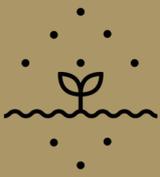




# SUSTAINABLE FARMING INCENTIVE

## What to do before you apply for an SFI agreement



### Scheme requirements

- Read the mandatory scheme requirements.

### Land

- Use the Rural Payments service to update any land details that are not up to date.
- Check that each land parcel you'll be including in your SFI application is shown on your digital maps.
- Check that each land parcel you want to include in your SFI application has correctly registered land cover(s) and permanent boundaries.

You do not need to check your hedgerow lengths are correct as they're not used in your SFI application.

### Eligibility

- Check you were a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible farmer on either 16 May 2022 or 15 May 2023.
  - You will have had at least 5 hectares (ha) of BPS eligible land.
  - You will have had 5 or more BPS entitlements.
- Check if you've applied for the Lump Sum Exit Scheme in 2022 and received payment (in most cases you will not be eligible to apply for an SFI agreement unless you repay the lump sum.)

### Contact details and permissions

- Check your registered contact details are up to date on the Rural Payments service.
- Check your permissions are set correctly to either 'Business Details: Full' or 'BPS: Submit', to allow you to start and submit a SFI application.

# FARMING FOR THE FUTURE



# SUSTAINABLE FARMING INCENTIVE

## Top tips when applying for an SFI agreement



Read our '**How to apply for SFI 2023**' guidance. This is available by clicking 'SFI Handbook for the SFI 2023 offer' on the Sustainable Farming Incentive guidance on GOV.UK.

Double check **your land use and land cover** is correct for each parcel that you want to include in your SFI application. This means that the land cover is compatible with the land use declared for BPS. Section 5.1.3 of the how to apply guidance is useful in explaining how to do this.

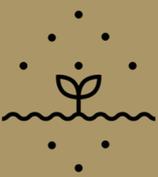
If you need to make any **changes to your land**, wait for these to be completed before starting an application as some changes won't be reflected in your application if it was started before the change was completed.



Once you have submitted an SFI application, keep an eye out for communication from the RPA via email or phone call as there may be **additional information we need**. The quicker we get this, the quicker we can make an agreement offer!

If you are being asked to request an **SFI Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (HEFER)** or give notice to Natural England for **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** consent, select 'Yes' or 'Not applicable' on the screens to allow you to go on and complete your application. You must then complete the required actions.

If you have land in other agri-environment schemes such as **Countryside or Environmental Stewardship**, make sure you are familiar with the details of these agreements as there may be certain parcels you can't put actions on if they are incompatible.



If you are entering **HRW1 (Assess and record hedgerow condition)** or **HRW2 (Manage hedgerows)** into your agreement and want both sides of the hedgerow, enter the length for each side against each parcel.

If you are entering **HRW3 (Maintain existing hedgerow trees, or establish new hedgerow trees)** into your agreement, enter half the length against each parcel. This is because HRW3 pays for both sides of the hedgerow.

You can use the **measuring tool on your digital maps** to help you measure the length of a hedgerow that you want to enter into HRW1, HRW2 or HRW3.

Do you need support for your farm? Search Farming Resilience Fund on GOV.UK for a full list of organisations in your area that provide free business support advice for farmers. Or you can call the RPA helpline.

**RPA helpline - 03000 200 301**

# FARMING FOR THE FUTURE