



## SUSTAINABLE FARMING INCENTIVE PILOT

On 10<sup>th</sup> March, Defra published more information about the first phase of the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) pilot including payment rates – the first time we have seen an indication of what might be offered under the new Environmental Land Management schemes.

The SFI is one of three elements of the planned Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme and the one that is meant to be accessible to most farmers. Farmers who are interested in taking part in the pilot need to complete an Expression of Interest and successful candidates will then be invited to submit a full application in June with agreements starting in October 2021.

The initial stage will be open to several hundred farmers, who currently receive the Basic Payment Scheme and pilot participants will be asked to provide feedback on all aspects of the process. Land entered into the pilot must not be part of an existing agri-environment agreement.

In this first phase, participants will be able to select from an initial set of eight standards on which to build their own agreements. These eight standards are set out below with payment rates varying depending on the level of the agreement.

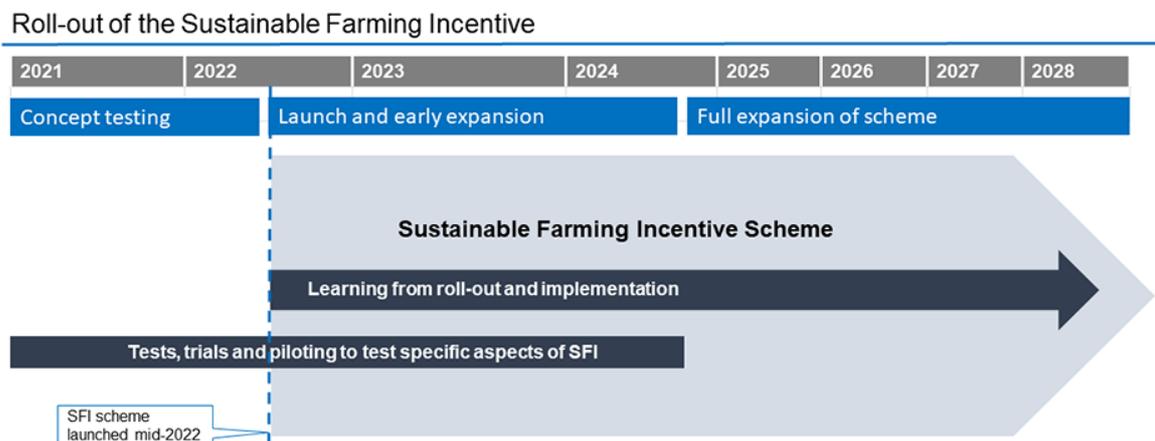
<b>Standard</b>	<b>Initial base rates (first phase of pilot only)</b>
Arable and horticultural land standard	from £28 up to £74 per hectare
Arable and horticultural soils standard	from £30 up to £59 per hectare
Improved grassland standard	from £27 up to £97 per hectare
Improved grassland soils standard	from £6 up to £8 per hectare
Low and no input grassland standard	from £22 up to £110 per hectare
Hedgerow standard	from £16 up to £24 per 100 metres
On farm woodland standard	£49 per hectare
Waterbody buffering standard	from £16 up to £34 per 100 metres

For the pilot's first phase, payment rates have been set at a broadly equivalent level to rates under Countryside Stewardship, but Defra says this is a starting position only and updated payment rates for the launch of the Scheme from 2022 are being developed.

The standards for upland elements along with how the scheme could apply to commons are both likely to be included in a future phase of the pilot.

The full announcement including more detail about the Standards and payment rates are on the following link: [Sustainable Farming Incentive Pilot](#).

Farmers can submit Expressions of Interest from 15<sup>th</sup> March and Defra says more details will be published before the pilot application window opens in June 2021.



For more information and if you want help submitting an Expression of Interest, please contact

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