Rural Development: Beef Efficiency Scheme full guidance

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For recent changes to this guidance, please see the bottom of the page .

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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 and key deadlines

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

Applicant deadlines

7 February – data capture deadline for calving data of calves born 2 June to 31 December

7 February – data capture deadline for culling or death reasons of cows or calves which are disposed of or die between 2 June and 31 December

15 May – Beef Efficiency Scheme claim and Basic Payment Scheme claim submitted on the Single Application Form

30 June – tissue sample return deadline for animals selected between 1 October in previous year and 31 March

15 July - data capture deadline for calving data of calves born 1 January and 1 June

15 July – data capture deadline for culling or death reasons of cows or calves which are disposed of or die between 1 January and 1 June

31 December - tissue sample return deadline for animals selected between 1 April and 30 September

Weights for calves must be taken between 120 and 400 days old and entered onto the database within 15 working days

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 must 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.

If the holding where you will be calving changes during the period of your Beef Efficiency Scheme agreement you must let us know.

3.3 Single Application Form

To claim for this scheme you must complete a Single Application Form and indicate that you wish to claim the Beef Efficiency Scheme each year during the annual application window.

You must also claim enough Basic Payment Scheme Hectares to activate your claim. **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 your reference year, 2015

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 BES reference animals 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 only, 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 must 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 must 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
1	Where the calf is lazy and has no enthusiasm to get up or suckle after it has been cleaned by its mother.
2	Where it is lazy or weak and when it needs assistance to suckle and takes more than one hour to stand.
3	Vigorous when it has suckled without assistance but takes more than 30 minutes to stand.
4	Very vigorous or bouncing; the calf stands within 30 minutes and suckles itself.

Calf vigour must be assessed before the calf receives its first drink and within 24 hours.

If you are not present for the calving and the first time you see the calf it is running around and has suckled then you must mark this as a 4 on the scale, as in the example below.

Vigour: Lazy _____X Bouncing
1 2 3 4

– Weight of calf

Calves have to be weighed at least once between 120 and 400 days.

You must record a weight on the Beef Efficiency Scheme system for every calf unless it dies or is sold before it reaches 120 days old.

If a weight has not be entered onto the system by the time a calf reaches 400 days old you will have 15 working days to record a weight or a breach may be applied.

You have the flexibility to weigh the calves either individually or in a group, for example, on the farm or through a mart. If you decide to weigh the calves in a group they must be batched together with calves of similar size. The individual calf weights must be recorded on the Beef Efficiency Scheme system (as opposed to the total group weight), as well as the date and method used for weighing.

If you choose to weigh your animals more than once, these additional non-compulsory weights can also be recorded on the Beef Efficiency Scheme system. For example, if you record weights regularly between birth and 600 days you will have the option of recording all of these on the system

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– Creep feeding

You are required to record whether your calf is being creep fed. This is a simple choice of ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ on the system.

– Calf mortality

You must record the death of a calf, whether this happens before or after tagging and registering on the Cattle Tracing System.

If a calf dies before registration, the Beef Efficiency Scheme system allows you to record the calving record data for an unregistered calf and the reason for its death (see the table below). The dam ID can be selected from a drop-down list of dams or entered directly and the calf ID will be system generated, e.g. UNREG_CALF_1.

If the calf dies after it has been registered, a tick box in the calving record allows this to be recorded, along with the reason for death.

For calves that die between 1 January and 1 June, a reason for death must be recorded on the Beef Efficiency scheme system by 15 July.

For calves that die between 2 June and 31 December a reason for death must be recorded on the Beef Efficiency scheme system by 7 February.

Code	Reason for death
AB	Aborted premature
BD	Born dead (died during calving)
AX	Asphyxiated (placenta covering nose)
TR	Trampled after calving
JL	Joint / navel ill
NE	Neurological
PN	Pneumonia
SC	Scour
Unknown reason	

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

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

If necessary, you must also record the date and reason for the disposal or death of the dam. For cows that die or are disposed between 1 January and 1 June, a reason must be recorded on the Beef Efficiency scheme system by 15 July.

For cows that die or are disposed between 2 June and 31 December a reason must be recorded on the Beef Efficiency scheme system by 7 February.

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 provide a tissue sample from your calves equating to 20 per cent of your calculated 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. All calves born from the 1 January up to and including the 1 June must 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 must be recorded on the system by the 7 February the following year.

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

8.2 Genotype tissue tagging

Each year you will be notified of the animals (calves and bulls) that you are required to provide. As soon as they are selected the list will be indicated on the Beef Efficiency Scheme.

The lab will then send you the tissue tags along with pre-paid postage and packaging for returning the sample tubes and a set of tagging pliers.

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.

