



Department  
for Environment,  
Food & Rural Affairs

**Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI)**  
will reward your business for doing  
nature-friendly farming actions  
alongside producing food.

# Getting started with the Sustainable Farming Incentive in 2026

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# Get paid for practical actions that can help improve your farm's resilience and profitability

The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) is an Environmental Land Management scheme that offers payments for taking action to support your crops and livestock through improving soil health, managing inputs, creating habitats, and more.

## How does it work?

- **Flexible scheme** – your choice of actions that fit with your farm system.
- **Regular income** – quarterly payments that support cashflow.
- **Cut input costs** – some actions can help reduce fertiliser and pesticide dependency.
- **More resilient land** – healthier soils and grasslands can cope better with extreme weather.

## Why is it important?

SFI offers actions that make good business sense, support long-term food production and help boost nature on your farm. A healthy, functioning natural environment is essential for food production and can help ensure your business' resilience to climate or global supply chain shocks.

## When should I apply?

SFI in 2026 will have two application windows.

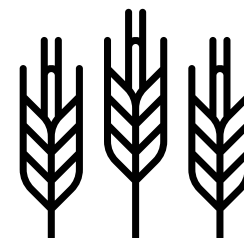
The first window ('Window 1') will open in June for two groups:

- small farms (farms with 3-50ha of agricultural land)
- farms without an existing Environmental Land Management (ELM) revenue agreement

The second window will open in September for all farmers and land managers.

Search "SFI 2026" on GOV.UK for full information

## Getting started with SFI for arable or mixed farms, including small farms



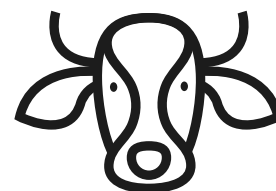
Not sure where to begin? If you're an arable or mixed farmer looking to improve soils, manage pests or reduce input costs, here are some popular SFI actions to get you started.

SFI action name and description	Payment rate	Benefits
Manage hedgerows (CHRW2)	£13/100m (one side)	Provides habitat for wildlife, as well as pollen, nectar and berries for mammals, birds and insects.
Legumes on improved grassland (CNUM2)	£102/ha	Legumes fix nitrogen into soil, reducing reliance on inorganic fertilisers.
Herbal leys (CSAM3)	£224/ha	Improves soil health including soil structure, fixes nitrogen into soil, and encourages biodiversity.
Manage grassland with very low nutrient inputs (CLIG3)	£151/ha	Provides food and shelter for invertebrates and farmland birds whilst supporting integrated pest management and minimising nutrients being carried in surface water runoff.
No use of insecticide on arable crops and permanent crops (CIPM4)	£45/ha	Supports integrated pest management. Protects beneficial insects, promotes biodiversity and reduces chemical reliance.
Take grassland field corners or blocks out of management (CIGL1)	£333/ha	Provides year-round habitat for a range of wildlife as well as supporting integrated pest management.
Pollen and nectar flower mix (CAHL1)	£739/ha	Provides food for beneficial pollinators and encourages natural crop pest predators.
Winter bird food (CAHL2)	£648/ha	Provides food for smaller farmland birds and insects, which can support integrated pest management.
4m-12m grass buffer strip on arable and horticultural land (CAHL4)	£515/ha	Helps to provide shelter and nesting places for birds, as well as a habitat for species like brown hares.
Flower-rich grass margins, blocks or in-field strips (CIPM2)	£798/ha	Supports integrated pest management, a sustainable approach to preventing and managing pests, weeds and diseases on your land.

Search Sustainable Farming Incentive 2026 (SFI26) for full information on GOV.UK.

Visit the Defra Farming Blog for further information on popular actions by region.

# Getting started with SFI for grazing livestock farms, including small farms



Not sure where to begin? If you're a livestock farmer looking to improve grassland, your field boundaries, or reduce input costs, here are some popular SFI actions to get you started.

SFI action name and description	Payment rate	Benefits
Manage hedgerows (CHRW2)	£13/100m (one side)	Provides habitat for wildlife, as well as pollen, nectar and berries for mammals, birds and insects.
Legumes on improved grassland (CNUM2)	£102/ha	Fixes nitrogen into soil, reducing the reliance on inorganic fertilisers.
Herbal leys (CSAM3)	£224/ha	Improves soil health including soil structure, fixes nitrogen into soil, and encourages biodiversity.
Manage grassland with very low nutrient inputs (CLIG3)	£151/ha	Provides food and shelter for invertebrates and farmland birds whilst supporting an integrated pest management approach and minimising nutrients being carried in surface water runoff.
Take grassland field corners or blocks out of management (CIGL1)	£333/ha	Provides year-round habitat for a range of wildlife as well as supporting integrated pest management.
Winter bird food on improved grassland (CIGL2)	£515/ha	Provides winter food for farmland birds.
Lenient grazing supplement (GRH10)	£28/ha	Increases biodiversity in grassland and provides habitats for spiders, insects and beetles.
Haymaking supplement (GRH7)	£157/ha	Encourages wildflowers and grasses to flower and set seed, which supports pollinators.
Maintain earth banks or stone-faced hedge banks (BND2)	£11/100m (one side)	Supports wildlife habitats, soil management and water management.
Maintain weatherproof traditional farm or forestry buildings (HEF1)	£5/sq m	Supports maintenance of farm buildings.

Search Sustainable Farming Incentive 2026 (SFI26) for full information on GOV.UK.

Visit the Defra Farming Blog for further information on popular actions by region.

# What to do before you apply for SFI

## Step 1: Check your digital maps show the correct land details

If your maps are not up to date, it may prevent you from applying for SFI.

Check that your digital maps show:

- at least 3ha of agricultural land linked to your Single Business Identifier (SBI) – you will only be able to start an SFI application if this is the case
- all the land parcels you want to include in your SFI application
- the correct total area (in hectares) for each land parcel
- the correct land covers for each parcel (for example, arable land, permanent grassland, permanent crops, or relevant non-agricultural land cover)

Make sure you update your digital maps:

- Search “Rural Payments service: how to register land and update digital maps” or “RLE1 form: how to register land and update digital maps” for further information.

You do not need to check or update the registered hedgerow lengths on your digital maps. These are not used in your SFI application.

## Step 2: Check your registered contact details are up to date

Check your registered contact details are up to date in the Rural Payments service. The RPA will use your registered business details, including your business email address, to contact you about your SFI application and agreement.



### Step 3: Check you have the correct permission to apply for SFI

You need to have the correct permission to apply for an SFI agreement for your business (SBI). To check this:

- Sign into the Rural Payments service.
- From 'Business Overview', select 'Give people permission to act for this business'.

You need to have one of the following permissions:

- 'Business Details: Full'
- 'BPS: Submit'
- 'CS Applications: Submit'

If you do not have one of these permissions, you need to ask someone with 'Business Details: Full' permission to give you the correct permission.

If you want someone else to apply on your behalf, such as an agent, you need to:

- check they're registered with the RPA in the Rural Payments service
- give them the correct permission to apply for an SFI agreement

Search "**Rural Payments service: give or update permissions**" for further guidance.

Search "**SFI 2026**" on GOV.UK for further information on preparing to apply.

