

For what state aid can farmers apply in April

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On 9 March, the State Fund “Agriculture” opened the application process under three state aid schemes, for which applications will be submitted electronically. For the convenience of farmers and in connection with limiting the risk of the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), applications may be submitted by e-mail to the regional directorates of the State Fund “Agriculture”. The templates of the applications under the state aid schemes are published on the Fund’s website. They can be found in the main menu, in the category “State Aid”, in the sub-menu “Schemes under Regulation (EU) 702/2014”:

The application intake under the scheme “Aid for compensating the costs of farmers related to the implementation of measures under the *“National Programme of Measures for the Control of Tomato Leafminer - Tuta absoluta Meyrick (Lepidoptera)”* will continue until 30 September. For the current year, the budget for this

measure is BGN 500 thousand. The amount of the subsidy will cover up to 100% of the price of the purchased products and means for pest control, and may not exceed the amount of BGN 2,500/ha including VAT.

Documents under the scheme *“Aid for certification of holdings in the “Fruit and Vegetables” sector according to the GLOBALG.A.P. standard”* will be accepted until 30 September. The Management Board of the State Fund “Agriculture” has allocated BGN 100,000 under the scheme. The support is targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as recognised groups or organisations of fruit and vegetable producers.

Potato producers may apply for support under the scheme *“Aid for compensating the costs of farmers related to the implementation of measures under the “National Programme of Measures for the Control of Soil Pests in Potatoes from the Wireworms family (Elateridae)”* until 15 May. The financial resource under the scheme is BGN 1.8 million for 2020. The support may be used by small and medium-sized enterprises – farmers who grow potatoes on areas larger than 0.1 ha. Up to 100% of the value will be supported, but not more than the amount of state aid per hectare by product and not more than BGN 850/ha, including VAT.

By 29 May, farmers must submit reporting documents for the activities carried out for the treatment of potato plantations. The deadline for payment of the subsidies is 22 June 2020.

Farmers may apply under the three schemes at the regional directorates of the State Fund “Agriculture”. The guidelines are published on the SFA website.

Once the applications, together with the other documents, have been submitted by e-mail to the respective regional directorate, they will be processed. According to a schedule drawn up, farmers will be notified when to appear at the Fund’s regional directorate, where the applications will be finally signed on the spot.

Under the scheme *“Aid for compensating the costs of farmers related to the implementation of measures under the National Programme for the Control of Pests in Permanent Crops during the Winter Period”* the deadline for reporting and submission of documents for plant protection products for the control of pests in permanent fruit plantations, strawberries, raspberries and oil-bearing rose during the winter season, which are applied in the period after the cold weather has passed until bud swelling, is extended **until 15 May 2020**. The extension of the deadlines is necessary in order to limit the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The staggered intake will give a greater number of rose producers the opportunity to participate in the support scheme. New plant protection products have been approved for them, which are already included in the National Programme for the Control of Pests in Permanent Crops.

The number of submitted applications for the first stage of aid under the scheme for winter spraying for 2020 is 3,836 for a total of 23,557.29 ha. This figure includes 340 submitted applications from oil-bearing rose producers for areas amounting to 1,983.4 ha.

The Management Board of the State Fund "Agriculture" has approved a financial resource of BGN 6 million under the scheme for winter spraying for 2020. The financial support is up to BGN 270 per hectare including VAT. It is important to note that support is provided for the costs of plant protection products incurred after the submission of a written application to the SFA, before the activity under the respective stage of pest control has started.

The funds are paid only for plant protection products purchased from persons who are traders within the meaning of the Commerce Act and hold a certificate for trade in plant protection products, pursuant to Art. 91, para. 1 of the Plant Protection Act and are entered in the public register of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency for authorised plant protection products, pursuant to Art. 6, para. 1 of the Plant Protection Act. Products for accelerating the processes of leaf decay may also be purchased from persons who are traders within the meaning of the Commerce Act.

The scheme aims to minimise the losses of farmers from the spread of pests in permanent crops (pome and stone fruit species, strawberries, raspberries and oil-bearing rose).

Source: State Fund "Agriculture" - PA