



English Woodland Grant Scheme

Email Alert 2nd December 2010

New Practice Guide now available - 'Managing ancient and native woodland in England'

The Forestry Commission have today published the Practice Guide: 'Managing ancient and native woodland in England'. This is the new technical code of good practice for managers of ancient and native woodland.

Until now, owners and managers of woodland have had to use a variety of sources to guide their work. The Practice Guide brings all of the current good practice together in one document.

Aimed at practitioners with experience of managing ancient woodland, it takes a slightly different approach from existing guidance, focusing primarily on the outcomes to be achieved, and then offering more flexible and practical guidance on the best ways of achieving them.

From April 2011 contracts approved under the English Woodland Grant Scheme will be expected to meet the practice guide. Applicants for Felling Licences should also take the Guide into account when applying for licences relating to ancient or native woodland or to veteran trees. The FC will be implementing this Guide in the management of ancient and native woodland across its own estate.

The Practice Guide covers a wide range of topics, including:

- harvesting woodfuel from native woodland in ways that will enhance biodiversity and heritage;
- restoring plantations back to native woodland, conserving deadwood habitats and preventing deer damaging young trees;
- producing hardwood timber and firewood from ancient and native woodlands, whilst also improving their value for wildlife (including conserving protected species such as dormice and bats).

The 'Managing ancient and native woodland in England - Practice Guide' is available to download free from the Forestry Commission's website www.forestry.gov.uk/anwpracticeguide from 1st December 2010.

For more information or comments on this Practice Guide please contact PPG.England@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

English Woodland Grant Scheme still open for applications

We are open for applications for 2011/2012 and future claim years for all grants. The rates of grant under EWGS have progressively increased since it opened in 2005, to reflect the cost of work and beneficial outcomes woodland management provides. For

a quick summary of the grants available under EWGS we recommend referring to the [EWGS Summary](#) which is available from the [EWGS homepage](#). For further details of grants available in your area please contact your [local FC office](#).

Claim year 2010/2011 - ensuring it is fully spent

We are now closed for applications for this claim year, but are keen to ensure our committed grant funds are fully claimed by the end of the year. The key message is please complete approved work and claim by the 31st March 2011 to guarantee payment.

If you have approved work that you think will be delayed to 2011/2012 claim year, please inform us and we should be able to accommodate an amendment to your contract. Similarly, if you have work approved for 2011/2012 that you think will be completed before the end of March, we're interested to know as we may be able to pay your grant early.

We're particularly interested in large value grants that have a significant effect on the grant budget, and local staff may be in touch with you to check on work progress. Also, the earlier notice you give us of claim year changes, the greater chance we have of accommodating your request and ensuring the grant budget is fully spent.

If you have any queries about your grant contract or wish to adjust when work will take place, please contact your [local FC office](#).

Farm Woodland Payments and Farmer/non-Farmer status

As you may know Farm Woodland Payments are capped at €150 per hectare per year for "non-Farmers", to meet EU regulations; Farmers can receive up to £300 per hectare per year.

Under the EU regulations a farmer is defined (in simple terms) as someone who receives more than 25% of their income from farming. In order to make sure that farmers receive this additional payment there is a declaration on the EWGS application form where applicants indicate their status.

The Forestry Commission, in consultation with the Rural Payments Agency, will be implementing a process to verify eligibility for Farmers' additional payments. We will be implementing a process which is proportionate and risk-based and our intention is to keep bureaucratic burden for applicants to a minimum but which still meets the EU auditing requirements. Further information will be provided when a solution is agreed.

Website changes

We've started the process of simplifying information on our website. Some of you may have noticed that the [EWGS homepage](#) is more concise than before, with brief information on key points. We aim to do similar work to other webpages in due course. If you have any suggestions for improvements to the website please contact [Gemma Davies](#) in our national team.

In response to customer feedback, we've also created a new webpage about [grant payments](#) – who we pay, who we send the remittance advice to and there is a sample remittance advice which is annotated to explain what it includes.

If you have any comments on this alert you can either contact your [local FC office](#) or the [Grants & Regulations National team](#).