

CAMPAIGN FOR THE FARMED ENVIRONMENT: ENTRY LEVEL STEWARDSHIP OPTION UPTAKE

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Summary

In July 2009 the Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE), an industry led approach, was announced as the preferred option to retain and exceed the environmental benefits formerly provided by set-aside. There were several ways in which farmers could participate in the Campaign. These included:

- Choosing key in-field target options in Entry Level Stewardship (ELS),
- Retaining former set-aside and any other areas of un-cropped land and/or
- Putting areas of land outside ELS into Campaign voluntary measures.

This paper focuses on the uptake of the key Entry Level Stewardship options since July 2009 and provides a summary of the latest figures (15 December 2012 unless otherwise stated). The key findings are:

- ELS in-field option area was 58,032 ha, 46% higher than July 2009, but did not achieve the target of 80,000 ha.
- 12,480 Environmental Stewardship agreements contained at least one Campaign in-field option compared to 10,501 in July 2009, an increase of 19%. A third of ELS agreements now contain at least one in-field Campaign option (49% of those in target counties¹ and 16% of agreements non-target counties). This compares to 29% of ELS agreements in March 2009 (42% in target counties and 15% in non-target counties).
- Field corner management (EF1) is the most popular option both in terms of agreements and area. 77% of "CFE agreements"² contained this option and it accounted for 42% of the in-field option area.
- When expressed as a proportion of the available arable area, uptake has increased from 0.9% to 1.4% in the group of target counties between July 2009 and December 2012 and remained little changed at 0.8% in non-target counties – the gap has widened somewhat over the period.
- At a county level, the greatest increases in option area (when expressed as a proportion of arable area) have been in Hertfordshire (1.1% of arable area) followed by Cambridgeshire (1.0%), Suffolk (0.8%) and Gloucestershire (0.8%), all being target counties. The greatest reductions have been in Cornwall (-0.1% of arable area), Lancashire (-0.2%), and Shropshire (-0.4%), all non-target counties.
- Unsurprisingly given the nature of the options, cropping farms have the greatest uptake of Campaign options and have shown the greatest increase in uptake over the life of the Campaign. Increases tend to be greater across all farm types within target counties compared to non-target counties.

¹ The Campaign partners have nominated 23 primarily arable target counties across England. Farmers in these counties are the focus of additional promotional activity. The locations of the target counties can be found in Annex 2 of this report.

² ELS agreements containing at least one of the Campaign in-field options.

1. Introduction

In July 2009 the Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE), an industry led approach, was announced as the preferred option to retain and exceed the environmental benefits formerly provided by set-aside in England. The Campaign has largely been focussed on arable farmers, including a county-based delivery mechanism in 23 predominantly arable ("target") counties. There were several ways in which farmers could participate in the Campaign. These included:

- Choosing key in-field target options in Entry Level Stewardship (ELS),
- Retaining former set-aside and any other areas of un-cropped land and/or
- Putting areas of land outside ELS into Campaign voluntary measures.

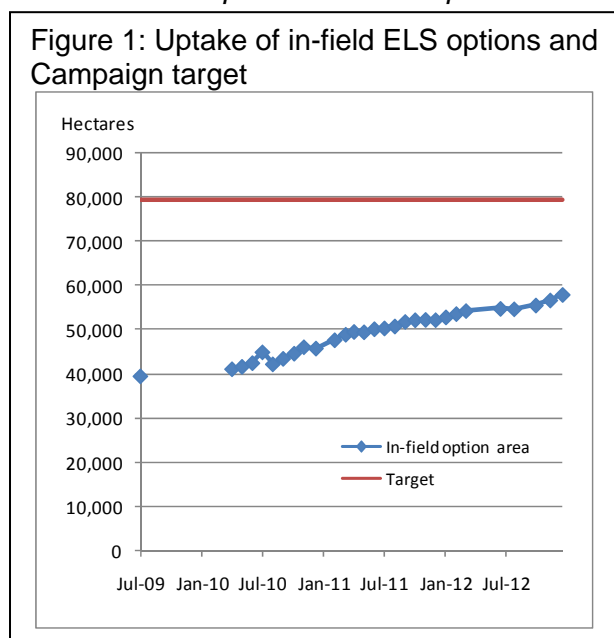
This paper focuses solely on the uptake of the key Entry Level Stewardship options between July 2009 and December 2012³. Progress against other targets has been presented elsewhere⁴.

2. Background

Farmers have been encouraged to adopt a number of relevant in-field ELS options (Annex 1) when renewing or taking up ELS agreements. The Campaign target was for the area under these options to double from the July 2009 baseline of 39,671 hectares. In addition, a further target was added in 2010 for the uptake of 2 options relating to 6 metre buffer strips next to watercourses. The target for these was to secure a total of 9,760 ha by December 2012. The equivalent organic ELS options were not included within the targets.

3. Results

3.1 Overall uptake of in-field options



Total uptake of the key in-field options within ELS did not meet the target set at the beginning of the Campaign (Figure 1). Between July 2009 and December 2012, the area within these options increased by 46%. The number of Environmental Stewardship⁵ agreements containing at least one of these options had increased by 19% to 12,480 by the 15th December, with a third of live ELS⁶ agreements contained at least 1 Campaign in-field option.

