STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2027 No. 0000

AGRICULTURE

The Farming for the Generations Scheme and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2027

Made ***

Coming into operation ***

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs(**1**) with the approval of the Department of Finance(**2**) make these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 5 and 6 of the Agriculture Act (Northern Ireland) 1949(**3**).

PART 1

Introductory

Citation and commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Farming for the Generations Scheme and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2027 and shall come into operation on xx xxx 2027.

Interpretation

2. In these Regulations—

"applicant" means either—

(a) in relation to the "succession business consultation grant" and the "succession business restructuring grant," an eligible farm business which has applied to the scheme;

(b) in relation to the "young farmers pathway study grant," an eligible farm business which has applied to the scheme and nominated a successor; or

(c) in relation to the "young farmer milestone payments," an eligible farm business which has applied to the scheme and has nominated a successor to undertake actions to achieve the milestones set out in the Schedule;

"approved" means approved by the Department;

"authorised person" means any person authorised by the Department to act under section 40(1) of the Agriculture Act (Northern Ireland) 1949 in matters relating to these Regulations;

(**1**) The Ministry of Agriculture for Northern Ireland became the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland, see the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 c. 36 section 40 and Schedule 5 paragraph 8(1); Renamed as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development by the Departments (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 S.I. 1999/283 (N.I. 1) Article 3(4) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs by the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 c. 5 (N.I.) section 1(2)

(**2**) The "Ministry of Finance" is now the "Department of Finance"; see section 1(4) of the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 c.5 (N.I.)

(**3**) 1949 c. 2 (N.I.)

"CAFRE" means the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise;

"the Department" means the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;

"the Direct Payment Regulation" means Regulation (EU) No. 1307/2013(**4**) establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the frame work of the Common Agricultural Policy;

"eligible farm business" means a farm business registered with the Department which holds a Category 1 DAERA farm business ID and meets the requirements of these Regulations;

"eligible professional adviser" means a solicitor or accountant who is entitled to practise in Northern Ireland and is a member of a professional body, or a valuer or an estate agent who is a member of a professional body;

"first scheme year" means the year beginning on 1st April 2027 and ending on 31st March 2028;

"force majeure or exceptional circumstances" has the same meaning as in Article 2(2) of Regulation (EU) No. 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy(**5**);

"lead generation" means, the main decision maker, named on the DAERA Farm Businesses ID, nominated by the eligible farm business on the date the application is received by the Department;

"pilot scheme" means the Farming for the Generations Pilot Scheme administered by the Department under the Farming for the Generations Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024(**6**)

"scheme" means the Farming for the Generations Scheme;

"scheme period" means the period of time that an applicant is enrolled in the scheme;

"scheme year" means the period of time between 1st April to 31st March inclusive each year;

"succession business consultation grant" means a grant to enable an applicant to have a consultation with an eligible professional adviser;

"succession business restructuring grant" means a grant to support an eligible farm business to implement changes to its business structure for succession purposes;

"successor" means—

(a) in relation to the young farmer pathway study grant the person nominated by an applicant to undertake a course of study; or

(b) in relation to the young farmer milestone payments the person nominated by an applicant to undertake actions to achieve the milestones set out in the Schedule;

"young farmers milestone payment" means a payment to an eligible farm business that meets the criteria in regulation 8(1)(a) to (c);

"young farmers pathway study grant" means a grant where an applicant can avail of approved funding for reasonable travel expenses, training, accommodation, subsistence, or fees.

(**4**) EUR 1307/2013
(**5**) EUR 1306/2013
(**6**) SR 2024, No. 16

PART 2

Farming for the Generations Regulations

Farming for the Generations Scheme

3.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2) and regulations 4, 5, 6 and 7 the Department may pay a grant to an applicant.

(2) Payment of a grant is subject to the applicant producing to the Department within the scheme period in relation to—

(a) a succession business consultation grant or a succession business restructuring grant, a receipted bill of costs from an eligible professional adviser;

(b) a young farmers pathway study grant, receipted invoices in relation to the applicant's young farmers pathway study approved grant proposal.

