



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
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Countryside Stewardship:

New CS Offers for Wildlife Upland Offer

Applicant guidance

Option and supplement descriptions and prescriptions

Applies to all New CS Offers for Wildlife: Upland Offer agreements commencing on 1 January 2019

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List of revisions since first publication

Section	Page	Revision	Revision date
Introduction	3	1st bullet, corrected to confirm that land use for the year of application must be recorded as permanent grassland.	March 2018
Introduction	3	5th bullet, corrected to confirm that applicants can select as many options as they wish, but there is no 3% limit.	May 2018
Option UP2	13	Addition of a link to the agreed stocking calendar for this option.	July 2018
Supplement SP6	27	Clarification that the requirement relating to a stocking calendar refers to Higher Tier agreements only.	July 2018

1 Introduction

Basic Requirements of the Upland Offer: (applicants choose from a total of 8 options / supplements)

- The applicant's land must be registered on the Rural Payments service to the Single Business Identifier (SBI) submitting the application. Land use for the year of application must be recorded as permanent grassland.
- All land in the application must be within the SDA (applicants who wish to include land outside the SDA will need to apply for a mainstream Mid Tier agreement).
- There are 4 options and 4 supplements to choose from. As a minimum, farmers can pick 1 base option and two supplements or two base options and one supplement or three base options.
- The supplements can only be used with the relevant base option. – see table below
- The minimum number of options/supplements in the 5 year agreement is therefore 3. Applicants can select as many options as they wish.

Base Options (select at least 1 base option and two supplements or two base options and one supplement or three base options)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
GS5	Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs	£16
UP1	Enclosed rough grazing	£39
UP2	Management of rough grazing for birds	£88
BE3	Management of hedgerows	£8/100m

Supplements

Option	Option title	Payment rate	Can be used with these base options....
GS15	Haymaking supplement	£85	GS5
GS16	Rush control supplement	£73	GS5; UP2
GS17	Lenient grazing supplement	£44	GS5
SP6	Cattle grazing supplement	£45	GS5

2 Option Guidance and Prescription sets

Introduction to the Upland Offer

Option Guidance:

Countryside Stewardship offers a range of options for managing your land. This document describes those available through the Upland Offer. These can be applied for in different combinations to create an agreement.

Each description is broken down into sections covering:

- Payment rate
- Where it can and cannot be used (eligibility)
- How it will benefit the environment
- Requirements, including keeping records
- Advice and suggestions for how to carry it out

Prescriptions:

All eligibility Rules and Prescriptions are mandatory.

Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs (GS5)

£16 per ha

Where to use this option

Whole parcel (except when located with GS1)
Only on:

- permanent grassland within severely disadvantaged areas (SDAs) and below the moorland line

Where this option cannot be used

Part parcel (except when located with GS1)

This option can only be used if one of the following criteria are met:

- If the grassland qualifies as semi-improved (see Permanent grassland options Eligibility Assessment form - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-permanent-grassland-with-very-low-input-options>)
- to help the sustainable management and buffering of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or priority habitats
- to maintain grassland to conserve species of national or regional importance, or protect historic or archaeological features
- when in-field scrub cover is less than 1% and the option will be used in target areas for ground-nesting wading birds
- on parcels adjacent to a permanent watercourse

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, dykes, drains, rivers, streams that are less than 4 metres wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- temporary water
- permanent water up to 0.1ha
- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways, as long as the requirements below can be met
- bracken
- areas of scree, rock outcrops and boulders - each area can cover up to 0.1ha
- grazed woodland and scrub that allows livestock access and has grass underneath

How this option will benefit the environment

If successful there will be:

- more flowering grass and wildflower species
- varied structures offering nectar and shelter for invertebrates
- increased numbers of ground-nesting and feeding birds, particularly waders such as lapwing and snipe

REQUIREMENTS

- graze or cut for hay or silage
- remove any cuttings
- maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20% is less than 7cm and 20% is more than 7cm. No height variation needs to be maintained when the field is closed up for a cut of hay or silage.
- maintain soil above pH 5.4, by liming if necessary, unless the target is to maintain acid grassland. Do not apply paper waste or other industrial by-products.
- when a parcel is cut for hay, haylage or silage, or grazed, you may apply either up to 12 tonnes/ha of farmyard manure, or inorganic fertiliser at a maximum rate of:
 - 9 kg/ha nitrogen
 - 23 kg/ha phosphate
 - 83 kg/ha potash
- applications of fertiliser must not be increased if the current rate is less than this
- graze or cut areas of dense rush growth so that they cover 20% or less of the parcel area and are less than 20 cm high by 30 September
- keep areas of well-established scrub in separate small patches, lines and occasional individual bushes across the site where scrub cover is less than 5%
- maintain between 5% and 10% scrub coverage in parcel areas where cover is equal to or above 5%
- control areas where bracken is present so that the area does not increase
- maintain areas covered by dwarf shrub
- keep historic and archaeological features free of scrub and bracken