The Campaign has taken place during a period of major renewals for ELS agreements⁷, thus providing an opportunity to encourage wider uptake of the Campaign options, although not all agreements already in place at the commencement of the Campaign were due to be renewed

³ Data used in this paper are for the position at 15th December 2012 unless stated otherwise.

⁴ Campaign for the Farmed Environment: Summary of evidence, Defra, February 2013.

⁵ Includes Entry Level plus Higher Level agreements and Uplands ELS agreements.

⁶ Entry Level Stewardship agreements only, excludes Entry Level plus Higher Level agreements, Uplands ELS agreements and Organic ELS agreements.

⁷ The first Entry Level Stewardship agreements became live in 2004. All agreements are for a 5 year period. Those commencing between 2008 and 2009 were not due to be renewed during the life of the Campaign.

during the duration of the Campaign.

The data suggest that of those agreements that were live in mid-December 2012 and started prior to July 2009, 20% contained an in-field Campaign option. This compares to around 34% of those starting after July 2009 (Table 1). The difference between these two groups of agreements is much greater in the Campaign target counties⁸, suggesting that the Campaign has been successful in influencing uptake, even given the differences in farm types and sizes prevalent in the group of target and non-target counties (Table 2).

Table 1: Agreements containing at least one CFE option

	Total ELS agreements	Agreements with CFE options	% of all agreements with at least one CFE option	% of all agreements with at least one CFE option (pre-CFE*)
All counties	29,458	9,694	33%	29%
start date before July 2009	3,125	612	20%	-
start date after July 2009	26,333	9,082	34%	-
Target counties	15,045	7,408	49%	42%
start date before July 2009	1,202	398	33%	-
start date after July 2009	13,843	7,010	51%	-
Not target counties	14,413	2,286	16%	15%
start date before July 2009	1,923	214	11%	-
start date after July 2009	12,490	2,072	17%	-

Does not include Uplands ELS, Organic ELS or Entry Level plus Higher Level scheme agreements

* March 2009 ELS dataset.

Unsurprisingly given the nature of the options and Campaign targeting, cropping farms have the greatest uptake of Campaign options and have shown the greatest increase in uptake over the life of the Campaign. Increases tend to be greater across all farm types within target counties compared to non-target counties. Uptake increases with farm size, although this is potentially linked to farm type with smaller farms tending to be grazing livestock enterprises.

⁸ The Campaign partners have nominated 23 primarily arable target counties across England. Farmers in these counties are the focus of additional promotional activity. The locations of the target counties can be found in Annex 2 of this report.

Table 2: Proportion of ELS agreements with at least one CFE option

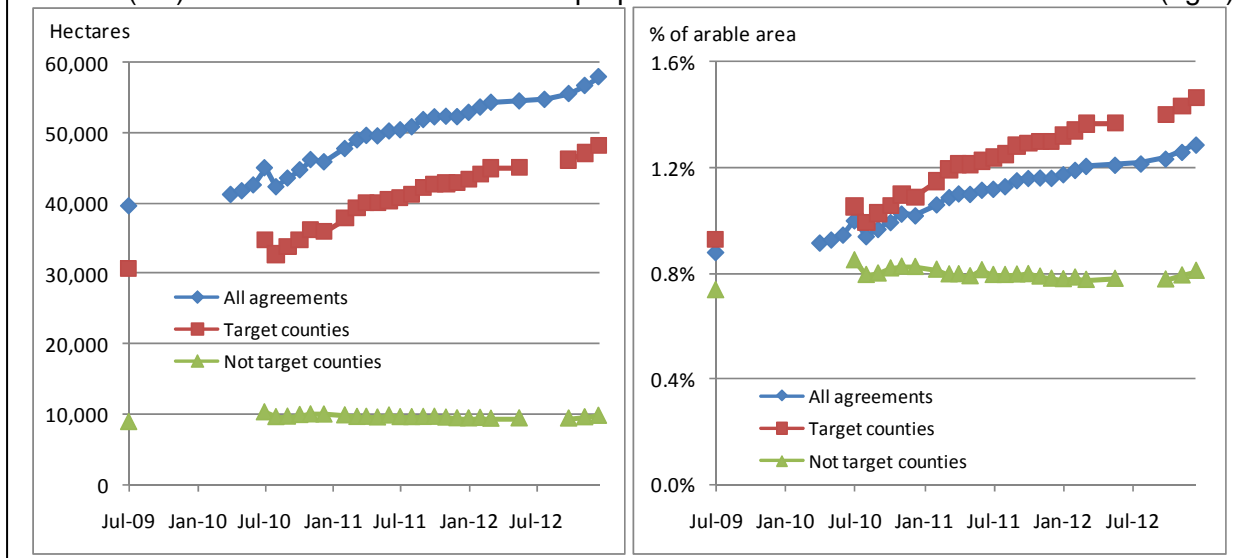
	Non-target counties			Target Counties		
	% of farms in each type/size (a)	% of ELS agreements with at least 1 CFE option		% of farms in each type/size (a)	% of ELS agreements with at least 1 CFE option	
		Mar-09	Dec-12		Mar-09	Dec-12
Cereals	25%	48%	55%	7%	59%	72%
General cropping	18%	28%	30%	14%	58%	65%
Dairy	5%	13%	12%	10%	24%	30%
Grazing livestock	34%	5%	4%	53%	8%	10%
Mixed	8%	27%	30%	7%	41%	47%
Other farm types	10%	25%	27%	8%	51%	61%
<i>Not matched (b)</i>		10%	7%		33%	25%
<20 ha	56%	2%	2%	74%	7%	6%
20 to <50 ha	13%	6%	6%	12%	20%	24%
50 to <100 ha	12%	13%	14%	8%	35%	42%
100 to <200 ha	11%	25%	30%	4%	51%	64%
>=200 ha	9%	45%	56%	2%	69%	84%
All ELS agreements		15%	16%		42%	49%

(a) Proportion of all farms in each type/size at June 2010 to illustrate differing structures in target and non-target counties.

