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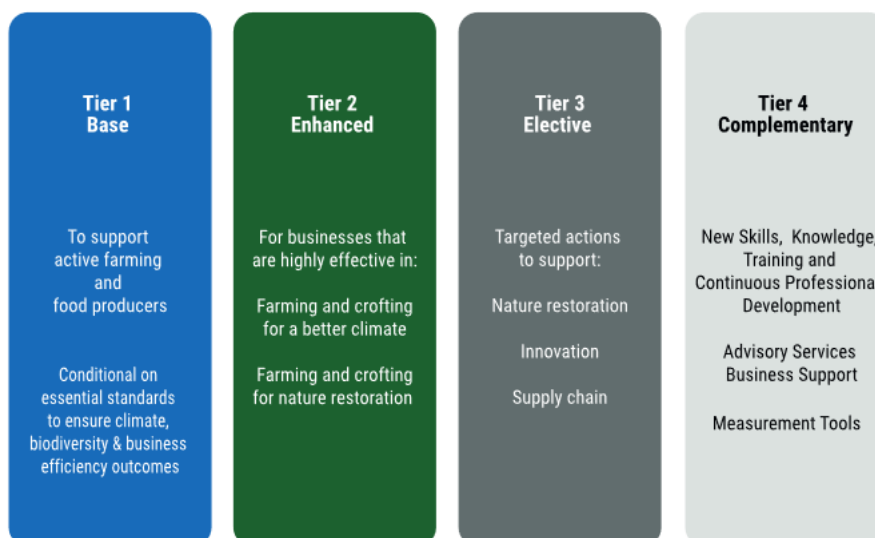
Agricultural Support is Changing – Get Ready for 2025 and Beyond

The objectives of the Agricultural and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024 are set out to ensure the use of its powers will deliver the Scottish Government’s Vision for Scottish Agriculture - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/next-step-delivering-vision-scotland-leader-sustainable-regenerative-farming/> These objectives are:

- the adoption and use of sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices
- the production of high-quality food
- the promotion and support of agricultural practices that protect and improve animal health and welfare
- the facilitation of on-farm nature restoration, climate mitigation and adaption
- enabling rural communities to thrive

The Act creates the necessary powers to replace existing, and familiar, CAP schemes. These will be replaced with a new four-tiered framework of ‘conditional’ support from 2027.

Agriculture Support Package Beyond 2025



The Scottish Government's Agricultural Reform Route Map sets out significant milestones over coming years. With every milestone, farms and crofts across Scotland will have to adapt and embrace change.

While the new four-tiered framework for agricultural support will not be fully implemented until 2027 at the earliest, some requirements of the transition will come into effect from 2025.

2025 will be a year of change which farmers and crofters must be ready for.

Further changes will take place from 2026 and 2027 as existing schemes transition into the new four-tiered framework.

From 2025, the support framework will be aimed at delivering against the following five outcomes:

- High Quality Food Production
- Thriving Agricultural Businesses
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- Nature Restoration
- A Just Transition

Phased Change – Consolidate. Transform. Evolve.

Changes to existing schemes will begin in 2025, with a phased approach to bringing in the new support framework from 2026. Legacy CAP support is anticipated to continue until replaced within the four-tier framework.

- **2025** - Initial **changes to existing support** will be introduced with new conditions to the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) through the Whole Farm Plan (WFP) and changes to cross-compliance
- **2025** - New **conditions will be introduced** to Voluntary Coupled Support (VCS) via the Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme (SSBSS) linked to calving interval performance
- **2026** - The Basic Payment Scheme **will consolidate as Tier 1 (Base)** payments, while **Tier 2 (Enhanced) payments will be introduced** based on the existing Greening delivery model
- **2027** - New **Tier 3 (Elective) and Tier 4 (Complementary) support will be rolled out** to incorporate agri-environment measures, forestry grants, and targeted capital grants, as well as farm advisory services and professional development
- **2028** – It is likely that transition to **a replacement for the Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme (LFASS) will begin** along with the incorporation of VCS, including the Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme (SUSSS), as direct support under Tiers 1 and 2

Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and Greening

BPS will remain in place in 2025, 2026 and 2027 providing base level direct payments – effectively Tier 1 from 2026.

New conditions will be introduced to the BPS in 2025 through new cross-compliance conditions and the foundations of the Whole Farm Plan (see below).

