



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE) - Survey of land managed voluntarily in 2012/13 farming year (England)

This release contains the results from the March 2013 survey which collected areas managed under unpaid voluntary environmental management in the 2012/13 farming year and farmers' attitudes towards the farmed environment and CFE. The results have been raised to represent all lowland farms with at least 10 hectares of crops and/or grassland. The key findings are highlighted below.

Attitudes towards the environment ([section 2](#))

- Farmers placed greater importance on the 'efficient use of inputs' and 'protecting soil and water' when making decisions about their land, crops and livestock than on 'protecting or benefiting farm wildlife' or 'reducing greenhouse gas emissions'. Around 80% of lowland farmers considered the former two to be very important compared to 61% and 30% for the latter two respectively.

Attitudes to and awareness of CFE ([section 3](#))

- In 2013, 66% of lowland farmers had at least some understanding of CFE. Levels of understanding increased with farm size and were greatest on cereal farms (85% having at least some understanding) and lowest on grazing livestock farms (55% having at least some understanding).
- The farming press remains the most common source of information about CFE (for 67% of lowland holdings in 2013), followed by CFE leaflets (53%). More than 80% of those having information from these two sources found it to be useful.

Unpaid environmental land management ([section 4](#))

- Overall, 45% of lowland holdings had land within one of the 22 listed voluntary measures in March 2013. Uptake increased with farm size and was significantly lower on those predominantly grassland farms now within scope for CFE. There was a strong link with the level of understanding of CFE; uptake rose from around 30% of those with limited understanding or little/no idea about CFE to 67% of those with a good understanding.
- In March 2013, there were 677 thousand hectares managed under the listed unpaid environmental measures with an additional 6,778 skylark plots and 6,781 km of fenced watercourses. Over wintered stubbles accounted for the greatest area (266 thousand hectares), followed by fertiliser free permanent pasture (232 thousand hectares).
- The adverse weather and soil conditions of 2012/13 meant that many fields remained uncultivated in early spring that would usually have been planted and the autumn establishment of measures to benefit wildlife were not undertaken. The results suggest that, as a result, the area of over-wintered stubbles and field corners recorded within the survey under unpaid environmental management were 93% and 36% higher than planned levels respectively.
- Of the 55% of lowland holdings that had not implemented any of the listed voluntary measures, half gave their main reason as "already doing enough for the environment" and a further quarter as "none of the measures were appropriate". Of those not implementing the voluntary measures, 87% indicated that they did not intend to do so.

Background

The Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE) is an industry-led partnership to improve the environmental condition of agricultural habitats and landscapes throughout lowland England. The aim is for good environmental management to be a core principle of farm businesses, empowering farmers and land managers to understand and address local environmental priorities. CFE provides coherent and consistent advice to farmers by coordinating with other industry initiatives (Greenhouse Gas Action Plan; Tried & Tested nutrient management; pesticides Voluntary Initiative). More specifically, CFE promotes the uptake of specific agri-environment scheme options and similar unpaid, voluntary land management. This survey has collected information about the areas under unpaid voluntary land measures as well as farmers attitudes to and awareness of the Campaign and wider environment. Uptake of agri-environment options will be measured directly from Natural England scheme records.

Survey results

Between 2009 and 2012, CFE activity was specifically focussed towards arable land¹. During this period the monitoring survey covered all farms outside the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDA) with at least 10 hectares of arable crops (including temporary grassland). In 2013 the scope of the Campaign widened to include all of lowland England and the coverage of this survey has therefore widened to include all farms outside the SDA with at least 10 hectares of crops and/or grass. In addition, a simplified list of voluntary measures has been introduced. For these reasons, the results presented here are not always directly comparable to previous surveys although comparable results have been presented where possible. Further details about the changes to the survey population can be found on page 10. Further details about the list of voluntary management measures can be found at www.cfeonline.org.uk.

1. Agri-environment scheme participation

Table 1: Are you currently in an agri-environment scheme?

