

Preparing for your one-to-one

Over 40,000 Teagasc clients will meet with their adviser over coming months. A little preparation will ensure you get more from this important meeting than a completed Basic Payment Application

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1 Preparation

Every spring, advisors spend a significant amount of time in offices completing Basic Payment Scheme applications. Last year, Teagasc advisors completed more than 40,000. Ensuring farmers gain all of their entitlements without penalty or delay is crucial work.

But early spring is a time when farmers are very busy farming and advisors are keen to be in the field advising them. So, before you head to the Teagasc office, prepare well and ensure you make the most of the BPS consultation.

Write down a list of items for discussion to ensure nothing gets missed. 2018 was a tough year, so you may want to review your farm plan, farm finances, increase the amount of silage conserved, or plan an investment.

2 The Basic Payment application

It is crucial that the application and associated forms are completed on time with due diligence.

Now that the information packs have arrived, you should contact your Teagasc office for an appointment. Making an early appointment will mean you'll probably get more time as advisors are generally under greater time pressure the closer the deadline.

The 2019 application

The BPS is an application that must be made if you wish to participate in other schemes, for example: GLAS, TAMS, Organics, etc.

The BPS application process encompasses:

- Basic Payment Scheme.

- Greening Payment.
- Continuation of the Young Farmer Scheme if you were an applicant in 2015, 2016, 2017 or 2018.
- Aid for protein crops (peas, beans, lupins).
- Areas of Natural Constraint.

Making changes to the herd/crop/flock identifier

Every year, farmers make changes to the herd/crop/flock number for one reason or another. For example, a herd number (identifier) in a single name was "joined" by a child to avail of the National Reserve and/or the Young Farmer Scheme. Registered Farm Partnerships and farming "Companies" are other examples.

If you are planning to make changes to the herd identifier number, do so in good time to allow the Regional Veterinary Office time to process the application.

Making changes to the "identifier" can result in late or slow processing of the BPS application as there are extra steps involved in its processing.

Please note:

If a change must be made it should be completed immediately, to allow the RVO adequate processing time.

The date the application is received becomes the date of change. (When making a change to the identifier, include a copy of the application and a stamped addressed envelope and request the copy be returned "stamped received"). This should be given to your advisor to upload with the BPS applications.

If no correspondence is received by you from the RVO by the time of your BPS appointment, you must inform your advisor of this fact, as a new blank online BPS application must be completed instead of the pre-populated one.

The Partnership registration office



will not accept applications between 28 February and 1 June this year. This is to help make the BPS application process more efficient.

If you are planning to make changes to your farm, be sure to consult with your Teagasc advisor early so that all the relevant application forms and tasks can be lined up and completed in good time.

3 Farm succession

It is important that every farmer has thought about farm succession. The first step is to write a will. This is an insurance policy in case you pass on unexpectedly. Have a conversation with your advisor about farm succession.

Succession is an area where leaving things to the last minute can result in things going horribly wrong! Early discussions allow planning to take place. There are taxation reliefs available to minimise the tax due on succession transactions, but they have

very specific conditions, for example, "age" or being an "active farmer".

National Reserve (NR)

This scheme is aimed at new entrants to farming. This year, the National Reserve has opened for applications also. The funding available is less than last year's, but fewer applications are expected. Successful applicants will expect to receive entitlements worth just over €180. There may be a cap applied as in previous years. On top of this, all of the applicants were also paid Greening which was worth a further 44% (€77). Some of these applicants also qualified for the Young Farmer Scheme (~€65).

The National Reserve scheme has two mandatory categories:

- Young Farmers.
- New Entrants.

The full terms and conditions are available to download from your Ag-food online account. Applications can also be submitted online.

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The Young Farmer Scheme

This Scheme delivers a "top-up" to young farmers who have recently taken up farming. To be eligible, you must have started in the last five years and you must be 40 or younger in 2018. Once you qualify you can avail of the payment for up to five years.

The date your name appeared on the herd number is the year you started. If you started farming in 2018, you are guaranteed to get at least two payments. The final payment depends

Write down a list of items for discussion at your advisory meeting to make sure nothing gets missed.

upon what happens in the next CAP negotiations. The payment is payable on a maximum of 50 entitlements. The payment is worth about €65.

The terms and conditions are similar to last year. Applications can be completed on the Agfood online web service. The funding for this scheme is similar every year during the current CAP agreement. Successful applicants in previous years must reapply for the next payment on the online BPS application system as part of the BPS application. New applicants will have to complete a separate online YFS application.

Deadlines

The Deadline for all Schemes (BPS, NR and YFS) is Wednesday 15 May 2019. This will not be extended. As for other years, amendments can be made after submission of the application until the end of May.

Reasons for making an amendment include:

- Correcting an obvious error (minor clerical error).
- Adding or deleting a parcel.
- Change of use of a parcel.
- Ticking/unticking the ANC box.
- Ticking of the YFS box (where applicable).

All amendment forms will be acknowledged in writing.

Making the appointment

Before you visit your advisor, review all the documentation you have received from the Department. If you plan to make significant changes to the 2019 application, state that you require a longer appointment than usual so that it can be completed in one visit. The more complex cases may also involve the solicitor, accountant and valuer and some or all of the following transactions:

- Adding and/or changing the name(s) on the herd number.
- Completing a partnership application.
- Transferring entitlements using the transfer application.
- Completing a Capital Gains Tax return.
- Completing a VAT return.
- Updating your will.

Conclusion: It's human to put things on the long finger, but those who can overcome this inclination are always well rewarded.