(b) 84% of December 2012 agreements were matched to a farm type in the June 2010 Census and 80% of March 2009 agreements.

The overall increase in option uptake has largely taken place within the Campaign target counties (Figure 2), perhaps not surprising given that these counties accounted for almost three quarters (73%) of the arable area in England at June 2010. When expressed as a proportion of the available arable area, uptake has increased from 0.9% to 1.4% in the group of target counties between July 2009 and December 2012 and from 0.7% to 0.8% in non-target counties – the gap has widened somewhat over the period. The relationship with farm

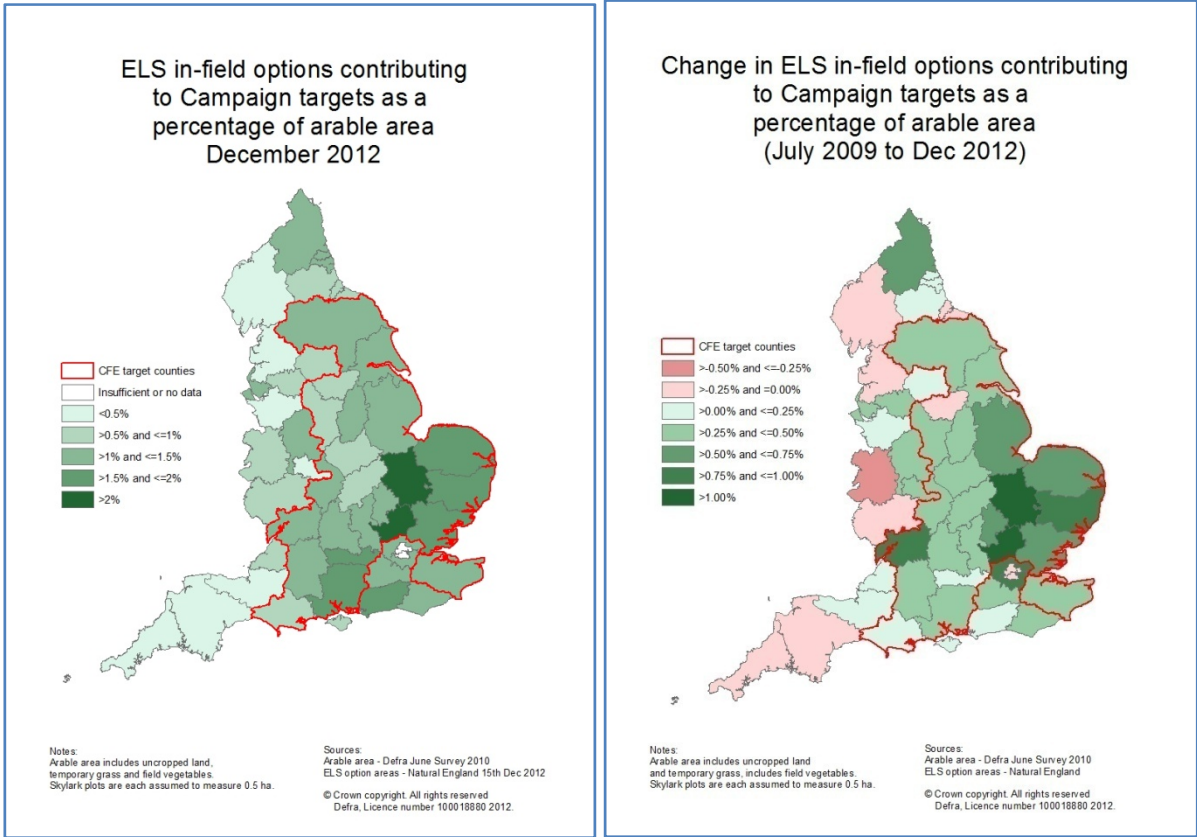
Figure 2: Uptake of in-field options within target counties and non-target counties. Total areas (left) in hectares and as a proportion of June 2010 arable area (right)



type and size is investigated later within this paper.

At a county level, in December 2012, uptake of Campaign options was lowest in Cornwall (0.3% of arable area) and greatest in Cambridgeshire (2.1%) and Hertfordshire (2.7%) (Figure 3, left hand map). The Campaign target focuses on the change since July 2009. There are some counties where there have been large relative increases in the Campaign option areas (see Annex 3). Gloucestershire and Suffolk have more than doubled their Campaign option areas since July 2009, although in Gloucestershire this was from a very low baseline position. In Cambridgeshire and Derbyshire, the Campaign ELS option areas have increased by at least 97% and in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire there have been increases of more than 80%. However, when the change in option area is expressed as a proportion of the available arable area (Figure 3, right hand chart and Annex 3), the greatest increase has been in Hertfordshire (1.1% of arable area) followed by Cambridgeshire (1.0%), Suffolk (0.8%) and Gloucestershire (0.8%), all being target counties.

