

Bridging payments for stewardship agreements complete

News story

Over 3,800 bridging payments were made to farmers and land managers in May 2020



English countryside

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has confirmed that more than 3,800 bridging payments worth around £43 million have been made to farmers and land managers.

On 28 April the government announced that, in recognition of the disruption to cash flow for rural businesses caused by coronavirus, eligible farmers and land managers would be offered bridging payments (interest-free loans) for 75% of the current estimated value for unpaid 2019 revenue claims on their stewardship agreements.

Over the past month, payments have been made to all eligible outstanding claimants, meeting the RPA's commitment to complete bridging payments by the end of May.

The loans covered Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship 2019 payments, ensuring farmers and land managers are paid for the important work they do to protect the environment.

RPA Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

I am pleased to announce that we have issued all bridging payments to unpaid Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship claims.

We know this is a challenging period for farmers and we will continue to focus on completing the remaining work on these claims

to ensure land managers are paid as quickly as possible.

If any adjustments need to be made to their final revenue payment, once processing work has been completed, the RPA will write to those customers informing them of what action will need to be taken.

Through CS and ES agreements, farmers and land managers are provided with an additional income stream for delivering environmental benefits, including providing habitats for wildlife and reducing the risk of flooding by improving farm infrastructure.

Those signed up to agri-environment schemes this year will be well-placed to participate in the new Environmental Land Management scheme

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