

2. Technical supplements to operations

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Technical guidance for the Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme, Small Farmers Grant Scheme and New Entrants Capital Grant Scheme.

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2.1 Introduction

2.1.1

A list of eligible operations are set out in Appendix 1 of the procedural instructions (Appendix A in the customer scheme guidance).

2.1.2

Cases of doubts in eligibility for agricultural items should be referred to [Mary Paton](#) with a full report of the circumstances. Any cases for building or surveyors items should be referred to [Gordon Kennedy](#).

2.2 Initial grassland improvement works for the restoration of degraded land

2.2.1

Grant is available for initial grassland improvement works which are intended to bring about distinct and durable improvement in the productivity of permanent pasture. Where restoration works may be at risk from the level of deer populations in the area, grant assistance must be conditional on adequate deer protection measures being in place. If there is doubt as to the risk from deer, claimants should be advised to contact [NatureScot](#).

2.2.2

Any application will need to be justified on agricultural and cost-benefit basis taking into account the cost of any necessary deer protection measures. All applications where deer may be a problem should be shared with a NatureScot Deer Officer for comment and advice. Deer Officers are primarily based at NatureScot Headquarters at Great Glen House, Inverness.

2.2.3

Degraded land is defined by the condition of the sward. It is considered degraded when improved sown grasses are no longer present at a reasonable level. The productive indicator species are ryegrass, cocksfoot, timothy and clover. If it is required to test the level of sward degradation within a field, a number of metre square test sites should be randomly selected to assess whether indicator species are less than 30 per cent. If the test sites average less than 30 per cent indicator species then the land can be considered degraded and eligible for grant support.

Improvement works should not be carried out on rough grazing or other semi-natural areas unless approved as part of an environmental impact assessment (EIA). The EIA regulations restrict 'intensive' agricultural operations on uncultivated or semi-natural land, where the result would have a 'significant' impact on the environment.

'Rough grazing or other semi-natural areas' is land containing semi-natural vegetation including heathland, heather moorland, bog, unimproved grassland and rough grassland which is used or suitable for grazing. Any such unauthorised works would also constitute a breach of the Cross Compliance rules under GAEC 6 - Maintenance of soil organic matter.

2.2.4

The necessary works may include ploughing, cultivation, herbicide sprays, suitable grass seed mixtures and appropriate amounts of lime and fertilisers as required for a grass sward. The application of lime, straight phosphate and straight potash require to be based on a recent soil analysis, along with a recommendation for the appropriate quantity of NPK fertiliser to apply to the particular area being restored.

2.2.5

Where heavy dressings of lime are recommended following soil analysis, these may be applied in two consecutive seasons over two separate grant applications. The first application being lime only and the second being lime, grass seed and fertiliser.

2.2.6

Organic food production – in cases where an applicant is involved in organic food production, again the application of nutrients and organic fertilisers require to be based on a recent soil analysis, along with a recommendation for appropriate quantities to ensure successful restoration.

2.2.7

It must be the applicant's intention that land being restored is of a permanent nature and will remain in grass for a minimum period of eight years.

2.2.8

Grass seed mixtures should reflect the above requirements and must contain at least 1.5 kg/ha of suitable white clover species; intermediate perennial ryegrass; meadow grasses; fescues; and red clover. Short-term grasses may be included but should not represent more than five per cent of the mix.

2.2.9

Where a nurse or cover crop is required to guarantee the successful establishment of the grass, the seed and establishment cost but not the harvesting costs of the nurse or cover crop will be eligible for grant.

2.2.10

Where a pioneer crop to be grazed off by livestock is considered 'necessary' for the success of the work, the establishment costs of the pioneer crop can be grant-aided.

2.2.11

If a sow-out to permanent pasture carried out as above is a failure or partial failure for reasons outwith the applicant's control, the cost of a second seeding or patching will be eligible for grant.

2.3 Bracken control

2.3.1

Eligible works – Control of bracken can be carried out by approved mechanical or chemical means.

2.3.2

Work must be carried out over a suitable period. Where mechanical means are employed this will usually entail not less than two treatments per year over three successive years.

2.3.3

Appropriate follow-up action to prevent bracken re-colonisation is an essential element of any bracken control programme. Failure to implement specific measures to encourage useful herbage species would probably result in re-colonisation by bracken. In the better areas such as in-bye land these measures will constitute some form of reseeding etc. In more difficult conditions bracken regrowth could be suppressed by intensive grazing preferably by cattle.

2.3.4

Grant may be paid in instalments, which may require to be recovered should the applicant fail to complete the full programme.

2.3.5

Aerial spraying should be approved where it can be demonstrated that this is the most effective and practical method.

