

Rural Development: Beef Efficiency Scheme full guidance

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1. Introduction

This guidance is for the Beef Efficiency Scheme.

Please read these notes carefully before signing up to the Beef Efficiency Scheme so you fully understand the requirements of the five-year contract.

In the event that there are any changes to these terms and conditions, they will be published on this web page.

2. Overview

The Beef Efficiency Scheme is a five-year climate change scheme that aims to help beef breeders improve their efficiency, sustainability and quality of their beef herd – helping increase their genetic value from 2016 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The scheme will deliver a range of improvements by focusing on cattle genetics and management practice.

The scheme's approach, based on active use of whole life data for individual animals, provision of advisory services and action planning by farmers, has the potential to make a significant impact by using better data to improve management practices.

The scheme will involve:

- the input of data collected by farmers about their animals for the duration of the scheme
- genotyping a proportion of animals each year to enhance the rate of genetic progress
- a carbon audit of each farm in the scheme
- support for farmers to identify three management improvements on their farm within the five years of the contract

3. Eligibility

3.1 Producers and agents

To be eligible for this scheme, you must meet certain requirements.

You must be eligible for Basic Payment Scheme payments and be registered on the Rural Payments and Services system.

You can find out more about how to register on the [How to use this service](#) page.

In addition:

- you must be registered as a cattle keeper with the [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#)
- you have to be a breeder of beef calves
- calves must be correctly registered on the Cattle Tracing System and have a valid passport
- you must be a member of a farm assurance scheme
- you must commit to completing the requirements of the Beef Efficiency Scheme

You should be registered as a **beef producer** with a recognised farm assurance scheme. These include: Quality Meat Scotland Assurance Scheme – Cattle and Sheep, Red Tractor Assurance for Farms – Beef & Lamb, RSPCA Assured, or any [UK approved organic control body](#).

If you have applied for assurance scheme membership, then you must be approved within three months of the date of your Beef Efficiency Scheme agreement.

If you wish to use an agent or business representative to apply for this scheme on your behalf, you need to update your mandates with us.

The easiest way to do this is by logging in to Rural Payments and Services.

[Log in](#)

Alternatively, you can use the PF05 - Business mandate form. You can get this from your local RPID office or download a copy.

[PF05 - Business mandate form](#)

3.2 Holdings

Your holding is all the production units (farms or crofts) that you manage. Only production units in Scotland are eligible for this scheme.

3.3 Single Application Form

To claim for this scheme you must complete a Single Application Form each year during the annual application window. **If you do not do this, your claim will not be valid and we will not make a payment.**

You can find out more about the Single Application Form below.

[Single Application Form](#)

3.4 Cross Compliance

To be eligible for this scheme you must keep your land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) and meet the legal requirements of keeping cattle as part of our Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs).

You can find out more about Cross Compliance below.

[Cross Compliance](#)

4. How to apply

You must:

- register with [ScotEID on their website](#), if you haven't already registered with them
- submit a Beef Efficiency Scheme application on the [ScotEID website](#) by 15 June, 2016
- submit a Single Application Form for each of the five calendar years of your Beef Efficiency Scheme contract. This can be completed online on Rural Payments and Services or by paper. Either way it must be submitted within the annual application window

There are some key pieces of information you need for submitting a Beef Efficiency Scheme application. We recommend you have them to hand before you apply.

- ScotEID user name and password
- Business Reference Number (BRN)
- Main Location Code (MLC)
- Rural Payments and Services user name (if you are an online RPID customer and have one)
- farm assurance number
- a list of any cows that were not eligible in the reference year, 2015 (**subject to confirmation from the European Commission**)

See [Definitions](#) section for the meaning of 'eligible suckler cow'.

5. Payments

To calculate the Beef Efficiency Scheme payment available to you we will:

- divide the number of cows with eligible calves registered on the Cattle Tracing System in the reference year, 2015 (**subject to confirmation from the European Commission**), by 1.5 to ascertain your eligible hectares
- the payment will be £48 per eligible hectare, which equates to £32 per animal

For new entrants and young farmers it may be possible to use 2016 as an alternative reference year.

[Annex A](#) explains how payment is calculated in more detail and provides examples of payment calculations.

See [Definitions](#) section for the meaning of 'eligible calves', 'new entrant' and 'young farmer'.

6. Beef Efficiency Scheme system

The Beef Efficiency Scheme system will be hosted on the ScotEID website.

