

# Faultless land 'mapping' is key

**T**HE Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) is a payment for either actively farming land or maintaining it in a condition suitable for farming. The payment is calculated based on the number of hectares of land on which the claim is made.

The process for claiming is as below:

## Step 1: Register with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

The Rural Payments Agency is the subdivision of Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) responsible for paying the BPS. You will need an account with them before they can pay you. This can be done by phone. The RPA's number is 03000 200 301. Once a lengthy options menu has been navigated, the operator at the other end of the line will help you set up an account.

They will then issue you with a Single Business Identifier (SBI) number, which is used in correspondence when discussing the business, and a Customer Reference Number (CRN) which is used for logging onto the RPA website. You will also be asked to give three answers to memorable questions for identifying yourself when talking to the RPA on the phone.

## Step 2: Map your land

There are two ways to do this. If you have acquired your land from someone else who previously claimed on it, and the land transfer window is

open, they may transfer the land onto the account you have just created. Alternatively, you can use the RPA's "add land by email" function or complete and send an RLE1 form (which can be downloaded from the RPA website) to the RPA along with a sketch map of each field.

It is important that mapping is correct, including land on which you do not wish to claim, and all ineligible features are included. If not, you may be penalised when you try to claim and your payment may be delayed. Never accept what someone else has previously mapped without checking even if it is registered with the RPA already. The RPA rely on automatic satellite mapping and historic information, so their maps are frequently incorrect.

## Step 3: Wait until the claim window opens

This will usually be early in March, and will last until around May 15. However, claims can be submitted after the deadline at an increasing penalty until a further "final deadline", usually around June 30. However, BPS entitlements can only be purchased before the deadline. See below for an explanation of how entitlements work.

## Step 4: Source entitlements

As well as land, to claim the BPS you also need "entitlements". These are a type of intangible asset that can be bought from other farmers who no longer need them, e.g. because they

Land agent and surveyor expert **Hugh Townsend** sets out his beginner's guide to submitting a BPS claim



have sold or rented out their land. Entitlements can be issued by the Government for free when some specific criteria are met, now including having started farming the land on which you are claiming the entitlements before May 17, 2021.

Otherwise, if you have bought or leased the land from a previous claimant they may transfer their entitlements to you as part of the arrangement. If not you will need to contact an entitlement agent such as Townsend Chartered Surveyors, who will source them for you from the open market. One entitlement equates to one hectare of eligible land, and a claim requires both land and entitlements. In other words, to claim 10 hectares of BPS, you would need 10 hectares of land and 10 entitlements. If you had 10 hectares of land and 12 entitlements, or 12 hectares of land and 10 entitlements, the most BPS you could claim would still be 10 hectares.

In England there are actually three different types of entitlement, each of them applying to different areas of the country: Non-Severely Disadvantaged Area (non-SDA); Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) and SDA Moorland. The type of land you have, so the type of entitlement you need, can be checked using Defra's Magic Maps website.

## Step 5: Prepare your claim

If you have internet access, you can log into the RPA website with your passwords and CRN, and then generate a claim from here or download a digital form to print out. If not, you will need to contact the RPA and ask them to post a paper claim form to you.

Either way, once you have a claim form in front of you, you must ensure by writing or inputting into your computer that you are only claiming on the eligible areas of each parcel. Now is a good time to recheck your mapping. If some parcels are not mapped correctly, or if there are some areas which may not be eligible for other reasons such as because they are used for non-agricultural activity, you should reduce your claim on those parcels accordingly and also notify the RPA of the increase in ineligible area using an RLE1 form.

If you requested the RPA to map your parcels but they have not yet done this, you will also need to complete and send back a continuation booklet. This identifies the as-yet-

unmapped parcels on which you want to claim.

## Step 6: Check, save, submit then save again

Your claim should now be ready to submit. However, we recommend that you should always make a final check against your mapping before it is sent out. Then you should save, or scan / photocopy, the form you are about to submit. Then you can submit the form, either by post or using the RPA website.

We recommend if you are submitting the form digitally to save again and check it again now to ensure no errors with the RPA website have altered your claim (we have seen this happen!). If so, you can generate a new claim and resubmit.

If you are submitting on paper, or need to post a continuation booklet, we strongly recommend that you use tracked postage and save your tracking number. The RPA have been known to lose documents sent to them.

Alternatively, if you wish to save yourself the inconvenience and minimise the risk of errors, it is possible to use an agent to either help you with this, or submit the claim on your behalf.

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► Many British and South West farms, particularly those with livestock, are heavily dependent on their BPS claim to remain profitable

Peter Banks

## UK pork at risk if retailers fail to act

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the expectation that the situation would all eventually come good.

The recent spike in the wheat price has now shattered that prospect, particularly, with soya, energy, fuel and labour costs also increasing.

At the meeting on March 8, pig producers highlighted just how dire the situation had

become. One producer explained how their feed costs increased from £78/pig in April 2021 to £101/pig this month, and are set to soar to £119/pig in April 2022 due to the higher wheat price.

Another estimated that, with forecast losses of £50/pig, a 700-sow pig unit will lose £1 million over the next year at current prices and costs.

The NPA estimates that more than £2p/kg is needed to allow producers to break even, which is around 70p/kg above the current price they are being paid by retailers.

The UK pig price has failed to respond to some dramatic price increases in Europe,

where the market has experienced shortages of pigs, following a notable contraction last year.

Mr Mutimer concluded: "We are staring down the barrel of a total collapse of the British pig industry, which is not only a tragedy for the producers, themselves, but will leave UK consumers short of one of their favourite and most versatile meats.

"Retailers will not be able to rely on EU pork, either, as it gets shorter in supply and more expensive.

"They need to act now to ensure that they can continue to secure our high quality British pork - we haven't got long."

### Agricultural Waste - FarmClear Service

The Implementation of **Waste Management Regulation 2005** now means that 'on farm' burning or burying of Wastes is no longer permitted.

Farmers will have a duty of care to dispose of their wastes through a controlled Waste Disposal Route.

At Peake GB Limited we can cater for your disposal needs on **Non-Hazardous Waste** items such as Silage Wrap, Feed Bags, Crop Covers, Herbicide Drums, Fertiliser Bags, Net Wrap, Baler Twine and Drainage Pipe.

We can also Dispose of **Hazardous Waste** items such as Chemicals, Medicines, Aerosols, Oil, Tyres, Syringes and Blades.



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