Figure 3: County level uptake of in-field target options

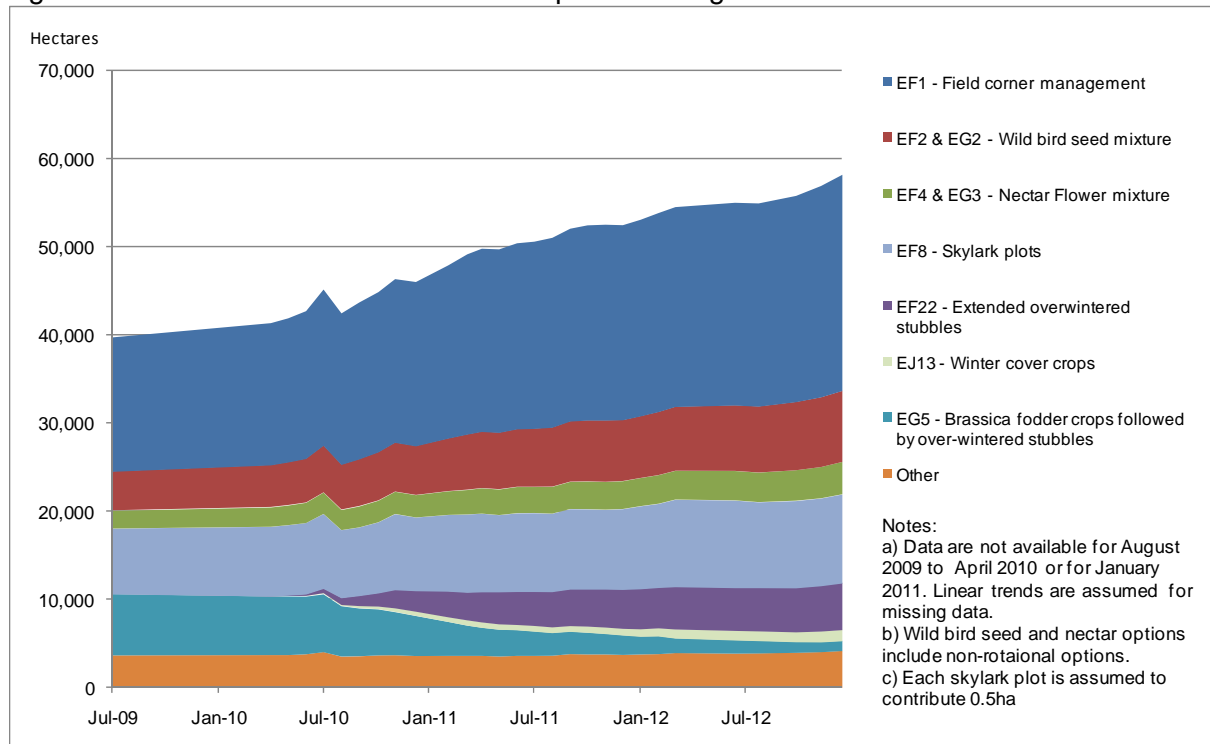


In a number of counties there have been reductions in the areas within Campaign options. These counties are largely (but not exclusively) non-target counties. In terms of a direct comparison between July 2009 and December 2012, the greatest relative reductions in target option areas have been in Lancashire (-36%), Cornwall (-31%) and Shropshire (-29%), all non-target counties. These three counties also have the greatest reductions when expressed as a percentage of the 2010 arable area (-0.21%, -0.13% and -0.37% respectively).

3.2 Option uptake

Throughout the Campaign, the most popular Campaign options (Figure 4) have been “EF1 Field corner management”, (currently within 77% of Campaign agreements⁹), “EF2/EG2 Wild bird seed mixtures” (35%), “EF4/EG3 Nectar flower mix” (22%). All other options were each found within less than 7% of Campaign agreements in December 2012. Together, these three option groups account for 62% of the Campaign target area. Skylark plots (EF8)¹⁰ and extended overwintered stubbles (EF22) also contribute a substantial area to the Campaign total. The five options together accounted for 89% of the Campaign target area in December 2012.

Figure 4: Cumulative contribution of ELS options to target area



The majority of options are more prevalent (in terms of their share of arable area) in target counties than non-target counties (Table 3). The most notable exceptions to this are those options more suited to mixed or livestock farms such as EG4 (whole crop silage), EG5 (brassica fodder crops), EJ13 (winter cover crops) and EF15 (reduced herbicide cereal crop preceding over winter stubble).

⁹ Agreements containing at least one of the Campaign options.

¹⁰ Skylark plots are each assessed as contributing 0.5ha.

Table 3: Option areas on 15th December 2012 for target and non-target counties in hectares and as a proportion of the arable area

