

Beef Efficiency Scheme (BES)

Questions and Answers

The Beef Efficiency Scheme will be formally open to applicants in spring 2016 and farmers will receive full details regarding application, nearer the time. In the meantime, we will soon issue the BES diaries which can be used to prepare for taking part in the scheme.

Please find below a number of questions and answers that you may find helpful.

Qu. 1 I have received a diary. What do I do now?

Information in the diary and letter will help you to decide if you would like to pre-register. To pre-register, please go to www.scoteid.com/bes.

Alternatively, go to www.scoteid.com and select '**Beef Efficiency Scheme**' in the **Cattle** section of the left hand menus.

A copy of the letter is available on the www.ruralpayments.org website.

Qu.2 Am I eligible for the scheme?

To be eligible for the scheme you must be;

- A breeder of beef calves;
- A member of a farm assurance scheme;
- Eligible for Basic Payment Scheme payments;
- Registered as a cattle keeper with APHA (previously AHVLA) and BCMS.

Qu.3 Can I still join the scheme if I have not pre-registered?

Yes. Pre-registration records your interest on ScotEID with first stage security added to your account.

Then, on joining the scheme, a second stage of security is added to your BES account to confirm confidentiality of your herd information. You will be able to join the scheme without having been pre-registered but it may require more of your time during the registration process.

Qu.4 If I pre-register am I obliged to carry out the commitments of the scheme?

No. Pre-registering does not mean that you have to carry out the commitments of the scheme. If you decide to join the scheme you will be required to make an application when the scheme is formally launched in the spring.

Qu.5 If I pre-register am I obliged to join the Scheme?

No. However, there are two benefits to pre-registering;

- Firstly, it allows us to engage with you before the scheme is fully operational;
- Secondly, it allows you to have a good insight into what is involved to help you make an informed decision on whether to apply.

Qu.6 I haven't received a diary for the scheme can I still pre-register?

Yes. If you have not received a diary, you can still pre-register. You can contact the **ScotEID help-desk on 01466 794323** to have a diary sent out to you.

Qu.7 I have a large herd and do not have enough pages in my diary to last me until the scheme starts. What should I do?

You may contact **ScotEID help-desk on 01466 794323** and request an additional diary which will be sent out to you.

Qu.8 How do I apply to join the scheme?

In March, you will receive a letter with a password for access to your **ScotEID** Beef Efficiency Scheme account.

You will then have access to complete an online application or a paper copy.

Please note you also must be registered on the new www.ruralpayments.org website.

Qu.9 What are the benefits of joining the Scheme?

Data about your animals will help you make better breeding and management choices. This could lead, for example, to higher rates of calving or growth. This should help both the environment and your profits.

The Scheme will also contribute towards a more sustainable Scottish beef sector, both environmentally and economically.

Qu.10 I have heard that you have to capture sire identification details and if you get it wrong it is a cross compliance issue?

No. It is a commitment of the scheme that all data required, including sire identification, has to be provided. However, whilst it is in your interests to record the correct sire data if you make a mistake recording the sire identification it won't result in a cross compliance penalty.

Q.11 I have heard that you have to weigh calves at birth?

No, we are not asking for the calf birth weight. We do, however, ask for a weight to be recorded, ideally at weaning but definitely before the calf is 460 days old.

A key ambition of the scheme is to increase the volume of animal weighing that takes place on farms.

Qu.12 I don't have weighing equipment on my farm - what should I do?

We recognise that many units will not have weighing equipment. If you are not in a position to purchase weigh-bars or a weigh-crate, it is recommended that you borrow or hire a weigh-crate, particularly if you don't sell your calves at weaning. However, to ease the process you will be able to weight groups of evenly-sized calves as a batch at market from which individual average weights can be obtained.

Qu.13 How do I know which calves to genotype and am I expected to pay for the genotype testing?

The scheme will require the genotyping of 20 per cent of the total calves born on your unit each year. At different points in the calving season we will inform you which calves we require to have samples taken from. You will be sent the management tissue-tags to complete the tagging.

The cost of the genotyping analysis and additional tags will be covered under the scheme.

Qu.14 Is all the data recording compulsory?

No, there are some data items which are compulsory (e.g. sire details) and some voluntary data items (e.g. cow live-weight) which are optional. The purpose of the scheme is to collect data that farmers will find useful in managing their herd, such as cow weights to calculate cow efficiency figures.

Qu.15 Is collecting and recording the data, along with taking the tissue sample, my only commitment to the Scheme?

Full details of the conditions under the scheme will be provided to allow farmers to choose whether to sign up. There will be some further compulsory elements;

The first of these is to identify three management improvements you will make to improve your herd and production system so as to protect the environment and enhance your profits.

The second is to make use of the advisory service that will be provided at no cost to you to help inform those choices. Further details on how the advisory service will operate will be provided in due course. Finally there will be a carbon audit which will most likely be done automatically through the scheme's database. Further information will be available later in the full scheme guidance.

These elements go hand-in-hand as the advisory services will help you with your management decisions and assist with monitoring the improvements. There will be a number of different ways in which they will be rolled out, for example year one will mainly focus on an online video.

Qu.16 If I join the scheme, what is the payment rate and when will it be paid?

Subject to European Commission approval, the payment rate is likely to be around £32.00 per animal which using a formula will be converted to a payment per hectare. Payments will commence in spring 2017, with the exact timing yet to be confirmed. Further detail on this important aspect will be provided as soon as possible.

Qu.17 If I complete the full application and within the first year decide that I do not wish to take part in the scheme will I be liable for a penalty?

No, if you withdraw from the scheme before any payment has been made you will not be liable for a penalty.

Qu.18 If I join the scheme are there any additional cross compliance requirements that I will have to meet?

No, Cross Compliance is a standard set of requirements that apply to all schemes (BSP, LFASS, BES, etc) in the same way.

Qu.19 Where can I get more information about cross compliance?

Full details can be found on the Rural Payments and Services website by clicking on the "Inspections" heading.

<https://www.ruralpayments.org>