



Rural Payments
Agency

Viv Lewis
Federation of Cumbria Commoners
5 Burnbanks
Bampton
Penrith
Cumbria
CA10 2RW

From
Mark Grimshaw
Chief Executive

16th August 2016

Dear Ms Lewis,

Federation of Cumbria Commoners

Thank you for your email of 27th July sharing your concerns about the 2015 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments on common land.

I understand the importance of BPS payments and the Agency are working to ensure all our farmers receive the right amount of subsidy as quickly as possible. We are focused on processing any outstanding 2015 claims and making top up payments to those who received bridging payments. Any customer who believes they are eligible to receive a payment but hasn't received anything at all should contact us immediately so we can investigate their case urgently. Anyone who is concerned they haven't been paid the correct amount should also contact us and we will re-visit the calculation to see if they should be included in our planned reconciliation exercise to receive a correction payment.

Regarding the information we are providing to help commoners understand their BPS 2015 payments, you will know we have faced real challenges in making BPS payments on common land in 2015 and we have had to make some difficult judgements about the correct balance to strike between providing more detailed payment breakdowns and focusing resources on completing making 2015 payments. We appreciate that customers have been used to receiving more detailed breakdowns of commons payments under the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) and intend to publish information on Gov.UK about the eligible area, and total number of livestock units claimed on commons for BPS 2015, to help understand payments.

I noted with appreciation your reference to SPS running like clockwork for the past few years. We are harnessing the knowledge and expertise we used to improve SPS performance to achieve similar improvements for BPS and look forward to working in partnership with you and other key commons stakeholders to help achieve our shared objective of improving significantly our service to commons customers.

As the shape of the post EU-Exit support system begins to emerge we will, of course, also want to engage with you to design the best possible mechanisms to deliver a viable uplands agricultural economy in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Grimshaw', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Grimshaw
Chief Executive Officer