

Sustainable Farming Incentive

The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) pays farmers to carry out sustainable farming practices that support food production, are good for the environment and improve animal health and welfare.

To get paid under SFI, you can apply for:

- a 3-year SFI agreement to do environmental land management actions
- a one-off payment for a vet to visit your farm annually to review the health and welfare of livestock

We’re rolling out the SFI environmental land management actions incrementally. More SFI actions will be introduced each year, so the full set is available by the start of 2025. You can currently apply for the 2 SFI soils standards and the moorland standard launched in June 2022. You’ll be able to apply for a wider range of SFI actions from summer 2023.

Key Features of SFI Agreements for Environmental Land Management

- applications are not competitive – if you and your land are eligible, you’ll be offered an SFI agreement
- you can choose how much land to enter – there’s no minimum or maximum area
- your annual payment will be paid in quarterly instalments - your first payment will be made 3 months after your agreement starts
- as we introduce more SFI actions, you’ll be able to ‘upgrade’ your agreement each year to do more actions and add more land

Am I eligible to apply for an SFI agreement?

You can apply for a 3-year SFI agreement to do the 3 SFI standards we launched in June 2022 if:

- you’re a farmer who was eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme on 16 May 2022
- you’ve got eligible land in England for the SFI standard you select
- you’ll have management control of the land for the 3-year SFI agreement

The person who’s actively farming the land will usually have management control of that land. This will typically be the owner occupier or tenant. If you occupy land on a rolling year-by-year tenancy, you can enter this land into SFI if you expect to have control of it for the full 3 years.

It’s possible to include the same land in SFI and another scheme (e.g. Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship) if:

- you and your land are eligible for each scheme

- the activities or outcomes you’re being paid for under each scheme are compatible
- you’re not being paid for a similar activity or outcome on the same area of land at the same time (“double funding”)

See the GOV.UK SFI guidance for how this works for specific schemes.

What can I apply for now?

You can apply now for:

- the 3 SFI standards we launched in June 2022
- an annual health and welfare review of your livestock by a vet

SFI Standards you can apply for now

Arable and horticultural soils standard	
Introductory level – £22 per hectare	Intermediate level – £40 per hectare
<div><div><div>1. Complete a soil assessment and produce a soil management plan (introductory and intermediate level)</div><div>2. Test soil organic matter (introductory and intermediate level)</div><div>3. Add organic matter (introductory and intermediate level)</div><div>4. Have green cover on at least 70% of land over winter (introductory level)</div></div><div><div>Have green cover on at least 50% of land and multi- species cover crops on an additional 20% of land (intermediate level)</div></div></div>	
Improved grassland soils standard	
Introductory level – £28 per hectare	Intermediate level – £58 per hectare
<div><div><div>1. Complete a soil assessment and produce a soil management plan (introductory and intermediate level)</div><div>2. Test soil organic matter (introductory and intermediate level)</div><div>3. Minimise bare ground (introductory and intermediate level)</div><div>4. n/a (introductory level)</div></div><div><div>Establish and maintain herbal leys on at least 15% of land (intermediate level)</div></div></div>	

Moorland standard - Introductory level only
£10.30 per hectare and additional payment of £265 per agreement

1. Identify and record soil and vegetation types and condition, and presence of historic and archaeological features

2. Assess the public goods the moorland is already providing

3. Identify opportunities to maintain or enhance public goods provided by the moorland

SFI management payment

Later in 2023, we’ll introduce an additional ‘SFI management payment’ to help farmers with the management time and administrative costs of entering into an SFI agreement. This is an annual payment of £20 per hectare, up to the first 50 hectares entered into an SFI agreement. The maximum annual payment will be £1,000. We’ll publish more information about this payment soon.

Additional payment for common land

If a group of 2 or more people apply for an SFI agreement on common land, there’s an additional payment of £6.15 per hectare to help with costs of administering the agreement on common land.

How to apply for an SFI agreement

- if you’re applying for an SFI agreement on land that’s outside a common, you can start your online application in the Rural Payments service, using your existing sign in details
- to apply on common land, you need to contact us first so we can arrange for you to start your online application - see next page for contact details
- there’s no application submission deadline, so you can apply at a time that works best for you – if we need to close applications we’ll give 6 weeks’ notice

Before you apply, check your registered land details are up to date on your digital maps in the Rural Payments service and read the scheme requirements on GOV.UK (search ‘Sustainable Farming Incentive’).

Register your interest for an annual health and welfare review of livestock



BPS eligible farmers who keep cattle, sheep or pigs can register their interest now in applying for a one-off payment to help with the costs of a vet carrying out an annual health and welfare review of these livestock.

This review includes a vet of your choice visiting your farm to:

- carry out the relevant endemic disease or condition testing of the livestock type you choose to have reviewed
- advise on the health and welfare of these livestock – including issues such as lameness, body conditioning or mobility scoring

To register your interest for a vet visit search ‘funding for farmers’ on GOV.UK



SUSTAINABLE FARMING INCENTIVE

WHAT WILL I BE ABLE TO APPLY FOR FROM SUMMER 2023?

From summer 2023, you'll be able to apply for a wider range of SFI actions under 6 new SFI standards.

We've designed the actions in the SFI 2023 offer to be more flexible.

This means you'll be able to choose:

- the combination of actions you want to do
- what area to do the actions on

Some of the actions are rotational so you can incorporate them into your farm system and annual rotation.

The SFI actions you'll be able to apply for from summer 2023 are summarised in the centre and right-hand columns.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT SFI AND OTHER FUNDING

You can find out more about SFI on GOV.UK by searching for 'Sustainable Farming Incentive'.

As well as SFI, farmers can apply for a range of other payments to help improve farm productivity and the environment.

Search 'Funding for farmers' on GOV.UK to find out more about the available payments.

If you have any questions about SFI, email us at ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk

or telephone
03000 200 301
(Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm, except bank holidays).

SFI actions for hedgerows

Annual payment: £3 per 100 metres – one side

1. Assess and record hedgerow condition

Annual payment: £10 per 100 metres – one side

2. Manage hedgerows

Annual payment: £10 per 100 metres – both sides

3. Maintain or establish hedgerow trees

SFI actions for integrated pest management

Annual payment: £989

1. Assess integrated pest management and produce a plan

Annual payment: £673 per hectare

2. Flower-rich grass margins, blocks, or in-field strips

Annual payment: £55 per hectare

3. Companion crop on arable and horticultural land

Annual payment: £45 per hectare

4. No use of insecticide, nematicide or acaricide on arable crops and permanent crops

SFI actions for nutrient management

Annual payment: £589

1. Assess nutrient management and produce a review report

Annual payment: £102 per hectare

2. Legumes on improved grassland

Annual payment: £593 per hectare

3. Legume fallow

SFI actions for arable and horticultural land

Annual payment: £614 per hectare

1. Pollen and nectar flower mix

Annual payment: £732 per hectare

2. Winter bird food on arable and horticultural land

Annual payment: £590 per hectare

3. Grassy field corners and blocks

Annual payment: £451 per hectare

4. 4m to 12m grass buffer strip on arable and horticultural land

SFI actions for improved grassland

Annual payment: £333 per hectare

1. Take improved grassland field corners or blocks out of management

Annual payment: £474 per hectare

2. Winter bird food on improved grassland

Annual payment: £235 per hectare

3. 4m to 12m grass buffer strip on improved grassland

SFI actions for low input grassland

Annual payment: £151 per hectare (indicative)

1. Manage grassland with very low nutrient inputs (outside SDAs)

Annual payment: £98 per hectare (indicative)

2. Manage grassland with very low nutrient inputs (SDAs)

