

UTASS Briefing: 9th December 2019.

SHEEP AND GOAT ANNUAL INVENTORY.

All keepers of sheep and goats need to complete an annual inventory showing the number of animal on their holding on 1st December 2019. This needs to be done by 31st December or it may incur additional inspections and possible penalties. Those keepers who have done this online in the past should receive an email with a link to a partially prepopulated form. Paper copies should be sent to everyone else. However, if you do not receive a form or link you should contact Defra on 03000 600140 or surveys@defra.gsi.gov.uk

BASIC PAYMENT SCHEME.

The RPA started making payments on the 2nd December 2019. They have not disclosed a target for delivery this year but expect to at least match or exceed last year's performance. If a payment received is less than expected (roughly similar to last year) it will be necessary to wait for the Claim Statement, which explains how it has been calculated, before contacting the RPA. Information received so far indicates that many of our members have been paid and some have also received Environmental Stewardship payments which are now paid in the same payment window (1st December to 30th June) as BPS and in full rather than 75% followed by 25%.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

Apart from the amazingly benign winter, 2019 has been a difficult year for most farmers with very difficult weather conditions since July and a volatile market place for beef, lamb and cereals. Uncertainties over Brexit have exacerbated the situation and placed a lot of additional stress on farmers and their families. At the risk of sounding patronising, UTASS would ask all in the farming community to "look out for" their friends and neighbours over the next few months. Given the scenario outlined above and all the skills and demands placed on farmers it is alright sometimes "not to cope". It is not a sign of weakness but a strength to be able to recognise when help and support are needed.

UTASS HOLIDAY CLOSURES.

We will be closed from 16.00pm Friday 20th December until 9.00am Monday the 6th January 2020 except for Friday 3rd January when UTASS will be open for the Post Office from 13.45 – 15.30. As usual ARAMS and BCMS requirements posted through the letterbox will be dealt with.

For further advice and assistance please call UTASS 01833 641010.
Richard Betton.