



In this issue Aoife and Donal talk about the recent CP payments and the scorecard summaries which have started arriving into farmers Agfood Schemes online accounts.

2023 ACRES CP Payments Overview

by Aoife Forde

Over the last month many farmers have been contacted by DAFM in relation to their individual ACRES payments. In February of this year co-operation (CP) farmers received a €5,000 interim payment which was paid by the department to address concerns that delays in ACRES payments were causing cash flow issues on farms.

In late June, and into July, balancing payments were issued to farmers. These balancing payments outlined as to whether farmers were owed money from DAFM meaning their results-based payment was greater than €5,000 or if farmers owed money back to DAFM meaning their results-based payment was less than €5,000. Throughout the 8 CP zones in the country, 4,748 farmers have been overpaid and DAFM has directly contacted these farmers about recovering this overpayment. 2023 ACRES payments will continue until all farmers have been paid.

As outlined by Donal in the article below farmers are beginning to receive their scorecard summary report from 2023 through their own individual Agfood accounts and, over

the coming weeks, in the post. The scorecard summary report will outline the score that each field received and the management advice that was given in relation to that field by your advisor. The individual payment for each field parcel will not appear on the scorecard summary. For farmers in Organics there is a reduced payment rate.



Source: Donal Hogan

It is expected that the ACRES 2024 payment run will commence towards the end of November.

If you have questions in relation to your ACRES results-based payment you should contact your advisor or alternatively you can speak to a member of the ACRES Burren Aran team who are always happy to help.

News: *The CP Team were out in July doing some monitoring of scorecards and it was great to meet some farmers and get back outside! We are currently out rescoring some of the commonages in the Acres Burren Aran CP zone. Our Farmer Clinics will start back in Gort Mart on August 29th from 3 to 6 pm and monthly on the last Thursday going forward. We're intending to hold farmer information events in October on NPIs, scorecards, commonages and any queries on the scheme in general, so keep an eye on social media and texts for dates and venues. **Date for your diaries!** Burren Winterage Weekend will be held on the October bank holiday Friday 25th to Sunday 27th of October. The Burren Winterage Weekend is a celebration of the Burren's farming tradition of WInterage. Keep an eye on the event website for updates and event details: WWW.burrenwinterage.com.*

ACRES CP Scorecard Results, What To Expect

by Donal Hogan

As an ACRES CP farmer, you will have recently received, or should soon receive, the results of the field scoring which was carried out last summer by your farm advisor. The scores are available on each farmer's individual Agfood accounts online and will be posted out shortly.

The scores received should reflect the biodiversity value of each of your fields including any threats or pressures to biodiversity and/or water quality on your field.

There are 10 different scorecards which your farm advisor may have used to score the field. The scorecard used will depend on the type of land within the field. The most common scorecards used in the Burren Aran CP area are the Grassland, Winterage and Rough Grazing scorecards.



STONE WALLS IN GOOD CONDITION, LIGHT SUMMER GRAZING ALLOWING FLOWERS TO BLOOM ON A HIGH SCORING FIELD ON INIS MOR. Source: Donal Hogan

Each field gets a score out of 100; the higher the score the higher the payment rate. Payment is calculated per LPIS parcel. If there are multiple scorecards located within a LPIS parcel, an area weighted average of these scores is calculated and this score is then what determines the payment for the LPIS parcel as a whole.

You should also receive management recommendations with each scorecard. It is



Source: Donal Hogan

vital that you speak with your farm advisor to discuss a strategy for improving your scores. All farms and fields vary widely and thus there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to increasing field scores and payments. There may be some easy wins, perhaps a damaging activity which is bringing down a score on a field could be stopped. A good stone wall or a stockproof hedge or a tall tree-line around a field is worth a score class, or two, depending on the scorecard. Repairing a fallen wall or replacing a fence line with a hedge or row of trees may bring up the score on one or more fields.

The best approach to maximising your payment will differ from farm to farm. In previous results-based schemes, farmers have found that there is great flexibility with the results-based approach.

You may want to bring all your fields up by a score class or two or you could focus on bringing up the score on a few fields by several score classes. Have a chat with your farm advisor as they will know the land, and the scorecards, and are in a great position to give you some constructive advice.

The ACRES Burren Aran CP team in Carron, and Inis Oírr are also available to discuss scores and are happy to help with management advice, planning, and queries you have about the scheme.

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