



## English Woodland Grant Scheme

Email Alert 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009

### Farm Woodland Payment contracts now being issued

We are pleased to now begin offering EWGS contracts to woodland creation grant applicants. In the last email alert we mentioned the delay issuing contracts because we are still waiting for EU approval. This is still the case, with approval not expected until at least January 2010.

In light of this and the impact late approval would have on woodland planting this year, we have been liaising with Defra to find a solution. Defra have agreed that we can issue woodland creation grant contracts (including the new Farm Woodland Payment rates) in advance of EU approval. This means there is no risk to the applicant and are guaranteed their rate as set out in the contract, even if the EU do not approve the proposed rates.

This support for woodland creation from the FC and Defra should mean landowners have their contracts in time to carry out planting this season and claim grant. Our keenness to ensure planting can take place this season means the first contracts we issue will be those for this years planting; others that are not urgent or involve changes to old contracts will take lower priority

There are a number of existing contracts where FWPS or FWP has been claimed against set-aside and are affected by recent EU rule changes. We will be contacting the 300 or so affected cases in December explaining the situation

### BBC Tree o'clock event

Some of you may have heard of the BBC's Tree O'Clock campaign. To help celebrate National Tree Week, BBC Learning has teamed up with Guinness World Records for Tree O'Clock – a nationwide challenge to plant as many trees as possible within a single hour on 5 December, uniting the nation in an event which will provide a lasting legacy and an amazing learning opportunity for all ages.

If you would like to pledge and plant some of your native broadleaf trees to take part in the event, you can find more information on the guidelines (including verification for the World Record) and pledge form here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/treeoclock/partner/#Form>

## Grant Budgets 2009/2010

In order to ensure we fully commit and pay out our grant budget, you'll be aware that we exercise claim year control. Whilst applicants need to propose the claim year in which they intend to carry out and claim the work, we fully appreciate plans may change for a variety of reasons and hope we can accommodate those changes where reasonable.

The management of grant budgets becomes particularly important as we approach the end of the financial year – this may be either deferral of work, or bringing work forward that has been completed early. It is in all of our interest that the FC knows what the likelihood of claiming is, so we can spend our grant budget by the end of March and commit future years fully.

Therefore regional FC offices would be very grateful for information from scheme holders where there is a likelihood that the work may not be carried out and claimed in the approved claim year. The earlier you can advise us of claim year changes, the greater the chance we can accommodate your specific situation and maximise the national grant budget.