

Secure your entitlements for 2018

Complete your Basic Payment form now

James McDonnell
Finance Specialist, Teagasc Rural Economy Development Programme.

Table 1 below shows us how important direct payments were to the farming community in 2016. The figures for 2017 will not be much different.

The agricultural sector is enduring a tough period, with market volatility, global politics and weather having a significant impact on farmgate prices. Therefore, it is more important than ever to ensure that you are making the best use of the monetary supports available. In this article, I will discuss the completion of the 2018 Basic Payment application form.

The 2018 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) application system opened in early February. The information packs were posted recently, which is about a month earlier than last year. It would be prudent to make a phone call to your adviser (Teagasc or otherwise) telling him or her of your plans for this year and schedule an appointment to complete the application.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) has added extra functionality to the online process this year. All applications must be submitted online in 2018. The online system also incorporates a transfer of entitlements section to cater for those with changes to their

herd number or farming structure. Note: if there is any change to a herd number, a transfer of entitlements must be submitted.

The online applications make the preliminary checking of applications more effective. This functionality allows early flagging of errors. It also allows some checks to take place immediately after the closing date and give the applicant the facility to respond without a penalty. The system will allow DAFM to cross check applications for inadvertent dual claims and other small errors.

The 2018 application

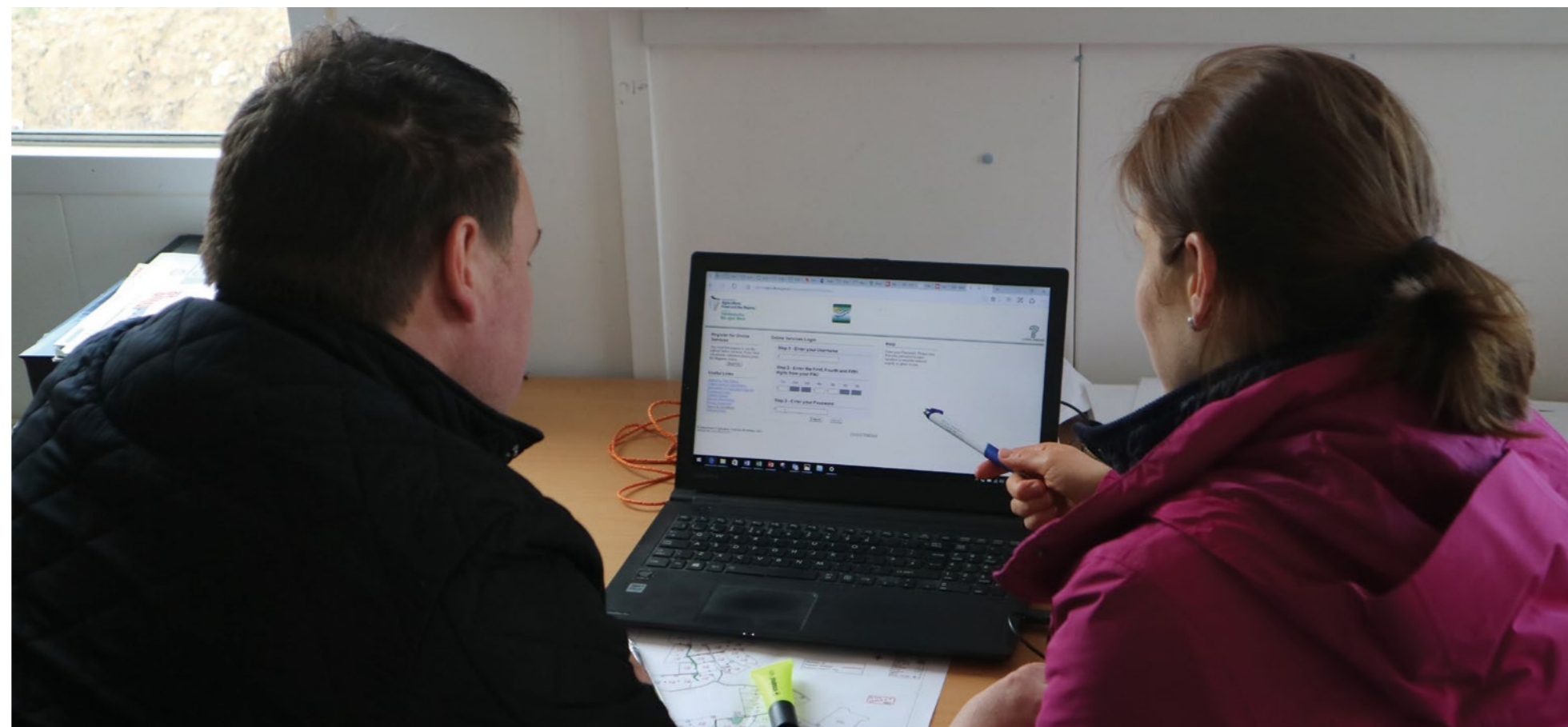
The BPS is an application that must be made if you wish to participate in other schemes, for example GLAS, TAMS or organics, etc.