	2011 Survey (a)		2012 Survey (a)		2013 Comparable farms (a)		2013 All lowland farms (b)	
	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI
Not in agri-environment scheme	29	±2	26	±2	31	±3	41	±3
Entry Level Stewardship (ELS)	61	±2	63	±2	61	±3	50	±3
Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS)	4	±1	5	±1	3	±1	3	±1
Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)	9	±1	14	±1	13	±2	12	±2
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) scheme or Countryside Stewardship (CS) Scheme	11	±1	11	±1	7	±1	7	±1

Based on 3 696 responses in 2011, 3 824 in 2012 and 2 143 in 2013.

(a) Farms outside the SDA with at least 10 hectares of arable crops (including temporary grass).

(b) Farms outside the SDA with at least 10 hectares of crops and grass.

¹ The Campaign's goal was to retain and exceed the environmental benefits of land previously required to be set aside under the Single Payment Scheme.

Agri-environment scheme participation provides important context when analysing the wider results from this survey. The participation rates also allow an assessment of the comparability of an important characteristic of the sample with previous CFE surveys.

In February 2013, around 60% of lowland farms had an agri-environment scheme agreement. For comparable farms, there were similar levels of agri-environment scheme participation in 2013 to the 2012 survey. The reduction for those in Environmentally Sensitive Area or Countryside Stewardship schemes is to be expected given that these schemes have been closed to new entrants since 2004 and the final agreements will end in 2014.

2. Attitudes towards the environment

Table 2: How important do you feel it is to consider the issues below when taking decisions about your land, crops and livestock?

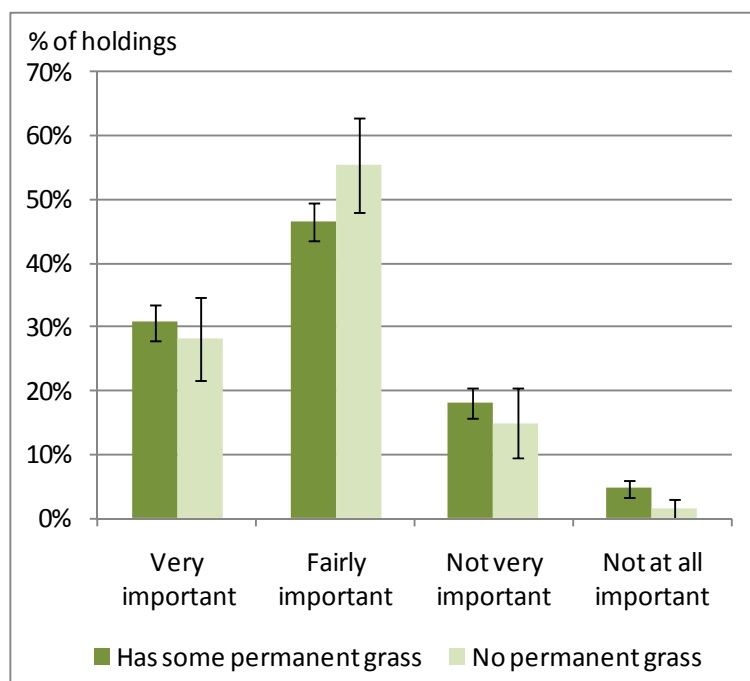
	Very important		Fairly important		Not very important		Not at all important	
	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI
Efficient use of inputs	82	±2	15	±2	2	±1	1	±1
Protecting soil and water	78	±2	21	±2	0	±0	0	±0
Protecting / benefiting farm wildlife	61	±3	36	±3	3	±1	1	±0
Reducing greenhouse gas emissions	30	±3	48	±3	18	±2	4	±1

Based on responses from 2 137 to 2 140 holdings.

Of the four options given, farmers placed greatest importance on the 'efficient use of inputs' and 'protecting soil and water' when making decisions about their land, crops and livestock; around 80% of farmers considered these to be very important. Although the relative importance given to 'protecting or benefiting farm wildlife' was lower, 97% of lowland farmers considered this to be at least fairly important, similar to 'efficient use of inputs' and 'protecting soil and water'.

Around a quarter of lowland farmers considered that 'reducing greenhouse gas emissions' was not very or not at all important when making decisions about their farm. There were no significant differences between farm types, size or agri-environment scheme participation, although farms with permanent grass were more likely to fall into this group (23% of lowland holdings) compared to those without permanent grass (16%).

