



Section 10

How to Claim Grant

Note 5: How to complete the
Claim Form

10.3

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SFGS You can claim grant once you have completed the work and only within the claim year in your contract. You can make separate claims for ground preparation, protection and planting. Planting grants are paid in two instalments, 70% when you make your claim and 30% five years later.

You can claim and receive grant yourself, or you can authorise an agent to claim and receive grant on your behalf. When you send us your signed draft contract, you must also tell us who will be making the grant claim and to whom the cheque should be made payable. These can be the same person. If you want to change these instructions after approved your contract, then you need to tell us in writing. When we return your signed contract we will also give you a claim form.

To claim SFGS and Farmland Premium grant you need to complete the claim form SFGS/FP4 (see Note 5).

How quickly can we deal with your claim

We have timescales for dealing with grant claims. These are set out in our Applicants Charter. When we receive your claim, we will first make sure that it has all the information we need. If it does not, then we will get in touch with you within two weeks. We will pay a satisfactory claim within four weeks of receipt. If we cannot do this, for any reason, we will contact you and let you know when payment will be made.

The Woodland Officer, or an FC representative with delegated authority from us, may look at the area when claims are received to make sure that the work has been done to the proper standard. If a visit is planned to your woodland you will normally be told, but we must be able to carry out the visit at any reasonable time.

You do not need to be there when we visit, but if you want to be present, we will try to arrange a time which suits you.

If the work is not satisfactory

If we are not satisfied that the work that you have done complies with the SFGS contract, we will firstly discuss the problem with you and give you the opportunity to put things right. We will inform you what needs to be done and how long we will give you to do this additional work.

If we are not satisfied with the work you have done, we can refuse to pay your grant. If we have already paid you grant we can reclaim, with interest, any payments already made. If you disagree with our decision, you may ask for an arbitrator to consider the matter.

SEERAD have a process for Farmland Premium cases where work is considered unsatisfactory (see page 7.6).

Questions about your grant payment

If you want to ask any questions about a payment you should talk to the staff at your local Conservancy office. Payment enquiries on Farmland Premium should be directed to your local SEERAD office.

Farmland Premium

Farmland Premium payments start within 12 months after the first SFGS payment for conversion (ie planting) for a full compartment. Thus claims received before August in any year will normally be paid from 16 October. Farmland Premium claims received after

1 August will normally be paid within three months of receipt. You should note that, when planting takes place after 1 August, your first annual payment will not be made until, at the earliest, October of the following year (e.g. planting on 1 November 2005 - first payment in October 2006). Any applications with set-aside payments due will not be paid until their Single Form Payment has been paid as this affects the Farmland Premium payment.

Getting a claim form

Your local SEERAD office will send you a claim form at five yearly intervals following the first claim. You will also be sent a form in the penultimate year of your payment period as a reminder of your ongoing obligations to the Farmland Premium after the payment period has elapsed and a declaration of your intent to abide by those obligations (see page 7.4). Your final year's payment will be withheld until you have submitted the form to the SEERAD area office.

Electronic claims

As an alternative to submitting a paper claim, you can send it over the Internet using SEERAD Online. This offers benefits such as checking you complete all the relevant questions and ensuring valid totals are entered before the claim is submitted. You can access SEERAD Online and get further information about our online services through the website www.scotfarmonline.gov.uk. For further information and help using SEERAD Online please contact the SEERAD Online Helpdesk on **0845 601 7597** or e-mail seeradonline@scotland.gsi.gov.uk. This does not apply to your initial instalment claim.

Payment period

Provided you observe the rules of the Farmland Premium, annual payments will continue for the full 10 or 15 years depending on the category of the woodland (see page 7.4) even if the Farmland Premium is closed to new entrants at some future date. It is possible, however, that claim procedures may change during the lifetime of your agreement. If they do change we will notify you.

Claim area measurements

Annual payments will normally continue on the basis of the first claim for five years. If, following a site inspection, the area planted is found to be less than that approved then future payments will continue to be made but on the lesser area. If the original measurement was made in good faith SEERAD will not normally seek to recover payments made on the original measurement. Similarly, if the area is found to be larger SEERAD will pay on this area (subject to scheme limits) but not retrospectively. If, following establishment, the approved area is later found to be less than the minimum area of 1 hectare, continuing participation in the Farmland Premium will only be allowed if the remaining area meets required standards. Smaller areas are unlikely to be viable in meeting the objectives of the Scheme. **If you decide to withdraw from the Farmland Premium after payments have commenced SEERAD may recover all payments made with interest.**

Set-aside

If you wish to count your woodland towards your set-aside obligation, you must indicate this on your annual IACS Single Application Form. The Farmland Premium payment you will be due will be the full Farmland Premium arable rate for the land category relating to your application, i.e. NLFA, LFA Disadvantaged or LFA Severely Disadvantaged, minus the set-aside payment to be made under the Single Farm Payment.

How Farmland Premium Payments are made

Farmland Premium payments by SEERAD will be made directly into your bank or building, society account using the Bankers Automated Clearing System (BACS). SEERAD will automatically update their records with your BACS details that are currently held on the IACS system. You should note that SEERAD cannot accept an account number for your Farmland Premium agreement that is different from that held on IACS. If SEERAD do not have any BACS details for you, you will need to complete a BACS request form which is available from your local SEERAD office.

Note 5: How to complete the Claim Form SFGS/FP4

To claim grant, complete claim form SFGS/FP4. You must also supply a map or maps showing the areas and operations for which you are claiming grant.

Tolerances: You may exceed quantities approved within your SFGS contract without our approval according to Note 7 Tolerances Table set out on page 11.4.

If you are claiming SFGS grants (but not Farmland Premium) you need only complete sections 1 to 3 and section 5. Please also sign section 8.

If you are also claiming the *first five years payments for Farmland Premium* then you must also complete sections 4, 6 and 7.

Five years after payment of the first instalment of your SFGS grant, we will invite you to claim the second instalment. This will also trigger further payments of Premium. See SEERAD's guide for more information about Farmland Premium payments.

Please note we will not accept claims (or make payments) for aggregated sums of less than £100 except where these are the final instalments or final payments.

Completing the claim form

Name of property and claim year

Enter the name of the property as you gave it on your application form. Tell us the claim Name of property and year. This should also be the same as you gave on your application form.

Details of account holder and BACS details

Confirm the name of the person or bank account name into whose account the grant will be paid. Give the address of that person or organisation. These details should be the same as those you gave on the "Grant Recipient for this contract" sheet that you returned to us with your contract.

Complete this section to give details of the account to which you would like your SFGS grant paid.

Please note that the BACS system will not allow:

- Payment to be made to a bank outside the United Kingdom;
- A sort code that requires a Building Society Roll Number (not account number).

Year

Complete the year in the format '05', '06', etc.

25% farming income

If more than 25% of your total income is from farming in the UK please put a cross in the "Yes" box; if not, put a cross in the "No" box. This allows us to claim EC co-financing correctly. If your circumstances change after you have filled in a claim form you must inform your local SEERAD office straight away.

Claim details

Give details of the areas planted in each land type. Please cross the relevant box to tell us whether 'Or not any of the arable land is (or will be) set-aside. If you cross the 'yes' box, remember to complete the number of hectares.

Declarations

Read this section carefully then sign and date the form to certify that you have carried out the work correctly.

Send this form, with the appropriate maps, to your local Conservancy office.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU CAN ONLY CLAIM FOR WORK THAT WE HAVE APPROVED IN YOUR SFGS CONTRACT.

