



Rural Payments Agency

23 January 2025
Our ref: RFI 7245

Dear [REDACTED],

Environmental Information Regulations – Information Request

Thank you for your email on 21 December, in response to our email of 19 December regarding your request for information with the reference RFI 7211. Your request has been dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

You have requested a detailed map showing all the areas qualifying for the Farming Recovery Fund (FRF) payment.

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has not produced a cartographic representation of the data as part of the process for determining eligibility for this fund. We used models to process spatial data directly, due to the wide geographical area impacted by both river flooding and exceptional rainfall. The extents of both the river flooding and rainfall impacts were overlaid with land parcels and a list downloaded to our data engineers who developed a scripted approach to undertake further checks such as removing parcels that were non-agricultural land and determining the relationship between the customer and the parcel data. The rates were then applied to the data. This method allows us to process large amounts of data to make payments to those affected, but it does not produce any detailed visualisations of this data in the process. Therefore, this information is not held.

The information you have requested is therefore exempt from disclosure under regulation 12(4)(a) EIR 'Information not held'. This is a qualified exemption, which usually means that a public authority is required to conduct a public interest test to determine whether or not information should be disclosed or withheld. However, the Information Commissioner (IC) takes the view that a public interest test in cases where the information is not held would serve no useful purpose. Therefore, in line with the IC's view RPA has not conducted a public interest test in this case.

Regulation 9 of EIR requires public authorities to provide advice and assistance to applicants where reasonable.

The recovery payments are a one-off contribution to farmers impacted by river flooding or exceptional rainfall or both. Eligibility for a recovery payment is based on areas where a main river has experienced a "notably high" river level due to Storms Babet

(October 2023) and Henk (January 2024) and on land parcels that fall within a high rainfall zone across England between October 2023 and March 2024.

We have focused on delivering recovery payments using data from rivers from the Environment Agency (Water Situation reports) and rainfall (Met Office data).

The Environment Agency Water Situation Reports categorise river flows and notably high is one of those categories. To inform eligibility, data showing locations that exceeded their highest ever levels has been analysed alongside additional supporting data to determine notably high or above levels that were recorded during Storms Babet and Henk.

The areas where “notably high” river level flooding occurred as a result of Storms Babet and Henk were Berkshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Staffordshire, Surrey, Warwickshire, West Northamptonshire, Wiltshire, Worcestershire and Yorkshire.

For high rainfall levels we set a threshold which states that if the area has received 70% more rainfall than the mean average, over the last 30 years, for that area then it will be eligible for a recovery payment.

Farm businesses were identified through these methods and were contacted directly by the RPA to notify them of their eligibility for a recovery payment. All eligible customers have now been contacted by either letter or email. If you or a client has not received contact regarding a recovery payment from the Rural Payments Agency, then unfortunately our data has shown that their land did not meet the eligibility criteria.

We can provide an SBI list of your clients for whom you hold ‘full business’ or ‘make legal changes’ permissions for in the Rural Payments online service, confirming who has received funding if that would be helpful.

Recovery payments were always intended as an exceptional intervention. Defra is working with the Flood Resilience Taskforce to develop a longer-term solution to the impacts of changing climate on our agricultural sector.

What you need to do

If you wish to make a formal complaint about the administration of the methodologies to a clients land you can follow the linked complaints procedure ([Complaints procedure - Rural Payments Agency - GOV.UK](#)) sending your completed CA4 form to FRF@rpa.gov.uk. Please be aware that the RPA is responsible for the application of the methodology only and therefore any complaints or appeals regarding the Farming Recovery Payments will only be able to test that we have correctly applied the data to the land parcels.

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

Rural Payments Agency | Eden Bridge House | Lowther Street | Carlisle | CA3 8DX

Tel: 03300 416502 | **Email:** IRT@rpa.gov.uk

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