Figure 1: Importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions



There were no significant differences between farm types, size or agri-environment scheme participation, although farms with permanent grass were more likely to fall into this group (23% of lowland holdings) compared to those without permanent grass (16%).

3. Attitudes to and awareness of the Campaign for the Farmed Environment

Table 3: How well do you feel that you understand the Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE)?

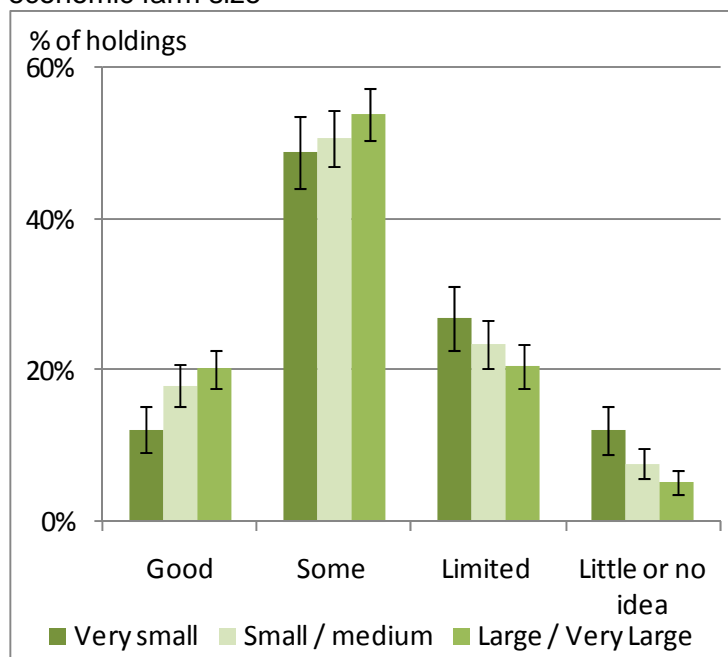
	2011 Survey (a)		2012 Survey (a)		2013 Comparable farms (a)		2013 All lowland farms (b)	
	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI
I have a good understanding	23	±1	23	±1	19	±1	15	±2
I have some understanding	42	±2	46	±1	56	±3	50	±2
I have limited understanding	25	±2	20	±2	20	±3	25	±3
I have little or no idea	10	±1	10	±1	5	±2	10	±2

(a) Farms outside the SDA with at least 10 hectares of arable crops (including temporary grass).

(b) Farms outside the SDA with at least 10 hectares of crops and grass. In 2011 and 2012 the question asked was "How well informed do you feel about the Campaign and its aims?"

Based on 3 696 responses in 2011, 3 824 in 2012 and 2 145 in 2013.

Figure 2: Level of understanding about CFE by economic farm size



In 2013, 66% of lowland farmers had at least some understanding of CFE. Levels of understanding increased with farm size and were greatest on cereal farms (85% having at least some understanding) and lowest on grazing livestock farms (55% having at least some understanding). Between 2009 and 2012, CFE was targeted towards arable areas meaning that these farms would have been exposed to a higher level of engagement and information provision.

Table 4: Have you had any information about CFE from any of these sources?

	2011 Survey (a)		2012 Survey (a)		2013 Comparable farms (a)		2013 All lowland farms (b)	
	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI
Farming press	55	±2	66	±2	76	±3	67	±3
CFE leaflet	46	±2	55	±2	59	±3	53	±3
CFE coordinator or farm advisor / agronomist (c)	20	±1	22	±1	26	±3	23	±3
CFE event	9	±1	11	±1	18	±2	16	±2
CFE website	8	±1	13	±1	15	±2	15	±2
Social media e.g. Twitter (d)	-		-		7	±2	9	±2
Other	3	±1	4	±1	1	±1	1	±1
None / not answered	21	±1	9	±1	8	±2	15	±2

(a) Farms outside the SDA with at least 10 hectares of arable crops (including temporary grass).

(b) Farms outside the SDA with at least 10 hectares of crops and grass.

(c) Collected as "Advisor/agronomist" only in 2011 and 2012.

