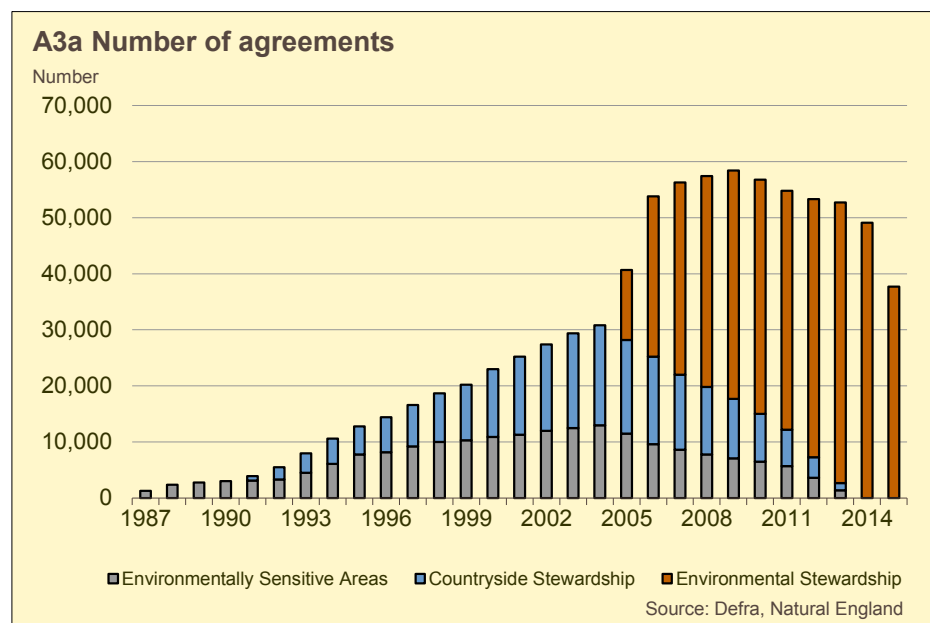


# Observatory monitoring framework – indicator data sheet

## Mechanism

### Indicator A3: Uptake of agri-environment schemes

This indicator shows the uptake of agri-environment schemes in England.



Note: From 2010, ES figures include Uplands Entry Level Stewardship data for which there were 6,310 live agreements at 31 December 2015.

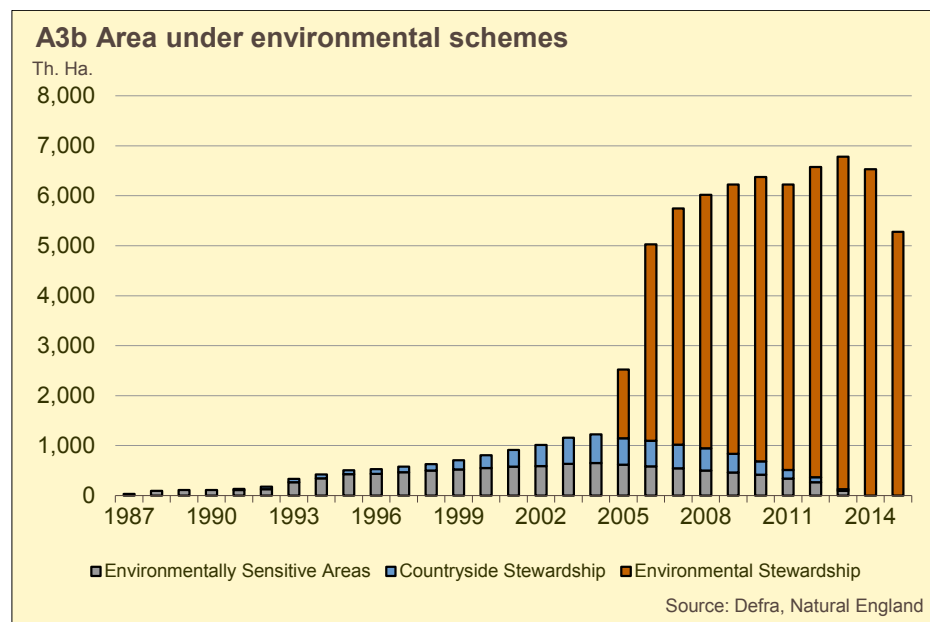
The Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) scheme was introduced in 1987 with Countryside Stewardship (CS) introduced in 1991 for those areas outside ESAs. These schemes closed in 2004 with all agreements expiring by the end of 2014.

Environmental Stewardship replaced ESA and CS in 2005, offering an Entry Level Scheme open to all farmers and a more targeted Higher Level Scheme. By the end of 2015 there were around 37,700 agreements managing 5,277 thousand hectares.

At the end of 2015 there were around 36,100 Entry Level Scheme (ELS) agreements managing 5,132 thousand hectares. These include ELS, Organic ELS, Uplands ELS and Higher Level Scheme (HLS) agreements linked to ELS.