	Non target counties		Target counties		England	
	Area (ha)	% of arable area	Area (ha)	% of arable area	Area (ha)	% of arable area
EF1 - Field corner management	3,627	0.29%	20,802	0.62%	24,429	0.53%
EF2/EF2NR - Wild bird seed mixture	1,465	0.12%	6,559	0.19%	8,024	0.17%
EF4/EF4NR - Nectar Flower mixture	565	0.05%	3,046	0.09%	3,609	0.08%
EF5 - ASD to Dec 2008 Pollen + nectar flower mixture on set-aside land	1	0.00%	1	0.00%	2	0.00%
EF7 - Beetle banks	14	0.00%	111	0.00%	125	0.00%
EF8 - Skylark plots	1,333	0.11%	8,737	0.26%	10,070	0.22%
EF9 - Unfertilised cereal headland within arable fields	94	0.01%	308	0.01%	403	0.01%
EF10 - Unharvested cereal headland within arable fields	55	0.00%	133	0.00%	188	0.00%
EF11 - Uncropped, cultivated margins for rare plants on arable land	35	0.00%	283	0.01%	319	0.01%
EF13 - Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds - arable	84	0.01%	304	0.01%	388	0.01%
EF15 - Reduced herbicide cereal crop preceding over-wintered stubble	289	0.02%	381	0.01%	670	0.01%
EF22 - Extended overwintered stubbles	770	0.06%	4,505	0.13%	5,275	0.11%
EG2/EG2NR - ASD to Jan 2010 Wild bird seed mixture in grassland areas	40	0.00%	16	0.00%	57	0.00%
EG3 - ASD to Jan 2010 Nectar flower mixture in grassland areas	1	0.00%	4	0.00%	5	0.00%
EG4 - Cereals for whole crop silage followed by over-wintered stubbles	363	0.03%	200	0.01%	563	0.01%
EG5 - Brassica fodder crops followed by over-wintered stubbles	418	0.04%	743	0.02%	1,161	0.03%
EJ5 - In-field grass areas	178	0.01%	408	0.01%	585	0.01%
EJ9 - 12m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land	112	0.01%	756	0.02%	868	0.02%
EJ13 - Winter cover crops	405	0.03%	883	0.03%	1,288	0.03%
Total	9,849	0.80%	48,183	1.43%	58,032	1.26%

3.3 Impact of option changes

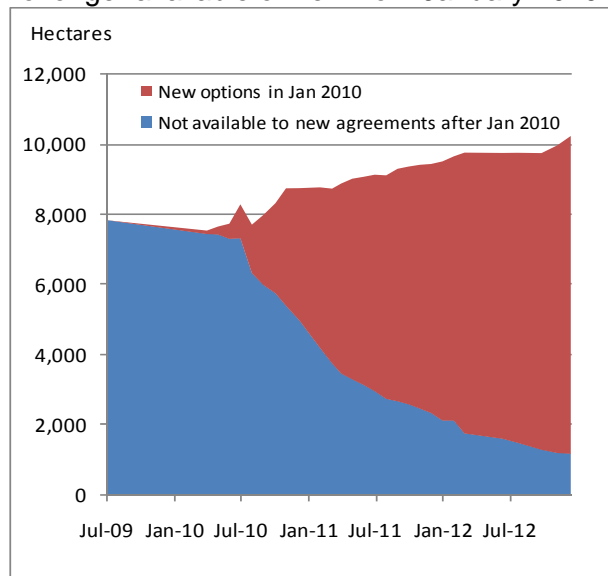
The range of ELS options available to new agreements was revised by Natural England in early 2010. The impending changes were known when the Campaign was officially launched in November 2009 and reflected within the ELS option target. Three options were included within the Campaign target that would not be available within new agreements from January 2010 together with 6 new options (Table 4). Concerns were raised that the withdrawal of these three options, particularly EG5 which accounted for 7,000 ha (90%) of the withdrawn

option area in July 2009, had an impact on progress towards the in-field target. In total, the three withdrawn options accounted for 19% of the total Campaign option area in July 2009; 41% of the Campaign option area in non-target counties and 13% in target counties.

Table 4: Changes to ELS options January 2010

Options no longer available in new agreements	New Options
EF3 - Wild bird seed mixture on set-aside land	EF13 - Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds - arable
EF5 - Pollen + nectar flower mixture on set-aside land	EF15 - Reduced herbicide cereal crop preceding over-wintered stubble
EG5 - Brassica fodder crops followed by over-wintered stubbles	EF22 - Extended overwintered stubbles
	EJ13 - Winter cover crops
	EJ5 - In-field grass areas
	EJ9 - 12m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land

Figure 5: Overall uptake of Campaign options no longer available or new from January 2010



The total area under these nine “changing” options has continued to increase compared to the July 2009 baseline (Figure 5), but at a lower rate than the group of unchanging options. The area under the 9 “changing options” increased by 31% to 10,238 ha between July 2009 and December 2012, whilst the area under the remaining Campaign options increased by 50% to 47,794 ha. Failure to meet the target may, therefore, not have been helped by the option changes, but is not a direct result of the changes.