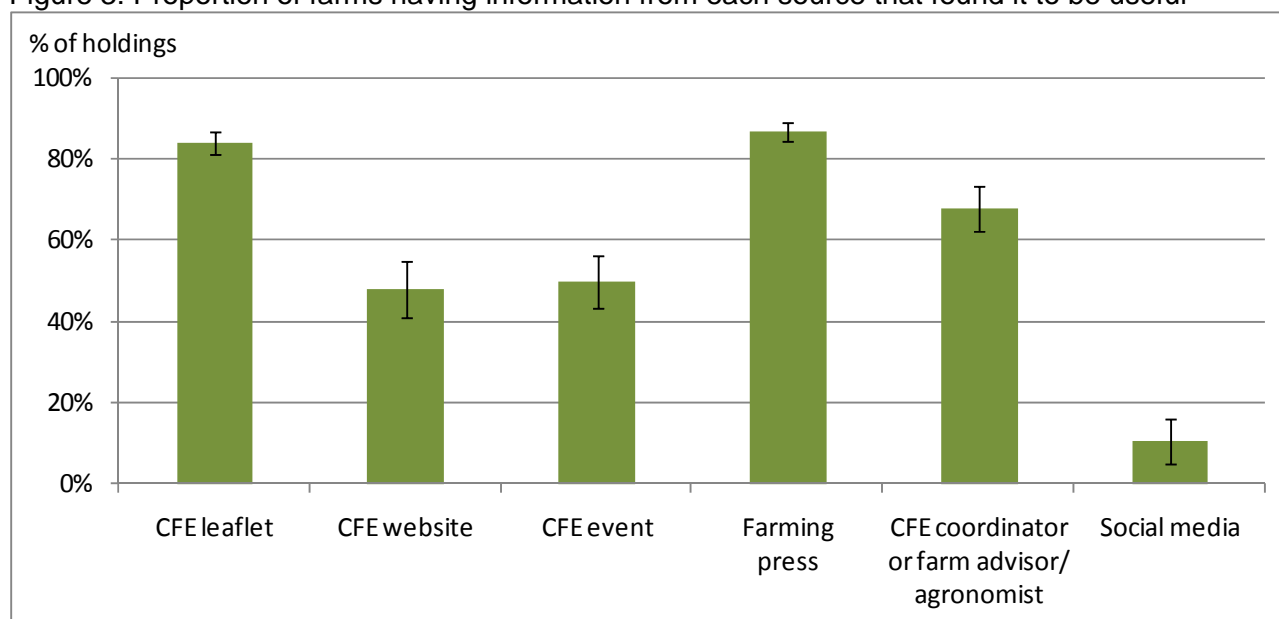
(d) Not collected in 2011 or 2012.

Based on 3 696 responses in 2011, 3 824 in 2012 and 2 152 in 2013.

As in previous years, the farming press was the most common source of information about CFE in 2013 (67% of lowland holdings), followed by CFE leaflets (53%). More than 80% of those having information from these two sources found it to be useful (Figure 3).

Around 15% of lowland holdings had information from the CFE website or a CFE event; half found the information to be useful. Of the 9% of farms receiving information via Social media (such as Twitter) just 10% found the information to be useful.

Figure 3: Proportion of farms having information from each source that found it to be useful



4. Unpaid environmental land management

Table 5: Do you have any land managed for the environment within any of the listed measures for which you do not receive payment from a formal agri-environment scheme?