It is anticipated that by 2026 the BPS will be replaced by the new Tier 1 'Base' payments will be introduced, but this will be a consolidation of the exist three-region BPS. No further changes are anticipated in 2026.

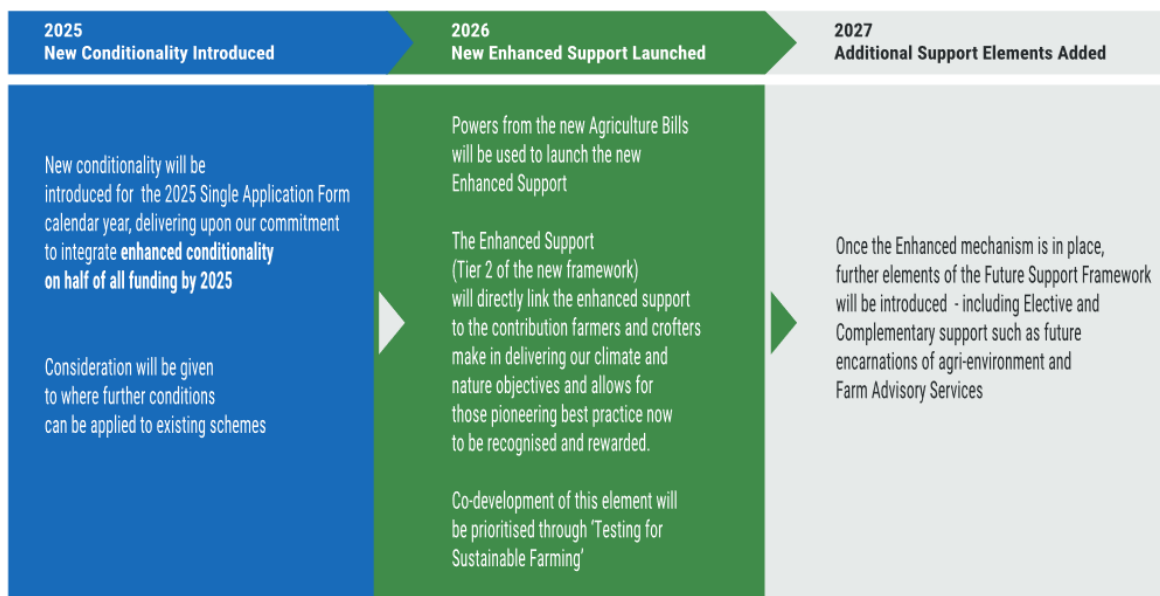
Tier 1 will be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose by 2027 – including the payment regions. The Scottish Government will not be making changes to the three existing payment regions without consulting widely on any new proposals first.

Any changes made in 2027 will be to support the transition to a more effective delivery model to deliver the intended outcomes.

New Greening requirements will be introduced in 2026 to establish the Enhanced Tier 2 of the future framework. This means that farmers and crofters will be expected to start doing Enhanced (Tier 2) activities using the existing Greening claim processes on the Single Application Form (SAF).

The existing Greening eligibility requirements and rules will be built upon to deliver further outcomes for nature and climate improvement - rewarding both new activity and existing good practice.

Future Support Framework: a phased approach



The present payment regions will be kept as they are in the early part of the transition. The current three region model will be reviewed to ensure the Tier One 'Base' payment is fit for purpose for the future.

Whole Farm Plan

‘Baselining’ is key to informing management choices to help deliver climate and biodiversity outcomes, while driving productivity and profitability. To accelerate that, **a foundation Whole Farm Plan (WFP) will be a condition of BPS from 2025** (and of Tier 1 from 2026).

From next year, in return for BPS payments, claimants must have started carrying out plans and audits that are relevant to their enterprises. Via the Single Application Form (SAF), claimants must have done **at least two** of the following

Carbon audit	Conducted within the five-year period before May 2025
Biodiversity audit	
Soil analysis	
Animal health and welfare plan	Renewed annually
Integrated pest management plan	

Many farms and crofts already have some of these plans and audits in place – through quality assurance or supply chain contracts, or as part of normal business planning. If so, and these meet the minimum standards, this can be simply confirmed in next year’s SAF.

Grants are still available through **Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF)** to do carbon audits and soil analysis - <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/preparing-for-sustainable-farming--psf/preparing-for-sustainable-farming--psf--full-guidance/>

Act now, while support is available, to be prepared for 2025. We will continue to press the Scottish Government for a continuation of this funding.

