



FARMING

Farmers, landowners and agencies are being encouraged to complete paperwork, such as VAT returns and Single Payment Scheme (SPS) forms, online. Enhanced broadband coverage can not only improve the efficiency of our farms and rural businesses, but by enabling improved access to information can also make rural areas more attractive and sustainable in the longer term. The DEFRA Farm Business Survey highlighted that, generally speaking, the higher the economic performance of a farm, the more likely it was to have good broadband and internet access¹.

Faster Broadband makes everyday online tasks such as uploading or downloading large files without drop-out much easier. As more and more agricultural administrative tasks are becoming electronic, the availability of fibre broadband becomes more important in order to carry out the work. 54% of farmers with access to a computer said that faster broadband and/or quality of connection would increase their use of the computer².

Running the financial side of the farm can become more efficient with fibre broadband. Safe, remote access to banking online means that financial transactions can be managed any time of the day or night.

Farm houses that run as bed and breakfast businesses can develop more efficient and effective websites to communicate with visitors, as well as offering value added services, such as wi-fi, to customers. At the same time as running the business on line, family members can stream videos and play online games without buffering.

The new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) comes into effect from 2015. Farms and rural businesses in England are set to benefit from £15 billion of funding. Defra is developing a new online service to help everyone who want to apply for CAP funds.

There will be added complexity in applying for the new Basic Payment Scheme from 2016. To comply with the ecological focus area greening requirement, farmers will need to map features of their arable land in fine detail. One of the biggest challenges for Defra and The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is collecting and verifying the data. An interactive portal showing maps electronically is being developed for farmers to apply online.

The RPA has produced two short YouTube videos. These show how to register for the Government Gateway and get started online. They are available through YouTube channel [Ruralpay](#)



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1 - 2011/12 Farm business survey October 2012 farm practices survey (DEFRA)

2-2012 Farm Practices Survey (DEFRA)