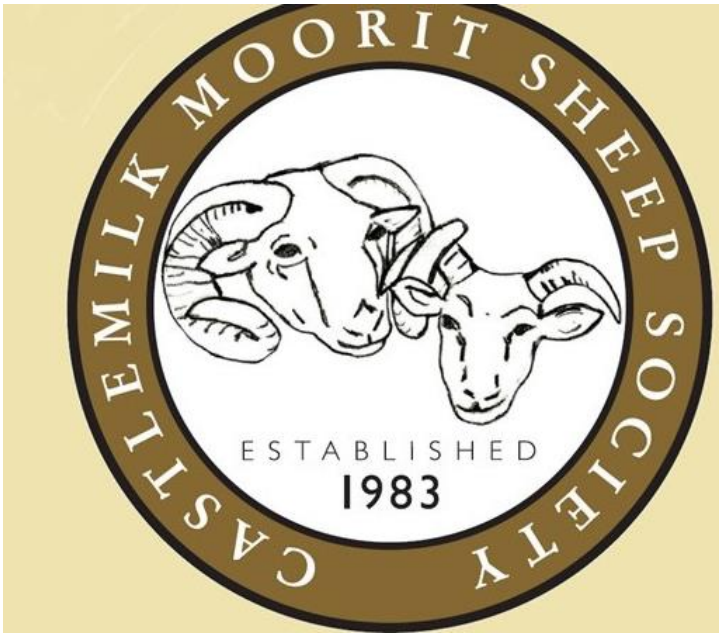

CMSS Members Day 2024

Grants and payments that could be claimed by Castlemilk Moorit owners

Disclaimer! This is a recounting of my experience in England but there are similar opportunities in the other UK nations…

Wales

- Wales has a similar scheme called Farm Business grants which funds 40% of the costs with a minimum grant of £3,000 and a Maximum of £12,000
- You can apply as long as you have a CRN number from the Welsh Government and have at least 3 Hectares of agricultural land and have 550 labour hours a year?
- The scheme works in a similar way with a list of items that have a value score

Scotland

- There is a sustainable agriculture capital grant scheme, a crofting agriculatural grant scheme, an upland sheep support scheme and also small farms grant schemes but all have different rules and eligibility. But most require you to qualify for, and submit, the single application form for basic payments.

There are 3 schemes which might be of interest

- Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF)
  - Grants for equipment and improvements
- Animal Health and Welfare Review (formerly AHWP)
  - Funded vet visit and if needed follow-up testing
- Environmental Land Management Scheme – Sustainable Farming Incentive

Note there are also some legacy scheme such as Countryside Stewardship/CS Higher Tier but it has been stated these will continue for a few years but will be absorbed into ELMS. However, for new Higher Tier actions the requirement to work with / get endorsement from Natural England will continue.

Farming Equipment and Technology Fund

- The 2024 fund had a number of themes: Animal Health and welfare, Manage slurry, Improve productivity but other themes may be included in future years.
- You can apply as long as you are based in England and your activities qualify. There is no minimum land requirement just, for instance, you must have cattle, sheep, chickens or pigs to claim under the Animal Health and Welfare strand
- **Your details on the Rural Payments Service must be up to date (especially the email) and you need the CPH & SBI number issued to fill in the application.**
- There is an application window per theme (1st March to 1st May in 2024 for AHW) and a list of possible items you can choose, but you cannot buy any until your grant is confirmed and it must meet the specific specification listed and must be NEW. Major suppliers will advise which items meet the spec.

Farming Equipment and Technology Fund

- Each item on the list has a number of ‘value points’ and the total points for your application will put you in a ranked list that will be used to decide whether you are above the cutoff for a grant; they do announce the cutoff points but only after the applications have closed; but obviously more points means more chance of getting the grant.
- There is a specific amount paid per item (based on DEFRAs guess of 50% of likely cost not what you have paid) and there is a minimum and maximum grant amount you can claim (£1000 to £25000)
- All applications and claims are online and your offer of a grant will be sent to your RPA email address if you qualify.
- Once you have the offer you have a 6 month window to purchase and receive the item (you have to pay in full before claiming). Once you have it you need to photograph the item set up in use and put your claim in using the offer agreement number. You must keep the items for at least 5 years from being paid the grant.

Typical items available under the animal health and welfare theme

- Sheep handling systems
  - Mobile
  - Fixed
  - Clamps
  - Dagging Crates
  - Weighing crates
  - Race
- Mobile sheep dip
- Plastic slats / blinds for housing
- Snack feeder
- Creep feeder
- Milk machine for lambs
- EID readers/guns
- Camera for monitoring livestock
- Electric fencing
- Feed storage
- Portable shearing kit
- Field shelter

But future years may vary

This is the race and sheep clamp I bought for £5,400 and got £1,500 of the cost as a grant. I did choose the more expensive stock board option hence the grant was only 33% not 50%

Animal Health and Welfare Review

- This provides a fixed amount of funding (currently £436 for sheep) for a vets visit to review and agree a flock health plan.
- The visit also acts as the medications review and provides a Vet Attestation Number (VAN) for markets/abattoirs
- In order to qualify you must have 21 or more sheep at the time of the visit, ideally including weaned lambs so a Wormer Efficiency Check can be done looking for resistance. There is no longer a requirement to have claimed BPS.
- You need to apply for an AGREEMENT NUMBER before booking the visit, you can do this online and you need your CPH & SBI numbers and the email on your RPA account. You have 6 months from the issue of the agreement to complete the visit, any FEC follow-up and claim so best to apply June or later so you have weaned lambs available to test.

