

Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme full guidance

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For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

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Introduction

These notes cover the Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme (SUSSS). Please read them carefully so you understand the rules of the scheme.

If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch with your local area office.

[Contact us](#)

To obtain movement document forms please get in touch with your local area office, or contact the Scottish Animal Movement Unit (SAMU) by telephone on 0300 244 5888, fax on 0300 244 8844 or email at samu@gov.scot

You can also view the movements notified on and off your holding by registering with [ScotEID](#) .

Overview of scheme

- this scheme gives direct support to help maintain sheep flocks in farm businesses reliant on poorer quality rough grazing found in Scotland's Basic Payment Region three. It has an annual budget of up to £7 million
- eligible animals must be retained on your holding (including away winterings) from 1 December in the year of claim to 31 March in the following year
- we pay on ewe hoggs (female sheep) born on Scottish holdings which rely on poor quality rough grazing found in Scotland's Basic Payment Region three (upper limit of 1 ewe hogg per 4 ha)
- the ewe hoggs must be less than 12 months old at the start of the retention period
- businesses that rely on poor quality rough grazing are defined as those which have: a) 80 per cent or more of their agricultural land in Scotland's Basic Payment Region three and b) no more than 200 hectares of good quality agricultural land in Scotland's Basic Payment Region one
- claims can be made between 1 September and 30 November each year
- you must maintain a flock register and keep it up to date. In addition, you must comply with the Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) (Scotland) Order 2009

Registering with Rural Payments and Services

To apply for this scheme, you must register with our new system. Even businesses who were previously registered with us must re-register.

[You can find out more about how to register here](#)

Claiming subsidy

Maximum number of claims

There is no limit to the number of claims you can make.

Claiming online

Using our online service is the easiest and quickest way to submit your claim. It helps stop mistakes and reduces the administration costs of the scheme.

The [Guide to online SUSSS submission \(1.33 MB PDF\)](#) (PDF, Size: 1.4 MB) will show you how to use the online Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme (SUSSS) application form to submit your application.

Even if you have no access to the internet, you may be able to make use of computers in your local area office.

[More information can be found in our customer services section](#)

Claiming offline

You can still claim by post using the [Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme claim form \(PDF, Size: 566.4 kB\)](#).

You can also access copies of the claim form from your local area office.

Completed forms should be sent to your local area office. Details can be found in our contact us section.

Contact us

We will only accept and acknowledge your claim form if you or your agent has:

- filled in your Main Location Code, business name and address in section one
- entered the individual identities of animals being declared
- completed the number declared box, number claimed box and retention location box(es) in section two
- signed and dated the form in section three. If you provide additional separate pages with your claim form (eg, a list of ear tags), these must also be signed and dated

Claim period

Claims can be made each year from 1 September and there is no limit to the number of claims you can make until the close of the application period on 30 November.

Retention period

To be eligible for payment, claimed animals must be retained on your holding (including away winterings) from 1 December in the year of the claim to 31 March the following year.

Retention Locations

We must know where the sheep you have claimed will be at any time during the retention period. You must enter all locations which will be used during the retention period on your claim form.

If you intend to move your sheep to a place other than that given on your claim form – even for a short period, for example to graze stubble turnips belonging to another farmer – you must notify your RPID area office in writing (by e-mail, letter or online) of this additional retention location before you move them. You must ensure that this requirement is met even if someone else is looking after your sheep during the retention period.

If the sheep you have claimed are found (either at inspection or during administrative checks) not to be at the location(s) which you have given at part 2 of the claim form or subsequently notified in writing, your payment will be reduced in accordance with the scheme penalties outlined within this guidance.

Declaring and claiming eligible ewe hoggs

You can choose to declare more eligible ewe hoggs on your claim form than you claim subsidy for. This may help you to satisfy the claim number throughout the retention period. For example, you could declare the individual identities of 100 eligible ewe hoggs but only claim on 90. This would allow a buffer of 10 animals in case you suffer unexplained losses during the retention period. You do not have to formally notify RPID of any withdrawals or natural circumstance losses until the number of eligible animals falls below the claimed number. When the number of eligible animals falls below the claimed number you must notify RPID (by letter, e-mail or online) of all reductions that occur from that point and the individual identities involved. At an inspection, we will inspect and confirm the eligibility of all the ewe hoggs you declare.

Eligibility

Producers and agents

Individuals, companies, partnerships, or a group of these can all claim from this scheme.

You can give an agent authority to act for you and sign your claim form. If you use an agent, you must authorise them to act for you.