For animals selected between 1 April and 30 September a sample must be returned to the lab by 31 December . For animals selected between 1 October and 31 March a sample must be returned to the lab by 30 June.

If you have tissue tagged 100 per cent of your animals, you will be asked to send the sample tube for that animal back to the lab instead.

The tissue tags should remain in the animals' ears until they move off your holding, for example if the animal is sold. However, standard replacement tagging rules apply and there is no requirement to replace lost management tags.

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.**

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. If you have chosen to complete 100% tissue tagging you should notify the Beef Efficiency Scheme team and 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.

8.3 Blood Sampling Sires

Following feedback from scheme participants we will accept blood samples for Sires if applicants have identified that a tissue tag would not be successful, We request that applicants try to take a tissue sample but when this is not possible a blood sample may be provided instead.

If you wish to provide a blood sample it must be taken by a vet and returned to the lab accompanied by a 'Blood Sampling Declaration Form' (PDF, Size: 80.8 kB) .

Samples should be shipped to the following laboratory address:

Neogen Europe Ltd, Beef Efficiency Scheme, The Dairy School, Auchincruive, Ayr, KA6 5HU

There are strict rules governing the packaging and shipping of blood samples and the samples are more difficult to store, Samples that are not stored, packaged and shipped correctly or not accompanied by a 'Blood Sampling Declaration Form' will not be accepted by the lab.

Samples must be collected in purple topped EDTA tubes (these prevent the blood from clotting and are available from your vet) other types of blood tube may mean the laboratory will be unable to test the sample. Please supply approximately 3 mls of blood.

Samples should be refrigerated if not being immediately shipped. As the samples are temperature sensitive we advise to ship Monday – Wednesday to avoid them being held in courier warehouses over a weekend.

Samples must be packaged and shipped following the legal requirements for sending Category B Biological Substances (UN3373). Your vet should be familiar with these guidelines and may have a stock of the required packaging. Alternatively packaging can be purchased from a variety of packaging companies.

The packaging requirements are outlined below.

For Biological Substance, Category B (UN 3373) shipments you must include four layers of packaging.

1. Primary watertight inner receptacle (purple-topped EDTA tubes). Use primary receptacles made of glass, metal or plastic with a positive means of ensuring a leak-proof seal; skirted stopper or metal crimp seal must be provided; screw caps must be reinforced with adhesive tape.

2. Absorbent material. Place absorbent material between the primary and secondary receptacles, using enough material to absorb the entire contents of all primary receptacles. Absorbent material is required for Biological Substance, Category B(UN 3373) shipments containing liquids. Acceptable absorbent materials include cellulose wadding, cotton balls, super-absorbent packets and paper towels.

3. Secondary watertight inner receptacle. Use a secondary container that is leak-proof for liquid specimens. Choose only secondary containers certified by the manufacturer for Biological Substance, Category B (UN 3373) prior to use. Either your primary or secondary receptacle must be able to withstand, without leakage, an internal pressure differential of not less than 95 kPa in the range of -40 C to 55 C (-40 F to 130 F). To prevent contact between multiple fragile primary receptacles, individually wrap or separate them inside the secondary container.

4. Sturdy outer packaging. Use rigid outer packaging constructed of corrugated fiberboard, wood, metal or plastic, appropriately sized for the contents. Chipboard or paperboard boxes are unacceptable outer packaging. Limit the total volume for liquid samples to 4 L and the total weight of dried samples to 4 kg per outer container. The minimum outer container size in the smallest overall external dimension is 4". Completed packages must be able to withstand a 4' (1.2-m) impact test as outlined in IATA 6.6.1 regulations. Before sealing the outer packaging, you must make an itemized list of the contents of the package and enclose the list between the secondary packaging and outer packaging.

Biological Substance, Category B (UN 3373) Marking Requirements

There are companies that can provide the packaging required to meet UN3373 requirements available. Your vet may already have a supply of these.

Clearly mark “Biological Substance, Category B” in 6-mm-high text on the outer package adjacent to a properly sized UN 3373 diamond-shaped marking. If you prefer, package markings may be in the form of a label.

The name and telephone number of a person responsible must be marked on the package. The name and address of the shipper and recipient must be marked on the package.

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 update their audits in years three and five. 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.

You must record details of your audit on the Beef Efficiency Scheme system.

10. Advisory services

You will be required to engage with advisory services each year 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
- receiving a 1:1 advisory consultation in year 2 of the scheme
- attending advisory service group events in years 3 to 5

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 must 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.

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 must be agreed and recorded with the advisory service provider during your 1:1 meeting or during one of the group meetings.

