Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme full guidance

This is an old version of the page

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For recent changes to this guidance, please see the bottom of the page .

Table of Contents

Introduction
Claiming subsidy
Claim submission window
Eligibility
Withdrawals
Obvious Error
Natural circumstances losses
Force majeure / exceptional circumstances
Eligibility checks
Inspections
Penalties
Declarations and undertakings
Payments
Our targets
How we look after your information
Appeals and complaints
Legal base
Recent changes
Previous versions
Download guidance

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 your business on our Rural Payments and Services system.

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 submit.

Claiming online

Using our online service is the easiest and quickest way to submit your claim. To do this, you must be registered with Rural Payments and Services .

Submitting an application online will help you avoid some simple errors such as claiming for an animal twice or entering an eartag in the wrong format.

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

Our local RPID offices can help you get online and can discuss what support is available. Even if you have no access to the internet, you may be able to make use of computers in your local area office. Please note, we have:

- an online appointment booking service which allows you to book a face-to-face appointment with a member of our team. To book this please call your local office. You can use this time to learn about Rural Payments and Services or talk about any other issues relating to your business
- public-use computers available for you to use free-of-charge to log-in to Rural Payments and Services to complete applications, update your personal details or manage a business

If you require assistance please contact your local area office for support with your application .

Please note, that our staff can explain how the application should be completed, however they cannot be held responsible for your application - this is your responsibility.

You may also wish to seek help from an advisory firm or business representative to submit your SUSSS application. You will need to mandate them to allow them access to your details. You can do this online when logged into your account, or you and your agent or business representative need to complete a Business Mandate Form (PF05) .

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 but please remember online submission is the easiest and quickest way.

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

Completed claim 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 mandated 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 submission window

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.

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 and Plant 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 have submitted a Single Application Form claiming land under Basic Payment Scheme Region 3 and meet the land eligibility requirements as set out within the full scheme guidance - please see the detail for Holdings under the Eligibility section.

Eligible Animals

We pay on ewe hoggs 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.

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 local 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 eligibile 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 your local RPID area office (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.

Animal Identification Requirements

The ewe hoggs must be less than 12 months old at the start of the retention period, The ewe hoggs 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 hoggs have moved to or from when declared ewe hoggs 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 (including winterings) 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 local RPID 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.

Obvious Error

You can correct a mistake in your claim and supporting documentation, at any time, if we classify it as an obvious error.

An obvious error is one of a purely clerical nature that is obvious to us during a simple examination of your claim. It could also be an error we find during our coherence checks which reveals a contradiction in the information you have provided in your claim only or supporting documents.

Decisions on obvious error depend on the overall facts and circumstances of each individual case. We cannot correct a mistake you have made because you misunderstood the scheme rules or forgot to claim. Please note we have no obligation to check your claim for obvious error.

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, we may accept that you have been prevented from meeting certain obligations due to a force majeure/exceptional circumstance (FM/EC) event. A FM/EC event comprises an objective element (an unusual circumstance, outside your control which prevented you from complying with scheme rules) and a subjective element (the consequences of which you could not have avoided in spite of the exercise of all due care). Some examples of a force majeure/exceptional circumstance event are:

- the death of the beneficiary
- long-term professional incapacity of the beneficiary
- a severe natural disaster gravely affecting the holding
- the accidental destruction of livestock buildings on the holding
- an epizootic or a plant disease affecting part or all of the beneficiary's livestock or crops respectively
- expropriation of all or a large part of the holding if that expropriation could not have been anticipated on the day of lodging the application

To apply for force majeure/exceptional circumstances, you must write to your area office within 15 working days of being able to tell us about it. You will need to send us as much evidence as you can to show the failure to comply with your obligations was solely due to the FM/EC event. This must include proof that the event occurred. We will consider each case on its merits and then notify you of our decision.

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

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 and 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 (animals not eligible) ÷ 90 (remaining eligible animals) x 100 = 11.1 per cent

This means that we pay premium on 90 animals and reduce the payment by 11.1 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 Form 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

Sterling

All payments will be made in Sterling.

If you haven't provided a Sterling bank account to RPID before you will need to follow the guidance below. We can only accept a UK bank account in the name of the business or in the name of business member linked to the business. Each business must have a unique bank account. We will not accept bank accounts already known to us under a different business record. You can provide your bank account details online.

Payments by BACS

We make payments under using the Bankers Automated Clearing Services (BACS).

We can only make payments to a bank account which accepts BACS payments. If we do not already have your business' nominated bank account details, or if you want to change them, you can do this online by logging in. Help on how to update bank details online .

Alternatively, you can fill in a Register your Bank Details Form – Sterling (PF03) and send it to your area office. Blank forms are available online or from your area office.

Please keep your bank details up to date in Rural Payments and Services to avoid payment delays.

Please note, if you register a new bank account or tell us of a change to your bank account, we will carry out checks for your security. These take at least 10 days, and we cannot make payments during this period.

We are not responsible for delays to your payments because you or your agent gave us incorrect bank details or did not tell us about a change to your bank account details before we processed your payment(s).

We will not process requests for mandates.

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 April.

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

How we look after your information

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 UK General Data Protection Regulation, the UK Data Protection Act 2018, 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 ‘assimilated 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

Previous versions of this page

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