

2 April 2008

## All-important May 15 deadline looms

As the all-important May 15 deadline approaches, farmers and growers should be turning their attention to completing their 2008 SP5 forms while taking note of important changes, says Edward Blundy of Brown & Co's Spalding office.

While some farmers and growers in the Boston and Spalding area are still awaiting part of their 2007 payment, there is some good news as the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has made progress in pre-populating SP5 forms correctly and the 2008 forms appear to be relatively user-friendly.

Changes to look out for when completing the 2008 SP5 form relate to set-aside, the 10-month period and rules concerning entitlements linked to fruit, vegetable and potato.

There are also changes to the way entitlements are activated, warns Edward Blundy. "The RPA will now activate entitlements based on their value, rather than their use-by date," he says. "Care must be taken not to lose entitlements, especially National Reserve top-ups that have to be used every year. This is particularly relevant to situations where a grower has fewer hectares of land than entitlements."

Some local farmers and growers are affected by new road developments such as the A1073 Spalding to Eye Highway Improvement Scheme. Edward Blundy recommends those that are need to pay special attention to areas where land becomes ineligible for the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) as a result. In those cases, it may be appropriate to leave the land off the SP5 forms and recover any lost revenue from the Acquiring Authority. He warns it is important to consider this sufficiently early to avoid incurring SPS penalties.

"It is extremely important to check all correspondence from the RPA and, if in doubt, seek professional advice," says Edward Blundy. "Mistakes with the SPS can be costly and can affect a claimant for several years."

PROPERTY & BUSINESS CONSULTANTS – LONDON, UK & OVERSEAS OFFICES

For information or advice concerning SP5 applications, or SPS advice generally, contact Edward Blundy at Brown & Co's Spalding office on 01775 722321.

**ENDS**

For further information, please contact

Edwards Blundy	Brown & Co	01775 722321 edward.blundy@brown-co.com
Sue Jupe	SMJ Communications	01603 614319 / 0780 390 6356 sue@smjcommunications.co.uk

**Notes to editors**

Brown & Co is a firm of independent rural property, land and business specialists operating from ten offices in the East of England, London, Poland and St Lucia.

Specialist services include:

- Land Agency
- Residential Agency and Lettings
- Commercial Property
- Agricultural Business Consultancy
- Estate Management
- Planning and Development
- Building Services and Surveys
- Auctions
- Overseas Consultancy Services
- Dispute resolution.