

# AGRICULTURAL UPDATE

*December 2016*

## **BPS Payment Window Opens**

The Rural Payments Agency's BPS 2016 payment window opened on 1st December with the RPA currently expecting to make payments to over 90% of claimants by the end of the month. Payment rates for this year are up significantly on last year due to the change in exchange rate between the Sterling and the Euro. This means that for the 2016 scheme year, lowland claimants can expect to receive £215.61/ha (£87.25/ac) to include their greening payment. Claims that exceed €2,000 total remain subject to the Financial Discipline Mechanism deduction of 1.35%.

Whether the RPA's target of 90% of claimants to be paid in December is achievable, and whether these payments are an accurate reflection of the claim submitted remains to be seen, however, we would urge all claimants to keep a watchful eye on their bank balance throughout the month and check that what is received matches what was claimed.

If you have any concerns about incorrect payments or other issues relating to BPS please contact our Agricultural Team.

• Farm & Estate Management

• Sales & Purchases of Rural Properties

• Valuations

• Estate Planning

• Landlord & Tenant

• Farming Agreements

• Basic Payment Scheme

• Auctions

• Compensation & Compulsory Purchase

• Farm Buildings

• Expert Witness

• Planning & Development

• Minerals

• Agri-Environment

• Woodland

• Digital Mapping

• Diversification & Grants

• Employment

• Payroll & Accounts

• Renewable Energy

---

**33 Castle Street  
Cirencester  
Gloucestershire  
GL7 1QD**

**01285 648107**

## Natural England Charges

Natural England currently charges for pre-application advice on planning and licencing case work. These charges will now be extended to include some categories of advice to assist with applications for consents for activities which may have an impact on SSSIs. We understand that these will initially relate to one-off applications in respect of infrastructure, development or large recreational events - but this should not affect applications for consents to carry out routine agricultural activities.

It is interesting to note this change, which might be the first sign of a revised philosophy and therefore the precursor for a wider charging regime.

## Bird Flu

An Avian Flu prevention zone has been introduced in England for 30 Days from 6th December, 2016 following outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N8) in poultry and wild birds in mainland Europe. No cases of H5N8 have been found in the UK yet, and PHE advises the public that the health threat is currently low. However, keepers of poultry and other captive birds are required to keep their birds indoors, or take appropriate steps to keep them separate from wild birds. The order is a precautionary measure and DEFRA is continuing to monitor the situation closely.

It is important to be vigilant for any signs of disease, and seek prompt advice from a vet where there is cause for concern. Maintaining good biosecurity can help prevent avian flu, not only by reducing poultry movement and minimising contact between poultry and wild birds, but also through such measures as disinfecting clothing and equipment. Further details can be obtained from the DEFRA website.

It is also worth reminding keepers of poultry that registration is required if you have 50 or more birds. The GB Poultry Register helpline is 0800 634 1112.

## For Sale

Organic wheat straw bales (Heston and conventional size) and organic haylage (square and round bales) for sale. To pick up from Bradborough Farm, Southrop. Please contact Emma Buse for the Seller's details.

## Farm Inspections Guidance

Guidance has been published by DEFRA on farm inspections. It covers who will inspect your farm, what the inspectors are looking for and any penalties for which you may be liable. There are four such documents: Animal Inspections, Disease Inspections, Land and Environmental Inspections and Facility Inspections.

The RPA and Environment Agency inspections are covered under the Land and Environmental booklet which is available on the government website [www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-inspections](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-inspections)

We are happy to provide advice if you are selected for an inspection and to assist in any administration work that may be needed.

## Guidance on 2017 Bovine TB Testing Intervals

All keepers of cattle, buffalo or bison are required by law to have their animals tested for bovine TB at prescribed intervals to reflect the regional risks of bovine TB.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has recently announced that the TB testing intervals in place in England since January 2015, will remain the same for 2017.

All cattle keepers in England will shortly receive a letter from the APHA explaining the default testing interval in their area and the TB testing interval for their herd. The APHA will then only write to individual keepers if there are changes to a herd's testing interval and to explain the reason for the change.

All cattle keepers with an annual or six-monthly testing interval, including those whose herds are undergoing radial testing in the Low Risk Area, must also comply with statutory pre-movement testing requirements, unless an exemption applies to the animal being moved or the type of movement.

Further information is available online at:  
[www.gov.uk/topic/keeping-farmed-animals/bovine-tb](http://www.gov.uk/topic/keeping-farmed-animals/bovine-tb)

## Marshes Farm Sells at Auction

On Wednesday 30th November, hopeful bidders attended the Red Hart, Blaisdon for the auction of Marshes Farm, Longhope, Gloucester. The property comprises a five bedroom period farmhouse in need of modernisation, a range of traditional and modern farm buildings and pastureland, extending in all to about 15.46 acres (6.26 hectares). Mark Hill, the auctioneer, received bids from several parties and eventually sold the property for £410,000.

If you are considering a sale of property by public auction, please contact Amy Herring for further information (01285 648115).

## The Farming Ammonia Reduction Grant Scheme

Natural England have recently launched the Farming Ammonia Reduction Grant (FARG) Scheme for dairy and/or beef farmers in England. The scheme offers grants at 100% of the standard rate through Countryside Stewardship to pay for slurry store covers. Through the scheme, farmers will also receive one-to-one advice from a farm adviser on ways to reduce ammonia emissions and conserve nitrogen.

Applicants can claim for the following capital items:

- Self-supporting covers for slurry stores at £61/m<sup>2</sup>
- Floating covers for slurry stores and lagoons at £11.20/m<sup>2</sup>

Applications must be received by Natural England before 31st January, 2017. For more information or if you would like us to apply on your behalf, please contact the Agricultural Team on 01285 648107.

## Christmas Opening Hours

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and profitable New Year.

Our offices will be closed on 26th and 27th December but will be open for business on 28th, 29th and 30th December from 10am - 2pm. We are closed on the 2nd January and normal hours will resume from 3rd January, 2017.

For further advice please contact one of our Agricultural Team: Mark Hill, Christopher Graham, Paul Oughton, Stuart Milsom, Brian Smith, Peter Kirby, Margaret Bush, Amy Herring, Anthony Wright, Harriet Taylor & Andrew Stibbard

This newsletter is produced for guidance only and should not be used as a substitute for professional advice. Accordingly no liability or responsibility for any loss or damage can be accepted by Moore Allen & Innocent LLP or other contributors as a result of any person, company or other organisation acting or refraining from acting upon comment on this newsletter.