2.3.6

If aerial spraying, your spray operator must have an approved Application Plan from the Health and Safety Executive. The Application Plan must be completed by the aerial spraying operator and emailed to aerial.spraying.permits@hse.gov.uk with the appropriate covering letter and suitable map of the area to be treated.

For non-aerial chemical control, applicants must use an approved product and follow the instructions on the label regarding appropriate use, also taking account of recommended best practice.

Applicants must consult the appropriate bodies before use when necessary, this includes the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, and NatureScot if the area is within a designated site.

2.4 Formation or improvement of access tracks to previously treated land improvement areas

2.4.1

Eligible works – comprise the formation of tracks or the hardening of an earth road to give access to previously treated land improvement areas. Such tracks may be constructed on the existing ground surface or excavated sub soil without the addition of any other materials where site conditions are considered to be satisfactory.

Works may include bulldozing, blasting rock, levelling, consolidating and ancillary drainage work.

2.4.2.

Removal of tracks from permitted development rights – From 15 December 2014 Permitted Development Rights no longer apply to agricultural and forestry tracks in Scotland. All developments to form or alter agricultural and forestry tracks must be notified to the planning authority before any works begin – but maintenance of existing tracks will not be affected.

No works should be started until the planning authority has advised that prior approval of the works is not required; 28 days has passed since submission of notification, without the planning authority advising

that prior approval is required; or the planning authority has advised prior approval is required, and this approval has been obtained.

No fee is applicable when submitted a prior notification application.

2.4.3

Access tracks should be constructed to the minimum standards needed to fulfil their intended agricultural purpose.

2.5 Land drainage

This includes under-drainage, ditching, and hill drainage.

2.5.1

Drainage work out with land occupied by a business may be eligible for grant provided that it is for the benefit of the business that is the subject of the claim. It is the responsibility of the applicant to arrange all necessary way leaves and permissions and provide these with their grant application.

2.5.2

All works essential for the proper functioning of the drainage scheme may be eligible for grant.

2.6 Under drainage

2.6.1

Eligible works and facilities include:

- new pipe or tile under drainage system
- improvement of existing systems
- installation of suitable permeable backfill above the new drains to improve the permeability of the drain trench
- where considered necessary for a drainage function, mole channels, subsoiling, gravel filled mole channels and similar works may be grant-aided under this item
- provision of any ancillary structures required for effective land drainage, including substantially constructed drain outlets, inspection chambers, silt traps and inlet grids and drainage pumps
- in certain circumstances, in association with the installation of a new under drainage system, high pressure water jetting to remove gelatinous iron ochre

2.7 Ditching

2.7.1

Eligible works and facilities include:

- improving/cleaning out existing ditches
- piping and filling ditches provided that the work will serve a drainage function, for example, to avoid channel instability problems or to reduce maintenance costs
- provision of culverts or bridges disturbed or rendered necessary by the drainage works
- provision of protective fencing

2.7.2

Excavated material must be placed at least 600 millimetres from the edge of the ditch and spread in such a way that it does not cause ponding of surface water.

2.8 Hill drainage

2.8.1

Eligibility:

This is restricted to the re-cutting of existing systems with any associated re-conditioning work. The top width should be not less than 550 millimetres and the bottom width not less than 150 millimetres with the sides sloped to a stable angle. Hill drains shall be opened with a tracked excavator with "V", or standard, bucket. The provision of a new system of hill drains is no longer eligible.

Excavated material must be placed at least 600 millimetres from the edge of the ditch and spread in such a way that it does not cause ponding of surface water. Bank slips must be cleared and rectified and any silt accumulated during excavation should be cleared before the scheme is completed.

2.9 Provision or improvement of agricultural/horticultural buildings and associated works

2.9.1

General – for justification of these items see paragraph 1.5. Most of the usual agricultural and horticultural buildings are included in this paragraph. In general, buildings which are necessary for the operation of the business are eligible to the extent that such operations are normally carried out by producers on their own holdings up to the point of first sale. Applicants should be reminded that buildings should be covered by insurance.

2.9.2 Eligible Items include:

- any permanent steading building (including the main structural element of plastic clad buildings) serving a recognised agricultural purpose
- horticultural buildings including Polycarbonate tunnels and Polytunnels, to be used to serve a recognised horticultural purpose.
- Kennels and pens for working dogs only.
- internal works necessary for the proper use of buildings including cubicles, permanent fittings etc
- works and facilities for more specialised types of agricultural production eg. honey, keeping milch goats, the production of rabbit meat, tea growing etc
- any permanent fencing, walls and gates, which are an integral part of or ancillary to the building.

