

Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS)

The Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS) provides essential income support to farming businesses in remote and constrained rural areas.

Funding is used to:

- allow farmers and crofters to continue to operate as viable businesses
- avoid the risk of land abandonment
- help maintain the countryside by ensuring continued agricultural land use
- maintain and promote sustainable farming systems

The current scheme will continue until 2024, however, from 2015 we have introduced, in certain circumstances, more opportunities for active farmers and crofters who were refused LFASS support during 2010–2014 to receive funding.

Full scheme guidance

Before you apply for this scheme, you must read the full scheme guidance. If you have any questions, please check these with us before you submit an application. If you do not follow the scheme rules you risk losing all or part of any payment you may be entitled to.

[Full scheme guidance](#)

If you need any help or assistance to use this guidance, you can book an appointment at your local area office.

[Book an appointment](#)

Updates

If we need to update the scheme rules, we will let you know what has changed here. You will also be able to access previous versions of the guidance.

Eligibility

The scheme is open to livestock farmers and crofters actively farming Scottish land designated as a Less Favoured Area.

To qualify you must:

- be at least 16 years of age
- declare at least three hectares of eligible land in your Single Application Form
- actively farm the eligible land you claim for LFASS, for the majority of the calendar year you claim in
- meet cross compliance conditions on all the land declared in your Single Application Form

You can find more information about active farming and eligible land rules in the full scheme guidance.

Claims

You can claim for LFASS annually through your Single Application Form each year during the annual application window.

You can find out more about the Single Application Form in our dedicated section.

[Single Application Form](#)

You can find detailed information about claiming - including guidance for those who farm or submit a Single Application Form outside Scotland - in the full scheme guidance.

Payment

This is how we will calculate your LFASS payment:

- we will use your eligible land area claimed, and certain historic values, to work out what area of land we will pay you on
- we will multiply your payable area by the payment rate for your fragility area

If your payment is based on your payable area is less than £385, we will top it up so that you get the minimum LFASS payment of £385.

The full scheme guidance tells you about:

- how we will apply degressivity
- how we work out your payable area
- historic values and how we use them
- fragility area
- the LFASS minimum payment and the payment rates

We aim to make payments early in the year after you have applied, with most being paid by the end of March. For example, LFASS applications in 2015 should see payments in early 2016. Payments will be made directly to bank accounts via BACS.

Inspections

If you receive funding from this scheme you may be inspected. You can find out more about how and why we carry out inspections in our dedicated section.

[Inspections](#)

European Commission law requires us to carry out:

- on-farm inspections on at least five per cent of claims
- administrative checks on all claims

We must check that:

- you are meeting cross compliance rules on all of your land and not just the Less Favoured Area you have claimed for
- the land you claim is eligible and that the area you have claimed is correct
- the level of farming activity is acceptable and you have economic responsibility for that activity

If you are qualifying for LFASS for the first time we will also check how many animals you have kept in the past against the Cattle Traceability System maintained by the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS). This is called your historic animal values.

You can find further information about LFASS inspections and what we mean by having economic responsibility in the full scheme guidance.

Breaches and penalties

If we find you have not been following the terms of the scheme, we will call this a breach and you could face a penalty. It's important that we penalise breaches to make sure we're acting within European Commission law.

Breaches can be caused by:

- over-claiming on your land area or claiming on ineligible land
- claiming on land not actively farmed, including activity across your farm that is too low
- someone else having economic responsibility for the farm activity

Penalties for not following the schemes rules could be reduced or cancelled payments. If we have already paid you, we may ask you to repay all or part of your payment with interest. Also:

- if you make a false declaration due to negligence, you will lose your payment for the year
- if you make a false declaration intentionally, you will lose your payment for two years
- in some cases where you have intentionally provided us with false information, you may face prosecution

Further information why we need to penalise breaches can be found below.

[Disallowance and penalties](#)

Appeals and complaints

You can appeal against decisions to refuse, reduce or recover subsidy or grant payments.

When we send you a letter with a decision that you can appeal against, we will tell you about your rights of appeal.

You may not be happy about the standard of service you have received and may wish to complain.

Further information on how to appeal and complain about our services can be found here:

[Appeals](#)

[Complaints](#)

Contact

If you have any questions about this scheme, please get in touch. Contact details can be found in our Contact us section.

[Contact us](#)

Scheme delivery

This scheme is delivered through:

