

## English Woodland Grant Scheme

Operations Note 18

1<sup>st</sup> June 2008

# Woodland and the Single Payment Scheme in 2008

**Purpose** This note aims to explain the relationship between woodland and the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) in 2008, notably:

- the implications of the zero percent set-aside rate on farm woodland in 2008
- how to record grazed woodland on your 2008 SPS form.

Further information on set-aside and completing your application form in 2008 can be found in the SPS Guidance and Handbook for England 2008

### **Woodland and the Single Payment Scheme**

Woodland is **only** eligible for SPS when:

- it was planted under Farm Woodland Premium Scheme on or after 1<sup>st</sup> July 1995 and is used to meet set-aside entitlements
- or
- it was planted under English Woodland Grant Scheme Farm Woodland Payment and is used to meet set-aside entitlements
- or
- it can be considered as grazed woodland under SPS rules.

### **Farm Woodland and set-aside in 2008**

For 2008, the set-aside rate has been set at zero percent. SPS eligible land (i.e., eligible land in 2003) does not have to be taken out of production or managed as set-aside in 2008 in order to activate set-aside entitlements. However you will still need to have sufficient set-aside eligible land to meet your set-aside entitlements and, as in previous years, you must claim your set-aside entitlements before any other entitlement.

If you choose to keep a proportion of your land out of production in 2008 there is no regulatory requirement for the land to be managed in accordance with set-aside rules, unless your Agri-Environment Scheme agreement obligations require you to, e.g., areas under Environment Stewardship agreement options HF16, HF17, HF18 and HF19. If you wish, you can continue to manage the land in accordance with set-aside rules but you will need to comply with the management requirements of 'Eligible land which is not in agricultural production' (GAEC 12).

**What this means for land under FWPS and EWGS FWP**

In previous years, using eligible farm woodland as set-aside may have allowed you to use less agricultural land for set-aside, freeing land for crop production. In 2008 you can still use eligible farm woodland under the FWPS or the EWGS FWP to meet your set-aside entitlements where you don't have sufficient land eligible as set-aside to meet your entitlements.

Where you do use farm woodland for this purpose you must record it on your SP5 application form under the Land Use Code SA2: EU Farm Woodland Scheme on set-aside land. It is important to remember that your woodland scheme payment will be subject to a payment reduction equivalent to the set-aside flat rate after modulation.

You may alternatively choose to use your FWPS/EWGS land to meet your set-aside entitlements in order to maximise the number of ordinary SPS entitlements you can use on your SPS eligible land

**Summary**

- To exclude farm woodland previously used for set-aside you must ensure you still have sufficient set-aside eligible land to support your set-aside entitlements once the farm woodland is discounted
- If you do not have enough other eligible land to support your set-aside entitlements you can use land converted to woodland under the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme or English Woodland Grant Scheme to support your set-aside entitlements as you may have done in previous years
- You must remember that your woodland scheme payment will be reduced equivalent to the set-aside rate after modulation if you use your eligible woodland to support your set-aside entitlements
- You must use the Land Use Code SA2 to identify farm woodland used as set-aside on your SPS form

**Grazed woodlands and the Single Payment Scheme**

Although you cannot claim the majority of land under Forestry Commission grant schemes (FWPS / FWS / WGS / EWGS), under SPS it is an SPS requirement that you declare, but do not claim or "activate", all of this land on your SP5 for compliance purposes

The RPA also have a regulatory requirement to cross-check all land under Forestry Commission schemes against both SPS and the Rural Land Register. It is therefore in your interest to ensure that land under Forestry Commission schemes is correctly recorded on the RLR and declared on your SP5. Failure to do so may lead to errors in cross-checking and the imposition of penalties on your SPS claim

Forestry code FR3 should be used for land under a Forestry Commission scheme (FWPS / FWS / WGS / EWGS) which is not eligible for SPS on your application

**Grazed woodland can be an exception to this rule but the following schemes are not eligible for payment for SPS as grazed woodland:**

- Woodland claimed under the Farm Woodland Scheme (FWS)
- Woodland claimed under the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS)

- New planting under the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS)
- Woodland Creation Grant and Farm Woodland Payment under the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS)

This is because to receive payment under these woodland schemes the land must have been taken out of agricultural production. This rule also applies to open space areas under these schemes. If you include land under these schemes as grazed woodland in your SPS claim, reductions may be applied

The 2008 SPS Guidance and Handbook provides detailed guidance on land eligible as grazed woodland under SPS. If you do have grazed woodland which meets the SPS eligibility requirements it must be recorded on your SP5 application form under the Land Use Code PP1

This Operations note is for guidance and clarification only. It is the SPS applicant's responsibility to make an SPS declaration based upon their own commercial decisions

**Further Advice** Any queries relating to Single Payment Scheme should be referred to the RPA's Customer Service Centre 0845 603 7777

The EWGS website [www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs) contains all the information needed to apply for FC grant support. If you do not have access to the internet, you can request any of the information from your local Forestry Commission office

We recommend getting professional advice on woodland management and grants. A list of national and regional professional organisations is available at [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-advice](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-advice) or from your local FC office

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