2.9.3 Ineligible items include: -

- buildings, or parts of buildings for wholesale and/or retail distribution or processing beyond the primary production stage, examples of which are listed below
- preserving by sterilisation, by freezing, by dehydration, by heat or chemical process, canning or bottling, pulping or cooking of agricultural produce, the slaughter of farm animals or any other process or treatment not normally carried out by a farmer/crofter. (This is meant to exclude non-agricultural activities even where these are undertaken by agricultural businesses. However it is not intended to refuse grant on new types of bona fide agricultural buildings or equipment, in respect of which eligibility for assistance should be established)
- the treatment or storage of timber products for sale
- the treatment of wool
- the growing of flowers, shrubs and other ornamental plants
- the provision of agricultural contract services
- the leasing or hiring of equipment to agricultural businesses
- processing or treatment for resale of produce from other agricultural businesses
- temporary, makeshift or portable or mobile buildings (with the exception of farrowing huts for outdoor pigs)
- piggery buildings where specified levels of fattening pig places are or will be exceeded (but see paragraph 1.11.1)
- poultry facilities where the number of birds exceeds or will exceed a specified limit (but see paragraph 1.11.1)
- garages for cars and other private vehicles
- living accommodation
- fish farming facilities
- facilities for equestrian purposes other than work horses used on the holding
- works of repair or maintenance
- temporary plastic coverings on tunnel type structures

2.9.4.1

It is a requirement of the scheme that to qualify for grant, the work must be eligible and be of a capital nature. This means that improvements must be lasting, not flimsy or makeshift and for agricultural buildings, likely to continue to be of benefit for a minimum of five years assuming normal use and maintenance.

2.9.4.2

Fixtures and fittings – in addition to the basic structure of agricultural buildings, design features which are an integral part of their construction or which by virtue of their purpose are essential to the function of the building are eligible at the same rate as that applicable to the building. Such components, fittings or fixtures may be eligible even if moveable – provided they are satisfactorily designed for their intended purpose, can meet the capital nature test and are technically sound. Examples of this moveable fitting would be items such as self-feed barriers, animal handling equipment etc.

An existing building may be improved by the addition of a fixture or fitting that meets these criteria. Fixed ventilation fans, space heating, lighting and power points may be considered under this section as can water bowls, troughs, piping etc.

Ineligible fixtures and fittings include workshop benches and fittings (e.g. fixed racks, shelves and cupboards), cages for livestock and mobile sheep dippers.

2.9.4.3

Substantial upgrading of buildings may be eligible for grant, but not repair or maintenance work. In all cases the expenditure must be of a capital nature and the applicant must demonstrate benefits to the business other than those being achieved by the original investment. Also, an investment to simply upgrade an existing building, or parts of it, by new up-to-date material without fundamentally changing the nature of production cannot be considered for assistance. For these reasons all proposals under the heading of substantial upgrade must be carefully examined.

2.9.4.4

Examples of substantial upgrading that may be eligible are given below but are subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 2.9.4.3 above.

- reroofing a building in the same materials as the existing one or a more suitable material. Reroofing in cases where stripping a roof covering is necessary over a complete roof or a complete slope of a substantial section of a roof due to failure of roof covering, slate nails or timber. Sound slates, tiles or wood may be reused but their value should not be included in the eligible costs
- taking down a wall or a substantial part of it and rebuilding it from the foundations
- renewal of a cracked, worn out or otherwise unsatisfactory concrete floor by a new one
- waterproofing measures, e.g. new damp courses to old walls, complete rendering of walls
- renewal of cement pointing of a complete building or substantial sections of walling

2.9.4.5

Examples of ineligible repairs:

- all work which might be properly regarded as maintenance or repair, e.g. re-fixing or replacing odd slipped or missing slates and tiles, or steel, fibre cement etc sheets
- piecemeal rebuilding of minor parts of a wall
- piecemeal repairs to concrete or other floors
- repairs to external or internal rendering
- piecemeal repairs to pointing

2.9.4.6

Change of use (non-agricultural) of assisted buildings – In the event of an unauthorised change to the use of a building within the period of grant conditions recovery action should be taken.

2.9.4.7

Second-hand buildings – second-hand agricultural buildings are eligible for grant subject to the normal safeguards including using a steel frame which is CE marked. Also that the buildings are suitable for their intended purpose and that the components are inspected and passed as being structurally sound by a professional officer on behalf of the Principal Agricultural Officer before approval is issued. This may involve partial rejection, e.g. the cladding and there may be requirements to replace any defective items.