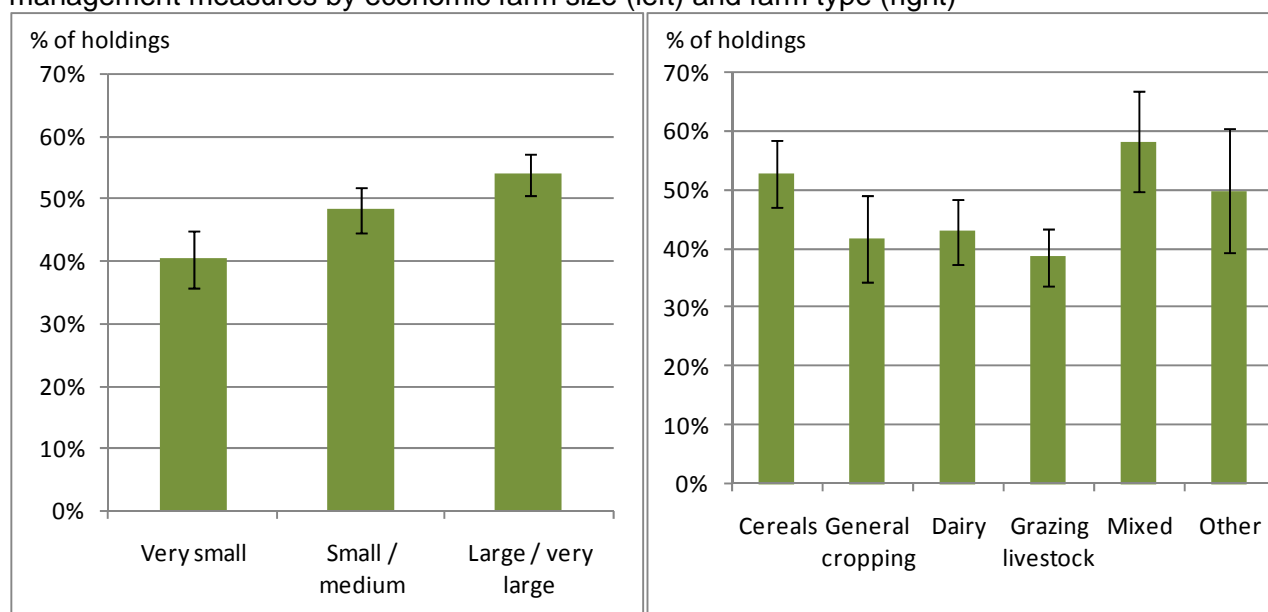
	% of holdings	95% CI
Yes	45	±3
No	55	±3

Based on responses from 2 152 holdings.

Due to changes to the list of measures and management guidelines, this result is not comparable to previous years.

Overall, 45% of lowland holdings had land within one of the 22 listed voluntary measures in March 2013. Uptake increased with farm size (Figure 4) and was significantly lower on those predominantly grassland farms now within scope for CFE. As might be expected there was also a strong link with the level of understanding of CFE; around 30% of those with limited understanding or little/no idea recorded land within at least one of the unpaid measures compared to 48% of those with some understanding and 67% of those with a good understanding.

Figure 4: Proportion of farms undertaking at least one of the listed unpaid environmental management measures by economic farm size (left) and farm type (right)



Care should be taken in the interpretation of the areas under each measure. The wet conditions at harvest in 2012 and throughout the autumn drilling period have meant that limited field work took place over the winter period. The extended period of adverse conditions (with both above average precipitation and below average spring temperatures) has meant that in many places soils have remained saturated and seedbed preparation impossible. As a result, many fields remained uncultivated in early spring that would usually have been planted and the autumn establishment of measures to benefit wildlife could not always be undertaken.

Fertiliser free permanent pasture was the most commonly occurring unpaid measure (on 20% of lowland farms) followed by over wintered stubbles (15% of lowland farms), field corners, fenced watercourses (both on 13% of lowland farms) and grass buffer strips next to watercourses or ponds (12% of lowland farms). All other measures were found on fewer than 5% of lowland farms.

This low incidence has contributed to greater levels of uncertainty for the individual estimates as indicated by the 95% confidence intervals shown within Table 6.

Table 6: Areas of land under unpaid environmental management in current farming year (2012/13)