You can do this online by creating an account with Rural Payments and Services and logging in.

Alternatively, you can download and complete Form PF05 – Business Mandate.

[PF05 – Business mandate](#)

You can also get this form from your local area office.

Holdings

Your holding is all the production units that you manage. Only production units in Scotland are eligible for this scheme. You are eligible to apply providing:

- at least 80 per cent of the eligible land claimed for Basic Payment Scheme on your Single Application Form in the relevant scheme year is in Payment Region Three and
- no more than 200 hectares of the eligible land claimed for Basic Payment Scheme on your Single Application Form in the relevant scheme year is in Payment Region One

You can find out more about the payment regions below.

[Regionalisation of payments](#)

You must be registered with the Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA) as a sheep keeper on each holding (including away winterings) you keep sheep on.

Single Application Form

To claim for this scheme, you must complete a Single Application Form each year. If you do not do this, your claim will not be valid and we will not make a payment. The Main Location Code you use on your claim form should be the same as the one on your Single Application Form.

Eligible Animals

We pay on ewe hogs born in sheep flocks maintained on land designated as Payment Region Three for the purposes of the Basic Payment Scheme. The animals must be home-bred, meaning you cannot purchase or transfer animals from another business. There is an upper payment limit of one ewe hogg to every four hectares of Basic Payment Region Three land.

Animal Identification Requirements

The ewe hogs must be less than 12 months old at the start of the retention period. The ewe hogs must have been fully electronically identified with two matching official identifiers (one of which must be electronic), prior to the submission of the claim and entered into your holding register.

If the EID double identification requirements are not carried out for each declared ewe hogg your payment will be reduced in accordance with the scheme penalties outlined within this guidance.

Holding register requirements

You must record in your holding register –

The official EID identifier, date of identification, number of animals and year of birth of every ewe hogg declared on your SUSSS claim.

The full official EID identifier, date of replacement and previous official identifier where a declared ewe hogg has had an official replacement identifier applied.

The full official EID identifier and date of death where a declared ewe hogg has died.

The date, number of animals, haulier details and CPH that the ewe hogs have moved to or from when declared ewe hogs have moved between your holdings.

If the mandatory holding register details for each declared ewe hogg is found to not be recorded (found either at inspection or during administrative checks) your payment will be reduced in accordance with the scheme penalties outlined within this guidance.

Movement documents and movement notification requirements

The sheep and goat identification and traceability legislation requires keepers to notify sheep movements to the national movement database (ScotEID) via SAMU. It is also a Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme (SUSSS) eligibility requirement that all movements are notified to the database.

A movement document must be fully completed for all movements of SUSSS animals declared on your claim. To notify a movement a movement document must be completed and sent to SAMU by post, fax or e-mail. As a claimant, it is your responsibility to check that a movement document has been received by SAMU. You can check if a movement notification has taken place by contacting SAMU or registering and logging online to ScotEID.

You must ensure that the notification requirements are met even if someone else is looking after your sheep during the retention period. e.g. if you away winter sheep you must ensure that the off and on movement is correctly notified to SAMU. As a claimant, it is your responsibility to check and ensure that both the off and on notification to SAMU has been made.

If the sheep you have claimed are found (either at inspection or during administrative checks) to have moved to another location(s) and the move has not been notified to SAMU, your payment will be reduced in accordance with the scheme penalties outlined within this guidance.

Economic Responsibility

Under the scheme, you must have economic responsibility for the animals which you include in your claim and be able to provide evidence of your ability to meet this requirement if required by RPID. Economic responsibility means that you must be responsible for:

- management of the flock;
- feeding;
- housing and paying the bills;
- veterinary care;
- ownership, including receipts from sales, of any progeny; and
- the selecting of animals brought into or disposed of from the flock.

In essence, this means that you must own or have a formal leasing agreement on the animals included in your claim. Economic responsibility does not include arrangements to buy animals and sell them back to the original owner, whether for a single or multiple scheme years and/or where the original owner undertakes day-to-day management of the flock. If you have some other arrangement which you think may entitle you to claim SUSSS, contact your SGRPID Area Office before you complete your claim form.

Cross Compliance

To be eligible for this scheme you must keep your land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) and meet the legal requirements of keeping sheep as part of our Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs).

You can find out more about Cross Compliance below.

[Cross Compliance](#)

Withdrawals

You can write to us to withdraw an entire claim or individual animals at any time. But not if we have told you we will be inspecting your holding, or have told you about any errors in your claim.