2.9.4.8

Buildings for livestock

- cattle – all the usual types of cattle accommodation are eligible. Partly slatted floors for dairy cows, for example in dunging areas, and fully or partly slatted floors for beef cattle and dairy heifers and calves may be approved, but fully slatted floors for dairy cows may not be accepted. Similarly, fully-slatted floors for beef cows with calves are not acceptable unless a bedded calf creep is provided
- sheep – eligible items include sheds for lambing, shearing and winter housing with or without slatted floors, and wool stores. The use of slats in sheds, or areas within sheds used for lambing would not be considered eligible for support. Pens, dippers and similar facilities are eligible under paragraph 2.12. Shelters may be eligible under paragraph 2.11
- pigs – provided that the project satisfies the pig restriction rules all the usual styles of housing for breeding, rearing and fattening purposes including fixed or demountable farrowing crates, handling facilities, dry sow stalls, cubicles and stalls for the close tethering of dry sows may be accepted. Farrowing huts used for outdoor pig production are also eligible where the site conditions are appropriate for rearing outdoor pigs.
- bees – buildings for use in connection with the production of honey are eligible
- milch goats – eligible items including buildings for breeding, rearing and milking purposes
- poultry – buildings which pass the capital nature test may be eligible under the scheme subject to the limitations prescribed in paragraph 1.11
- other livestock – facilities for other livestock, such as deer, llamas, etc would be eligible - Kennels and Pens for working dogs – Facilities for working dogs are eligible. A kennel should be of suitable construction for the environment and pens should be of galvanised steel. The kennel and exercise area should be erected on a concrete slab to allow for ease of cleaning. An exercise area must accompany a kennel. The floor area should be no less than 4m² per dog with an exercise area no less than 6m². Any proposals for kennels should be referred to the Senior Buildings Officer for consideration.

2.9.4.9

Buildings for storage – eligible items include buildings for the storage of other home produced crops and for bought-in feed. Stores for bulk and liquids such as bins, hoppers or tanks for seed, cattle feed, fertilisers, bulk milk tanks, etc, are eligible if laid on a suitably prepared base. Silos for storage of grass are covered in paragraphs 2.10.

2.9.4.10

Other buildings – buildings for implements and machinery - Eligible items include open and closed sheds for implements and machinery used for the purpose of the agricultural business including workshops, inspection pits and loading platforms. Eligible works associated with agricultural buildings include yards, hard standings, dung steads, slurry stores etc. In the case of slurry stores the applicant will need to develop a waste management plan to calculate the amount of storage required.

2.9.4.11

General guidance on machinery and equipment – while machinery and equipment is not generally eligible for support there are some exceptions. Examples of these are indicated below but these should not be regarded as exhaustive and guidance on the eligibility of other similar items may be sought from technical support.

- facilities for the sheltering and/or feeding of out-wintered livestock
- equipment for handling and treatment of livestock ;
- water pumps
- electricity generators
- provision of electrical equipment including electric motors, fans for grain or hay drying (excluding heaters) and other ancillary equipment
- land drainage pumps

With the exception of electricity generators, plant and machinery must be new and unused and must meet the requirements specified under the individual item to be eligible for grant. However, equipment may be required to service more than one eligible facility and provided it is designed for an eligible function and stationary while in use it may be considered for grant. Tractors, tractor mounted machinery and mobile feed trailers are ineligible .

2.9.4.12

Insurance – applicants are expected to have buildings insured against fire or storm damage. Cover should be for the current value. Where a building or other structure is adequately insured and suffers such damage, grant on any replacement building or structure should be confined to the cost less any insurance money received.

If the building or structure was not insured or was under insured, the net cost for grant purposes should be based on the cost of any replacement building or structure less the value of the original before the damage occurred; i.e. the value at risk, and not merely any insurance money the applicant may have received.

Some structures, e.g. plastic tunnel buildings, sheep pens, etc, are not normally insured and others, particularly those which were old or worn out before the damage occurred, may have little more than a nominal salvage value. In such cases account should be taken of any evidence as to the extent of or limitations upon the insurance cover available.

Insurance money received, or notional insurance, should normally be set against the cost of any replacement building, see paragraph below. Unless specifically excluded from the policy, the cost of demolition or site clearance work can reasonably be regarded as insurable and should also be deducted.

The decision as to whether a building is a replacement is a matter for judgement by professional staff. A proposal for a building to serve the same purpose as the original must be presumed to be a replacement and be treated accordingly, regardless of any change in size, type or siting. Where the proposal is for a building serving a different purpose it can be presumed not to be a replacement unless the Principal Agricultural Officer has reason to think otherwise, e.g. the damage/loss of a fodder store to be replaced by a roofed silo with fodder storage above where it would be reasonable to take into account the insurance compensation for the loss of the fodder store.

2.10 Provision, replacement or improvement of roofed or unroofed silos, grain stores or fuel oil tanks

2.10.1

General – This item covers roofed and unroofed silos intended for grass and other green forage crops and includes silage effluent tanks and appropriate ramps and aprons.

Stores for all grain to be used on the holding are eligible, e.g. prop corn, wet grain or distillers grain.