(3) Subject to regulation 8, the Department may pay an applicant for successfully completing defined scheme milestones listed in the Schedule.

(4) A successor may not be replaced by another person without the written approval of the Department, which may be granted only where force majeure or exceptional circumstances apply.

Scheme eligibility criteria: Training requirements

4. An applicant must attend mandatory training conducted by or on behalf of CAFRE as specified by the Department in writing.

Succession business consultation grant

5.—(1) The Department may pay to an applicant, a succession business consultation grant of up to £680 for each consultation with an eligible professional advisor during the scheme period.

(2) The total payments to an applicant under paragraph (1) during the scheme period shall not exceed £1360.

Succession business restructuring grant

6. The Department may pay to an applicant a succession business restructuring grant not exceeding £6,500 during the scheme period in relation to expenditure incurred by the applicant on the professional fees of an eligible professional adviser for the purpose of implementing business succession restructuring.

Young farmers pathway study grant

7.—(1) An applicant may submit a proposal to the Department for a young farmers pathway study grant, outlining plans for the nominated successor to undertake a course of study.

(2) The Department may approve this proposal and pay an applicant a young farmers pathway study grant for an amount not exceeding a total of £8,000 during the scheme period in relation to—

(a) the fees of an approved training course at an university, or other educational organisation in either case outside Northern Ireland;

(b) approved reasonable accommodation, travel and subsistence expenses incurred in connection with—

(i) attending an approved training course under sub-paragraph (a);

(ii) attending an approved work placement outside Northern Ireland; or

(iii) approved educational visits or conferences outside Northern Ireland.

(3) An applicant who has previously participated and received a successor development grant in the pilot scheme will be ineligible to receive a grant under this regulation.

Young farmers milestone payments requirements

8.—(1) An applicant may receive a total sum not exceeding £25,000 over a 4 year scheme period for successfully completing defined scheme milestones listed in the Schedule if the following conditions are met—

(a) a lead generation must have nominated a successor as part of its application to the Scheme;

(b) this successor must, at the time of application to the scheme—

(i) in relation to each scheme year, be aged between 18 years and 40 years 364 days (inclusive), on 31 December immediately preceding that scheme year;

(ii) be named on an eligible Category 1 farm business ID; and

(iii) hold a minimum of a relevant Level 2 qualification or a qualification of an equivalent or higher standard as specified by CAFRE.

(2) Sub-paragraph (1)(b)(iii) does not apply in relation to an application made in the first scheme year where the successor—

(a) was aged between 40 years and 40 years and 364 days (inclusive) on 31 December immediately preceding that scheme year; and

(b) is enrolled, at the time of application, on a course leading to a relevant Level 2 qualification, or a qualification of an equivalent or higher standard, specified by CAFRE.

(3) Where paragraph (2) applies—

(a) the successor must obtain the qualification referred to in paragraph (2)(b) no later than 31 December 2027; and

(b) the Department must not make the first young farmer milestone payment unless it is satisfied that the qualification has been obtained by that date.

(4) To receive milestone payments, an applicant must provide evidence of completion of each of these milestones as required by the Department.

(5) The following will be ineligible to receive a grant under this regulation—

(a) an applicant that is currently, or has previously been, in receipt of a payment under the young farmers scheme in accordance with the Direct Payment Regulation in relation to the same nominated successor; or

(b) an applicant that is currently, or has previously been, in receipt a young farmers milestone payment in relation to the same nominated successor; or

(c) a lead generation and a successor who submit more than one application together using the same Category 1 DAERA Farm Business ID or

(d) an applicant who nominates a successor, who has previously been nominated as a successor by another applicant to this scheme.

(6) An applicant may apply for the young farmer milestone payment only once during the duration of the scheme.

Withholding and recovery of payment

9.—(1) This regulation applies where an application for payment has been approved by the Department and it becomes aware that the applicant—

(a) is not eligible to receive the payment; or

(b) has knowingly or recklessly provided false or misleading information, or any document which is false or misleading in a material particular, in relation to the application.