Natural circumstances losses

If the number of ewe hoggs retained during the retention period falls below the number claimed due to natural circumstances losses, you have 10 working days from finding any reduction in the number of animals to inform us.

Force majeure / exceptional circumstances

If you have been unable to comply with the rules of the scheme as a result of force majeure/exceptional circumstances, you may retain the right to aid in respect of the claimed animal numbers.

To qualify you must notify us in writing with relevant evidence within 15 working days from the date you are in a position to do so.

Eligibility checks

We will check by inspections and administrative checks that you have met the eligibility requirements detailed above. Where ineligible animals/claims are found your payment will be reduced in accordance with the scheme penalties outlined within this guidance.

Each eligible animal must only be claimed once. If you duplicate a claim for an animal in the same year or a subsequent year, we will treat this as an over-declaration and apply penalties.

You can avoid this by checking your claim record each and every time before you claim.

Inspections

We will inspect all the sheep you declare under the scheme and the land declared in support of your claim.

We will check that you have met the scheme's rules, as detailed in the regulations and implemented and enforced by the Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) (Scotland) Order 2009.

Detailed guidance can be found in our inspections section.

[Sheep and goat identification](#)

We may not warn you about any inspection we plan to carry out and we may inspect your holding more than once a year.

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 all declared sheep have been correctly identified with two matching official EID identifiers
- by means of a physical inspection that official EID identifiers, homebred status, sex, age and retention location of the declared sheep match the submitted claim details
- that the full official EID identifier, date of identification, number of animals and year of birth of all declared animals have been recorded in your holding register
- that the full official EID identifier, date of replacement and previous official identifier has been entered in your holding register where a declared animal has had an official replacement identifier applied
- that movement documents have been fully completed, movement information is entered in the holding register and movements notified to ScotEID via SAMU
- that the full official EID identifier and date of death of any declared sheep which have died during the retention period are recorded in the holding register
- that the natural circumstance losses criteria have been met.
- as a keeper of sheep, your identification and traceability requirements can be found in the Sheep and Goat Identification and Traceability - Guidance for Keepers in Scotland (below)



[Sheep and Goat Identification and Traceability - Guidance for Keepers in Scotland \(PDF, Size: 349.5 kB\)](https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/Sheep-and-Goat-Identification-and-Traceability---guidance-for-keepers-in-Scotland.pdf)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/Sheep-and-Goat-Identification-and-Traceability---guidance-for-keepers-in-Scotland.pdf> Sheep and Goat Identification and Traceability - Guidance for Keepers in Scotland

Penalties

General

You will lose some or all of your payment if you do not meet the rules of the scheme and the undertakings you give.

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

So it's important to make sure you understand your responsibilities we would advise you to seek professional advice if you need it.

Scheme penalties

You may face a penalty if you claim for animals that do not meet the rules of the scheme.

From scheme year 2021 a review of the penalty regime changed the way penalties are applied. There is now only one penalty level, so for 2021 applications onwards, if we find a difference between the number of animals claimed and the number of animals that are eligible, we will reduce a payment using a percentage error rate which is calculated by dividing the number of animals found to be not eligible by the number of animals that are eligible.

For example:

If you claim 100 animals but 10 of these are not eligible, the percentage error calculation would be: $10 \text{ (animals not eligible)} \div 90 \text{ (remaining eligible animals)} \times 100 = 11.1 \text{ per cent}$

This means that we pay premium on 90 animals and reduce the payment by 11.1 per cent.

In scheme years 2015 to 2020, there were five levels of penalty. We still found the percentage error rate by dividing the number of animals found to be not eligible by the number of animals that were eligible, however, we had five levels of penalties as outlined below:

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 using a percentage error rate.

Penalty level one applies when the number of non-eligible animals found is no more than three.

- level one – we will reduce your payment by the percentage error rate

Penalty levels two, three, four or five apply when the number of non-eligible animals is four or more.

- level two – if the percentage error rate is a maximum of 10 per cent, we will reduce your payment by the percentage error rate
- level three – if the percentage error rate is more than 10 per cent to a maximum of 20 per cent, we will reduce your payment by twice the percentage error rate
- level four – if the percentage error rate is more than 20 per cent, we will not pay you under that year's scheme
- level five – if the percentage error rate is more than 50 per cent, we will not pay you under that year's scheme. Additionally, we will also apply a fine to other payments you are entitled to over the following three scheme years. The fine will be determined by calculating the difference between the claimed and determined number of animals multiplied by the payment rate per animal for the scheme year concerned

For example:

If you claim 100 animals but 10 of these are not eligible, the percentage error calculation would be:

$10 \text{ (animals not eligible)} \div 90 \text{ (remaining eligible animals)} \times 100 = 11.1 \text{ per cent}$

This is a level three penalty. This means that we pay premium on 90 animals and reduce the payment by 22.2 per cent.

