



Rural Payments Agency

19 June 2023
Our ref: RFI 6592

Dear [REDACTED],

Environmental Information Regulations – Information Request

We refer to your request for information dated 18 May 2023 which we have dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

You have asked the following questions: -

- 1) How many people are currently employed within the Rural Payments Agency whose job involves (a) processing and (b) inspecting claims made under the Basic Payment Scheme, The Countryside Stewardship Scheme, and the Sustainable Farming Incentive?
- 2) How much public money has been spent per annum on the employment of persons tasked with (a) processing and (b) inspecting claims made under the Basic Payment Scheme, The Countryside Stewardship Scheme, and the Sustainable Farming Incentive over the previous five years (2018 - 2023)?
- 3) How much public money has been paid out to farmers and landowners per annum over the last five years (2018 to 2023) under (a) the Basic Payment Scheme and (b) The Countryside Stewardship Scheme and (c) The Sustainable Farming Incentive.
- 4) In the last five years (2018 to 2023) how much money has been proved to have been defrauded from the public purse by farmers or landowners (or their representatives) claiming public money under the Basic Payment Scheme, The Countryside Stewardship Scheme, and the Sustainable Farming Incentive on an annual basis?
- 5) Have any of the cases in paragraph 4 led to criminal prosecution?

We have considered questions three, four and five under the EIR.

Please find below the total amounts paid per annum under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), the Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme and the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) between 2018 and 2023.

Calendar Year	BPS	CS	SFI
2018	£1,944,272,555.34	£112,493,821.86	n/a
2019	£1,885,405,964.94	£203,591,111.75	n/a
2020	£1,956,307,377.61	£305,161,496.47	n/a
2021	£1,696,955,423.51	£341,874,702.63	n/a
2022	£1,384,135,171.37	£436,872,746.22	£10,692,418
2023 (1 Jan – 18 May)	£36,731,535.17	£176,105,538.08	£9,574,067

Please find below the total amounts found to have been fraudulently claimed under BPS CS and SFI between 2018 and 2023.

Calendar Year	BPS	CS	SFI
2018	£22,579.21	£0	£0
2019	£43,041.34	£528.00	£0
2020	£21,781.91	£3,530.00	£0
2021	£34,696.83	£2,423.86	£0
2022	£250,195.19	£64,375.44	£0
2023 (1 Jan -18 May)	£24,487.62	£39,100.48	£0

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) can also confirm that some of the cases identified to have fraudulently claimed have led to a criminal prosecution.

We will write to you separately regarding questions one and two which are being considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA).

We also attach Annex A below, explaining the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

What you need to do

If you are not happy with the way we have handled your request, you can ask for an internal review. These requests should be submitted in writing within two months of the

date of receipt of the response to your original request. You should email your request for a review to IRT@rpa.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision by following the link to the Information Commissioner's website [here](#).

They can also be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted RPA's own complaints procedure.

If you need further information

If you have any questions about this email, you can contact us by email irt@rpa.gov.uk.

You can find more information on how we handle personal data in our [Personal Information Charter](#) and [RPA Customer Privacy notices](#) on [GOV.UK](#)

Yours sincerely

Information Rights Team

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