The BPS application process includes:

- Basic Payment Scheme.
- Greening Payment.
- Continuation of the Young Farmer Scheme if you were an applicant in 2015, 2016 or 2017.
- Aid for Protein Crops (Peas, Beans, Lupins).
- Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme.

Making changes to the herd/crop/flock identifier

Every year, a significant number of farmers make changes to the herd/crop/flock number for one reason or another. For example a herd number (identifier) in a single name was joined by a child to avail of the



National Reserve and/or the Young Farmer Scheme. Registered farm partnerships and farming companies are other examples.

If you are planning to make changes to the herd identifier number, it must be completed in good time to allow the Regional Veterinary Office (RVO) to process the application.

Making changes to the identifier can result in late, or slow, processing of the BPS application as there are extra steps required.

Please note:

- If a change must be made, it should be completed immediately to allow the RVO adequate processing time.
- The date the application is received becomes the date of change. When making a change to the identifier, include a copy of the application and a stamped addressed envelope and request the copy be returned stamped received. This should be given to your adviser to upload with the BPS applications
- If no correspondence is received by you from the RVO by the time of your BPS appointment, you must inform your adviser of this fact, as a new blank online BPS application must be completed instead of the pre-populated one.
- The partnership registration office will not accept applications between 31 March and 1 June this year. This is to help make the BPS application process more efficient.

If you are planning to make changes to your farm, be sure to consult with your Teagasc adviser early so that all the relevant application forms and tasks can be lined up and completed timely.

National Reserve (NR)

This year, the National Reserve opened for applications in early February. The funding available this year is less than last year's, but fewer applications are expected.

A 90ha limit was applied in 2017. The rules are similar to last year. Successful applicants will expect to receive entitlements worth just over €180. On top of this, all of the applicants were paid Greening, which was worth a further 44% (€77). Some of these applicants also qualified for the Young Farmer Scheme (~€65).

The National Reserve scheme has two mandatory categories:

- a) Young Farmers
- b) New Entrants.

The full terms and conditions are available to download from your Agfood online account. Applications can be submitted through this online service also.

The Young Farmer Scheme

This scheme delivers a top-up to young farmers who have recently taken up farming. To be eligible, you must have started in the last five

years and you must be 40 or younger in 2018. Once you qualify, you can avail of the payment for up to five years.

The date your name appeared on the herd number is the year you started. If you start farming in 2018, you are guaranteed to get at least two payments. The final payment depends upon what happens in the next CAP negotiations.

The payment is payable on a maximum of 50 entitlements. The payment is worth about €65 (per hectare). The terms and conditions are similar to last year. Applications can be completed on the Agfood online web service. The funding for this scheme is similar every year during the current CAP agreement.

Applicants who were successful in previous years must reapply for the next payment on the online BPS application system as part of the BPS application. New applicants will have to complete a separate online YFS application.

Deadlines

The deadline for all schemes (BPS, NR and YFS) is Tuesday 15 May 2018. This will not be extended. As with other years, amendments can be made after submission of the application until the end of May.

Reasons for making an amendment include:

- Correcting an obvious error (minor

clerical error).

- Adding or deleting a parcel.
- Change of use of a parcel.
- All amendment forms will be acknowledged in writing.
- Ticking/unticking the ANC box.
- Ticking of the YFS box (where applicable).

Getting help with the form

If you intend getting help in completing your application form for the BPS or any of the other CAP schemes, it is important that you make an appointment with your adviser immediately.

Before you visit your adviser, review all the documentation you have received from the Department (DAFM). If you plan significant changes to the 2018 application, state that you may require a longer appointment than usual, so that it can be completed in one visit.

The more complex cases may also involve your solicitor, accountant or valuer and potentially some or all of the following transactions:

- Adding and /or changing the name(s) on the herd number.
- Completing a partnership application.
- Transferring entitlements using the transfer application.
- Completing a Capital Gains Tax return.
- Completing a VAT return.
- Updating your will.

Table 1: Value of Direct Payments and contribution to income in 2016

Sector	Direct payments	Contribution to income (%)
Dairy	€19,735	38
Cattle Rearing	€14,400	115
Cattle other	€16,209	96
Sheep	€17,946	114
Tillage	€26,331	85
All	€17,804	75

Payments are average/farm. Source: Teagasc National Farm Survey