<https://www.scoteid.com>

The system includes the Scottish Government's electronic Beef Efficiency Scheme database in which you must record all Beef Efficiency Scheme actions, including compulsory data on the calf and dam.

The Beef Efficiency Scheme system must be updated within specified timelines to allow for the genotyping selection process to take place. The timelines are explained in the [Genotyping](#) section of this guidance.

7. Compulsory data collection

7.1 Calf

– Calf ID, date of birth, sex and the dam ID

The Beef Efficiency Scheme system will use the information (calf ID, date of birth and dam ID) you record on the Cattle Tracing System when you register calves with the British Cattle Movement Service.

– Sire ID of calf

The first time that you record a sire for a calf using its official ID on the Beef Efficiency Scheme system, that sire's ID will be added to a drop-down list and will be available to use for subsequent calf data

recording. As you enter further sires, the drop-down list will grow to represent your list of sires available. You can, for any entry, type in the official ID of the sire.

It is important that, to the best of your ability, you record the correct sire ID for each calf. However, we appreciate that this is not always easy and thus information can be amended at a later stage. There is no penalty in the scheme if you record the wrong sire and it is **not a Cross Compliance issue**.

– Calving ease

Calving ease is assessed on how easy or how difficult the calving event is. There are five ‘calving ease’ options to choose from starting with the cow calving herself through to the point at which a caesarean is required.

Cow calved herself

This is when you have given no assistance during the calving event. You would also use this descriptor where a cow has calved herself in between your calving checks and you weren’t present.

Assisted calving

Easy – is one person simply pulling the calf’s feet by hand. If the cow is struggling to calve herself and you have to assist with a non-strenuous pull without the use of a calving jack then this is classed as an easy pull.

Hard – this is two people on a rope or the use of a calving jack. This score would also be used where the calving was carried out by one person using mechanical assistance.

In the Beef Efficiency Scheme system you will see that the ‘Easy’ and ‘Hard’ options are set out on a scale. This allows you to provide a better evaluation of the calving event. For example, where the calving was very easy and a light pull was required you would evaluate this by marking an ‘X’ closer to ‘Easy’.

However, if you had to use a calving rope and pull a little harder, then you would mark this around the middle of the scale, as in the example below.

If assisted: Easy X Hard

Caesarean

You have the option to record a caesarean – this is where there has been veterinary assistance to surgically remove the calf.

Malpresentation

The last option is ‘Malpresentation’ – for example, where there has been a breech and the calf arrives tail first.

– Size of calf

You must assess the size of the calf within 24 hours of birth.

The calf-size scale ranges from small through to extra large. Small is scored as 1, medium 2, large 3 and extra large as 4.

You should assess calf size based on averages **for your herd**. For example, if a calf is smaller than average, you would score it as a ‘1’, as in the example below. You should also assess calf size based on the breed. For example, you can compare Aberdeen Angus calves with each other but not with a Charolais calf.

Calf size: Small X Extra Large
1 2 3 4

– Calf vigour

You must give the calf a vigour score, based on the descriptors in the table below, which are also highlighted in the calving diary.

Scale	Description
-------	-------------

7.2 Dam (mother of the calf)

– Dam docility

You must record the dam docility. This is the dam's behaviour when you are working around her at the time of officially tagging the calf.

The table below has been created to help you assess a cow's docility. The scale and descriptors are also included in the Beef Efficiency Scheme diary.

Scale	Description
1	Docile – the cow is easily handled, settled and gentle.
2	Quiet – but can be restless when handled.
3	Manageable but nervous – moderate amount of struggle when handled.
4	Flighty or wild – out of control, jumpy and struggles violently when handled.
5	Aggressive – she is agitated and may show attacking behaviour, going for you in the pen.

In the example below, the cow has been scored a 1.

Dam: Docile X Aggressive
 1 2 3 4 5

– Culling / death reasons of the dam (if applicable)

If necessary, you must also record the date and reason for the culling or death of the dam. There are a number of different codes in the table below, which you can use to categorise the reason on the Beef Efficiency Scheme system. You can choose any or all that apply.

