Overview

Date published: 7 December, 2022

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This guidance is effective from 1 January, 2023

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Greening was introduced to improve the environmental performance of farming. A new Greening payment ‘for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and environment’ will be paid on top of the Basic Payment Scheme from 2015.

Thirty per cent of Scotland’s Direct Payment budget is allocated to the Greening payment. When considering the implementation of the Greening requirements in Scotland, a balance was reached regarding the transfer of funds from Pillar one to Pillar two and the activities to be undertaken to meet the Greening requirements.

Under reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, it is mandatory for applicants to the Basic Payment Scheme to comply with Greening requirements, where relevant on their land. In return for this, an additional Greening payment will be made.

On leaving the European Union the Greening requirements have been reviewed and now cover:

- Permanent grassland
- Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs)

The Greening requirement applies at a business level. This is the land under one Business Reference Number (BRN) – all the land your business claimed on your Single Application Form. Greening is paid in accordance with the number of eligible hectares in the region concerned in each year of application.

You may be subject to inspections throughout the year to ensure you are adopting relevant Greening practices. If you fail to meet your Greening requirements, this will result in a proportionate reduction being applied to your Greening payment. In addition to this reduction, you may incur an administrative penalty which can be applied to your Basic Payment.

What does Greening mean to me?

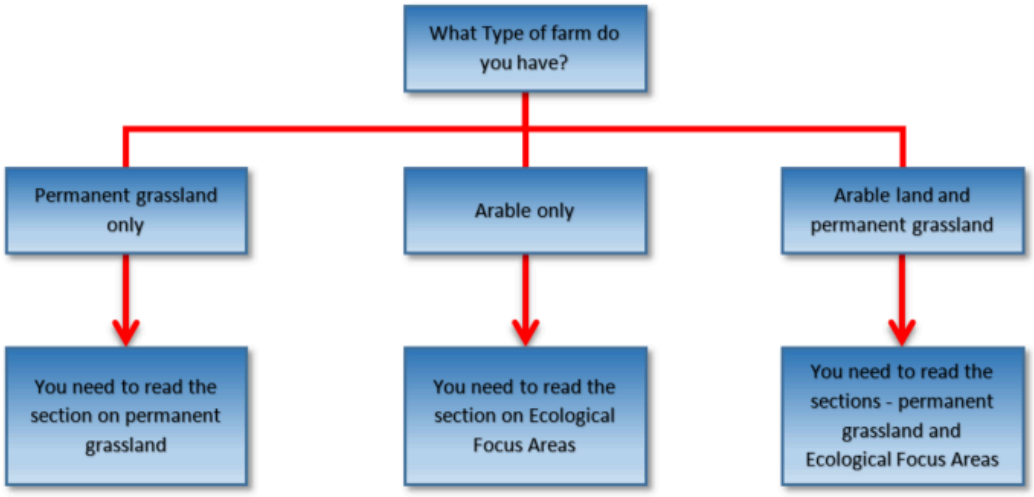
To make sure you receive the Greening payment with your Basic Payment, you must comply with Greening requirements. Many businesses already comply with Greening requirements as part of their normal agricultural practices.

However, it is important you read this information to see which Greening requirements apply to you. Greening activities will include one or more of the following:

- protecting permanent grassland designated as environmentally sensitive grassland
- farming five per cent of your arable area in a manner that promotes biodiversity – known as an Ecological Focus Area (EFA)

What do I need to read?

This guidance will describe the Greening elements and what you need to do for each of the requirements. Use our flowchart below to find out which parts of this guidance are important for you to read.



When considering this flowchart, for detailed definitions of arable and permanent grass, please see the glossary.

Is Greening the same as Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition?

No, but a lot of the GAEC and Greening practices complement each other. As with Greening, you are also required to comply with GAEC, under Cross Compliance to meet Basic Payment Scheme requirements.

You should be aware of the following examples of GAEC:

- a requirement to keep a two metre buffer strip from the centre line of a hedge and a two metre buffer strip from the top of the bank of surface water
- a ban on the cutting or trimming of hedges between 1 March and 31 August
- GAEC 1 – you must not apply pesticides within two metres of the top of the bank of surface water unless the following exemption applies:

- spot applications of pesticides to control injurious weeds, invasive species and, after prior written consent of the Scottish Ministers and / or other statutory bodies, certain other weed species. If you are carrying out this exemption, please be aware of SEPA's requirements for applying pesticides in or near water. Information on this can be found on the Spraying Pesticides page of the NetReg website

- GAEC 7 – you must not apply fertilisers or pesticides within two metres of the centre line of a hedge unless one of the following exemptions apply:

- applications of fertilisers or pesticides to establish a new hedge. This applies from the time the land is prepared for planting the new hedge to the end of the hedge's third growing season

- spot application of pesticides to control injurious weeds, invasive species and, after prior written consent of the Scottish Ministers and / or other statutory bodies, certain other weed species

This list is not exhaustive, the full guidance covering GAEC is available on the Cross Compliance pages of Rural Payments and Services.

Recent changes

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