



FARMING AND PROPERTY BULLETIN – JANUARY 2021

Agricultural Transition

- Following publication of the the Government's '*Path to Sustainable Farming*' document, Parliament's Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee has subsequently launched an enquiry into the ELM (Environmental Land Management) Scheme and the Agricultural Transition.
- In anticipation of the ELM Scheme Pilots that will be run nationally through 2021, the EFRA Select Committee will scrutinise the design of the Pilots and will raise questions on how the Government aims to ensure that farmers receive sufficient support throughout the Agricultural Transitions period.
- As part of their above enquiries, the EFRA Select Committee is calling for evidence on the following questions:
 - i. Is the Government's timeframe for rolling out the ELM Scheme and phasing out of direct payments by 2027 realistic?
 - ii. Will the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) be a viable support measure for farmers before the ELM Scheme is fully established?
 - iii. How effectively has Defra engaged with farmers, land managers and other stakeholders on the design of the ELM Scheme?
 - iv. How can the ELM Scheme be made a more appealing business choice for farmers, land managers and other stakeholders whilst still effectively delivering its goals?
 - v. How can the Government ensure that ELM Scheme agreements achieve their desired environmental outcomes whilst ensuring that bureaucratic burdens are reduced and that value for money is delivered?
 - vi. What lessons can be learned from previous environmental schemes?
- Further details on how evidence can be submitted can be found at <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/886/environmental-land-management-and-the-agricultural-transition/>. The deadline for submission of evidence is 29th January 2021.

BPS 2020 Payments

- 95% of farmers in England were paid their BPS 2020 payment by the RPA on the first day of the payment window. The RPA have also begun paying Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmental Stewardship (ES) revenue payments for 2020.

BPS Cross-Compliance Rules for 2021

- Despite Greening rules having been relaxed from 1st January 2021, farmers claiming under BPS must still adhere to the cross-compliance rules. These are the set of rules governing activities including hedge cutting, fertiliser application and livestock record-keeping.
- In England, the rules have not been changed for 2021 per se, but how the rules are implemented has been updated. When selecting farms for inspection, the RPA will now focus more on those farms that are likely to pose a higher risk to the environment. Random inspections will still be carried out on all types of farm however.
- Prior to an inspection, farmers will also be provided with a list of records that the inspector will want to have sight of to will enable them to prepare prior to the visit.
- The need for the standard penalty to be 3% has also been replaced by a system whereby different penalty percentage levels will apply depending on the severity of the breach and whether it was intentional or simply negligent.



BASC Advice on Shooting During Lockdown

- BASC has advised its members that activities such as wildfowling, deer stalking and rough shooting are now allowed as a form of exercise so long as a number of stringent conditions are met around travel and social distancing. These conditions can be found at <https://basc.org.uk/coronavirus/>, but the principals are as follows:
 - i. You should only travel locally to shoot, which is to 'stay local in the village, town or part of the city where you live' as defined in government guidance;
 - ii. When shooting, you should only meet with people you live with, your support bubble, or with one person from another household if on your own.
- BASC does not consider that driven game shooting or any other group shooting activities should take place at this time.

Red Tractor Standards Consultation

- Red Tractor is seeking input from across the farming industry at this important time for British food standards. The consultation will run until 5th March 2021 and will be finalised for rollout from November 2021.
- The NFU have urged farmers to voice their opinion and to ensure that they have their say so as to continue to influence the high standard of assurance that Red Tractor continues to provide across the six farming sectors. The consultation can be responded to by visiting <https://redtractor.citizenspace.com/>.

2021 Adkin Hay & Straw Sale

- The 60th Adkin Annual Sale of Hay & Straw took place live, online, on 12th January 2021. Held in conjunction with Thimbleby & Shorland, it was reported that the online format worked well, with the majority of buyers bidding online and all others by telephone.
- Auctioneer Chris Boreham, of Thimbleby & Shorland, noted in his sale report that the trade was in marked contrast to last year; strong demand for meadow hay was noted in particular, especially from local buyers supplying the horse market, with a top price of £44.50 per bale being achieved which was almost two and a half times more than the equivalent bales made last year. The lack of supply of fodder was evident, with the volume down on previous years as a result of the extreme weather seen in 2020, where the dry spring had resulted in low yields but very good quality.
- Significantly less straw was also entered this year, again a result of the low yields and the fact that a lot of straw had been traded at harvest. It was noted that strong demand for straw came particularly from buyers supplying livestock farmers in the west.
- With the exception of a small quantity of convention hay bales, there was 100% clearance of all hay and straw entered. Thanks go to all parties for continuing to support the sale. The principal prices achieved were as follows:

Meadow Hay

*Claas 2100 big bales - £44.50 per bale (approximately £178 per tonne), 100% clearance.
Conventional bales - £4.35 per bale, 67% clearance.*

Seed Hay

4-string Timothy/Ryegrass big bales - £41.25 per bale, 100% clearance.

Barley Straw

Claas 3200 big bales - £45 per bale (approximately £130 per tonne), 100% clearance.

Wheat Straw

MF 2140 big bales - £26.36 per bale (approximately £130 per tonne), 100% clearance.