



Rural Payments  
Agency

# Inspection visits

This leaflet explains why we need to visit you, what we will do at the visit, and how you can help to make the visit go smoothly.

[www.rpa.defra.gov.uk](http://www.rpa.defra.gov.uk)



## Why we need to visit you

Under European Union regulations we must carry out a certain number of inspection visits each year. Sometimes we must carry out our visits with colleagues and auditors, and in many cases we are not allowed to give you any notice of our visit. We realise that this can cause some inconvenience, but we try to keep any disruption to a minimum.

We carry out inspection visits to check that:

- the details you have given are correct; and
- you are meeting the current legal and administrative rules.

We do this by inspecting your premises (including land, crops and livestock) or, checking your records, (or both). We also check that:

- you have met any commitments you made in your application for payment or your declaration; and
- for livestock inspections, you have properly recorded all animal births, deaths and movements, and reported them to the British Cattle Movement Service where appropriate.

**Important:** when we complete an inspection, that does not mean that we approve your business activities or that you will get the payments you have claimed. The RPA team responsible for managing your claim or declaration will make the final decision on any action that needs to be taken following the inspection.

If you do not co-operate fully with the inspection, and you do not have good reason for this, we may have to take action such as restricting the movement of any livestock you have. If you have claimed for payment, we will not be able to pay you unless we have completed the inspection. You may even be prosecuted.

## What we will do

We want our visit to cause as little disruption as possible to you, your colleagues and your livestock. However, some inspections can take several days to complete – particularly those where subsidy inspections and cattle identification checks are carried out at the same time.

During the inspection we will:

- provide a clear explanation of why we are there, how we will carry out the inspection, which regulations are involved, and what we need from you;
- give you an idea of how long the inspection will take (although this may depend on what we find);
- take all necessary precautions to prevent the risk of contamination or the spread of disease from one premises to another;
- provide advice and guidance on compliance issues (that is, issues relating to meeting relevant regulations), or let you have the name and telephone number of the person you should contact; and
- fully explain what we find.

At the end of the inspection we will give you a feedback form that you can fill in to tell us what you thought of the inspection. We value your feedback and filling in this form will help us to improve the level of service we offer when carrying out inspections.

## **How you can help**

You can help us by:

- keeping copies of your claims and declarations;
- making sure all your records and documents are up to date and close to hand; and
- for livestock inspections, if necessary, bring in your animals so that we can inspect them safely and make sure that your facilities for handling livestock are suitable and well maintained. This will reduce any risk to you, your livestock and our people.

## **What we expect of you**

We are here to help, and are committed to providing good customer service. We will treat you with respect, and expect you to do the same.

We will not tolerate threatening or abusive behaviour, either verbal, physical or in writing, towards us or anyone acting for us, and will take whatever action is necessary (including legal action) against any person who is involved in threatening or abusive behaviour.

## How to complain

If you're unhappy with our customer service or a decision we have made, let us know as soon as possible.

You can phone, email or write to us using the contact details in our 'Complaints about the Rural Payments Agency (RPA)' guidance. You can read this on our website at [www.rpa.defra.gov.uk](http://www.rpa.defra.gov.uk) (click on 'Customer Focus') or get a copy from our Customer Service Centre (phone: 0845 603 7777, email: [csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk)).

You can also complain in person to anyone representing us.

In your complaint you should set out the facts as fully and clearly as possible. Remember to tell us:

- your full name, address and phone number;
- what happened and where;
- how your business was affected;
- who you dealt with at RPA;
- how you'd like us to settle your complaint; and
- any references you may have (for example, your single business identifier (SBI), county parish holding (CPH) number or trader number).

We'll phone you to let you know that we've received your complaint. If we can't get in touch with you by phone, we'll write or email instead.

We'll try to settle your complaint within 15 working days of receiving it. If we can't, we'll explain why and work with you to settle it or agree what else can be done. This may include passing your complaint on to be considered further.

For more information about how to complain, read the guidance mentioned above.