2.10.2

Silage pits and clamps – The minimum acceptable standard is an earth banked clamp with concrete floor and effluent tank or any other facilities acceptable to the Local Authority or SEPA. In the interest of good silage making, the walls of an earth banked pit should be suitably lined. The cost of temporary plastic sheeting is not eligible for grant.

All retaining walls and their foundations shall be designed and constructed in accordance with BS 5502 Part 22. Each wall should have a display notice giving details of the design limits.

In cases where it is thought at the application stage that the walls do not comply with the British Standard recommendations, a design certificate, prepared by a qualified civil or structural engineer, must be obtained if the work is to be grant-aided.

Tops of retaining walls should be provided with an appropriate guard or sight rail.

Pits sunk into the ground should have a childproof barrier. For example a woven wire fence with barbed wires added on top so that a combined minimum height of 1.3 metres is obtained above the ground level.

2.10.3

Prevention of pollution – the written agreement of the SEPA must be obtained before work is started and also on completion of the works. The Authority may be willing to grant consent for or agree to relevant proposals only subject to certain safeguards. These conditions must be complied with and grant cannot be paid where they have not been met.

Any additional costs reasonably incurred as a result of meeting conditions imposed by the SEPA may be eligible for grant.

Fuel tanks – The fuel oil tank must be bunded to 110% of the capacity of the inner tank. The entire base of the tank must be installed directly and supported by a level, non-Combustible base i.e. concrete; at a minimum of 50mm in thickness and extending out to a minimum of 300mm on all sides.

If the tank is to be raised to provide gravity fuel supply, the base must be raised also so that the tank is installed directly on it.

The tank must be installed with reference to the manufacturer's instructions and securely fastened onto the base to avoid movement e.g. With restraints connected to eye bolts.

Where additional fire protection is not provided minimum clearances of 760mm from tank to a combustible boundary and 1.8m clearance from tank to the combustible wall of a building must be adhered to. These distances include the 300mm extended concrete/non-combustible base.

A suitable spill response kit shall be kept at an easily accessible location for both the operator(s) and/or delivery driver(s).

All works grant aided must comply with the Water Environment (Controlled Activities)(Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended), in particular General Binding Rule 28 which relates to the storage of fuel oils.

2.11 Provision, replacement or improvement of facilities for feeding out-wintered stock

2.11.1

Works **eligible for grant include** – provision of facilities for the sheltering of out-wintered livestock, including fixtures, fittings, concreted or bottomed feeding sites with associated drainage, feed barriers, ring feeders, haiks, fencing and gates. Storage recycling bins can also be considered eligible for assistance, in order to qualify for support the bin would have to either be associated within an agricultural building or on a hard standing area where stock are fed during the winter months.

2.11.2

Eligibility criteria – to qualify for assistance as a shelter under this item the proposed structure must satisfy the undernoted basic criteria:

- the intended purpose is the intermittent sheltering of out-wintered livestock in severe weather and not for in-wintering
- a structure for sheltering cattle should be sited to allow free and direct access to a suitable area of out-wintering ground. The building should be sited at the most practical site which may be near the other croft/farm buildings
- a structure for sheep should have the provision for restraining them for short periods (i.e. lambing or severe weather) but not for in-wintering
- the structure is of a functional standard sufficient to provide reasonably for shelter needs and is also designed and constructed to withstand the conditions prevailing on the particular site and complies with BS 5502 as applicable
- the following additional points should be noted relating to the assessment of expenditure eligible for grant-aid

2.11.3

Feeding equipment – must be associated with hard standing.

2.11.4

Electricity – cost of internal wiring may be assisted under the parent item.

2.11.5

Water – the cost of internal work is assisted under the parent item. Unless the cost of bringing the supply to the shelter is negligible, that part of the cost should be assisted under paragraph 2.16

2.11.7

Works ineligible for grant – feeding equipment without adequate hard standing area for the livestock being fed. In relation to storage recycling bins neither the purchase of plastic liners nor any collection fees would qualify for assistance under the scheme.

2.12 Provision or improvement of equipment for handling or treatment of livestock

2.12.1

Officers should bear in mind that eligible facilities may in some circumstances in crofting communities be more appropriate on a township basis.

