



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

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Our ref: PO2020/05230/DW

18 May 2020

Dear Tony

Thank you for your email with letter attached of 28 February about the reference period for delinked payments. I apologise for the delay in responding. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. Thank you for your understanding during this challenging time.

We intend to consult further with the industry before setting the detailed rules for both delinked payments and the possible lump sum payment option. This will help us get the approach right for farmers and allow us to take account of any particular concerns, such as the impact on commoners.

The reference period to be used for delinked payments is one of the areas that we shall consult on. For example, we could make payments based on the Basic Payment Scheme payments the farmer was entitled to receive in a particular scheme year or average over a number of years. We understand the importance of carefully deciding on this reference period and of communicating it to the industry in good time.

I am pleased to hear how committed the New Forest Commoners Defence Association are to the transition towards our new Environmental Land Management scheme. We will provide more information about our new schemes, including delinked payments and lump sums, as it becomes available.

**RT HON GEORGE EUSTICE MP**