Do not:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-native species
- cut more than one-half of scrub in any one year, except on historic and archaeological features
- harrow or roll on historic or archaeological features
- use supplementary feed except for mineral blocks
- allow bare ground in the form of small, well-distributed areas to cover more than 5% of the option area
- allow bare ground to develop on historic or archaeological features
- allow more than 5 square metres of localised patches of bare ground around rabbit warrens by year 2
- carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without having Natural England's written permission before work starts

Restrictions that apply on certain dates

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
		15 March to 30 June - do not apply fertiliser or manure									
		15 March to 30 June - do not cut for hay or silage									
		15 March to 30 June - do not operate machinery or allow activities that disturb breeding birds; do not cut bracken									
		15 March to 31 July - do not cut rush									

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- a standard soil analysis to be completed in the final agreement year and results submitted with the final claim

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic evidence:

- photographs of the management undertaken

Applicants will have to send the following with their application;

- the grassland eligibility assessment form

By the submission of the first claim, applicants will need to submit a laboratory soil analysis including at least pH and phosphate (P)

ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO CARRY OUT THIS OPTION

*The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does **not** form part of the requirements for this option.*

Choose the right location

Grassland which contains rare plant species is clearly valuable. It can still be valuable, and suited to this option, if it has a range of commoner herbs or dwarf shrubs such as red clover, yarrow, self heal, heather and bilberry.

Low input grassland is most valuable when located alongside other important landscape features such as scrub and wetlands in a mosaic approach.

Grassland is also the best protection for historic and archaeological features, as long as plants with powerful roots like scrub or bracken do not take hold, and bare ground does not develop.

Managing the sward

The land will be more valuable for insects, birds and other animals if it has a varied, patchy structure all year round. It is much easier to achieve this structure by grazing with cattle than by grazing with sheep only, which risks non-compliance with the Requirements.

Wet areas can be important sources of insect food and should be maintained where possible. Check for breeding birds before operating machinery, even outside the closed period.

Further information

See this illustrated guide:

Farming the historic landscape: caring for archaeological sites in grassland -

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/local-heritage/helm-redirect>

GS5		Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs
Aim	To provide a varied sward structure and more flowering grasses and wildflowers, in order to increase the habitat and food available for invertebrates, birds and other animals.	
Eligibility Rules		
E40	The grassland must qualify as at least, semi-improved as defined in Key 2a in the BEHTA manual, unless it is used; as part of a feature-specific option bundle; or for facilitating the sustainable management and buffering of SSSI's or Priority Habitats; or for the maintenance of grassland to conserve species of national or regional importance or to protect historic or archaeological features; or where in-field scrub cover is less than 1% and the option will be used in target areas for ground-nesting wading birds; or on parcels adjacent to a permanent watercourse.	
E1041	For Mid Tier only, you must submit a laboratory soil analysis showing ph and P levels only with the first claim.	
E92	Only available on permanent grassland within the SDAs and below the Moorland Line.	
Prescriptions		
P10	Only use pesticides, including herbicides, to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles or bracken.	
P30	Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.	
P31	Do not harrow or roll on historic or archaeological features.	
P59	Only in years when the parcel is cut for hay/ haylage/ silage/ grazed you may apply EITHER up to 12 tonnes/ha of farmyard manure OR fertiliser at a maximum rate of 9 kg/ha nitrogen, 23 kg/ha phosphate, 83 kg/ha potash. Do not increase your application rate if your current rate is less than this. Do not apply between 15 March and 30th June.	

