

Current thinking on Agri-Environment Schemes

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Current thinking on Agri-Environment Schemes

- REPS 4 had to deliver on
 - Climate change
 - Water quality
 - Biodiversity



Court of Auditors Report 2006

- Very critical of agri-environment measures generally
- Questioned value for money
- Outcomes not quantifiable

Commission 2007–8

- Heavily influenced by Court's view
- “If it can't be measured, it shouldn't be paid for”

Value for money

- For REPS 4 we had to justify payment in more detail than ever before

Now we must

- Quantify
- Verify
- Monitor
- Evaluate



Audits

- Both Court of Auditors and Commission
- More searching than ever before
- Currently finishing response to Commission's interim findings
- Have to give Commission and Court assurances about measuring and verifying outcomes



Processing of applications

- Every application must have administrative check completed before any can be paid
- Commission requirements for administrative check
- Can be carried out properly only with extensive computerisation

eREPS

- Only plans prepared on eREPS will be accepted
- Moving in due course to full on-line application process

Quality of REPS plans

- Increased requirement for better-quality plans
- 100% of plans subject to quality check, validation check and cross-compliance check
- A plan that fails these checks will be rejected
- A new plan and application will be subject to scheme deadlines



REPS 4 applications

- Commission requirement for REPS to be aligned with SPS and DAS
- All applications will have an anniversary date of 1 January
- Contract will have five “*periods*”, not years



Integration

- Mounting pressure for integration of Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 payments
- Consultation with farmers
- Minimal impact on payment levels
- Simplification for both farmer and administration

Hard questions being asked

We pay on basis of 11 basic measures

- Commission beginning to question this approach
- Why should they pay for measures that do not apply to all farms?

Future REPS

- Restricted access?
- Calls for tender?
- Restricted to specific environmental commitments?

Prepare now for the next Rural Development period

- Need to persuade taxpayers that agri-environment schemes are value for money
- Develop a REPS “brand”?



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