

business management

Don't miss the deadline to join a Registered Farm Partnership

Gordon Peppard
Collaborative Farming
Specialist, Rural Economy
Development Programme



Registered Farm Partnerships (RFP) are an excellent collaborative farming arrangement which provide a business structure where the profits are shared among the partners in a business.

With more than 3,000 in place they are clearly seen by many farm families as an attractive business model.

RFPs between family members (intra-family) are most common in Ireland but there are also inter farm RFPs in operation where non-family members come together to form a collaborative business arrangement.

RFPs provide a pathway for succession within the family; they provide all members with a say in the planning, decision-making and management of all of the farming activities; and they provide numerous social and financial benefits.

RFP applications can be submitted at any time during the calendar year. But if you are planning to submit an application to enter a Register a Farm Partnership in 2021, in order for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to have it processed in time for submission of your Basic Payment Scheme application before 15 May 2021 under an RFP number, then all applications and supporting documentation for the RFP must be submitted before 26 February 2021.

There are five key areas to address when completing an RFP application:

1 The RFP bank account: A new RFP bank account to include all the names of the partners must be set up. All income and expenditure from the partnership goes through this bank account.

No farming transactions of the partnership should take place through individual partners' own bank accounts.

There is a one page form to be completed and stamped by the bank to verify that the bank account is set up and operational.

2 Establishing the herd number for use in the RFP: RFPs can be a single herd number partnerships or a multi-herd partnerships.



All income and expenditure from the partnership goes through this bank account.

Multi-herd number partnership:

Where two individuals currently have their own herd numbers and have been farming in their own right prior to the establishment of the partnership, then this will be a multi-herd partnership. No changes are required to the herd numbers and partners can nominate a dominant herd number to use for animal registration, herd health management, etc.

The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) application will be made on one application form using the RFP number. Within the BPS application form, both herd number tabs will appear and lands associated with each herd number should be declared under the respective herd numbers.

Single herd number partnership:

Single herd number partnerships generally arise in a family situation where a son or daughter (minimum Level 6 agricultural qualification) are returning home to farm in conjunction with their father/mother in a registered farm partnership.

Consult the local District Veterinary Office (DVO) and agricultural advisor in relation to adding the son/daughter to the existing herd number or whether the new entrant should establish their own herd number.

In most cases, the son/daughter is added to the existing parent/s herd number using an ER1.1 application submitted to the local DVO.

3 Completing the on-farm and partnership agreements:

These agreements are very important documents and require consultation with accountants, solicitors and agricultural advisors.

The agreement forms the basis of a successful RFP where all workings of the agreement are clearly defined and very carefully drafted with expert independent advice.

All template agreements are guidelines and should be amended to reflect each individual partnership agreement.

4 Supporting documentation:

Please ensure the following documents are included with your application for an RFP.

- Completed application form.
- Partnership tax reference number.
- Completed bank details document verified by bank.
- A signed copy of the farm partnership agreement
- Copy of on-farm agreement.
- Copy of folios and maps of all owned lands.
- Copy of leases and maps for all lands leased in.
- Stamp duty certificate from Revenue for all leased land.
- Evidence of agricultural qualifications (min. Level 6) for Category II partners.
- Completed checklist.

5 Submission of the application:

Completed applications with all supporting documentation should be emailed to farmpartnerships@agriculture.gov.ie before 26 February 2021 in order to have an RFP number prior to the closing date for the BPS on 15 May 2021.

For further information on forming a RFP, please consult the Teagasc website or contact your local Teagasc office.