GS5	Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs
Prescriptions	
P133	Manage by grazing and/or cutting for hay or silage. Do not cut between 15 March and 30 June. Remove any cuttings.
P134	Maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20 per cent of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm. You do not need to maintain this height variation when the field is closed up for a cut of hay or silage.
P136	Maintain soil pH above 5.4 by liming if necessary unless the target is to maintain acid grassland. Do not apply paper waste or any other industrial by-products.
P137	Control dense rush so that stands do not cover more than 20% of the parcel area. Manage by grazing and/or cutting every year to achieve a sward height of less than 20 cm by 30 September. Do not cut between 15 March and 31 July.
P138	Retain the full extent of well-established scrub where cover is below 5%. Where the cover is 5% or greater maintain scrub over at least 5% and a maximum of 10% of the parcel area. It must be retained as discrete small patches, lines and occasional individual bushes scattered across the site. Do not cut more than half of the scrub in any one year except on historic and archaeological features.
P184	Do not supplementary feed except for the provision of mineral blocks (non-energy based).
P288	Prevent the spread of bracken. Do not cut bracken between 15th March and 15th July.
P289	Maintain the cover of areas of dwarf shrub.
P299	Prevent additional scrub encroachment on historic or archaeological features.
P300	Prevent the spread of bracken on historic and archaeological features.
P441	Only carry out mechanical operations or allow other activities that may cause disturbance to breeding birds from 1 January to 14 March and from 1 July to 31 December.
P456	Cover of small, well distributed areas of bare ground must not exceed 5%, and must not be located on historic or archaeological features. By year 2, localised patches of bare ground around rabbit warrens must not exceed 5m x 5m.
P673	Agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage, in writing with Natural England before undertaking any works.

Enclosed rough grazing (UP1)

£39 per ha

Where to use this option

Whole parcel

Only on land above the moorland line within severely disadvantaged areas (SDA), on parcels less than 25ha in area - parcels must be enclosed.

When this option is targeted at ground nesting birds, parcels must have scrub cover of less than 1% of the area.

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they're part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- bracken
- ditches
- dykes
- scrub including gorse bushes and briar scree, rock, outcrops or boulders
- streams less than 4m wide and that take up less than 1 ha of the parcel

How this option will benefit the environment

It maintains and enhances areas of enclosed rough grazing land within an upland farming system.

This land contains extensive areas of moorland vegetation but it does not meet moorland priority habitat status over the majority of the parcel.

If successful there will be:

- benefits to moorland birds such as short eared owl and ring ouzel
- improved breeding and feeding habitat for birds such as golden plover and redshank
- a mosaic of upland rough grazing habitats with diverse sward heights and extended areas of wet, marshy grassland vegetation
- any historic environment features (such as old walls) should be visible, with low dwarf shrub or grassy cover and no bare soil or sodden, trampled land (poaching)

REQUIREMENTS

- contain bracken and common gorse so that they do not spread to new areas of land
- control common gorse by cutting or burning in blocks
- maintain dwarf shrub coverage
- maintain scrub in discrete small patches, lines and occasional individual bushes scattered across the site:
 - where scrub cover is less than 5%, keep the full extent of well-established scrub
 - where scrub cover is more than 5%, keep scrub cover between 5% and 10% of the parcel area
- maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20% is less than 7cm high and 20% is more than 7cm high - no height variation needs to be maintained when the field is closed up for a cut of hay or silage
- only use machinery or allow other activities that might disturb breeding birds between 16 July and 14 March
- control dense rush by grazing or cutting every year so that stands do not cover more than 20% of the parcel area and sward heights are less than 20cm high by 30 September

Do not:

- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles and bracken
- apply any lime, fertilisers or manures
- supplementary feed except for mineral blocks
- cut rushes between 15 March and 31 July
- cut more than half of the scrub in any year, except on historic and archaeological features
- use herbicides on ferns other than bracken
- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- carry out any drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, unless Natural England has given written permission before work takes place

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- timings of herbicide or pesticide applications along with the product used and application rate
- burning and cutting dates and locations
- a monthly record of stock numbers grazing each parcel in this option
- any written agreements from Natural England for drainage works

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- a photographic record of the extent of dwarf shrub, bracken and gorse on the site

ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO CARRY OUT THIS OPTION

*The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does **not** form part of the requirements for this option.*

Pick the right location

Suitable land includes:

- uncultivated grassland
- unimproved pasture
- allotments that have been historically set aside for the grazing of animals
- steeper or less accessible parcels not routinely used for producing forage
- seasonally wet parcels
- parcels with naturally occurring flushes or rock outcrops

These parcels tend to have unimproved soils that support semi-natural vegetation, priority habitats or [species listed under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act]

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/scientific-resources/biodiversity/uk-biodiversity/uk-species/checklists/NHMSYS0020515439/index.html>

Avoid damaging historic and archaeological features as these are particularly vulnerable in historically uncultivated parcels.

