

Project scope

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Futures programme

Further update



AUDITOR GENERAL 

Prepared by Audit Scotland
March 2017

The European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) provides a system of agricultural support and development programmes throughout the EU. A new CAP started in 2015 and includes elements of significant reform. The Scottish Government is developing an IT system to underpin the effective implementation of the new CAP as part of a five-year business change programme known as the Futures programme.

In May 2016, we provided our fourth update on the delivery of the Futures programme and reported that

we do not expect the programme to deliver value for money. In September 2016, the Auditor General again highlighted the significant risks of the programme as part of her section 22 (3) report on the Scottish Government consolidated accounts 2015/16.

Why is this audit important?

We identified a number of issues and risks in our May 2016 report including the risk of non-compliance with the European Commission (EC) regulations. Failure to make payments to farmers in accordance

with, or meet requirements of EC regulations can have financial consequences with risks to future EU funding.

The Futures programme has proved significantly more complex and challenging than the Scottish Government anticipated. The programme will come to an end on 31 March 2017 but parts of the system will continue to be delivered beyond this point. The system continues to experience difficulties and there continues to be risks relating to the timing of payments.

What will the scope of the audit be?

The overall aim of this audit is to assess what the programme has achieved and what is still to be delivered.

The report will examine the following:

- What progress has been made in addressing the issues and risks identified in our previous report, published in May 2016.
- What progress has been made with making payments to farmers and recovering loan payments for SAF 2015, and SAF 2016; and, what progress has been made with SAF 2017 applications.
- What the final programme costs were, what has been delivered to date, and what is still to be delivered.
- Transition arrangements for ending the programme.

How will we carry out the audit?

The audit will draw on a review of relevant documents, supplemented by interviews and analysis.

We will:

- review published information, including papers from the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy

and Connectivity Committee, and the Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee

- analyse Scottish Government budget documents and annual accounts, and European Agriculture Fund Accounts
- conduct a review of relevant documents and minutes from the Scottish Government, including CAP Futures governance boards
- speak to representatives from the Scottish Government and key stakeholders.

What impact will the audit have?


Our report will provide an update on the progress made by the Scottish Government in delivering the CAP Futures programme. It will assess how the programme is being managed, what has been achieved to date, what has still to be done, and any risks that remain.

We will report publicly, helping to support Parliamentary scrutiny. Where necessary we will make recommendations to the Scottish Government to promote and support improvement. Regular public reporting at key points of the programme will provide an overview of progress on this key Scottish Government programme.

Audit timetable

We aim to publish a progress report for the Auditor General in June 2017. Following publication, the report will be considered by the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee.

Contact

For further information, please contact Morag Campsie, Audit Manager at mcampsie@audit-scotland.gov.uk 



Audit Scotland, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh EH3 9DN
T: 0131 625 1500 E: info@audit-scotland.gov.uk 
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk 

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