Calving	AB	Abortion
	CD	Cow down
	ME	Metritis
	RP	Retained placenta
Health and disease	GT	Tetany / grass staggers
	LA	Lameness
	MA	Mastitis
	MF	Milk fever
	PN	Pneumonia
	SC	Scour
Veterinary diagnosed and disease	KE	Ketosis
	LD	Left displaced stomach / abomasum
	RD	Right displaced stomach / abomasum
General	AG	Old age
	BE	Behaviour / temperament
	FL	Feet and legs
	HP	General health problems
	IF	Infertility
	IJ	Injury
	LP	Low production

	PC	Poor condition
	TY	Poor type

8. Genotyping

8.1 Genotype selection

Each year you will be required to take a genotype ear tissue sample from your calves equating to 20 per cent of your reference animals (rounded to the nearest animal). For example, an applicant with 47 reference animals in 2015 must have sufficient animals to genotype nine calves in each year of the scheme. If you do not have sufficient animals to genotype each year then penalties may apply (see [Annex B](#)).

The selection criteria for the 20 per cent sample will be based on the data recorded by you on the Beef Efficiency Scheme system. We would expect all calves born from the 1 January up to and including the 1 June to have their sire details, calving ease, vigour and any health events recorded on the system by the 15 July of the same year. For those calves born from the 2 June until the 31 December, the same information should be recorded on the system by the 15 January the following year.

There is also a requirement to genotype all bulls used for mating that are still on your holding.

The animals you are required to tissue tag for genotyping will be notified to you as soon as possible after the selection has been made.

8.2 Genotype tissue tagging

There are two options for tissue tagging. You can either:

- wait for the laboratory to provide you with genotype tissue tags free of charge for the 20 per cent of animals that have been selected for tagging, or
- tissue tag 100 per cent of your calves, using a genotype tissue tag as your primary or secondary tags (bearing an official crown logo) or as a separate management tag. Under this option, the additional price of using genotype tissue tags (as opposed to ordinary official tags) will be at your own cost

If you opt to tissue tag 100 per cent of your calves, you will be required to use an appropriate tag that:

- preserves the sample until the designated laboratory contacts you to inform you of which samples are required, and
- is stored in the appropriate way, as instructed by the tag supplier

The tissue tags and sample tubes used for BVD testing **cannot** currently be used for genotype testing. **Please ensure you speak to your tag supplier about appropriate storage, use and shelf life of the tags if you opt to tag 100 per cent of your animals.**

You can also use a management tag for tissue tagging. However, the tag must be able to preserve the sample until they are required from the lab. The tags used for BVD testing cannot currently be used for genotype testing.

Please ensure you speak to your tag supplier about appropriate storage, use and shelf life of the tags if you are opting to tag 100 per cent of your animals.

The lab will send you a list of the animals (calves and bulls) requiring genotype tissue sampling, along with the tissue tags where relevant [\[1\]](#). For calves born 1 January to 1 June, this will be as close to weaning as possible and by the beginning of November each year. For calves born 2 June to 31 December this will be as close to weaning as possible and by the end of April the following year.

If a selected animal has died or is sold, the applicant must immediately contact the lab to request a substitute animal. A replacement tissue tag will be sent for the animal if you require it. If you tissue tag 100 per cent of your animals, then you will be asked to send the sample tube for that animal back to the lab instead.

The tissue tags must remain in the animals' ears until they move off your holding, for example if the animal is sold.

[1] In the first year of the scheme the lab will send tissue tags to all farmers for the selected animals for genotyping. Pre-paid postage and packaging for returning the sample tubes will be provided along with the tags. Thereafter, in years two through to five, you will be asked to indicate on the Beef Efficiency Scheme system what option for tagging you have chosen (i.e. 20 per cent or 100 per cent). If you choose to tissue tag 100 per cent of your calves, then you will not be sent tissue tags by the lab. You will, however, be sent a list of the animals required for genotyping and the pre-paid packaging for returning the sample tubes of the selected animals.

9. Carbon audit

It is a scheme requirement that a carbon audit of your business must be undertaken. This will be done using an online farm management package. It will identify the quantity and source of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) associated with your farming activity. Farms with a low carbon footprint are often the most efficient.

You will be given help with initial completion of the online management tool through the Beef Efficiency Scheme advisory services. Further detail will be provided to participants after they have joined the scheme.

Following completion of the initial audit, applicants will submit data annually detailing their farm enterprise inputs and outputs. This will be information that you should already have available to you as part of the normal operation of your farm business and will be used to evidence progress against the benchmark data captured during the initial audit.

The online tool will be designed with ease of use in mind and will allow individual farmers to look at changes which can be made on their farm that will reduce emissions and improve profitability.