2.12.2

Eligible items include:

- crushes and tractor mounted catcher crates (including portable crushes). Squeeze Crushes, Head Scoops and foot trimming attachments
- weigh crates and electronic weigh systems retrofitted to existing crushes/crates which are also compatible for use with EID
- turning cradles, sheep handlers and trimming stands for treatment of sheep.
- Auto drafting and weighing systems for sheep (where sheep numbers justify it)
- permanently sited pens and handling systems with permanent or demountable fencing
- mobile handling equipment where the use of that equipment is appropriate to meets the needs of the qualifying unit
- permanently sited dipping baths and foot baths
- provision of hardcore or concrete floors to pens
- provision of loading banks and pens
- animal clippers and electrical sheep shearing equipment

2.12.3

Ineligible items include:

- small hand held items of equipment such as drench guns and foot trimming tools
- equipment intended for the servicing of other eligible equipment (e.g. sharpening equipment, welders, hoists etc)
- mobile demountable sheep dipping equipment

2.13 Provision of fences, hedges, walls and gates

2.13.1

Eligible works and facilities - eligible works include erection of boundary structures including fences, hedges, walls and dykes.

2.13.2

Examples of eligible expenditure are:

- strained - line post and wire fences, with or without woven wire netting
- high tensile wire fences with droppers
- permanent electric fences
- top wiring for a wall or protective fencing alongside a wall
- additional line wires to an existing fence or substituting woven wire netting for line wires on an existing fence
- protective fencing (e.g. to shelter belts, ditches, small Christmas tree plantations etc)
- deer fencing for deer farming or for the protection of crops or grassland
- rabbit netting
- permanently fixed and durable windbreaks for livestock or crops
- walls, dykes
- hedges (see paragraph 2.15)
- gates associated with the walls, dykes and hedges

2.13.3

Ineligible items include:

- amenity fencing for agricultural dwellings, but where such fencing serves an agricultural purpose grant would be restricted to the cost of a post and wire fence
- temporary fencing
- removal of hedges
- repairs and minor alterations
- removal of old fencing prior to the erection of a replacement fence

2.13.4

Other factors affecting eligibility:

- livestock fencing – fencing to exclude livestock from an area of improvement is eligible
- apportionment fencing – is normally eligible because it is a requirement and the apportionment is not effected until the fence is erected. However where an apportionment is approved for a forestry scheme the fencing should be funded from the forestry package
- boundary fencing – where both parties are eligible for grant in the erection of the mutual fence, grant can be paid on the full cost of the fence. Where only one party is eligible grant can only be approved and claimed on 50% of the project costs
- hedges – where the establishment of a new hedge may be at risk from the level of deer populations in the area, grant assistance must be conditional on adequate deer protection measures being in place. If there is doubt as to the risk from deer, claimants should be advised to contact Deer Staff within NatureScot.
- before application are approved, they will need to be checked to confirm that they are justified on agricultural and cost-benefit criteria taking into account the cost of any necessary deer protection measures. All schemes where deer may be a problem should be submitted to NatureScot Deer Staff for comment and advice.
- deer fencing – care should be taken when assessing grant applications for deer fencing to ensure that the proposed works will not have a subsequent negative impact on public/road safety, deer welfare, biodiversity etc.

A joint agency statement exists which sets out the risks and impacts that must be addressed before deer fencing can be approved using public funding. This statement was published in June 2004 and represents a policy collaboration between NatureScot, Scottish Forestry and the Scottish Government. This document is linked below and should be used for application assessment purposes.

[NatureScot - Detailed Joint Agency Statement for Deer Fencing](#)

The nature of some of the assessment criteria in this document confirms that if concerns exist regarding any proposed works we should contact [NatureScot](#) for further guidance. Any 'High Impacts' identified by the Joint Statement will require more detailed assessment by the agencies responsible.

Referral will depend on the scale and situation of the project. Small scale projects like the enclosure of a small hay/silage field or vegetable plot on inbye croft land would probably not merit their input. But larger scale projects which are more likely to impact on other aspects such as road safety, deer welfare, designated sites and the wider surrounding landscape should be referred to NatureScot for further comment where any concerns exist.

2.13.6

Electric fencing – permanently sited electric fencing, supplied either from the mains/batteries/solar is eligible for grant provided the controller/energiser complies with the appropriate British Standard.

In addition to the conventional three, four or five e-wire electric fence systems, various types of proprietary fencing systems are eligible including automatic monitoring systems, remote deactivating systems, solar powered generators, etc. Batteries are not eligible.

Providing there is agricultural justification a single wire may also be considered eligible when erected as an off-set wire on bracket or on posts alongside an existing fence or a stone dyke, provided that on completion a permanent stock-proof barrier is established.

The benefit of providing an offset electric fence is to provide protection to non-electric fence or dyke so that its life is extended through it receiving less physical damage.

Electric fences can cause issues with telecommunications if they are installed near their infrastructure. Applicants will need to make sure they consider proximity to existing telecommunication infrastructure before fences are erected. If required, applicants can use the Openreach website to apply for consent. Alternatively RPID may insist on this process being undertaken if they have concerns regarding a particular site. Openreach may send out staff to inspect sites before authorisation is approved.