UP1	Enclosed rough grazing
Aim	To maintain and enhance areas of enclosed rough grazing land that contain extensive areas of moorland vegetation but do not meet moorland priority habitat status over the majority of the parcel.
Eligibility Rules	
E131	Land must be designated as Severely Disadvantaged Area, within the Moorland Line, and in parcels under 25ha.
E132	Where the option is targeted at ground-nesting birds, scrub cover must be less than 1% of the parcel area.
Prescriptions	
P2	Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.
P3	Do not apply any lime.
P10	Only use pesticides, including herbicides, to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles or bracken.
P30	Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.
P134	Maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20 per cent of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm. You do not need to maintain this height variation when the field is closed up for a cut of hay or silage.
P137	Control dense rush so that stands do not cover more than 20% of the parcel area. Manage by grazing and/or cutting every year to achieve a sward height of less than 20 cm by 30 September. Do not cut between 15 March and 31 July.
P138	Retain the full extent of well-established scrub where cover is below 5%. Where the cover is 5% or greater maintain scrub over at least 5% and a maximum of 10% of the parcel area. It must be retained as discrete small patches, lines and occasional individual bushes scattered across the site. Do not cut more than half of the scrub in any one year except on historic and archaeological features.
P184	Do not supplementary feed except for the provision of mineral blocks (non-energy based).
P289	Maintain the cover of areas of dwarf shrub.
P441	Only carry out mechanical operations or allow other activities that may cause disturbance to breeding birds from 1 January to 14 March and from 1 July to 31 December.
P597	Take action to contain bracken and common gorse so that they do not spread to new areas of land. Herbicides must not be applied to other ferns. For common gorse, control must be by cutting or burning in blocks.
P673	Agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage, in writing with Natural England before undertaking any works.
P706	Keep a monthly record of stock numbers grazing on parcels in this option. Make the record available on request.

Management of rough grazing for birds (UP2) Mid Tier

£88 per ha

Where to use this option

In Mid Tier this option can only be used with approval from Natural England. The land must be mapped as Upland breeding bird areas for Countryside Stewardship, see MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk)

Whole or part parcel

Only on permanent grassland parcels of at least 2ha that are within a Less Favoured Area. This includes allotments, intakes, newtakes and semi-improved in-bye that already support (or have the potential to support) breeding waders.

The applicant must also meet at least one of the following conditions to use this option:

- follow a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- qualify as a low intensity farmer

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, dykes, drains, rivers, streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- temporary water
- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways, as long as the requirements can still be met
- bracken
- areas of scree, rock outcrops and boulders – each area can cover up to 0.1ha
- permanent water up to 0.1ha
- grazed woodland and scrub that allows livestock access and has grass underneath

How this option will benefit the environment

It is for restoring or maintaining upland bird populations. The option brings about water level management and provides the appropriate grassland habitat and sward structure for feeding and nesting.

If successful there will be rough grassland habitat supporting target species. Where appropriate, a water level management regime may also be in place, including scrapes and foot-drains. The water level management will also have enhanced pools or ditches for aquatic plants, invertebrates and other important species.

REQUIREMENTS

- manage the sward by grazing and/or cutting to maintain a varied sward to benefit upland waders by achieving a sward height of less than 5cm over 50% of the parcel area by 15 March
- only graze in line with the agreed stocking calendar (<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3a4379e5274a701279ada5/stocking-calendar-for-UP2.pdf>), which includes minimum and maximum stocking rates by grazing animal type by month
- manage scrub to achieve cover of between 1% and 5% of the parcel;
- manage bracken and make sure bracken litter doesn't cover more than 25% cover across any area of bracken

- manage dense rush so that it doesn't cover more than 20% of the parcel and the rush height is less than 20cm by 30 September
- manage field operations to reduce effects on breeding birds
- manage wet features to provide muddy areas for waders to feed.

Do not:

- supplementary feed except for the provision of mineral blocks (non-energy based)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- a count of breeding birds in year 5 of the agreement – send this with the final claim

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- photographs of the management undertaken

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- a map and photographs of the extent of bracken on the option area
- a map of the land drainage system
- a stocking calendar
- evidence that a recommended fertiliser management system is used or evidence to support low intensity farmer claim - this information can be provided with the application or within 18 months of the start of the agreement, as applicable

ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO CARRY OUT THIS OPTION

Pick the right location

Choose sites that:

- are open, with any surrounding hedges less than about 2m high
- experience minimal disturbance (from footpaths or public rights of way)
- have no overhead pylons or power lines
- have no in-field trees
- are not next to woodland
- have either an existing high water table or surface water attributes (flushes, ditches, foot drains), or where they could be created

Sites to avoid

Avoid sites that are:

- steep (above 14:1, or 8 degrees)
- less than 2ha and bounded by tall (over 2m) hedgerows, scrub or trees

Vegetation management

Tailor vegetation management to the target species - usually a range of vegetation heights is preferred.

