



Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
ANIMAL WELFARE, RECORDING AND BREEDING SCHEME FOR SUCKLER HERDS

HELPSHEET

This Helpsheet should be read in conjunction with the Terms and Conditions of the Animal Welfare, Recording and Breeding Scheme for Suckler Herds 2008-2012, and before completing your Application Form.

A dedicated Lo-call number has been allocated to deal with specific queries from farmers in relation to the Scheme. It is **1890 252 707**.

A dedicated email address has also been allocated to enable farmers submit queries, and replies will be made on an ongoing basis. It is sucklerherds@agriculture.gov.ie

POINTS OF INFORMATION

1. Familiarise yourself fully with the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme before completing your Application Form, as the onus will be on you the applicant(s) to comply fully with them, in order to qualify for payment.
2. The Scheme will operate as and from 1 January 2008 for a maximum of 5 years until 31 December 2012.
3. An application to join the Scheme for the full 5-year period is also the contract between the applicant(s) and the Department, especially as regards compliance with the Terms and Conditions and qualification for payment. Cows that calve before the date of receipt of the application will not be eligible for payment in respect of the calves born before that date. **It is important to note that a currently active suckler farmer who does not apply to enter the Scheme from year 1 (2008) will not be allowed enter it in the subsequent four years.**
4. A new entrant to suckler farming who will commence /re-commence keeping suckler cows for the rearing of calves from 2009 onwards, may join the Scheme from the second (2009) and subsequent years, provided he/she lodges an application on/before 31 March 2009, on/before 31 March 2010 etc. Such applicants will be eligible for payment only up to 2012. **Cows that calve before the date of receipt of the application will not be eligible for payment in respect of the calves born before that date.**
5. The closing date for lodging the Application Form will be 31 March 2008. However, it is important to note that the Application Form must be lodged with the Department before the first calf is born in the herd in 2008, as a suckler cow, which calves before the date of receipt of the application will not be eligible for payment. For example, a farmer whose suckler cows are due to calve from 1 February 2008 onwards must lodge the Application Form on/before 31 January 2008, and a farmer whose suckler cows are due to calve from 1 September 2008 onwards must lodge the Application Form on/before 31 March 2008.
6. A penalty of 1% loss in payment per working day will apply to applications lodged after 31 March 2008. If the delay amounts to more than 25 calendar days, i.e. applications received on/after 26 April 2008, then such applications will be deemed inadmissible and no grants shall be paid.
7. Payment will be made in respect of a maximum of 100 eligible suckler cows, but all suckler cows and calves reared by those cows and kept on the holding, whether considered for payment or not, must be compliant with the requirements of the Scheme.
8. There is a minimum calving age of 24 months, and any heifer calving for the first time at less than 22 months of age will not qualify for payment. A tolerance will apply for heifers calving for the first time between 22 and 24 months.
9. Calves must be tagged and registered within 27 days of birth, and all animals on the holding must be correctly recorded on the CMMS database.

10. Veterinary advice is that **all** calves should be treated with a local anaesthetic when disbudding. Local anaesthetic may be obtained on prescription from veterinary surgeons. It is illegal to disbud a calf over 2 weeks old without using a local anaesthetic. **Disbudding** of calves must be carried out within 3 weeks of birth, except where the horn buds do not emerge within this period, or for animals that are naturally polled.
11. Where male calves are to be **castrated** (not compulsory under the Scheme, e.g. where the farmer is involved in the production/sale of bulls), it must be carried out at least 4 weeks prior to the weaning date, or at least 2 weeks after the weaning date. It is illegal to castrate an animal over 6 months of age without veterinary involvement.
12. Research work has shown that a proper **weaning** process reduces the stress on the calf and the suckler cow. The details regarding best practice for weaning are to be found at Term and Condition 8.5. It is important to note the following:
 - **8 weeks** of age is the minimum that a calf can be weaned.
 - Meal feeding must be introduced to calves a minimum of **4 weeks before** weaning.
 - **Graduated weaning** must take place in herds with more than 10 suckler cows and **abrupt weaning** of all animals at the one time is not permitted.
13. All relevant animal events (calving details, disbudding, castration, weaning etc.) must be recorded using the **Animal Events System** operated by the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF), and may be submitted in paper form by post or over the internet.
14. All approved applicants, or a family member who is actively involved in the management of the suckler herd must attend a suitable **training course** before the end of the second years of the Scheme. This requirement will not apply to applicants under 35 years of age who possess a relevant Qualification. Failure to attend will result in third and subsequent years' payment being withheld until the training is satisfactorily completed. See Paragraph 8.7 of the Terms and Conditions

CHECKLIST FOR APPLICATION FORM

**Please avoid common errors by carrying out the following checks
before submitting your Application Form**

- ✓ **Is your herdnumber, name and address entered correctly on the Application Form?**
- ✓ **Have you completed the total number of Beef Breed cows you expect to have calving down in your herd during 2008.**
- ✓ **If your Herd is kept at more than one location, have you listed the two places where your animals can be inspected?**
- ✓ **Have you signed and dated your Application Form (where the herdnumber is in joint names, all the parties must sign)?**

Lo-call number is 1890 252 707

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