



What does

the EU

mean for the
countryside?



For people living and working in the countryside the EU means the common agricultural policy (CAP) in all its aspects with environmental protection for the whole community.

It means promoting a robust and competitive agricultural sector with high environmental and production standards whilst ensuring a fair standard of living for the agricultural community. It means contributing to sustainable development of rural areas especially by helping the agricultural sector to adapt to new challenges, protecting the environment and the countryside, especially in view of climate change. It also means improving the quality of life in rural areas, whilst ensuring growth and jobs in the countryside. <http://europa.eu/!VD93DU>



Farming, wildlife, rural businesses and the wider economy are set to benefit from a total of GBP 20 billion from the CAP for the 7 years to 2020. The amount allocated for direct payments to farmers is GBP 18 billion.

The United Kingdom's share of the CAP to 2020 was negotiated by the British government with the European Commission and then shared between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland where the local administrations decide on the use of the money.

Money is allocated separately for direct payments to farmers and for rural development. But under CAP the government has the right to transfer up to 15 %

of direct payment funds to rural development. It is currently transferring 12 %. The result is that although the total amount allocated under the CAP has remained the same, there will be more than before for rural development.

Greening: from 2014 30 % (GBP 5.4 billion) of direct payments will be linked to three environmentally friendly farming practices — crop diversification, maintaining permanent grassland and conserving 5 % of the land as areas of ecological interest.

Active farmers. This new provision aims to exclude payments to applicants who exercise no real agricultural activity on their land.

Capping. The amount of support that any individual farm can receive will be limited to EUR 300 000 per year. However, to take employment into account, the holding can deduct the costs of salaries in the previous year (including taxes and social security contributions) before these reductions are applied. The funds 'saved' will be transferred to the rural development budget in the country concerned.

Hill farmers. For the first time ever, they will receive the same direct payment rate on

OTHER NEW CAP FEATURES:

Young farmers — under 40 years of age — will be able to claim a top-up payment for up to 216 acres — 90 hectares — of their holding for the first 5 years of its operation.

Small farmers. Any farmer wishing to participate in the small farmers scheme will receive an annual payment fixed by the Member State of between EUR 500 and EUR 1 000, regardless of the farm's size.





their upland farmland as their lowland counterparts. This will support farmers working in some of the toughest conditions and least-productive land, who manage some of our most beautiful countryside and provide habitats for wildlife. This helps to sustain the important British tourism industry.

All CAP payments will continue to be linked to the respect of a number of baseline requirements relating to **environment, animal welfare and plant and animal health standards** but with simplified administrative requirements.

SUPPORTING UK'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

Vocational training: since 2007, rural development funds have provided vocational training for 114 000 farmers.

The total EU contribution for measures benefiting rural areas, for the 7 years up to

2020, amounts to almost EUR 5.2 billion. This will be spent in accordance with the priorities set out in the British rural development programmes for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

THE EU ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME:

LIFE is the main EU environment programme and has been very successful in the United Kingdom.

<http://europa.eu/!FR77bW>

The United Kingdom LIFE projects are shown here:
<http://europa.eu/!Kc38pX>

Let's clean up Europe

European Clean-up Day is a LIFE project.

<http://www.letscleanupeurope.eu>

The European Clean-up Day taking place on 8-10 May 2015.



Environmentally the EU is concerned with:

- ▶ the battle against pollution;
- ▶ cleaner beaches and drinking water;
- ▶ better sanitation (our rivers are the cleanest they have been for centuries);
- ▶ climate change and renewable energy;
- ▶ disposal of electronic waste;
- ▶ cleaner factory emissions across the EU leading to less cancer as well as a level playing field in factory costs across the EU.



Wildlife and Countryside Act:

EU rules led to the introduction of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which consolidated existing laws in the United Kingdom and added new protection for birds, wildlife and plants. The act strengthened the protection of sites of special scientific interest and bans agriculture or forestry in parts of national parks that

have been heathland for 20 years or more.

Bird protection: In the United Kingdom, EU funds go towards projects run by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. An EU-funded project led by a British scientist from the Royal Veterinary College has finally established the aerodynamics of bird flight in V formation and why geese and other migratory birds adopt it. The highly technical research has implications for airline fuel economy.

<http://europa.eu/!MQ38yv>
For video and article see:
<http://www.nature.com/news/precision-formation-flight-astounds-scientists-1.14537>



+ info?

SOME USEFUL LINKS:

The EU environment website

<http://europa.eu/!nM77nQ>

EU agriculture website

<http://europa.eu/!hC94fq>

Partnership for action against wildlife crime

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/paw>

Guidance regarding Environmental Stewardship DEFRA

<https://www.gov.uk/environmental-stewardship>

The EU Clean Air Package

<http://europa.eu/!MB87pJ>

For further information, please visit your nearest Europe Direct Information Centre
<http://europa.eu/!vy44WW>



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