



On target :

Less Favoured Areas

***NFU Scotland – fighting for
your interests***

Improvements to LFASS

Over the last two years, NFU Scotland has been striving to improve the targeting of LFA funding as well as retaining its overall budget spend. After a great deal of hard work, changes to LFA support in Scotland have been agreed and have been implemented from 2011.

The changes will improve even further the link between payment levels and farming activity, within EU rules. The current LFA-wide minimum stocking density requirement has been replaced with variable minimum stocking densities for each of the four categories of land quality. This change will generate savings, by reducing payments to farmers whose activity has declined.

These savings will now be used to fund an increase of 38% in the LFASS payments on the poorest land in the Standard LFA regions (grazing categories A and B), and a smaller increase of 5% for the remaining land in the Standard LFA region (grazing categories C and D).

This is in addition to the existing 38% increase in payment rates for all grazing categories in the Fragile and Very Fragile that was secured in 2009.

It is also worth noting that, following calls from NFUS, SGRPID have now got the 'functionality' to make advance payments on LFASS if, like last year, bad weather etc prevents inspections from being completed, which would otherwise delay any LFASS payment.

LFASS Budget

Of equal significance is the retention of the LFASS budget in the recent Scottish Government Spending Review (September 2011). This has to be seen as a major success at a time when public funding across the board is subject to significant cuts.

By retaining spend on LFASS, some £65 million per year, the Scottish Government has also reiterated its faith in Scottish farmers' ability to produce food while maintaining high environmental and biodiversity standards, as well as delivering real social and economic benefits in rural communities and the country as a whole.

LFASS Anomaly Cases

NFUS has also been in negotiation with SGRPID to identify what might be done for so-called LFASS 'anomalies' within the rules in order to pay claims from those that have been frozen out for a variety of reasons.

Dealing with such cases is very complex, as each case is different and in order to make LFASS payments there has to be a sound legal basis to do so within existing rules and regulations. NFUS is continuing to work with SGRPID to see what can be done for such cases, and is also looking at alternative support options that might be accessed if producers remain excluded from LFASS.

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NFU Scotland – supporting Scotland's farmers, crofters and growers