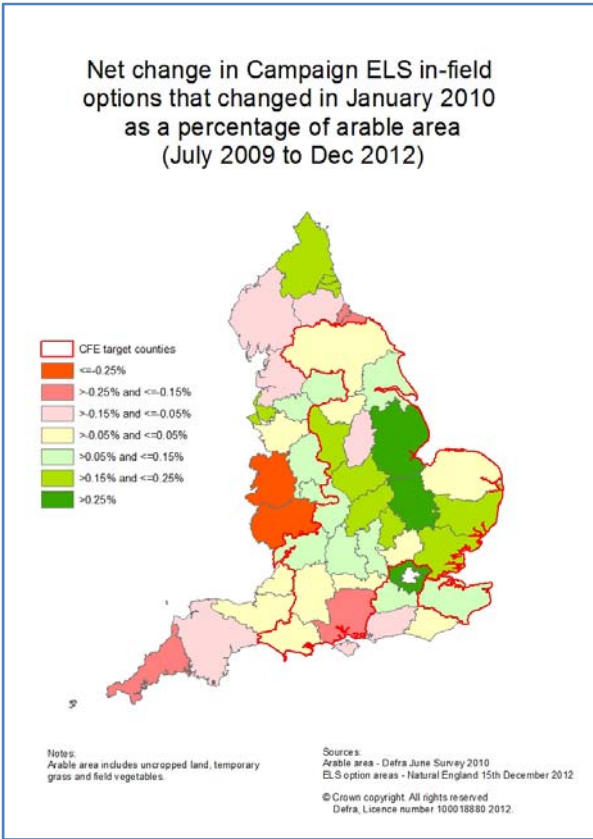
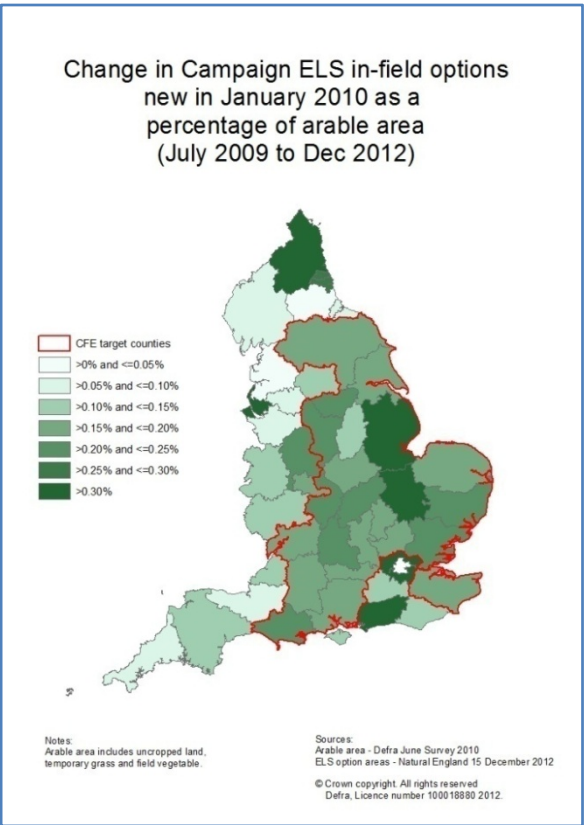
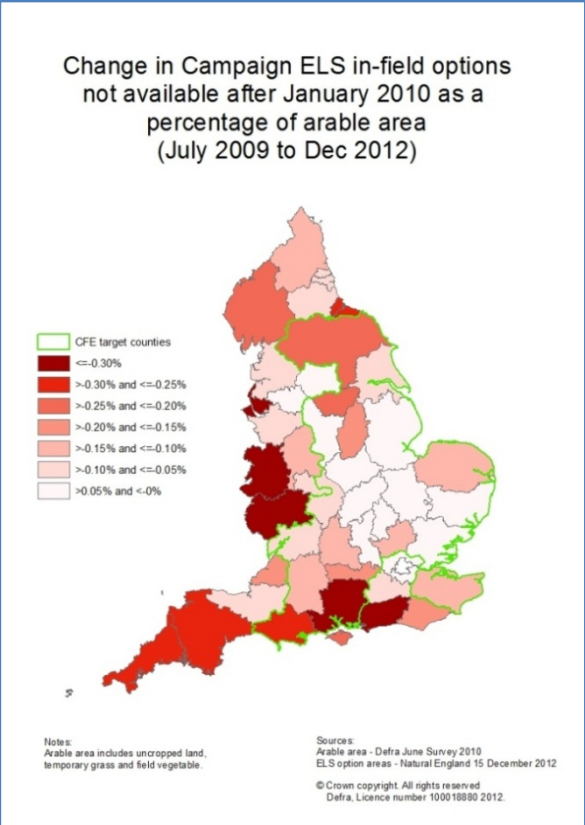
The three withdrawn options were more prevalent in non-target counties, accounting for 0.29% of the arable area in July 2009 compared to 0.12% of the arable area in target counties. The new options were not necessarily direct

replacements for the withdrawn options as agreements were renewed. Locations were different (see Figure 6).

When expressed as a percentage of the arable area, the reductions in the withdrawn options (Figure 6, top left) have been greatest in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, West Sussex, and Hampshire.

The greatest increases in the areas of the “new” options (as a proportion of the arable area) have been in Northumberland, West Sussex, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire (Figure 6, top right). The latter two counties account for more than a fifth (22%) of the area under the new options. The net effect of the changing options can be seen in Figure 6 (bottom left). The greatest net reductions (as proportions of arable area) have been in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire (non-target counties) and to a lesser extent, Hampshire (target county).

Figure 6: Changes in option areas for the options withdrawn in January 2010 (top left) and available from January 2010 (top right). The overall net change is shown bottom left (all expressed as a percentage of arable area.)