10. Advisory services

You will be required to engage with advisory services to help you identify the best management improvements for your farm that will deliver greater farming efficiencies and better environmental and climate outcomes. The advisory services include:

- watching the advisory services video in year one
- attending advisory service group events throughout the five years of the scheme
- receiving a 1:1 advisory consultation within group events at least once during the five years of the scheme

The advisory service video, to be watched in the first year of the scheme, focuses on data collection, completion of the Beef Efficiency Scheme system on ScotEID and genotype tissue tagging. The video will be made available to you when you have joined the scheme and have a Beef Efficiency Scheme agreement.

We will contact you with details of when you should attend your specific 1:1 advisory session. We will also inform you of where the group events will be nearer to the time that these are held, as they will be across the country. The 1:1 and group advisory sessions will aim to help you to make your management decisions on changes to practice based on the information that you have gathered from the collection of your data and the genotyping.

Further detailed information on the advisory services will be published on Rural Payments and Services later this year.

11. Management improvements

You must identify three management improvements for your farm. One of the improvements should focus on improving breeding selection while another should include greenhouse gas mitigation. The third management improvement can come from the same or any other relevant area, such as breeding practices, grassland management, making better use of nutrients, etc.

The advisory services should be used to assist you in identifying the best management improvements to make and at least one of these should be selected by the end of the second scheme year of your agreement.

The management improvements you make should be recorded on the Beef Efficiency Scheme system.

12. 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 on this topic.

Inspections

European Union law requires us to carry out administrative checks on all claims, as well as undertaking on-farm inspections on at least five per cent of claims.

We must check that:

- you are meeting Cross Compliance requirements on all of your land, not just the land claimed under the Beef Efficiency Scheme
- 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
- you are meeting the Beef Efficiency Scheme requirements

We may also check your historic animal data on the Cattle Tracing System maintained by the British Cattle Movement Service to confirm the reference animals used to calculate your Beef Efficiency Scheme payment.

13. Breaches and penalties

We have to ensure we are acting within European Union law. If we find you have not been following the terms of the scheme we call this a breach and you could face a penalty.

Penalties for not following the scheme rules could mean reduced or cancelled payments. In these circumstances, if we have already paid you we may ask you to repay all or part of your payment with interest.

Breaches can be caused by:

- not completing the required information in the Beef Efficiency Scheme system
- not completing the genotyping
- not completing the carbon audit
- not attending the required advisory services
- breaching Cross Compliance rules
- submitting your Single Application Form after the application deadline

In [Annex B](#) we explain what happens in the case of such breaches.

Penalties can also be triggered in certain other circumstances:

- 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

We explain penalties in the following sections:

[Cross Compliance](#)

[Single Application Form](#)

14. Definitions

Young farmer

At the time of submitting a Beef Efficiency Scheme application you must:

- be between the age of 16 years and under 41 years of age at the point of application
- be setting up as head of the holding of a new or existing farming business for the first time
- have a suitable formal agricultural qualification (at least to National Vocational Qualification Level 2 or equivalent) or be able to demonstrate at least five years' agricultural experience
- you must have registered your business with us

New entrant

At the time of submitting a Beef Efficiency Scheme application you must:

- be over 16 years of age; there is no upper age limit
- be within a year of starting your agricultural business
- have a minimum of three hectares of land
- you must have registered your business with us

Eligible calf

- belongs to a beef breed, i.e. is born in Scotland out of an eligible suckler cow and is sired by a beef bred bull
- is part of a herd intended for rearing calves for meat production and / or beef breeding
- it has been tagged and registered on the Cattle Tracing System within 27 days of birth, in accordance EU regulation 1760/2000
- is in the ownership and possession of the applicant

Eligible suckler cow

- belongs to a beef breed, or sired by a beef breed
- is not a cow used to supply milk commercially
- is part of a herd intended for rearing calves for meat production and / or beef breeding
- rears a calf for suckling
- is in the ownership and possession of the applicant
- is properly tagged, registered and recorded in accordance with the Cattle Identification Regulations (CIR) Scotland. EU Regulation 1760/2000
- gives birth to an eligible calf

Beef Efficiency Scheme eligible land

All Basic Payment Scheme eligible land (including seasonal land) declared and claimed on your Single Application Form is potentially eligible.

[15. Contact us](#)

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the helpline on 0300 300 2222.

[16. Appeals and complaints](#)

16.1 Appeals

If you would like to appeal a decision we have made, you can do so through the formal appeals process. You can find out more in our appeals section.