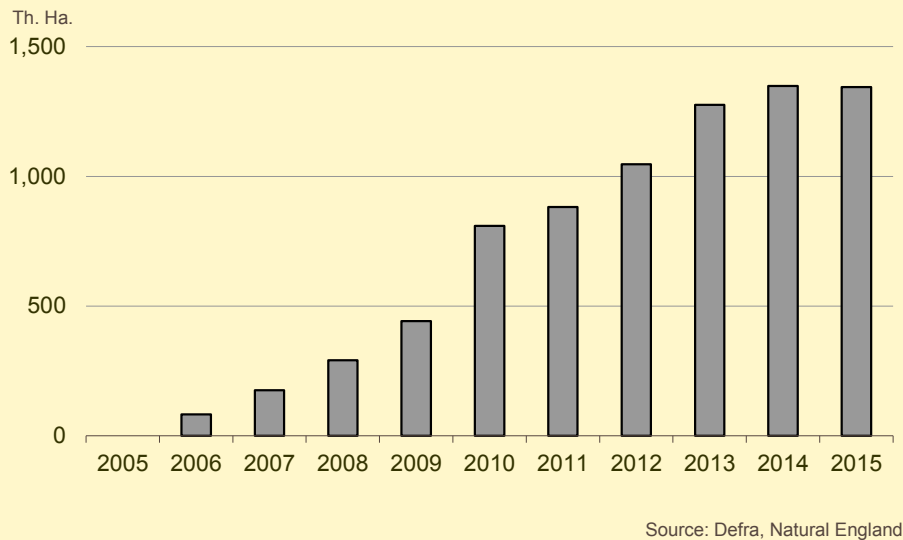
The reduction in ES agreements and area between 2014 and 2015 is due to ES closing to new applicants after 1 December 2014 with expiring agreements not being renewed.

A new Countryside Stewardship scheme was launched in 2015. The first agreements began in January 2016.



Note: From 2010, ES figures include Uplands Entry Level Stewardship data for which there were 1,189 thousand hectares at 31 December 2015.

### A3c Area under Higher Level Stewardship



The majority of HLS agreements are linked to ELS.

At the end of 2015 there were around 14,200 HLS agreements managing 1,344 thousand hectares of land.

Free-Standing HLS accounted for just over 1,600 agreements managing 145 thousand hectares of land.

This indicator was updated in August 2016. The next update will be in June 2017.

#### *Further information and contact*

Background information can be found in the accompanying fact sheet.

For queries or information on this indicator contact Defra's observatory team on +44 (0) 20 802 66202 or email [observatory@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:observatory@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

# Observatory monitoring framework – indicator fact sheet

## Mechanism

### Indicator A3: Uptake of agri-environment schemes

<i>Indicator</i>	Uptake of agri-environment schemes
<i>Data</i>	<p>A3a Number of scheme agreements: Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmental Stewardship (ES)</p> <p>A3b Area of land in schemes: ESA, CS and ES</p> <p>A3c Area of Higher Level Schemes (HLS)</p>
<i>Geographic coverage</i>	England
<i>Years</i>	<p>A3a: ESA: 1987 – 2013 (all expired by 2014), CS: 1991 – 2013 (all expired by 2014), ES: 2005 - 2015</p> <p>A3b: ESA: 1987 – 2013 (all expired by 2014), CS: 1991 – 2013 (all expired by 2014), ES: 2005 - 2015</p> <p>A3c: Area under Higher Level Stewardship: 2006 – 2015</p>
<i>Source</i>	Natural England, Defra
<i>Origin of data</i>	Scheme administrative data
<i>Updates</i>	Indicators A3a, A3b and A3c will be updated annually. The next update will be June 2017.
<i>Background</i>	<p>ESAs were implemented in 4 stages from 1987 covering areas considered to be of high landscape, wildlife or historic value. There were 22 designated ESAs in England. The ESA scheme was a voluntary, non-competitive scheme introduced in 1987. The rules and options were specific for each ESA according to the objectives and priorities of the area concerned. Agreements were for a 10 year period.</p> <p>CS was introduced in 1991 and was the principal scheme for conserving and improving the countryside outside ESA areas. Farmers were paid grants to follow more traditional farming methods that enhance the landscape, encourage wildlife and protect historical features. Due to a limited budget, acceptance onto the scheme was not guaranteed and depended on the application being of a suitable standard, determined by a scoring system. Agreements were for a 10 year period.</p> <p>Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and Countryside Stewardship (CS) schemes closed to new entrants in 2004, although there were a limited number of agreements in 2004 prior to the roll-out of Environmental Stewardship (ES). Agreements for both ESA &amp; CS schemes were for 10 year periods. The final agreements in these schemes expired during 2014.</p> <p>In 2003 and 2004 a pilot of the new ES scheme took place with a small number of farms. ES was formally introduced in 2005 offering both an Entry Level Scheme (ELS), open to all farmers and landowners, and Higher Level Scheme (HLS), with targeted environmental management. ELS and its organic equivalent (OELS) encourage farmers to deliver simple yet effective environmental management with flat rate payments over 5 years. HLS aims to deliver significant environmental benefits in high priority situations and areas. Unlike ELS, HLS entry is discretionary and</p>

payments relate to the options chosen. HLS agreements cover 10 years. The first ELS agreements were made in 2005. The first HLS agreement went live in February 2006. The majority of HLS agreements are linked to ELS agreements. The scheme is managed by Natural England.

In July 2010, Defra fundamentally changed the way in which upland farmers in England were supported, replacing the area based Hill Farm Allowance (HFA) with a new strand of ELS aimed specifically at the uplands, 'Uplands ELS'. Integrating uplands support within ES allows payments to be linked to the delivery of public benefits by encouraging large numbers of upland farmers and land managers to deliver simple yet effective environmental management. This is open to all farmers with land in the Severely Disadvantaged Areas of England.

ES closed to new agreements after 1 December 2014. ELS only and OELS only agreements have continued to expire during 2015 without being renewed resulting in a reduction in the number of these agreements and associated area managed compared with December 2014. HLS agreements did not begin to expire until the end of January 2016.

A new Countryside Stewardship scheme (CS) was launched in 2015. The first agreements did not begin until 1 January 2016.

*Statistical &  
methodological  
information*

The data show the cumulative number of agreements and areas of land within individual schemes.

A single scheme year has been used as the individual schemes use different years. The data for each scheme is for the year in which the bulk of that scheme's payments were made.

*Further  
information*

This is also a Biodiversity Strategy indicator:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-biodiversity-indicators>

Further information on Defra agri-environment schemes and the rural development programme can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/environmental-stewardship>