(2) Subject to paragraph (1), the Department may—

(a) revoke the approval of the application for payment;

(b) where payment has not been made, withhold the payment or any part of it; or

(c) where payment has already been made, recover from the applicant an amount equal to the whole or any part of the payment—

(i) as if it were made under an order of the county court;

(ii) as a civil debt; or

(iii) by way of offsetting against any sum otherwise payable to the applicant by the Department.

(3) Before exercising the power under paragraph (2), the Department must by a withdrawal or recovery notice, as is appropriate—

(a) give the applicant a written explanation of the reasons for the proposed action;

(b) afford the applicant the opportunity to make written representations within a reasonable time specified by the Department; and

(c) consider written representations made by or on behalf of the applicant within a reasonable time period.

Review of decision

10.—(1) Where the Department makes a decision under these Regulations an applicant may apply to the Department for a review of the decision.

(2) An applicant must apply to the Department in writing for a review no later than one month beginning with the date of the notification of the decision and specify—

(a) the name and address of the applicant;

(b) the decision of the Department in respect of which the applicant seeks a review and the date of that decision; and

(c) full particulars of the grounds upon which the review of the decision is sought.

(3) Where an applicant seeks a review under this regulation, the Department may review the decision specified.

(4) In reviewing a decision, the Department may—

(a) consider any document or other evidence produced by the applicant (whether or not that document or evidence was available at the time of the decision);

(b) invite the applicant to provide such further information relevant to the review as it considers appropriate; and

(c) consider written representations made by or on behalf of the applicant within a reasonable time period.

(5) Following a review of the decision the Department may—

(a) confirm the decision; or

(b) substitute for it a new decision.

(6) As soon as reasonably practicable after reviewing the decision, the Department must notify the applicant in writing of its decision under paragraph (5) and the reasons for it.

PART 3

Miscellaneous Amendments

11.—(1) Regulation 4(2) of the Farming with Nature Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026(**7**) is revoked.

(2) The provisions amended by regulation 4(2) of those Regulations have effect as if the amendment had not been made.

(**7**) S.R. 2026 No. 105

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on XX XXXX 2027

Richard Johnston
A senior officer of the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

The Department of Finance approves the foregoing Regulations

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Finance on XX XXXX 2027

XXXXXX
A senior officer of the Department of Finance

SCHEDULE

regulations 2, 3(3) and 8(1)

Young Farmer Milestone payments

1..—(1) To be eligible to receive a young farmer milestone payment, an applicant must meet the eligibility criteria listed in regulation 8.

(2) Payments will be structured over four scheme years.

Payment 1 - Intention payment

2.. A payment of £5,000 will be made to an applicant upon confirmation that the nominated successor has completed—

(a) two structured training sessions on Planning for Succession to include a Farm Business Review; and

(b) Sustainable Agriculture Programme and Environmental training.

3.. This training in each case must be specified or approved by CAFRE.

Payment 2 - Business Development Milestone

4.. A payment of £5,000 will be made to an applicant upon confirmation that the nominated successor has successfully completed relevant business development training as specified by CAFRE.

5.. This training must be approved by CAFRE and will be specified within scheme documentation.

Payment 3 - Knowledge Transfer Milestone

6.. A payment of £5,000 will be made to an applicant upon confirmation that a nominated successor has successfully completed relevant knowledge transfer training as specified or approved by CAFRE.

Payment 4 - Integration Payment

7.. A payment of £10,000 will be made to an applicant when a nominated successor is classified as demonstrably integrated into the farm business including evidence of—

(a) inclusion within the farm business structure; and

(b) be named on and be an authorised signatory for all the associated farm business accounts with financial institutions.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations establish the Farming for the Generations Scheme ('the Scheme'). The Scheme provides for grant payments to be made by the Department to eligible farm businesses in relation to

The Scheme—

specifies the eligibility criteria for the scheme (regulation 4);

specifies scheme grant payments (regulations 5, 6 & 7);

specifies the eligibility criteria for the young farmers milestone payments pathway (regulation 8);

provides the powers for withholding and recovery of overpayments (regulation 9);

provides the powers for review of decisions (regulation 10);

revokes the amendments introduced in the Farming with Nature Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 (regulation 11); and

lists the eligibility criteria and payments for young farmers milestone payments (see Schedule).