

Before you sign any contract, you need to understand what you're getting yourself into.

That is why the NFU is offering a Contract Checking Service to all our farmer and grower members, in conjunction with our Legal Panel Firms.

The firms can check the contract for you as well as advise on what it means in terms of your rights and obligations and whether or not it meets your requirements and needs.

You can get a professional view on your contract from an NFU panel firm solicitor from as little as £275 (+ VAT). When you balance that cost against what the contract is going to be worth to your business, it is likely to be money well spent.

Why is the Contract Checking Service necessary for farmers and growers?

The Contract Checking Service will help you understand what you're entering into.

The NFU and its Legal Assistance Scheme have been involved in and supported a number of costly and stressful contractual disputes affecting members' businesses, some of which could have been avoided if members had taken professional advice from the outset.

Taking professional advice on contractual arrangements at an early stage can help to reduce potential pitfalls, the stress associated with litigation and costly disputes in the future.

The NFU Legal Panel Firms will undertake the work on your behalf to ensure you understand your rights and obligations and are satisfied that your aims and objectives are met before signing the contract.

How does the service work?

The service is split into three stages:

Stage 1 – An initial discussion with an NFU Specialist Adviser and a referral to the appropriate panel firm if you want them to check the contract for you.

Stage 2 – The panel firm will speak to you, review the documentation you send to them and produce a simple report to reflect your objectives and help you to understand the contract.

Stage 3 – If you want them to, the panel firm will consider the contract in more detail and assist in renegotiating specific terms with the other party and/or advise in further detail what the contract means for your business.

How is the service accessed?

- You should contact NFU CallFirst on 0370 845 8458 when you have a contract that you are planning to enter into. Get in touch as early as you can.
- The NFU Specialist Adviser will have an initial discussion with you and can make a referral to one of the NFU's Legal Panel Firms. You will be referred to the relevant panel firm in your area, who will contact you within two working days to discuss your requirements.

What does it cost?

Your first discussion with the panel firm to consider your requirements will be free of charge, but if you decide to instruct the firm to undertake a review of your contract, any fees will be agreed before the work starts on stages 2 and 3.

The NFU has negotiated preferential rates for Farmer & Grower members that start from as little as £275.00 (+ VAT) for the report at stage 2 (depending on the complexity and value of the contract).

At stage 3 the charge will either be at the firms' standard hourly rates (with a 12.5% discount applied), or a fixed fee which can be agreed directly with the firm before any work is done.

What type of contract is covered?

The service is designed to provide you with an initial report on fairly straightforward standard contracts.

For example:

- sale of goods or services contracts
- farm business tenancy agreements
- grazing agreements
- share farming agreements

What type of contracts aren't covered?

Some contracts may fall outside the remit of stage 2 of the service due to their complexity, value or length. If this is the case, the panel firm will advise you of this after you supply a copy of the contract.

You can still engage their services to help you with it, but they would then quote separately for their fees of doing so under stage 3 or outside the Contract Checking Service. Examples of such contracts include the sale of large estates, option agreements or renewable energy contracts.

Why does the NFU have a panel of approved law firms and why should you use them?

The NFU's Legal Panel Firms have been carefully selected for their strength and depth of expertise in agricultural and horticultural matters, giving farmers and growers reassurance.

The NFU's Legal Panel Firms also offer you great savings. Each one of our Legal Panel Firms offers our NFU Farmer & Grower members hourly rate savings of 12.5% on agricultural and horticultural legal services and advice that affects your farming or growing business, as well as preferential fixed fees for certain other services.

Don't sign contracts without understanding your rights and obligations.

This service will save you the stress and high legal costs associated with contractual disputes that could be avoided if you seek professional advice before signing the contract.

For more information call **NFU CallFirst** on **0370 845 8458** or visit **www.nfuonline.com** or **www.nfu-cymru.org.uk**

Disclaimer: Whilst every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information and content provided in this document at the date of publication (February 2017), no representation is made as to its correctness or completeness and no responsibility or liability is assumed for errors or omissions. Terms and conditions may apply to services and benefits which form part of the membership offer. For the most up-to-date information please visit www.nfuonline.com or www.nfu-cymru.org.uk. Alternatively, call NFU CallFirst on **0370 845 8458**.

NFU supported by
 NFU Mutual

 

NFU CONTRACT CHECKING SERVICE



Helping you understand exactly what you're signing