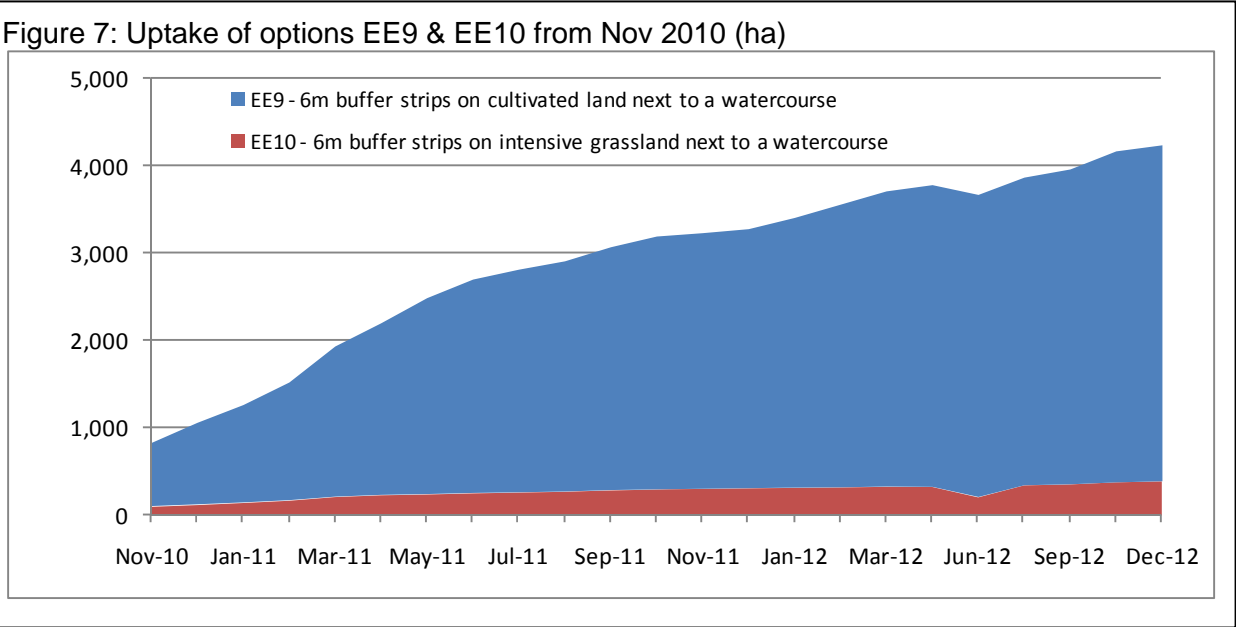


Note: red areas indicate reductions, green areas increase and yellow areas little overall change.

The greatest net increases have been in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. For England as a whole¹¹, there has been a net increase of 0.06% of the available arable area in this group of changing options (an increase of 0.12% in target counties and a reduction of 0.11% in non-target counties).

3.4 6 metre buffers next to water courses

An additional target was set towards the end of 2010 specifically monitoring uptake of two options that were introduced into ELS from January 2010: EE9 6m buffer strips on cultivated land next to a watercourse and EE10 6m buffer strips on intensive grassland next to a watercourse. Estimates made at the time suggested a baseline of 4,880ha of buffer strips against watercourses, with a number within existing ELS 6m buffer strip options EE3 and EE6. Whilst the recorded option area within EE9 and EE10 has not risen to the target level set (9,760 ha), it has increased over the period to 4,230 ha in December 2012 (Figure 7).



¹¹ For England as a whole, the area of withdrawn options has reduced by 0.12% of the arable area, the area of new options has increased by 0.17% of the arable area, net change = 0.05%). For target counties the equivalent figures are withdrawn options -0.09%, new options 0.18%, net effect 0.10% of the arable area. For non-target counties the equivalent figures are withdrawn options -0.21%, new options 0.13%, net effect -0.08% of the arable area.

Annex 1: In-field ELS options relevant to CFE

ELS in-field options	Notes
EF1 - Field corner management	
EF2 (NR) - Wild bird seed mixture	Includes non-rotational option
EF3 - Wild bird seed mixture on set-aside land	Avail. to December 2008 only
EF4 - Nectar Flower mixture	
EF5 - Pollen + nectar flower mixture on set-aside land	Avail. to December 2008 only
EF7 - Beetle banks	
EF8 - Skylark plots	
EF9 - Unfertilised cereal headland within arable fields	
EF10 - Unharvested cereal headland within arable fields	
EF11 - Uncropped, cultivated margins for rare plants on arable land	
EF13 - Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds - arable	Avail from January 2010
EF15 - Reduced herbicide cereal crop preceding over-wintered stubble	Avail from January 2010
EF22 - Extended overwintered stubbles	Avail from January 2010
EG2 (NR) - Wild bird seed mixture in grassland areas	
EG3 - Nectar flower mixture in grassland areas	
EG4 - Cereals for whole crop silage followed by over-wintered stubbles	
EG5 - Brassica fodder crops followed by over-wintered stubbles	Avail. to January 2010 only
EJ5 - In-field grass areas	Avail from January 2010
EJ9 - 12m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land	
EJ13 - Winter cover crops	Avail from January 2010

