



# Rural Payments Agency

## **Background**

### **CAP Information Service**

The way farmers, land managers and agents will apply for schemes and claim Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payment is changing; they will need to use the new CAP Information Service (CAPIS).

CAPIS will be the new online application and payment service for all new CAP schemes. It is being built with the help of customers; their feedback is creating a simpler, more user-friendly service.

The service will be introduced gradually, initially with small groups of customers, and on an ongoing basis over the summer and autumn. Customers will be contacted directly and asked to register onto CAPIS from late October onwards. Customers will be able to register, check their details are up to date and familiarise themselves with CAPIS before the end of 2014. The RPA will be in contact with customers when the service is ready.

There will be various stages in applying for BPS: it is not a one-off application, but a process in a series of steps.

More and more government services are moving online. CAPIS is one of the first to move online and will cost taxpayers £154m to implement, a significant saving on the £600m spent on previous services over the last nine years.

### **Extra help**

All applications for the new CAP schemes will have to be made online from 2015. For SPS 2014, nearly 70 per cent of applications were made online.

We understand that some customers can't get online, or don't have access to a computer or the skills to use one. We will provide a range of additional support to those customers, which we're calling 'extra help'.

We are working to identify those customers most likely to need the extra help. We will be communicating directly with them over the coming months to help them get the appropriate support, for example through new Digital Support Centres where some customers will be able to get face-to-face help to use CAPIS. The RPA will contact customers when the service is available to use.

## **CAP**

Under the new CAP, which comes into effect from 2015, farming, wildlife, rural businesses and the wider economy in England are set to benefit from £15 billion in funding.

Defra is developing CAP schemes to reflect the new requirements including those relating to greening, the active farmer test, hill farmers and young farmers and a new online service to help everyone who wants to apply for CAP funds to do so in a quick and simple way.

Defra, working with the RPA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission is determined to implement the CAP in a way that is as simple, affordable and effective as possible.

At each step of the countdown, information will be made available to help people understand how the new CAP will affect them, and what they need to do, and by when, to move as smoothly as possible to the new schemes and online service.

## **GOV.UK**

The CAP Reform section of the GOV.UK website ([www.gov.uk/cap-reform](http://www.gov.uk/cap-reform)) provides a single point of access to further guidance on CAP. The CAP Reform Countdown symbol is being used to flag up important information about CAP Reform. Farmers and land managers will see this on webpages and other documents in coming months.

As decisions are made this information will be:

- Timely – RPA is already letting farmers and land managers know now about early business decisions they must take on issues like entitlements transfer and crop diversification.
- Available to everyone who needs it – existing and potential new customers.
- Easy to understand and act upon – no complicated jargon.
- Clearly signposted – the CAP Reform Countdown symbol means there is important information you need to know or actions to take now.

## **The Funding**

Most of the funding under the new CAP period - more than £11.5bn - will be paid under direct payment schemes to farmers. The new Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), including the greening payment and the young farmer payment, will replace the Single Payment Scheme (SPS).

There will also be at least £3.5bn of investment into the environment and rural economy under Rural Development schemes over the next seven years. The programme will support the environment, farming and forestry sectors, businesses and communities in rural areas. Even with a smaller overall CAP budget, the Government will be spending a bigger share on the environment than before.

## **Want to know more?**

Anyone interested in reading more about CAP Reform and the discussions that are taking place – including the Defra consultations – should go to [www.gov.uk/cap-reform](http://www.gov.uk/cap-reform).