

Circular 30/2015

23rd July 2015

To: GLAS Commonage Advisors

Re: Update on the Approval of Commonage Advisors – Extension to closing date for submission of Commonage Management Plans

The Department is currently processing a large number of applications for 'Approval to Act as a Commonage Advisor'. This process involves verification of shareholder details and in many cases contacting advisors to get clarification or missing data and has proven time consuming. Appointments will recommence shortly and will be listed under 'Approved Commonage Advisors' at <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmerschemespayments/glas/>

Please note that there is no longer a 'pending' Commonage Advisor status as the closing date for receipt of applications to act as a Commonage Advisor has passed, and therefore all interested parties on any one commonage will be assessed before the appointment of one commonage advisor is made. To be clear, the appointment of a Commonage Advisor will be notified to all the shareholders listed for that Commonage on the Commonage Container. If any of these shareholders wish to be part of the Commonage Management Plan, they must sign up to the approved Commonage Advisor by means of the GLAS Commonage Authorisation Form (Comm Auth 1) i.e. even if they had previously nominated another Advisor to act in that role. These forms may be found at <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/agfoodinformationpages/agfoodagentforms/>

Advisors who have been appointed may now commence the work of assessing the commonage in terms of its condition and its stocking requirements, as well as speaking to shareholders. While the on-line facility to complete the Commonage Management Plan (CMP) will not be available for some weeks, we will shortly issue a template of the Plan with guidance notes. In the meantime, advisors may take it that the main components of the Plan as already outlined remain as follows:

- Individual stocking density minimum to be reached by 2016.
- Commonage stocking density minimum to be reached by 2018.
- Facility for advisor to amend stocking density on the basis of scientific assessment.
- Identify months sheep will graze (minimum four months, less than six requires justification).
- Details of other activities for sustainable management of the commonage.
- Identify predominant habitats and their status.

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It is envisaged that the online CMP will include a mapping facility, which may be used by the Advisor to amend the area declared under the Basic Payment Scheme.

Advisors may also find it helpful to access the original Commonage Framework Plans at <http://www.commonage.agriculture.gov.ie>.

In view of the above, the closing date for submission of a Commonage Management Plan has been extended to **31st October, 2015**, which means that those applying for GLAS Tranche 2 may be added to the Plan.

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