



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs

T 03459 335577
defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

To all MPs with constituencies in England
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

10 March 2021

Launch of the Sustainable Farming Incentive national pilot

Dear colleagues,

This month we are launching the pilot of the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme. As I announced at NFU Live 2021, this marks a major milestone in our delivery of the future schemes.

Now the UK has left the EU and is no longer bound by the bureaucratic Common Agricultural Policy, the Government is introducing a new system that is tailored to the interests of our farmers. It is the most significant change to farming and land management in 50 years, designed to deliver a renewed agricultural sector, producing healthy food for consumption at home and abroad, where farms can be profitable and economically sustainable.

The Sustainable Farming Incentive is the first in a package of environmental land management schemes. The three schemes will pay farmers to improve the environment, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions.

Through the Sustainable Farming Incentive, farmers will be paid for environmentally sustainable actions. For example, we might pay farmers to manage and plant hedgerows to provide year-round food, shelter and breeding cover for birds and insects.

We'll start to pilot the Sustainable Farming Incentive this year with an initial group of several hundred farmers. They will receive payments through the pilot scheme based on existing rates from Countryside Stewardship. In mid-2022, we will start to roll out the scheme to all recipients of legacy EU subsidies, with an updated payment methodology. The intention is to move to a system that fairly pays farmers and land managers for taking environmental actions and adopting sustainable practices that achieve better outcomes.

Information on the pilot scheme will be published today, which you can find in the document enclosed, and online at the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-pilot-launch-overview>

It sets out our plans for launching the pilot of the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme, within the context of the other schemes on offer as we move away from the previous system. This builds on information set out in the Agricultural Transition Plan (published in November).

From 15 March we intend to invite expressions of interest from farmers to join the pilot. Further details of the piloting of the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme and of the roll-out next year of an early version of the scheme will follow in the coming weeks and months.

George Eustice

RT HON GEORGE EUSTICE MP