	Measure	Area (Hectares) unless stated	95% CI	No. of responses
VM1	Grass buffer strips next to a watercourse or pond	17,197	$\pm 4,039$	330
VM2	In-field grass strips to avoid erosion	3,752	$\pm 1,463$	92
VM3	Management of maize fields to avoid erosion	20,799	$\pm 6,399$	63
VM4	Fenced watercourses	6,781 km	$\pm 1,404$	291
VM5	Winter cover crops	22,543	$\pm 8,584$	78
VM6	Wildflower mix (to add or enhance wildflowers in field corners or buffer strips)	2,401	$\pm 1,059$	92
VM7	Pollen & nectar mix (to provide food for nectar feeding insects)	2,222	$\pm 1,080$	70
VM8	Legume and herb rich temp grass	2,394	$\pm 1,504$	19
VM9	Ryegrass seed for birds	3,367	$\pm 2,385$	15
VM10	Wild bird seed mix and game strips	8,097	$\pm 2,517$	189
VM11	Skylark plots	6,778 plots	$\pm 2,811$	45
VM12	Lapwing plots	1,130	± 740	19
VM13	Unsprayed and / or unfertilised cereal headlands	6,778	$\pm 4,738$	52
VM14	Cultivated margins	740	± 440	20
VM15	Over-wintered stubbles	265,697	$\pm 41,317$	417
VM16	Supplementary winter feeding for wild farmland birds	5,368	$\pm 3,745$	64
VM17	Field corners	13,371	$\pm 2,307$	378
VM18	Beetle banks	1,185	$\pm 1,255$	28
VM19	Fertiliser-free permanent pasture	231,673	$\pm 40,131$	427
VM20	Arable land reverted to grass	18,475	$\pm 8,383$	105
VM21	Selective use of spring herbicides	34,474	$\pm 13,343$	42
VM22	Brassica fodder crops	15,045	$\pm 5,677$	55
	Total (excluding skylark plots and fenced watercourses)	676,705	$\pm 61,578$	1,084
<p>Note: Changes to the list of measures, management guidelines and farm coverage mean that these results are not necessarily comparable with previous years.</p>				

In March 2013, there were 677 thousand hectares managed under the listed unpaid environmental measures with an additional 6,778 skylark plots and 6,781 km of fenced watercourses. Over-wintered stubbles accounted for the greatest area (266 thousand hectares), followed by fertiliser free permanent pasture (232 thousand hectares).

It was recognised that the weather and soil conditions during 2012/13 may have resulted in more over-wintered stubbles and field corners on farms than originally planned. For these two measures, farmers were also asked about the areas that they would have had under normal conditions. The results suggest that in March 2013 the area of over-wintered stubbles was 93% (+/- 25%) higher than planned under normal conditions and the area of field corners 36% (+/- 18%) higher.

A limited number of measures are similar to those within the Campaign between 2009 and 2012, albeit now having less prescriptive requirements. The quantities of these measures are shown in Table 7. With the exception of over-wintered stubbles and selective use of spring herbicides, areas have tended to fall between 2012 and 2013, largely affected by the weather conditions, although the reductions for grass buffer strips and reverted arable areas are not statistically significant.

Table 7: Areas under measures similar to previous years

	2011 Survey (a)		2012 Survey (a)		2013 Comparable farms (a)		2013 All lowland farms (b)	
	Hectares	95% CI	Hectares	95% CI	Hectares	95% CI	Hectares	95% CI
Grass buffer strips next to a watercourse or pond (c)	13,678	±1,963	18,226	±2,277	14,502	±3,766	17,197	±4,039
Reverted arable areas	19,935	±4,232	13,417	±2,272	10,526	±4,942	18,475	±8,383
Skylark plots [Number of plots]	7,152	±1,820	10,839	±1,997	5,420	±2,277	6,778	±2,811
Wild bird seed mix and game strips	16,805	±1,600	20,530	±2,057	7,780	±2,493	8,097	±2,517
Pollen and nectar mix	1,561	±663	2,579	±610	1,649	±724	2,222	±1,080
Over wintered stubbles	103,763	±10,003	105,208	±11,841	258,017	±40,650	265,697	±41,317
Cultivated margins	1,579	±441	2,242	±626	637	±424	740	±440
Selective use of spring herbicides	13,746	±5,229	24,002	±8,388	24,867	±10,887	34,474	±13,343

(a) Farms outside the SDA with at least 10 hectares of arable crops (including temporary grass).

(b) Farms outside the SDA with at least 10 hectares of crops and grass.

(c) Collected as grass buffers alongside temporary and permanent watercourses in 2011 and 2012. See Table 6 for numbers of response in 2013.

There were 55% of lowland holdings that did not have any unpaid land under the listed measures (Table 5). Half of these farms gave their main reason for non-uptake as “I am already doing enough for the environment”; a further quarter that “None of the measures are appropriate for my farm” (Table 8). There were significant differences in response between those in and outside agri-environment schemes (Figure 5). Of those without land in the listed measures, 87% did not intend to do so in the future (Table 9).