False declaration

If you knowingly make a false statement in an application, we will apply a fine to other payments you are entitled to over the following three scheme years.

The fine will be equivalent to the payment you would have received had there been no errors in your application.

Penalties for not following Cross Compliance

You may face a penalty:

- if you do not keep your land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC)
- if you do not keep to the Statutory Management Requirements (SMR), which include the animal identification regulations

More information can be found in our [Cross Compliance](#) section.

Penalties for using banned substances

We may exclude you from the scheme for a year if we find:

- that you have used banned substances (for example, hormones) on your animals or we find these substances on your premises
- we find residues of substances in your animals (for example, medicines) which you have used illegally, or we find these substances stored illegally on your premises

If we exclude you from the scheme for using banned substances and you repeat this offence, we may exclude you for up to five years.

If you prevent us from inspecting your holding or taking samples to check for banned substances, we may exclude you from the scheme.

Returning your Single Application Form (SAF) late

If we receive your Single Application after the deadline we will reduce your payment. You can find out more about the Single Application Form and how to complete it online below.

Using our online service is the quickest and easiest way to submit your form each year.

[Single Application Form](#)

Declarations and undertakings

You must read the declarations and undertakings at section three of your claim form carefully before you sign the form.

Payments

General

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.

We will make payments 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.

Payments by BACS

If we already hold bank account details for your business we will use those.

If you want to change your bank account details, or provide them for the first time, you need to fill in and return the form below.

A paper copy of this form is also available from your local area office. Please keep your BACS details up to date to avoid payment delays.

- [PF03 - Register your bank details form - sterling](#)

Payment rates

We pay a flat rate for each eligible animal. The yearly rates will be set once the total number of eligible animals claimed is known, usually around March.

Our targets

We can only process your claim if you fill it in correctly and include all the documents we need to support it.

We aim to:

- acknowledge your claim by letter within 14 days
- to pay all eligible claims by 30 June following the end of each scheme year

Information about you and your payments

We take our responsibilities for the way we store, secure and use your personal information seriously, and always seek to respect your privacy and to meet our legal obligations. These obligations include the General Data Protection Regulation, the UK Data Protection Act, and other regulations and legislation relating to privacy and communications.

To see details on how we use your information and who we share your information with, please see our [privacy policy](#) or available in paper form from your area office.

Our Privacy Policy explains the purposes for which we use personal data and the legal basis for that use. It explains our responsibilities for collecting data and what happens if you fail to provide data we need or provide incorrect data. We set out the categories of data we collect and how we acquire it, especially in those cases where it may come from another party.

The Privacy Policy also sets out our approach to sharing data and gives information about the organisations with whom we share data and why we do so. Finally, we advise you of your various rights and how to exercise them.

If you are providing information to us on behalf of someone else (for example, as an agent representing a beneficiary), you are advised to draw this section of the Guidance and the Privacy Policy to the attention of any individual whose data is being processed. This is in order to help you fulfil your obligations under data protection legislation towards your clients or those whom you represent.

[Appeals and complaints](#)

If you are unhappy with a decision we have made regarding your claim or if you are unhappy with the service we have provided you with, you can make use of our appeals and complaints procedures.

You can find out more about both below.

- [Appeals](#)
- [Complaints](#)

[Legal base](#)

Our legal authority for this scheme is in two parts.

- European Parliament and the Council Regulation 1307/2013 that deals with the basic rules of the scheme
- European Parliament and Council Regulation 1306/2013 that deals with requirements that are more general

The following also has to be adhered to regarding animals: Regulation (EC) 21/2004 as amended

These regulations are supplemented with other regulations, and you should note in that respect that EU legislation has now been rolled over into domestic law as 'retained EU law'. If you would like to know the full range of regulations, speak to your local area office.

We aim to provide as much guidance as is practicable on the scheme. It is not however a definitive statement of the effect of the relevant legislation, which can only be provided by the courts. If you have any legal questions, you should get appropriate legal advice from a solicitor.

[Recent changes](#)

Section	Change
Introduction	Updated SAMU contact details
Payments	Payment rates for 2017 added

[Previous versions](#)

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