Animal Health and Welfare Review

- The vet visits and takes you through a checklist about lameness, ewe and lamb health, common diseases, use of medications and docking/castration techniques. Poo samples are collected at the visit and sent for FEC if results show worms you have to worm as recommended and collect/send follow-up samples.
- Once all results are back you then get a report recommending any change in management or follow up actions. Once you have the report you can claim the grant online by emailing the summary page.
- New for 2024 there is now a further ENDEMIC DISEASES follow-up review where you can claim up to a further £639 for testing if the vet report from your AHWR says it is needed. Possible testing includes: border disease (BD), caseous lymphadenitis (CLA), enzootic abortion of ewes (EAE), Johne's disease, Maedi Visna (MV), toxoplasmosis, tick-borne fever, pulpy kidney, lamb dysentery, ewe nutrition status, lamb nutrition status, trace elements. (*NB you cannot use these tests for your accreditation schemes)*

ELMS – Sustainable Farming Incentive

- This is not a replacement for BPS that paid based on land and entitlements but a new approach where you have a list of 'actions' that help the environment that you can agree to take on your land.
- It is open to anyone who farms, there is no minimum acreage or entitlements needed you just need a CPH, SBI and a RPA account.
- The 'actions' are really 'outcomes' and it does not tell you specifically what you have to do you just need to achieve the outcome – yes less prescriptive but also more complex to understand!!
- The SFI action list (and it seems most other things) are subject to regular change, and with a new government this change may increase?
- Everything is online from expression of interest to agreement confirmation. The online forms are slow but actually quite easy to use once you start.
- Each SFI agreement lasts for 3 years.

ELMS – Sustainable Farming Incentive

Sounds straight forward HOWEVER

- There are 102 actions (and counting) and each has rules about what type of land parcel is eligible and what other actions you can mix on the same land parcel.
- Some actions have variants eg a version for moorland, common land, organic land, SDA and non-SDA but are the same action
- Some actions are at holding level rather than land parcel and some are at land parcel level but you can actually claim you have delivered them from a different parcel than you claimed against…
- Some of the actions still have no precise definition attached eg what plant/grass mix becomes a herbal ley?

I think for an initial agreement the way forward is keep it simple, it is stated you can amend them annually and add actions (though at the moment this seems to mean having a second agreement) so currently its try and learn…

ELMS – Sustainable Farming Incentive

Just to illustrate the complexity, with the focus on grassland these are the main actions (there are 48 in total):

- CSAM1: Assess soil, produce a soil management plan and test soil organic matter
- CSAM3: Herbal leys
- OFC2: Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland
- OFM1: Organic land management – improved permanent grassland
- OFM2: Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland
- GRH1: Manage rough grazing for birds
- SCR2: Manage scrub and open habitat mosaics
- HEF6: Manage historic and archaeological features on grassland
- GRH6: Manage priority habitat species-rich grassland (endorsed)
- CNUM2: Legumes on improved grassland
- CNUM1: Assess nutrient management and produce a review report
- CHRW2: Manage hedgerows
- CHRW1: Assess and record hedgerow condition

ELMS – Sustainable Farming Incentive

- CIPM1: Assess integrated pest management and produce a plan
- SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%)
- SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%)
- SPM3: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (more than 80%)
- SPM2: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (50-80%)
- HEF1: Maintain weatherproof traditional farm or forestry buildings
- SCR1: Create scrub and open habitat mosaics
- GRH11: Cattle grazing supplement (non-moorland)
- GRH10: Lenient grazing supplement
- GRH8: Haymaking supplement (late cut)
- GRH7: Haymaking supplement
- CLIG3: Manage grassland with very low nutrient inputs
- CIGL2: Winter bird food on improved grassland
- WBD7: Remove livestock from grassland during the autumn and winter (SDAs)

ELMS – Sustainable Farming Incentive

Native breeds actions – how do they work?

- They are claimed by hectare grazed BUT only if those hectares are in your SFI agreement under certain base actions eg Low input grassland you can claim herbal ley you cannot…
- You need to fill in a spread sheet of no of animals per month grazed across all your eligible land parcels and this calculates your 'Grazing Livestock Units' the value for each animal is dependent on species, sex and age eg a rams and lowland ewes = 0.1 but lambs and hill ewes = 0.08
- BEWARE the spreadsheet on the DEFRA site has a formula error ☺ but gives the correct GLU by category. Any grazing animal on the NBAR register counts including equines and goats.

There are also 'endorsed' actions listed and you need signoff from Natural England (or similar) to claim these if you have any historic features on your land you need to request a HEFER report and ensure any actions you choose are in harmony with the suggested management strategies given on the report. You can order these via your RPA account

ELMS – Sustainable Farming Incentive

So how do you apply?

1. Make sure your RPA account is up-to-date; this includes your Land Registry Map – without up-to-date land parcel numbers you cannot apply
2. You may need to send an 'Expression of interest form' to DEFRA and wait for an invitation to apply. You can find out by selecting SFI on your RPA account and clicking 'Set up new agreement' it will either work or direct you to the form.
3. Once you have the new agreement open you need to go through each of your land parcels and select the actions for that parcel.
4. Once you have selected everything you get a chance to confirm and the agreement is send to DEFRA for review
5. You will be notified by email when the formal agreement document is ready and you need to sign into your RPA account to download and accept.
6. There is a management fee they add at agreement level and they then send you money quarterly ☺