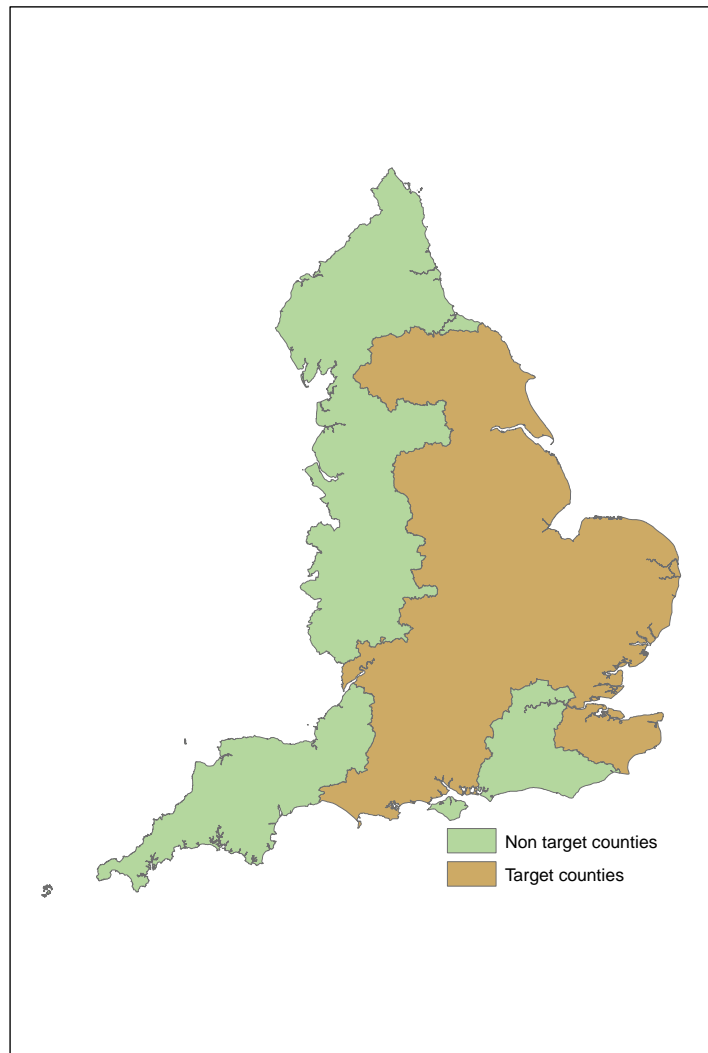
Table 2: 6m buffer strip options relevant to CFE

ELS in-field options	Notes
EE9 - 6m buffer strips on cultivated land next to a watercourse	Avail from January 2010
EE10 - 6m buffer strips on intensive grassland next to a watercourse	Avail from January 2010

Annex 2: Campaign target counties

The Campaign target counties are:

- Bedfordshire
- Berkshire
- Buckinghamshire
- Cambridgeshire
- Derbyshire
- Dorset
- East Yorkshire
- Essex
- Gloucestershire
- Hampshire
- Hertfordshire
- Kent
- Leicestershire
- Lincolnshire
- Norfolk
- North and South Yorkshire
- Northamptonshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Oxfordshire
- Rutland
- Suffolk
- Warwickshire
- Wiltshire



Annex 3: Changes to county in-field option areas for July 2009 to December 2012*

Land County	Jul-09	Dec-12	Net change	% change	Change as a % of arable area
Avon	125	183	57	46%	0.21%
Bedfordshire	514	844	331	64%	0.52%
Berkshire	772	780	8	1%	0.02%
Buckinghamshire	493	690	197	40%	0.31%
Cambridgeshire	2321	4627	2306	99.4%	1.03%
Cheshire	237	283	46	19%	0.07%
Cleveland	143	124	-19	-13%	-0.12%
Cornwall And Isles Of Scilly	396	274	-122	-31%	-0.13%
Cumbria	406	317	-89	-22%	-0.13%
Derbyshire	204	403	199	97.4%	0.42%
Devon	678	509	-169	-25%	-0.12%
Dorset	626	807	181	29%	0.19%
Durham	273	392	120	44%	0.24%
East Sussex	332	435	103	31%	0.30%
Essex	1891	3102	1211	64%	0.60%
Gloucestershire	457	1223	766	168%	0.78%
Hampshire	1752	2105	353	20%	0.29%
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	1460	1278	-182	-12%	-0.13%
Hertfordshire	1158	1936	777	67%	1.09%
Humberside	2129	3041	912	43%	0.39%
Isle Of Wight	75	82	7	9%	0.07%
Kent	1220	1766	545	45%	0.41%
Lancashire	232	149	-84	-36%	-0.21%
Leicestershire	617	1134	517	84%	0.44%
Lincolnshire	3385	5983	2598	77%	0.63%
Merseyside	119	161	42	35%	0.37%
Norfolk	3876	5657	1782	46%	0.58%
North Yorkshire	2499	3253	754	30%	0.28%
Northamptonshire	623	1137	514	82%	0.42%
Northumberland	899	1488	589	65%	0.54%
Nottinghamshire	1016	1333	317	31%	0.28%
Oxfordshire	994	1512	517	52%	0.41%
Shropshire	1723	1222	-501	-29%	-0.37%
Somerset	353	432	79	22%	0.09%
South Yorkshire	431	425	-7	-2%	-0.01%
Staffordshire	470	807	337	72%	0.44%
Suffolk	1694	3508	1814	107%	0.82%
Surrey	142	203	61	43%	0.33%
Tyne And Wear	91	114	23	26%	0.24%

Land County	Jul-09	Dec-12	Net change	% change	Change as a % of arable area
Warwickshire	612	1018	405	66%	0.43%
West Midlands	10	39	28	274%	0.37%
West Sussex	965	996	31	3%	0.06%
West Yorkshire	183	252	70	38%	0.22%
Wiltshire	1436	1899	463	32%	0.32%

* February 2012 ELS data from Natural England 15th December 2012.
Arable area data sourced from Defra 2010 June Survey.
Excludes Greater Manchester and London.