Table 8: If you do not have any land within any of the listed unpaid measures what is your main reason?

	% of holdings	95% CI
I consider I am already doing enough for the environment	49	±4
None of the measures are appropriate for farm	26	±4
It is not clear what I am expected to do	13	±3
Any actions will have a negative impact on profitability	5	±2
I am not willing to take action on a voluntary basis	3	±1
Other	4	±1

Based on responses from 944 holdings.

Changes to the list of measures, management guidelines and farm coverage mean that these results are not comparable with previous years.

Figure 5: Reasons for not currently having land within unpaid environmental management by agri-environment scheme participation

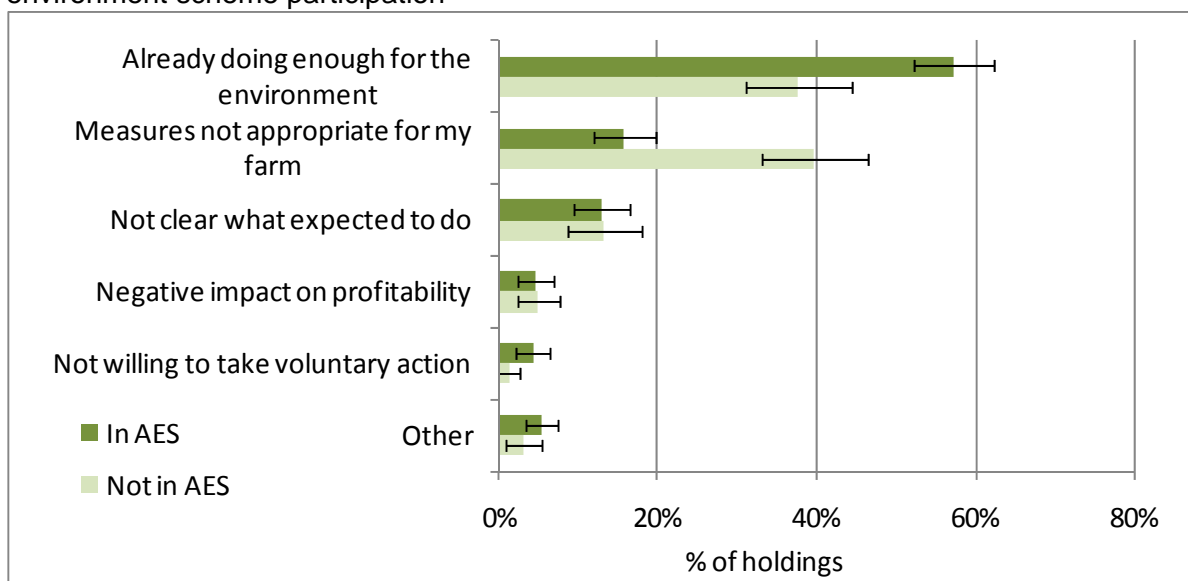


Table 9: If you do not have any land within any of the listed unpaid measures do you intend to do so?

	% of holdings	95% CI
Yes	13	±2
No	87	±2

Based on responses from 1 007 holdings.

Changes to the list of measures, management guidelines and farm coverage mean that these results are not comparable with previous years.

Table 10: How important do you feel it is to consider the issues below when implementing the listed unpaid environmental measures?

	Not at all important		Not very important		Fairly important		Very important	
	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI	% of holdings	95% CI
Responding to conditions on the land	1	±1	3	±1	23	±3	74	±4
Fitting existing farming practice (e.g. rotation)	4	±2	6	±2	42	±4	48	±4
Following environmental management guidelines	3	±1	7	±2	53	±4	37	±4
Focussing primarily on environmental outcomes	3	±1	14	±3	62	±4	21	±4

Based on responses from at least 1 081 holdings.

Of the four options offered, farmers placed greatest importance on “responding to conditions on the land” when implementing the unpaid environmental measures, perhaps reflecting the adverse conditions of 2012/13. Least importance was placed on “focussing primarily on environmental outcomes” with 17% of farmers considering this to be not very or not at all important.

