

Legal basis of the land will be registered by 15 February

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*By 15 February 2017 all farmers must register the **legal basis*** for the use of agricultural land with the municipal agriculture office at the location of the property in order to obtain the right to apply under the direct payment schemes. The amendments to the Law on Ownership and Use of Agricultural Land (LOUAL) also provide the opportunity for the establishment of blocks for the use of permanent crops.*

The areas eligible for support under Campaign 2017 will be declared only if there is a registered legal basis for the land used. The legal basis may be declared with the municipal agriculture offices at the location of the property until 15 February 2017.

In order to register a legal basis, farmers must submit one of the following documents: decision for restored ownership right or notarial deed, lease or tenancy (rent) agreement, agreements under Article 37v of the Law on Ownership and Use of Agricultural Land (LOUAL). The legal basis also includes grazing permits.

The amendments to the LOUAL also provide the opportunity for the establishment of blocks for the use of permanent crops. A declaration and an application shall be submitted by 20 February 2017. The deadline for concluding an agreement under Article 37v, paragraph 2 and for the allocation of the use of land by blocks under Article 37v, paragraph 3, item 2 is 30 March 2017. The report and the order for the allocation of the blocks in the land territory shall be issued by 5 April 2017. The order shall be announced by 10 April 2017.

The amendments and supplements to the LOUAL, promulgated in the State Gazette, provide the opportunity for the establishment of blocks for the use of pastures, meadows and grasslands. This may be done through the conclusion of an agreement between owners or users of livestock holdings with farm animals registered in the Integrated Information System of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA). Persons who meet the requirement regarding the owned or legally used pastures, meadows and grasslands, in accordance with the number and type of registered grazing farm animals, may participate in the agreement. 28 February is the deadline for registering an application for participation in the agreements for the use of pastures, meadows and grasslands. The agreements are approved by 30 April.

Agricultural properties that are state or municipal property may be registered until 9 June, provided that a procedure for granting them for use has been initiated before 15 February 2017.

The legal basis for support in forest properties, state and municipal property – pasture, meadow or glade – shall be the lease agreements concluded under the Forest Act.

For properties located in protected areas, the legal basis shall be a grazing permit under Article 50, item 5 of the Protected Areas Act. It is issued on the basis of the annual plans approved by order of the directors of the regional bodies of the Ministry of Environment and Water. The procedure is considered to have started on the date of the order of the respective regional body of the Ministry of Environment and Water.

The legal basis* for the delineation of agricultural areas was officially introduced in the 2016 direct payments campaign, with the aim of supporting the real business and eliminating speculative projects.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food