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 to the Beef Efficiency Scheme can be caused by:

- not completing the required information in the Beef Efficiency Scheme database
- not completing the genotyping
- not completing the carbon audit
- not attending the required advisory services
- not selecting management improvements
- breaching Cross Compliance rules (Any deficiencies in the information you supply to meet the requirements of the Beef Efficiency Scheme will not result in a Cross Compliance penalty.)
- 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 or fail to provide all necessary information due to negligence, support shall be refused/withdrawn for the year in question and the following year
- 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 (no more than 18 months after the setting up process has started)
- 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 at the time of birth

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 at the time of calving
- 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 Beef Efficiency Scheme team via the mailbox BESMailbox@gov.scot or on 0300 244 9555.

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 eligible suckler cows which had one or more eligible calves whilst on your holding in your reference year and registered on the Cattle Tracing System at your holdings.

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 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 eligible hectares declared and claimed on their Single Application Form as they wish.

However, the maximum Beef Efficiency Scheme payment you can receive is equal to your calculated reference hectares.

Claim and payment period

Payments will be calculated once your BPS claim has been processed through the system with payments being made in the year following the claim.

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

Introduction

If you do not follow your contract terms and conditions we will call this a breach.

A breach may be identified through the automatic checking we carry out against your application, claim, land or allowances, through an inspection or following a check of any supporting documentation relating to a claim.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all contract conditions are fulfilled and that all information you provide is accurate.

If you have breached your agreement, future grant payments will be reduced or withheld and sums previously paid will be recovered.

Cross Compliance

Any breach of cross-compliance rules anywhere on your holding may result in a penalty being applied. In most cases, this penalty will be applied to all area-based payments being claimed. Any penalties related to Cross Compliance will be applied to your Beef Efficiency Scheme Payment.

Any deficiencies in the information you supply to meet the requirements of the Beef Efficiency Scheme **will not** result in a Cross Compliance penalty.

You can find out more about Cross Compliance using the link below.

Cross Compliance

Single Application Form

If you submit your Single Application Form Late you may be subject to a Late Penalty. Late penalties will be applied to your Beef Efficiency Scheme payment.

You can find out more about Late Penalties using the link below.

Single Application Form

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

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.

If the BPS eligible land declared and claimed on your Single Application Form is less than 80% of your BES defined reference hectares, no payment can be made for the year in question.

Breaches of agreement

In accordance with Article 35 of Regulation EU 640/2014; we will refuse or withdraw in full or in part any support, in cases of non-compliance or where the eligibility criteria or the conditions and obligations of your contract have not been met.

If we assess that there has been a serious non-compliance, the support will be refused or withdrawn in full. You will also be excluded from the same measure or type of operation for the calendar year of the finding and for the following calendar year.

For commitments extending over a number of years, breach actions may also result in a reduction and/or recovery being applied to amounts paid in previous years as well as the current year, where it is evident the breach occurred in previous years.

In determining the level of reduction we will consider how the breach should be classified against the following factors:

Classification	
Severity	The severity depends on the importance of the consequences of the breach taking into account the objectives of the condition of the agreement that was not met
Extent	The extent will depend on the effect that the non-compliance has on the agreement as a whole and reflects the amount of agreement breached
Duration	The duration shall depend on the length of time the effects of the breach last and whether it is possible to rectify the breach by reasonable means
Re-occurence	A breach will be determined as a re-occurrence where similar non-compliances have been found during any of the last four scheme years

The maximum reduction in any one year is 100 per cent of the option payment. Please see the below matrix to see how non-compliance will be treated.

If you breach your requirements in year 4 or 5 of the scheme we will apply the penalty amount to your most recent payment under the scheme and seek to recover the money from you.

Breaches and Penalties for BES (PDF, Size: 80.8 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Breaches-and-Penalties-for-BES----Oct-2017.pdf Penalty matrix

If we seek to recover payments from you, we will write to you explaining why, with the amount due which will also include interest. Interest will begin to accrue from 60 days from the date of our letter and will continue to accrue until the time of repayment.

Where monetary penalties are not paid or recovered within the period requested, the Department may take whatever action is deemed necessary for their recovery.

The letter will also give advice on how to appeal our decision. You will have 60 days from the date of this decision letter to either repay or to seek a review of the decision. If you do neither by the 60 day deadline, we will offset your debt from future payments from any SRDP scheme within three calendar years following the calendar year of the finding of the scheme breach.

More information on appeals can be found in the following 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 a 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 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.

Examples of how we might apply a breach

Calving Data capture deadline not met in 2017 (Year 2)

In the first instance we will issue you a warning letter giving you a further 4 weeks to supply the required information. You must submit the data by the date specified on your letter.

If you fail to meet the deadline in your warning letter we will reduce the amount due to you under the Scheme for the 2017 scheme payment. Failure to comply with this part of the scheme has been classified as Medium Severity and the number of records missing (extent) will dictate the consequence of the non-compliance.

