk production".

He continued: "Once we have certainty about our future relationship with the EU, we need Government to look at how it can support the growth of the British dairy sector by helping us access key markets and invest in domestic processing capacity to allow the industry to meet demand."



➤ Greening penalties can be applied for not meeting crop diversification and Ecological Focus Area (EFA) rules, warns Hugh Townsend Penny Cross

size of the penalty

what is actually held Size of penalty

what is actually held	Size of penalty
	No penalty
	1%
	2%
	3%

affect the BPS claim that is often overlooked, and it is important what is happening on the ground is also what is happening on paper, and vice versa. It is also vital that all agreements (ie leases, grazing licences, etc) and documents (ie NVZ, TB testing, etc) are kept up to date in case of an inspection, as these can be vital to avoid penalties or cross compliance failures.

■ Contact Hugh Townsend on 01392 823935 or at htownsend@townsendcharteredurveyors.co.uk

Land Rover star of show

A 1949 Series 1 Land Rover looks set to draw plenty of attention from keen bidders at Holsworthy Market this weekend.

Coming direct from one private home in North Cornwall, it will form part of 1,700 lots coming under the hammer on Saturday.

Ten tractors will join the line-up, including a John Deere 4440 coming in from the edge of Exmoor.

Kivells auctioneer, James Morrish, said ahead of this weekend's sale: "A mass of mowers, straw choppers, harvesting equipment and goods will fill the market site to capacity, together with 350 poultry, 400 lots of pet food and 100 pigs."

The sale will start at 9.45am.



➤ The 1949 Series 1 Land Rover is expected to be the star lot at Saturday's auction James Morrish / Kivells