There is also a free and simple Integrated Pest Management (IPM) tool at www.planthealthcentre.scot/scottish-ipm-assessment-plan and to create an animal health and welfare plan go to <https://www.sahps.co.uk/>

These changes are designed to help all farmers and crofters do more to produce food sustainably, to cut emissions and to farm more for nature. Detailed guidance on all of these changes, including the minimum standards of each of the plans and audits, is available at <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/whole-farm-plan/>

More information about further action farmers and crofters will need to take in 2026 and beyond will be announced in summer 2025.

It is expected that all farms and crofts will be expected to have all plans and audits relevant to their activities in place by 2028 at the latest. The Scottish Government intends to add Nutrient Management Plans to the Whole Farm Plan by 2028.

Cross-compliance

New conditions will be introduced to cross-compliance in 2025 in the form of peatland and wetland standards. These will be added to Good Environmental & Agricultural Condition (GAEC) – namely GAEC 6, which relates to the maintenance of soil organic matter.

These standards will prohibit various activities like ploughing and cultivation, new drainage, and practices that damage the vegetation cover and expose the peat. The new GAEC 6 requirements will apply to land with peat soils more than 50cm deep with a near natural vegetative cover, and to wetland habitats.

More information can be found at

<https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/inspections/all-inspections/cross-compliance/>

Voluntary Coupled Support (VCS)

From 2025, a new condition will be added to the Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme (SSBSS). This means calves will only be eligible if their dam has a calving interval of 410 days or less. It is intended to help balance productivity and profitability with reducing emissions,

The new condition will be measured on an individual animal basis, not on herd averages. Offspring of cattle with an established calving interval of more than 410 days will not receive a payment. The first calves registered to any dam will be exempt from the calving interval threshold so will remain eligible for payment provided that all other scheme conditions are met.

It is intended that the SSBSS will continue until at least 2028 to allow time for the calving interval conditionality to become established within the Scheme.

More information on the scheme can be found via the Scottish Government's [frequently asked questions](#) and at <https://www.nfus.org.uk/Policy/Livestock/calf-scheme-ssbss-reform.aspx>

The Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme (SUSSS) will continue in its current form in 2025 and 2026. Consideration is being given to how this element of VCS may be delivered from 2028. We recognise the importance of the SUSSS to active hill farmers and crofters with a predominance of Region 3 land and will be pushing to ensure more effective delivery of such support.

Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS)

LFASS will continue in 2025, 2026 and 2028 at least. Work is just starting on how best to deliver this type of ‘disadvantaged areas’ support under the new four-tiered framework from 2028.

Given the profile of Scottish agriculture, the need for such support remains critical. It is proposed that, in the future, this funding will be made available through Tier 2 (Enhanced). However, as income support to ensure continuity of agricultural activity in less favoured areas, we will press for this support to be a bespoke and specific element of Tier 1 Base payments.

The socio-economic and environmental value of active farming and crofting on poorer land or in remoter locations, or both, cannot be overstated. Ongoing support for livestock grazing systems in such areas must be integral to the future support framework.

While LFASS continues to provide stability over the next few years, there is a clear opportunity, via the new Act, to develop a new approach to support the active livestock systems shaped by Scotland’s less favoured areas.

Agri Environment and Climate Scheme (AECS)

AECS is expected to continue to 2026 to deliver elements of Tiers 3 and 4 until new Elective (Tier 3) and Complementary (Tier 4) support mechanisms are introduced. Some of the options currently available through AECS are being considered for inclusion in Tier 2 over time so that more farms and crofts can implement them.

Changes may be made to the scoring, budgets or options to support the transition from AECS to the right fit within the new four-tier support framework – predominantly Tier 3.

Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS)

FGS is expected to continue to 2026 to deliver elements of Tiers 3 and 4 until new Elective (Tier 3) and Complementary (Tier 4) support mechanisms are introduced. Some of the options currently available through FGS are being considered for inclusion in Tier 2 over time so that more farms and crofts can implement them.

Changes may be made to the scoring, budgets or options to support the transition from FGS to the right fit within the new four-tier support framework – predominantly Tier 3.

Targeted Capital Support

It is expected that the Agricultural Transformation Fund (ATF), the Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme (CAGS), the Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Fund (KTIF), and the Food Processing, Marketing and Cooperation (FPMC) Scheme will continue until 2026 and will deliver much of the Tiers 3 and 4 capital support until new Elective and Complementary elements are developed and then implemented from 2027.