2.14 Provision of stock grids

2.14.1

Eligible items include grids on croft or township roads; contributions paid to highway authorities towards the capital cost of grids under a formal agreement made in terms of section 47 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 are also eligible; major reconstruction works to improve an existing grid and associated gates, fencing and bypass.

2.14.2

Ineligible items include minor repair work to the grid, its approaches, gates and fencing; works on a grid which are the responsibility of the highway authority.

As part of the assessment process for stock grids, consideration will be given as to whether a stock grid is the most appropriate method of access provision and that it can be justified in terms of the eligible activities proposed as part of any application.

2.14.3

Stock Grids on Public Roads - the applicant must provide written confirmation that the appropriate local authority has no proposals for the same road, or, any other proposals that may affect the applicants own proposal.

2.15 Shelter belts, hedges and windbreaks

2.15.1

Eligible items include the establishment of an effective shelter belt or the improvement of an existing belt for livestock or crops; essential ancillaries such as protective fencing and ditching; and windbreaks for horticultural business. All forestry operations must comply with the UK Forestry Standard and the forestry EIA regulations.

Shelterbelts must be designed to fulfil the required agricultural purpose: Porosity rather than width is most important when designing shelter belts so this should be considered in the planting layout. Tree species used in shelter belt planting, whether conifer or broadleaves, should be planted at a minimum of 2,500 stems per hectare.

2.15.2

Ineligible items – commercial forestry and amenity planting.

2.15.3

Other factors affecting eligibility – Shelterbelts must be a minimum width of 6 metres or three planting rows.

2.15.4

Risk from deer – where the establishment of shelter belts may be at risk from the level of deer populations in the area, grant assistance must be conditional on adequate deer protection measures being in place. If there is doubt as to the risk from deer, applicants should be advised to contact NatureScot. Before approving applications, an assessment will also need to be done to confirm that they are justified on agricultural and cost benefit criteria taking into account the cost of any necessary deer protection measures. All schemes where deer may be a problem should be submitted to NatureScot for comment and advice. The justification for shelter belts must stand on its own.

2.16 Provision or improvement of water supplies

2.16.1

General – this paragraph includes all permanent works for supplying and storing water for the purposes of an agricultural business. Grant may be paid on both new water supplies and extensions to existing supplies, namely to fields and agricultural buildings.

2.16.2

Works eligible for assistance – include the provision of a new supply, connection to existing water mains; the supply of drinking troughs to fields and the laying of necessary pipe connections thereto.

2.16.3

Rainwater Harvesting Systems – tanks, filters and pipe work etc associated with the installation of rainwater harvesting systems to gather rainwater from roof areas etc are eligible for grant.

2.16.4

Alternative Watering Sources – assistance towards providing an alternative source of drinking water for livestock that currently have direct access to watercourses is available.

Alternative watering facilities must not be installed within five metres of the water environment (as measured from the top of the bank). Water troughs must be a purpose-made unit constructed of galvanised steel, concrete, spray-moulded glass reinforced cement or polyethylene. Where the water trough is connected to the mains water supply, the facility must comply with local Scottish Water byelaws. Water transfer pipework must be buried in a trench.

Grant assistance is available for the creation of a watercourse abstraction point, solar powered pump system, water-powered pump system, stock-powered pump with integral drinking bowl and mounting plinth, water transfer (pipework), troughs, fittings and trough connection.

2.16.5

Meters – meters installed to comply with the local water authority requirements, or for other reasons, are eligible for grant.

2.16.6

Payment to water authorities – charges by water authorities for tapping the mains to supply eligible agricultural businesses are eligible.

2.16.7

Private supplies – agricultural water supply systems relying on private sources are eligible for grant provided that the purity and volume is consistent with its intended purpose. All applicants must now have their private water supplies registered with the relevant local authority and evidence of this should be supplied with any applications. Applicants should also provide a copy of the risk assessment for the supply. This should cover the supply from source to tap, identifying risks and general mitigations that can be put in place.

For the provision of a new supply, a hydrological report should be supplied that demonstrates both the capacity of the planned supply, along with the plans for installing effective treatment and also provides evidence that the proposed supply doesn't impact on any existing private supplies.

2.16.8

UV Water Treatment Systems – for the treatment of water to be used in the feeding of livestock or irrigation of horticultural crops. In line UV water treatment system must be capable of treating at least 30 litres per minute (55 Watt power consumption). System must be WRAS approved.

2.16.9

Works ineligible for assistance – include capital contributions towards expenditure incurred by water authorities in laying main supply pipes; normal maintenance and cleaning of reservoirs and ponds; repair to tanks, pipework and fittings; water supplies to croft houses.