Management of wet features (drains, grips, scrapes)

Provide surface wet features from 1 March to 1 June (such as scrapes, flushes, foot drains or surface standing water). At least 50% of the wet features' edges should have exposed mud at the water's edge to promote invertebrate activity and allow chicks access to feed.

Consider the need to re-profile man-made wet features annually and maintain as required.

Any mechanical operations should be scheduled for the driest period of the year (or after mid-August if breeding snipe are present).

Manage rushes so that they cover no more than 20% of the option land.

Grazing

Use quiet stock on these sites to avoid unnecessary trampling of nests and chicks.

Adequate grazing and appropriate mechanical operations after the breeding season (August to March) are vital to create the desired vegetation mosaic for the following spring.

It is important that there is adequate grazing available which is not in breeding bird options to retain flexibility to manage the breeding bird areas correctly during the breeding season.

UP2	Management of rough grazing for birds
Aim	To restore and/or maintain populations of upland birds, (normally breeding waders such as Lapwing, Snipe, Redshank, Curlew and Golden Plover but may also include Yellow wagtail, Black Grouse or other priority species by appropriate water level management and providing the grassland habitat and sward structure suitable for feeding and nesting.
Eligibility Rules	
E218	Only available on permanent grassland parcels with a minimum area of 2 ha within the LFA.
E255	This option is only available when: You are following a recommended fertiliser management system to plan your nutrient input across your farm; or You adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of your agreement. Advice (supported through RDP) will be provided to support the adoption of this system; or You qualify as a low intensity farmer.
E264	For Mid Tier, this item can only be used where approved by Natural England

UP2	Management of rough grazing for birds
Prescriptions	
P6670	<p>Manage the sward by grazing and/or cutting to maintain a varied sward to benefit upland waders by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grazing in accordance with your stocking calendar to achieve a sward height of less than 5cm over 50% of the parcel area by 15th March. Cut rank vegetation if necessary but leave 10-20% of the parcel area with tall vegetation. ■ Ensuring dense rush does not cover more than 20% of the parcel area, and manage to achieve a rush height in these areas of less than 20cm by 30th September. ■ Managing scrub by rotational cutting to achieve cover of between 1% and 5% of the parcel. ■ Ensuring the cover of bracken does not increase and bracken litter does not exceed 25% cover across each area of bracken growth. ■ Managing wet features (including gutters/scrapes / flushes / foot drains every 3/4 years in rotation to provide muddy areas for waders and wildfowl to feed. ■ Only carrying out mechanical operations or allow other activities that may cause disturbance to breeding birds between 31 July and 31 December and from 1 January to 14 March.
P10	Only use pesticides, including herbicides, to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles, or bracken.
P184	Do not supplementary feed except for the provision of mineral blocks (non-energy based).
P593	Only graze in accordance with the stocking calendar provided by Natural England which includes minimum and maximum stocking rates by grazing animal type by month.
P603	By year 5 of the agreement, at least one of the target breeding wader species Lapwing / Snipe / Redshank / Curlew, must be present between March and June inclusive, and their behaviour indicate they are breeding.
P673	Agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage, in writing with Natural England before undertaking any works.
P705	Keep a monthly record of stock numbers grazing on all parcels. The record must include the number of animals by species and the number of grazing days by each species. Make the record available on request and submit a copy with your annual claim.

Management of hedgerows (BE3)

£8 per 100m for 1 side of a hedge

Where to use this option

On boundary lines of shrubs, which are:

- composed of woody plants with less than 2m between the ground and the base of the leafy layer
- over 20m long
- less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base
- composed of at least 80% native shrubs

Where this option cannot be used

- on features that are trees for most of their length
- lengths of hedge managed under this option are not eligible for the capital item BN7 - Hedgerow gapping-up but are eligible for other capital item payments

How this option will benefit the environment

Increases the availability of blossom for invertebrates. By allowing fruit and berries to ripen it provides food for overwintering birds. It will also improve the structure and longevity of hedgerows.

If successful there will be:

- taller and wider hedges, with gaps forming less than 10% of the hedge length
- a mix of hedges of different heights and width across the farm
- production of 2 to 4 times the weight of berries when compared with hedges cut every year
- an increase in the blossom available to insect pollinators
- dense cover, which is important for successful breeding for a variety of wildlife
- an improvement in overall hedge condition to maintain them as distinctive and historic landscape features

REQUIREMENTS

- maintain a hedge at least 2m tall and 1.5m wide by year 2, except for sections gapped up, laid or coppiced during the agreement term
- cut hedgerows:
 - either no more than 1 year in 3 between 1 September and 28 February - leave at least two-thirds of hedges untrimmed each year
 - or no more than 1 year in 2 between 1 January and 28 February - leave at least one-half of hedges untrimmed each year
- gap up any length of hedge with more than 10% gaps within the first 2 years

Do not:

- remove any tree limbs, including lower limbs, or mature ivy growth from hedgerow trees
- remove any standing deadwood
- supplementary feed livestock within 2m of the centre of the hedge

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- hedgerow management records

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- photographs of each hedge entered into the option

With their application, applicants will have to send maps showing:

- existing access tracks

This can be marked on the Farm Environment Record (FER).

ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO CARRY OUT THIS OPTION

*The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does **not** form part of the requirements for this option.*

Pick the right hedge

If you do not have management control of both sides of a hedge then only enter 1 side into the option. If there is no parcel number listed under your SBI for the land on one side of the hedgerow, for example where it is a road or track verge, or the land belongs to a neighbour, that side of the hedgerow can't be entered into BE3 on your application.

Select hedges that:

- are connected to other hedges or habitats (such as woodlands and ponds)
- have other components such as hedgerow trees, bases or banks rich in flowers, or an adjacent ditch or margin

Use the option to improve the condition and longevity of hedges which are of particular historic interest, such as parish boundaries, or are especially important in the landscape.

Managing the hedges

If the correct rotor and forward speeds are used, well-maintained flails are effective for cutting 2 to 3-year-old growth of most woody species.

Fast growing species, such as ash or willow, may need heavier duty flails or more powerful cutting heads. Alternatively, use a circular saw or leave hedges uncut. There is no requirement to trim hedges at all during the agreement. Instead, leave them to grow and manage in a coppicing or laying rotation.

Cutting incrementally, rather than trimming back to the same point, allows hedges to increase in height and width by several centimetres at each cut, encouraging a dense, healthy hedgerow.

Use native shrubs species that already occur in hedgerows in the local area to gap up. A gap is a complete break in the canopy. Where a tree canopy overlaps the hedgerow canopy it is not counted as a gap.

Further information

Read more on:

- managing hedgerows in a long-term cycle - <http://hedgeline.org.uk/index.php>
- common questions on hedge cutting - <http://hedgeline.org.uk/index.php>

BE3	Management of hedgerows
Aim	To increase blossom availability for invertebrates, provide a vital source of food for over-wintering birds by allowing fruit and berries to ripen, and improve the structure and longevity of hedgerows.
Eligibility Rules	
E16	<p>You can only use this option on:</p> <p>A boundary line of shrubs (a woody plant where the distance between the ground and the base of the leafy layer is less than 2 m) which is over 20 m long and less than 5 m wide (between major woody stems at the base) and composed of at least 80% native shrubs.</p> <p>You cannot use this option on features which consist of trees over most of their length.</p>
Prescriptions	
P71	Allow hedgerows to reach and then maintain a minimum height of 2m and minimum width of 1.5 m by year 2. Sections gapped up, layed or coppiced during the term of the agreement are excluded.
P73	<p>Either:</p> <p>Cut hedgerows no more than one year in three between 1 January and 28 February or 1 September and 31 December. Leave at least two thirds of hedges untrimmed each year.</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>Cut hedgerows no more than one year in two between 1 January and 28 February. Leave at least one half of hedges untrimmed each year.</p>
P79	Do not remove any tree limbs including the lower limbs or mature ivy growth from hedgerow trees.
P80	Do not remove any standing deadwood.
P88	Do not supplementary feed within 2 m of the centre of the hedge.
P622	Gap up any length of hedge with more than 10% gaps within the first two years.

Haymaking supplement (GS15)

£85 per ha

Where to use this supplement

Whole or part-parcel

Only in combination with:

- GS5 - Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs
-

How this supplement will benefit the environment

To ensure the continuation, or reintroduction, of haymaking on fields which are, or were, cut for hay each year. It allows a crop of herb-rich hay to be grown and harvested, which will lead to wildflowers and grasses blossoming and setting seed. This will help to conserve many of the plants in the meadow and provide pollen and nectar for bees and other insects.

