



Results Based Agri-environment Payment Scheme (RBAPS)

Arable Pilot: Norfolk/Suffolk



The objective of the arable element of the RBAPS project is to test the effectiveness of results based payments to improve the environmental performance of two existing agri-environment scheme options. This is the first time arable farming systems have been subjected to an RBAPS approach so this is a very exciting opportunity.

The pilot area is based around the predominately arable area of south Norfolk and north Suffolk and is a national hotspot for farmland birds including corn bunting, grey partridge and tree sparrow. At least seven of the twelve target pollinator species are also found.

RBAPS Options

- Winter bird food (for farmland birds and pollinators): an annual mix of crops sown to provide seed in autumn and winter and an additional benefit of flowers during the summer.
- Pollen and nectar (for pollinators): a mix of legume and perennial flowering plants sown to provide a nectar source from early summer to mid autumn.



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The aim of the pilot is to produce evidence on the following:

- Environmental performance of RBAPS approach for the selected options
- Accuracy of farmer assessment in determining their own performance level
- Cost effectiveness
- Attitudes to RBAPS/PBR.

Farmers participating in the pilot will establish plots of winter bird food and/or pollen and nectar. These will be assessed by the farmer and Natural England using a standard methodology. Assessments will also be completed on a number of 'control' farms elsewhere within the pilot area for comparison.

Final payment rates for the RBAPS/PBR plots will depend on the results achieved, using a tiered approach based on how well the sown components have established and grown. Only those components that are known to deliver the necessary seed or nectar resources will be counted towards the option delivery.

There is strong evidence that these two options are key to the survival of farmland birds and pollinators. When they are established and managed well, they provide vital food resources at key times of year which ultimately affects the species ability to successfully breed and ensure that populations grow.

This three year project is delivered in partnership by Natural England and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (on behalf of the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership), and is co-financed by the European Union. It is one of three EU funded projects testing the RBAPS approach and the results will be used to inform future agri-environment scheme design.

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