2.17 Provision or improvement of a mains electricity connection, or the supply and installation of an electricity generator

2.17.1

General – care should be exercised where supply of electricity is being provided to units where currently no house or electricity supply currently exists. This is a particular issue where new crofts are being created and existing ones sub-divided.

Application assessments should include checks to ensure that the grant is not for the provision of a domestic electricity supply to the unit.

Unless the work has been carried out by a utility company, the applicant must provide a certificate, to the effect that the installation complies with the current IET Wiring Regulations.

2.17.2

Electricity – expenditure which may be eligible includes:

- any payment made to an utility company for a connection to mains electricity
- the supply and installation of a new generator
- reconditioned generators are eligible where the generator has been substantially rebuilt by specialist manufacturers and certified by them as being in satisfactory working order
- a standby generator is eligible for grant in specific circumstances where the loss of power would have a detrimental impact on the business activities i.e. milk tank etc
- provision of a three phase supply in place of a single phase supply, where conditions allow.

2.17.3

Wiring of buildings – grant is payable on the fixed components of the installation within a building. The renewal of lamps or tubes is not eligible. Grant will not be paid on the cost of providing buried systems of electrical heating such as underfloor heating, although these may be integral parts of buildings. Rewiring of buildings is only eligible as an item in its own right where the whole wiring system is being replaced.

2.18 Provision of electrical equipment

2.18.1

General – this item covers the provision of electrical equipment which is designed for a specific agricultural purpose and is required to promote or complete the production stage of a commodity.

2.18.2

Eligible items include:

- fans for grain and hay drying
- electrically powered augers, bruisers, mixers, etc
- sheep shearing equipment, including clipper heads
- mobile generators required to power eligible equipment
- Cameras (not for property security purposes) or GPS tracking systems for monitoring livestock
- EID Tag Readers
- Calving Detectors

2.18.3

Ineligible items include:

- second hand equipment
- ventilation fans, space heating etc
- replacement blades and sharpening equipment for sheep shearers
- equipment not installed in accordance with IET Wiring Regulations
- electrical hand tools
- compressor and accessories for maintaining equipment

An electrical certificate must be submitted with any claim for grant aid on an electrical installation.

2.19 Provision or improvement of roads, bridges, culverts

2.19.1

General

From 15 December 2014 Permitted Development Rights will no longer apply to agricultural and forestry tracks in Scotland. All developments to form or alter agricultural and forestry tracks must be notified to the planning authority before any works begin – but maintenance of existing tracks will not be affected. No works should be started until the planning authority has advised that prior approval of the works is not required; 28 days has passed since submission of notification, without the planning authority advising that prior approval is required; or the planning authority has advised prior approval is required, and this approval has been obtained. No fee is applicable when submitted a prior notification application.

In cases where construction is below the high water mark, it is the applicant's responsibility to make sure that all necessary licences and permissions have been obtained. Most land below high-tide mark is owned by the Crown and therefore consent from Crown Commissioners will be required in these cases.

2.19.2

Eligible items include:

- the construction of a new road or bridge where none existed before. This must include the introduction of suitable base materials.
- the reconstruction of an existing road, which must include the addition of new materials to a suitable depth over the whole surface
- work on an existing road designed to improve drainage by altering the level of the surface, providing grips, or strengthening steep slopes with more suitable materials, e.g. coated macadam or concrete. Care should be taken that such work is approved only in those places where it is necessary
- widening roads and reconstructing bridges and culverts
- where there is a danger or hazard to persons or stock as a result of these works, safety and protective fences or walls of a permanent kind can be provided and be eligible for grant, as are consequential works such as the re-erection of fences and walls.
- Additional works required to comply with specific planning conditions will be eligible. Such as a bell-mouth junction with stated surfacing such as bitumen macadam. Surfacing of this type will be restricted to the bell-mouth junction only.

2.19.3

bridges or other types of crossings serving a similar purpose (eg. substantial culverts or fords) may qualify for assistance, but for the purpose of assessing the amount of grant, the minimum specification which would meet the needs of the holding should be adopted. Grant for an access incorporating such a crossing to any new or replacement building or area of land will be assisted only to the extent of the cost of the most economical road/crossing combination leading to the site. Any new works must comply with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011.

2.19.4

Ineligible items include:

- spraying and chipping of macadamised roads as an isolated maintenance operation
- patching and filling pot-holes
- work on a road or bridge which is the responsibility of a highway authority

2.19.5

Acceptable standards – the standard of construction should only be that demanded by the frequency and kind of use which can reasonably be expected in the particular circumstances of each case. A higher specification may be justified when required by the terrain, ground conditions or volume and type of traffic.

Recent changes

Section	Change
Provision or improvement of equipment for handling or treatment of livestock section	You can now claim for CCTV to monitor livestock during lambing and calving

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