REQUIREMENTS

- cut and remove field-dried hay every year
- graze the aftermath sward, preferably with cattle

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- photographs of the management undertaken

ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO CARRY OUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

*The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully, but does **not** form part of the requirements for this supplement.*

Cost of haymaking

This supplement is normally available:

- to ensure the continuation, or reintroduction, of haymaking on fields which are, or were, cut for hay each year. or
- If the cost of haymaking is particularly high, for example:
 - if buying machinery or livestock would lead to additional costs for making or storing hay
 - if there are long distances between the meadows and the hay barn

GS15	Haymaking Supplement
Aim	To retain and restore high botanical value meadow grassland, help reduce diffuse pollution and benefit landscape character.
Eligibility Rules	
E83	This supplement can only be used in combination with one of the following land management options: Management of species-rich grassland, Restoration towards species-rich grassland, Creation of species-rich grassland, Management of grassland for target features and Creation of grassland for target features and in Mid Tier GS5 Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs and GS6 Management of species rich grassland.
Prescriptions	
P261	Do not cut before 5 July. If you make haylage, you must turn the swath at least once and wilt for at least 48 hours.
P262	Cut and remove hay or haylage once every year.
P428	Where spring grazing of meadows is a traditional practice, exclude livestock for at least 7 weeks before cutting and by 30 May at the latest. Graze the aftermath to achieve an average sward height of no more than 8 cm by the end of the grazing season.
P706	Keep a monthly record of stock numbers grazing on parcels in this option. Make the record available on request.

Rush infestation control supplement (GS16)

£73 per ha

Where to use this supplement

Only on:

- permanent grassland
 - on a single parcel of land with continuous rush cover of more than 50% of the parcel
 - only on a single parcel for a maximum of 3 years
-

Options to use with this supplement

This supplement must be used with 1 of the following options:

- GS5 - Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs
- UP2 - Management of rough grazing for birds

How this supplement will benefit the environment

This is a short-term incentive to reduce rush cover in parcels with heavy infestations. It will help prevent the loss of botanically rich grasslands or provide nesting areas for breeding wading birds.

REQUIREMENTS

- graze or cut areas of dense rush growth every year so that rushes are less than 20cm high by 30 September
- keep bare ground cover at less than 10% by year 2
- reduce cover of dense rush growth to less than 30% of the parcel area by the end of year 3 of the agreement

Do not:

- cut rushes between 15 March and 15 July

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic evidence:

- photographs of management undertaken

Applicants need to send a map showing the extent of rush cover with their application.

ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO CARRY OUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

*The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully, but does **not** form part of the requirements for this supplement.*

Maintaining rushes

The aim is to reduce heavy infestations of rushes to a cover below 30%. Cover should then be maintained at between 10% and 30%.

Also:

- ensure damage to nests or disturbance of chicks is avoided when cutting
- avoid controlling rush where there is standing or flowing water on or close to the surface for most of the year
- avoid cutting areas where rush is growing in association with sphagnum mosses
- graze with cattle, as sheep normally avoid grazing rush
- wherever possible, remove cuttings to prevent low growing plants being smothered

Cutting machinery

The following machines are most appropriate for rush cutting:

- a grass mower trailed by a tractor
- a pasture topper
- a forage harvester

GS16	Rush infestation control supplement
Aim	To reduce rush cover in parcels with heavy infestations to help prevent loss of botanically-rich wet grasslands and/or provide nesting areas benefit breeding wading birds.
Eligibility Rules	
E74	Available on land where continuous rush cover occupies more than 50% of the parcel.
E75	This supplement can only be used in combination with the following land management options: Permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDAs), Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs, Management of species-rich grassland, Restoration towards species-rich grassland, Management of wet grassland for breeding waders, Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl, Management of grassland for target features and Management of rough grazing for birds.
E80	The supplement can only be used on any single parcel for a maximum of 3 years.
Prescriptions	
P249	By year 2 cover of bare ground must be less than 10%.
P251	Graze and/or cut areas of dense rush growth every year so that, by 30 September, rush growth is less than 20 cm high. Do not cut between 15 March and 15 July.
P254	Reduce cover of dense rush growth to less than 30% of the parcel area by the end of the third year of your agreement.
P706	Keep a monthly record of stock numbers grazing on parcels in this option. Make the record available on request.

Lenient grazing supplement (GS17)

£44 per ha

Where to use this supplement

Whole or part parcel

Only on:

- permanent grassland
- in combination with GS2 as part of the Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife package (Mid Tier Manual section 8.3)
- in combination with GS5 permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs
- on parcels where at least one boundary is a hedgerow and/or there is scrub cover within 200m of the parcel

This supplement can be rotated between eligible parcels, but the same total area must be maintained each year and once applied to a parcel it must remain on it for at least 3 successive years.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It provides critical spring and summer invertebrate food needed by species such as yellowhammers.