[Appeals](#)

We may accept that you may have been prevented from meeting certain obligations of your contract due to a force majeure event. Force majeure relates to exceptional circumstances. Examples of a force majeure event are:

- the death of the scheme beneficiary
- the long-term incapacity of the beneficiary
- a severe natural disaster gravely affecting the holding
- the accidental destruction of buildings, such as slurry stores
- an epizootic or plant disease affecting part or all of the beneficiary's livestock or crops respectively

To seek an exception to any withdrawal of support or financial penalty on the grounds of force majeure, you must write to your RPID area office within 10 working days of the event happening. You should send us as much evidence as you can to support your case, including proof that the event occurred. Each case will be considered on its merits.

16.2 Complaints

If you would like to complain about the standard of service you have received, you can do so through our complaints process. You can find out more in our complaints section.

Complaints

Annex A – Beef Efficiency Scheme payment calculation

The Beef Efficiency Scheme (BES) payment will be paid over the first three years of your contract. As it is an agri-environment scheme the payment is worked out on an area basis. The payment rate is £48 per eligible hectare, which equates to £32 per calf.

For the purposes of the payment we are required to calculate your:

- BES reference animals
- BES calculated reference hectares
- BES defined reference hectares

BES reference animals

This is the number of cows with one or more eligible calves born in the reference year (expected to be 2015) and registered on the Cattle Tracing System for your business.

BES calculated reference hectares

This is determined by dividing the number of BES reference animals by the co-efficient 1.5 L/ha.

BES defined reference hectares

This will be equivalent to your BES calculated reference hectares if the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible land you claim on your Single Application Form in 2016 is at least 80 per cent of your BES calculated reference hectares.

If the area of Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible land claimed on your 2016 Single Application Form is less than 80 per cent of your BES calculated reference hectares, then the area used as your BES defined reference hectares is reduced to that figure.

Examples

– Farmer one

BES reference animals	150
BES calculated reference hectares	100 hectares
BPS eligible land claimed on Single Application Form 2016	80 hectares
BES defined reference hectares	100 hectares

The farmer's Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible land claimed on their 2016 Single Application Form (80 hectares) is within the 80 per cent threshold of their BES calculated reference hectares (100 hectares). Therefore the BES defined reference hectares remains at 100 hectares.

– Farmer two

BES reference animals	150
BES calculated reference hectares	100 hectares
BPS eligible land claimed on Single Application Form 2016	60 hectares
BES defined reference hectares	60 hectares

The farmer's Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible land claimed on their 2016 Single Application Form is 60 hectares. This is less than the 80 per cent threshold of their BES calculated reference hectares (100 hectares).

As a result the farmer's BES defined reference hectares is reduced to 60 hectares, which is equivalent to the actual area of Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible land the farmer claimed on their 2016 Single Application Form.

Beef Efficiency Scheme payment – years one, two and three

To receive your maximum Beef Efficiency Scheme payment for years one, two and three of your agreement you must declare and claim (as a minimum) the number of BES defined reference hectares on your Single Application Form for years one, two, three, four and five of your agreement.

If you do not have enough Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible land declared and claimed on your Single Application Form to meet the number of BES defined reference hectares but claim at least 80 per cent of your BES defined reference hectares, your Beef Efficiency Scheme payment will be reduced accordingly to the actual Basic Payment Scheme eligible land you declare and claim on your Single Application Form.

Beef Efficiency Scheme defined reference hectares and Basic Payment Scheme eligible land

Each year the scheme permits a maximum variation of 20 per cent between the farmer's BES defined reference hectares and the Basic Payment Scheme eligible land declared and claimed on their Single Application Form. If a farmer reduces the number of Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible hectares declared and claimed on their Single Application Form by more than 20 per cent of their BES defined reference hectares, then the farmer will be in breach of their contract.

A farmer can increase the number of Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible hectares declared and claimed on their Single Application Form as they wish. However, in terms of Beef Efficiency Scheme payment, where a farmer's land occupied, declared and claimed on their Single Application Form varies in any year after year one from his BES defined reference hectares it can be reduced by 20 per cent or increased by 20 per cent but not if this takes the area above the BES calculated reference hectares.

Claim and payment period

Payments will be automatically produced through the system, with year one, two and three payments being made in May 2017, 2018, and 2019 respectively. There is no payment for years four and five of the scheme although genotype testing and the obligations of your Beef Efficiency Scheme agreement will continue.

[Annex B – Penalties](#)

This section is in preparation. Details will be published as soon as they are finalised.

[Download guidance](#)

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