Calving data was submitted for 60% of your animals. Not rectifying within the agreed timescale in the letter will lead to a 30% reduction being applied to your 2017 Scheme payment.

In this case; the payment should have been £5,088. The reduced payment that will be issued is £3,371.50.

Calving Data capture deadline not met in 2020 (Year 5)

As above you will be sent a warning letter in the first instance giving you a further 4 weeks to comply and if you miss this deadline a penalty will be applied depending on the extend of the non-compliance.

If the non-compliance occurs in year 4 or 5 we will apply the penalty to the most recent Beef Efficiency Scheme Payment you received.

In this case the scheme rules were complied with in years 1-4. A payment of £6,784.00 was made in year 3. In year 5 you submit 85% of your calving data. A penalty of 10% is applied and recovery of £678.40 is made.

Disposal Data and Weights

Both will be calculated using the same principles, however, weight information is considered low severity as it has a lesser impact on the objectives of the conditions of the agreement.

Tissue tagging

We will send you lists of animals that we require tissue samples for each year and you must return a sample for each animal to the lab by the specified deadline.

Based on the information that is supplied to the Laboratory, by the due date, we will base the consequence of non-compliance, on the extent. Non-compliance with this element of the scheme has been classed as Medium severity.

Where it is satisfactorily demonstrated that the applicant was not at fault for the non-return of a sample this shall not be considered a non-compliance, for example, where a calf dies prior to the tissue tag being delivered or the tag malfunctions.

However, you must clearly indicate on your return form why a sample was not provided and return any broken tags with your return. We will make additional selections for you in future tagging rounds to replace any animal that could not be genotyped.

Herd Size drops below 20% of contracted reference animals

If your herd size drops below 20% of your reference animals this will be considered a high severity, non-rectifiable breach and you will not be able to continue in the scheme. Your contract will be withdrawn and all payments made under the scheme will be recovered.

Failing to attend for a 1:1 consultation and/or completing your first carbon audit by the required deadline

This is an essential part of the Scheme, and failure to complete your carbon audit and/or to attend your 1:1 consultation is classified as High Severity. Extent will always be High as failure to attend affects all animals in your herd.

The advisory services will be flexible and the provider will work with you to find a suitable time and date. If you need to re-arrange your booking this is acceptable provided the meeting is set to take place by the deadline.

If the meeting does not take place and/or you do not complete the audit by the deadline you will be issued with a warning latter in the first instance giving you a further deadline to complete the meeting and the carbon audit.

If you fail to meet this new deadline, we will reduce the payment due to you by 90%. You will then be given to the end of the contract complete the meeting and carbon audit.

Failure to do this would result in your contract being withdrawn and all payments under the scheme being recovered.

Not attending advisory group events

You will be expected to attend the group events from year 3 to year 5. Failure to attend a meeting by the required deadline is classified as Low Severity and High Extent as it affects all the animals in your herd.

The provider will seek to give you choice in the time and date you attend and allow you to re-arrange your meeting if required. However, if you fail to attend a meeting by the deadline you will be issued with a warning latter in the first instance giving you a further deadline to attend a meeting.

If you fail to meet this new deadline, we will reduce the payment due to you by 10%. You will then be given to the end of the contract complete the meeting and failure to do this would result in the payment being reduced by 30% for the year in question.

If you repeat this non-compliance will double so if you fail to attend a 2nd group meeting you will face double the penalty. If you failed to attend a meeting in year 3 you would get a warning letter and only be penalised if you failed to attend a meeting by the deadline specified in the letter.

If you then failed to attend a meeting in year 4 you would receive a warning letter and be penalised 10%.

Carbon Audit - not providing updates in years 3 and 5

We will expect to see updates being made to your carbon audit in years 3 and 5. If the updates are not completed by the deadline this will be classed as Low Severity and High Extent as it affects all of your business.

You will be issued with a warning letter and given a further 4 weeks to complete the updates. Failure to meet this further deadline will result in your payment being reduced by 10%. If you then failed to complete your second update you would be sent a warning letter and penalised 10% in the first instance.

Management improvements

You must identify and agree with your BES advisor by the specified deadline three management improvements for your business to aim towards by the specified deadline.

Failure to agree a management improvement by the required deadline is classified as Medium Severity and High Extent as it affects all the animals in your herd.

If you miss the deadline you will be issued with a warning letter and given a further deadline to agree an improvement. Failure to meet this further deadline will result in your payment being reduced by 70%. If you then failed to agree your second improvement you would be sent a warning letter and penalised 90% in the first instance.

Recent changes

Section	Change
Annex B - Penalties	Guidance on breach and penalty details updated

Previous versions

Previous versions of this page

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