# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2019 Support Scheme** |
| **DATE**  | **14 August 2019**  |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

Today I am announcing the introduction of a BPS 2019 Support Scheme.

I am concerned about the impact of the UK’s decision to leave the European Union (EU) on Welsh farmers, because I have always been clear, a no deal exit from the EU would be catastrophic for our agricultural sector and rural communities.

With the UK edging ever closer to leaving the EU without a deal it is vital we provide as much certainty as possible to Welsh farmers, and as a government we are doing all we can to support the industry. I have made it a priority to ensure we plan sensibly and have been working with our partners, farming unions, charities and many others since the summer of 2016 to ensure our industry is in the best possible position to deal with Brexit.

As in 2018, I have decided not to make BPS advance payments in October. It would create a disparity between farming businesses, as some would receive an advance payment whilst others would not. However, I intend to build on the success of the BPS Loan Scheme introduced last year, where over £23 million was paid into the bank accounts of 1,200 Welsh farm businesses during the first weeks of December.

The 2019 BPS Support Scheme will therefore pay an increased loan of up to 90% of an individual business’ anticipated BPS 2019 claim value, and will provide Welsh farmers a degree of financial security during these uncertain times. It will also ensure parity between farming businesses, as we again plan to pay the BPS Support Scheme during the first week of the BPS payment window; which runs from 2 December 2019 to 30 June 2020.

As in 2018, farming businesses will need to apply for the BPS Support Scheme. Rural Payments Wales (RPW) will provide further details and make an online application available in October. Subject to individual farm businesses meeting the necessary terms and conditions for the loan, payment will be made to those claimants whose BPS 2019 claims have not been validated by the beginning of December.

Due to the continued uncertainty over Brexit, Welsh Government has to plan and prepare for all eventualities. For this reason it is unlikely RPW will deliver the same level of day one payments as achieved in previous years, and I would therefore encourage all 2019 BPS claimants to apply for the 2019 BPS Support Scheme using the simple RPW Online form.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep Assembly Members and the industry informed. Should Assembly Members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returned I would be more than happy to do so.