

Revised Sow Welfare Grant

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney TD, today finally confirmed that a revised Sow Welfare Scheme would be opened at the beginning July.

The Minister stated that as a fully compliant pig sector was an essential regulatory and competitive requirement with effect from 1 January 2013, he was providing a further financial stimulus to ensure that pig farmers who were not yet compliant would be able to meet the new requirements by the end of the year.

Details

- The current investment ceiling of €300,000 per holding will increase to €500,000 per applicant for the first sow house,
- With further amounts of €300,000 for each of the next three houses.
- The grant-rate would remain unchanged at 40 per cent.
- Sow houses which had already been grant-aided under the current Rural Development Programme, i.e. under the 2007 Sow Welfare Scheme and the original TAMS Scheme, will be taken into account for this purpose.
- Applicants who had not commenced work in relation to an existing grant application would be entitled to cancel those applications and re-submit an application under the new Scheme.

€4 million had already been committed under the original TAMS Scheme; the remaining €9m of the €13m in total is available under this revised Scheme.

Selection criteria would be applied in order to determine those applications which will proceed to the approval process in any particular tranche.

- The closing date for receipt of applications under the revised Scheme will be end-October 2012.
- The final date for completion of works under the Scheme and the submission of a payment claim will be end-September 2013.
- The first tranche under the revised Scheme will close on 16 July 2012 in order to allow some farmers to commence work immediately.

Ultimately farmers cannot ignore the entry into force of the new EU animal welfare rules with effect from 1 January 2013. It simply means that farmers who completed the investment works after that date could continue to receive grant-aid under the Scheme.

Similar extensions will be provided to farmers who are completing investment works under the original TAMS Scheme.

Revised terms and conditions and the accompanying application form will be available on the Department's website with effect from Monday, 2 July 2012.