

Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme (Mainland and Islands)

This scheme helps maintain beef suckler herds at a level that sustains the commercial beef industry in Scotland.

The support provided will help the environmental and social benefits that arise from extensive beef suckler herds in Scotland.

The beef sector has accounted for 22 per cent of Scottish agricultural output over the last 10 years and beef production is the largest agricultural sector in Scotland. About 11,400 people are employed on beef cattle holdings.

Full scheme guidance

Before you apply for this scheme, you should read the full scheme guidance. If you have any questions, please check with us before you submit an application.

[Full scheme guidance](#)

If you need any help or assistance to use this guidance, you can book an appointment at your local area office.

[Book an appointment](#)

New conditions for 2025

From 2025 onwards, calves will only be eligible for a SSBSS payment if their dam has a calving interval threshold of 410 days or less. Find out more in the, [SSBSS quick guide](#) , the [Agricultural Reform Route Map](#) and the [frequently asked questions \(PDF, Size: 166.4 kB\)](#) on 2025 changes.

Updates

22 December, 2016

We've updated the Eligibility section of the guidance to include some new information of dual purpose breeds.

For previous versions of the guidance, please check the scheme archive.

[Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme archive](#)

Eligibility

To be eligible for the scheme you must:

- maintain a suckler beef herd in Scotland
- be a sole producer or
- a company or
- a partnership or
- a group of these

We pay on calves that:

- you own or lease

- are at least 75 per cent beef bred
- are born on your Scottish holding and kept there continuously from birth for at least 30 days
- were born on or after 2 December, 2014
- have a valid cattle passport
- have been correctly officially identified
- have not been paid under the previous schemes (Scottish Beef Calf Scheme or Scottish Beef Scheme)

Applications

To apply for support through this scheme you must have submitted a Single Application Form for the same year. You can find out more about the Single Application Form using the link below.

[Single Application Form](#)

You can apply for Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme between 1 January and 31 December.

Using our online service is the easiest and quickest way to submit your claim.

However, you can also claim by post using a paper claim form.

If you submit your claim online it will help you avoid simple errors such as claiming for an animal twice or entering an eartag in the wrong format.

The actual payment rates for a scheme year will be based on the budget available being divided by the total number of eligible animals claimed (when known).

[Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme \(Mainland and Islands\) claim form \(PDF, Size: 322.1 kB\)](#)

Completed forms, along with details of each animal's identification number, should be sent to your local RPID area office. You can find contact details for each office in our contact section.

[Contact Us](#)

Payment

There are two rates of payment for this scheme, depending on where you are based.

- mainland
- island

The higher rate for Scottish islands reflects the challenges faced by beef producers in these areas.

The actual payment rates for a scheme year will be based on the budget available being divided by the total number of eligible animals claimed (when known).

For scheme years 2015 to 2019, a choice of currency between sterling and euros has been available to businesses claiming Direct Payments. From scheme year 2020 we will only pay you in sterling.

Payments will be made to your business' nominated bank account using BACS.

We can only pay into a United Kingdom bank account held in the name of the business. You must provide your business' bank account details to allow us to pay you.

We aim to acknowledge your claim by letter within 14 days.

We will aim to pay all eligible claims by 30 June following the end of each scheme year.

Inspections

We will inspect the cattle you claim under the scheme as part of our existing Cattle Identification Inspection programme.

You can find out more about how and why we carry out inspections in our dedicated section.

[Inspections](#)

You must allow us to inspect your records and animals at any reasonable date and time. We may ask you to gather your animals at a convenient place on the holding and you must provide secure handling facilities to allow us to check each animal's ear tag.

We will not pay your subsidy and you could face prosecution if you:

- refuse to let us inspect your holding and animals
- prevent our inspector from coming onto your holding
- do not give reasonable help to the inspector

At an inspection, we will check:

- by means of a physical inspection that claimed animals have been correctly identified with two matching official identifiers and breed, sex, age and location of the claimed animals match the submitted claim details
- that your herd register contains all mandatory birth, movement and death information as applicable. We may also check supporting documents, such as purchase and sales receipts and slaughter certificates
- that claimed animals have a valid official passport
- the ScotEID ScotMoves+ / ScotMoves systems have been notified of births, movements and deaths of claimed animals as applicable.

Non-compliance and penalties

If we find you have not been following the scheme rules, you could face a penalty such as your payment being reduced or cancelled entirely.

It is important we take action where we do find that the requirements of the scheme have not been followed to make sure we are acting within United Kingdom law and do not face administration fines for not doing so.

If you knowingly make a false statement to receive payment for yourself or for someone else you may be prosecuted.

If we find a difference between the number of animals you claim in a scheme year and the number of animals that are eligible, we will reduce your payment by a percentage error rate.

To find the percentage error rate, we divide the number of ineligible animals found by the number of animals remaining eligible.

You may also face a penalty if you do not keep your land in good agricultural and environmental condition or if you do not keep to the statutory management requirements, which include the Cattle Identification Regulations.

If you are unhappy with a decision we have made regarding your application, you have the right to appeal.

Likewise, if you are unhappy with our service as a whole, we have a dedicated complaints procedure to help you resolve this.

Frequently asked questions

Download the frequently asked questions below for further information on the Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme (SSBSS) from 2025.

[SSBSS frequently asked questions \(PDF, Size: 166.4 kB\)](#)

Appeals and complaints

If you are unhappy with a decision we have made regarding your application, you have the right to appeal.

Likewise, if you are unhappy with our service as a whole, we have a dedicated complaints procedure to help you resolve this.

[Appeals](#)

[Complaints](#)

Contact

If you have any questions about this scheme, please get in touch. Contact details can be found in our Contact us section.

[Contact us](#)