Survey details

Survey methodology

The results provided in this release are based on the questions asked in the Campaign for the Farmed Environment survey of land managed voluntarily in the 2012/13 farming year, sent to a representative sample of holdings across English regions and farm sizes. The results provide a reliable estimate for all farms now within scope of the Campaign; approximately 71,600 farms with a total of nearly 7.2 million hectares of arable crops and grassland. The survey was sent to approximately 5,500 holdings with at least 10 hectares of arable crops and/or grassland (defined as land under crops, uncropped arable land, temporary or permanent grassland). Holdings in an area classed as a SDA (Severely Disadvantaged Area) were excluded from the survey. The survey was voluntary and had a response rate of 39%. Many thanks to all of the farmers who completed a survey form especially when agricultural conditions were so unfavourable.

A breakdown of the number of holdings within the population and the sample are shown below.

Farm type	Number of eligible holdings in England	Number of holdings sampled	Response rate %
Cereals	16 840	1 149	47
Other crops	13 795	1 131	39
Pigs & poultry	1 717	186	32
Dairy	7 002	958	38
Grazing livestock (less favoured areas)	3 883	232	38
Grazing livestock (lowland)	21 787	1 273	36
Mixed	6 593	571	35
All farms	71 617	5 500	39

Between 2009 and 2012, CFE activity was specifically focussed towards arable land². During this period the monitoring survey covered a smaller subset of farms; all farms outside the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDA) with at least 10 hectares of arable crops (including temporary grassland). Wherever possible, results for 2013 have been presented on a comparable basis with earlier years. The table below provides a comparison of the numbers of farms in the full 2013 population and the population comparable with previous years. Farms newly drawn into the population in 2013 are predominantly livestock in character.

Farm type	Number of holdings in comparable population (a)	Number of extra holdings now in full population	Number of holdings in full 2013 population (b)
Cereals	16 647	193	16 840
Other crops	7 712	6 083	13 795
Pigs & poultry	1 073	644	1 717
Dairy	5 181	1 821	7 002
Grazing livestock (less favoured areas)	636	3 247	3 883
Grazing livestock (lowland)	5 885	15 902	21 787
Mixed	5 485	1 108	6 593
All farms	42 619	28 998	71 617

Data analysis

Results have been analysed using a standard methodology for stratified random surveys to produce national estimates. With this method, all of the data are weighted according to the inverse sampling fraction.

Accuracy and reliability of the results

We show 95% confidence intervals against the results. These show the range of values that may apply to the figures. They mean that we are 95% confident that this range contains the true value. They are calculated as the standard errors (se) multiplied by 1.96 to give the 95% confidence interval (95% CI). The standard errors only give an indication of the sampling error. They do not reflect any other sources of survey errors, such as non-response bias. We have also shown error bars on the figures in this notice. These error bars represent the 95% confidence intervals (as defined above).

Comparability with previous surveys

The scope of the Campaign widened in 2013 from arable land to include all of lowland England. In addition, a simplified list of voluntary measures has been introduced. For these reasons, the results presented here are not always directly comparable to previous surveys although every effort has been made to produce comparable results where possible.

Definitions

Where reference is made to the *type of farm*, this refers to the 'robust type', which is a standardised farm classification system. *Farm sizes* are based on the estimated labour requirements for the holding, rather than its land area. The farm size bands used within the detailed results tables which accompany this publication are shown in the table below. Standard Labour Requirement (SLR) is defined as the theoretical number of workers required each year to run a holding, based on its cropping and livestock activities.

² The Campaign's goal was to retain and exceed the environmental benefits of land previously required to be set aside under the Single Payment Scheme.

Farm size	Definition
Very small	Less than 2 SLR
Small / medium	2 to less than 3 SLR
Large / very large	At least 3 SLR

The *Severely Disadvantaged Areas* (SDA) are more environmentally challenging areas. They are largely upland in character and together with Disadvantaged Areas (DA) form the Less Favoured Areas (LFA) classification established³ in 1975 as a means to provide support to mountainous and hill farming areas.

Availability of results

Other Defra statistical notices can be viewed on the Defra website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/about/statistics>.

³ Council Directive 75/268/EEC.