

## THE SUSTAINABLE FARMING INCENTIVE – PILOT AND SCHEME LAUNCH



The Sustainable Farming Incentive forms the baseline entry point for the new Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMS), and it will open in reduced form to all BPS applicants in 2022 (SFI2022) before the full scheme opens in 2024. In the meantime, DEFRA are running an SFI pilot to test different elements of the scheme.

All farmers will be eligible to apply and payments will be made for managing land in an environmentally sustainable way, above the regulatory baseline. It is hoped that by making it simple and straightforward, there will be a high level of uptake.

The SFI Pilot will focus on eight ‘standards’ with three levels of possible commitment (introductory, intermediate and advanced) with associated payment rates. At this stage, these payments are broadly in line with those made under Countryside Stewardship

SFI Standard	Initial Payment Rates (Pilot) £/ha
1. Arable Land	£28 - £74
2. Arable & Horticultural Soils	£30 - £59
3. Improved Grassland	£27 - £97
4. Improved Grassland Soils	£6 - £8
5. Low and No Input Grassland	£22 - £110
6. Hedgerow	£16 - £24/100m
7. On Farm Woodland	£49
8. Waterbody Buffering	£16 - £34/100m

More standards are likely to be introduced as the scheme is developed further.

Those taking part in the Pilot will be required to:

1. Undertake the agreed land management obligations, for which payments will be made on a monthly basis in arrears.
2. Prepare a Land Management Plan
3. Assist in the development of the scheme through surveys, meetings and workshops, (possibly 10-15 hours/month) for which a participation payment will be made.

The pilot and SFI2022 will not be available on parcels currently in an agri-environment scheme, and the applicant must have management control until late 2024 when the pilot ends. Capital works will be available for which farmers will be reimbursed on completion.

Expressions of interest for the SFI Pilot will be invited on 15 March 2021 with the application window opening in June. The first agreements will go live in October 2021. If you are interested in applying for the pilot, please contact Sarah Payne ([sarah.payne@adkin.co.uk](mailto:sarah.payne@adkin.co.uk)) or Emily Ham ([emily.ham@adkin.co.uk](mailto:emily.ham@adkin.co.uk)) who will be able to provide you with more information.