There should be:

- plenty of spiders and insects, including larger ones such as grasshoppers and beetles
- birds, such as yellowhammers, reed buntings and skylarks flying into the field to feed

REQUIREMENTS

- graze during the growing season to maintain a sward:
 - that has an average height of 7cm to 13cm
 - where at least 20% is shorter than 10cm
 - where at least 20% is over 10cm tall
- on the parcel or part parcel where this option is used one boundary must be a hedgerow and / or there must be scrub within 200m of the option

Do not:

- cut for hay or silage

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic evidence:

- photographs of the management undertaken

ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO CARRY OUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

*The following section gives advice on how to carry out this supplement successfully, but does **not** form part of the requirements for the supplement.*

Sward height importance

The option is usually used as part of a package to benefit declining farmland birds. It provides the critical spring and summer invertebrate food needed by species such as yellowhammers.

Most invertebrates are much more abundant in taller grass but birds find it difficult to access them if the whole sward is tall. Birds need shorter patches where they can land and check for danger. They can then dart into the taller patches to catch their prey, or wait for them to move to the edge of the tall grass or out into the shorter patches.

Option amount and location

Normally at least 1ha of this option per 100ha of the farm area is needed to provide sufficient invertebrates.

Place the supplement on part parcels next to hedges or scrub for yellowhammers and other buntings. For skylarks it should be placed away from trees, hedges or other tall structures.

Since the target birds do not generally feed more than 300m from their nests, parcels of this option should not be more than 500m apart.

This option will be more effective on grassland including herbs and wildflowers, but it can also be used on grassland with few, if any, herbs or wildflowers.

Checking sward height

If a sward stick is not available, uncompressed sward height can be measured using a ruler, or lines on boots. Ignore stems and seedheads – measure to the top green leaf.

How to achieve the right sward

It is much easier to achieve the correct diverse sward structure by grazing with cattle than by grazing with sheep only, which risks non-compliance with the Requirements.

Grazing can be rotational or intermittent, but the stock should eat the sward down well during the grazing periods to avoid it becoming rank during the rest periods

GS17	Lenient grazing supplement
Aim	To provide an invertebrate-rich foraging habitat for declining farmland birds, especially buntings, on grass-dominated farms as part of a package/bundle of bird-friendly measures for pastoral landscapes.
Eligibility Rules	
E86	This supplement can only be used either: in combination with GS2 Permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDAs) option as part of an option bundle for farmland wildlife in pastoral and mixed farming landscapes; or in combination with GS5 Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs; or In combination with option GS13 Management of grassland for target features
E88	In Mid Tier agreements, this supplement must only be placed on parcels where at least one boundary is a hedgerow and/or there is scrub cover within 200 metres of the parcel.
E89	Once applied to a parcel it must continue for at least 3 successive years.
Prescriptions	
P272	Do not cut for hay or silage.
P273	Graze during the growing season to maintain a sward with an average height of 7 - 13 cm with at least 20 per cent of the sward shorter than 10 cm and at least 20 per cent more than 10 cm tall.
P706	Keep a monthly record of stock numbers grazing on parcels in this option. Make the record available on request.

Cattle grazing supplement (SP6)

£45 per ha

Where to use this supplement

Only in combination with a land management option where cattle grazing is appropriate for delivering the aims of the option.

Where this supplement cannot be used

With:

- GS17 - Lenient grazing supplement

In Mid Tier with:

- GS5 Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs
- UP2 Management of rough grazing for birds

How this supplement will benefit the environment

There should be:

- a more varied sward structure, which will increase wildlife diversity
- better control of scrub, bracken and coarse vegetation
- better grazing of wet areas and difficult sites such as steep slopes

REQUIREMENTS

- In Higher Tier graze the site according to a stocking calendar agreed with Natural England
- In Mid Tier at least 60% of the grazing Livestock Units must comprise of cattle.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels

ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO CARRY OUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully, but does not form part of the requirements for this supplement.

Where to use this supplement

It can be used at sites where:

- cattle are being introduced
- significant changes to the current grazing regime are needed to improve the quality of the habitat

Type of cattle

Many cattle breeds or cross-breeds may be capable of meeting requirements:

- cattle with low nutritional requirements, such as dry suckler cows, are best for sites with fibrous herbage
- mature, placid cattle are best suited for sites where there are ground-nesting birds, as they reduce the risk of trampling

Timing

Graze different habitat types at different times of the year and with a range of cattle numbers.

SP6	Cattle grazing supplement
Aim	To provide a more varied sward structure to increase wildlife diversity. Cattle are also often more suitable for controlling bracken and scrub and grazing wet habitats.
Eligibility Rules	
E104	This supplement can only be used in combination with a land management option where cattle grazing is appropriate for delivering the aims of the option. Including with GS5 in the SDA in the Mid Tier.
Prescriptions	
P706	Keep a monthly record of stock numbers grazing on parcels in this option. Make the record available on request.
P726	Cattle must comprise at least 60% of the total annual grazing LUs.



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