

**CAMPAIGN
FOR THE FARMED
ENVIRONMENT[®]**



A farmer's guide to voluntary measures



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FOREWORD FROM THE CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

Welcome to the Campaign for the Farmed Environment farmer guide to voluntary measures for your farm. This guide explains more about the Campaign, and how you can take part and record what you do in terms of voluntary management.

As farmers and land managers you care for your land and know that a healthy environment is essential for your business. But, we are being challenged to show our natural stewardship of the countryside, wildlife and natural resources as never before.

Many of you have already shown your commitment, by joining Environmental Stewardship, retaining areas of land uncropped and undertaking voluntary activity outside any government scheme. With over two thirds of English farmland in conservation schemes efforts have never been greater, but we can do more and focus our effort to get better results.

This is why the industry developed the Campaign for the Farmed Environment to help you protect the countryside, its wildlife, soils and water quality. The Campaign will help you to choose the best options for your farm, whether via Environmental Stewardship or by selecting from a range of voluntary measures for your farm that are flexible and agronomically practical. You are the best placed to help tackle these challenges by protecting resources and creating new habitats across the countryside.

Taking part in the Campaign is voluntary - but having the majority of farmers take part, will mean that the threat of future regulation will not be necessary. And taking part is easy - we are asking you to choose some key in-field options when renewing or entering Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) agreements for the first time, to review any existing voluntary management, and adopt at least one of the Campaign voluntary measures, while also retaining existing uncropped land.

This guide has been specifically produced to explain about the 'voluntary measures' part of the Campaign. We have also produced a national leaflet which details the ELS options you can also choose as part of the Campaign. You are not alone - this guide has been sent to around 40,000 farmers with more than 10 hectares of arable land. The Campaign will provide you with the information that you want to know to help you make the right choices for your farm. Your local agronomists and advisers will be on hand to provide you with advice about what voluntary measures will work best for your holding.

**CAMPAIGN
FOR THE FARMED
ENVIRONMENT[©]**



NFU, CLA, FWAG, LEAF, AIC, GWCT, AICC, CAAV,
Defra, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the RSPB

USING THIS GUIDE—VOLUNTARY MEASURES FOR YOUR FARM




On 9 July, the Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, announced that the Campaign for the Farmed Environment was the preferred approach to retain and exceed the benefits that used to be provided by set-aside. The NFU and CLA have been joined by a wide range of other key industry partners including FWAG, LEAF, GWCT, AIC, AICC and CAAV to develop the Campaign. In July, the RSPB, Natural England and the Environment Agency also gave the Campaign their full backing, so this is truly a joint effort to find a way forward that allows farmers to continue to produce more, but impact less on their environment.

The Campaign partners have identified a range of measures for you to make taking part in the Campaign as flexible as possible. This is achieved through a combination of voluntary management measures which have been developed for the Campaign, alongside key ELS options.

This guide focuses on the Campaign's 15 voluntary measures. It explains the specific management needed for each measure and includes a single-sided form (which you can find at the back of this booklet) to record the area and type of voluntary measures carried out on your farm for the next three years of the Campaign.

Importantly, you won't have to send this form to anyone – it's designed to be kept on farm as your personal record. Instead Defra will be monitoring uptake in the Campaign through an annual postal survey, with follow up telephone calls and a small number of site visits. The first of these postal surveys will be in mid-February 2010. The site visits (approx 200 each year nationally) will give an understanding of the environmental impact of the Campaign, but will have no statutory force. So the Campaign is very different to the alternative of cross compliance, which would have resulted in inspections, penalties and significant administrative overheads for farmers.

This guide highlights :

- Whether the measures are rotational (R) or permanent/non-rotational (NR).
- The main benefits of each measure using the Campaign icons (resource protection  farmland birds  and farm wildlife). 
- The **essential requirements** for each measure (red box); and additional management (green box) which can boost the measure's impact.
- Optional management measures that have been developed for C3, C7 and C12 which can deliver slightly different outcomes and provide you with greater flexibility in the implementation of the measure.

To help you put these measures in place there are a range of support and advice tools available for you to access:

- Local Liaison Groups (LLGs) in key arable counties - county advice and guidance depending on local priorities and access to a network of beacon farms to demonstrate best practice.
- One-to-one advice – agronomists and farm advisers will be able to advise you on selecting the best options for your farm.
- Natural England farm advice & training programme – leaflets providing more detail on resource protection, farmland birds and farm wildlife, events and one to one advice.

Further information in the form of factsheets, leaflets and online support – www.cfeonline.org.uk

If you have any queries about this guide speak to your agronomist or farm adviser, visit the Campaign website to find out if there is local support available or contact the National Programme Coordinator on 024 7685 8892.

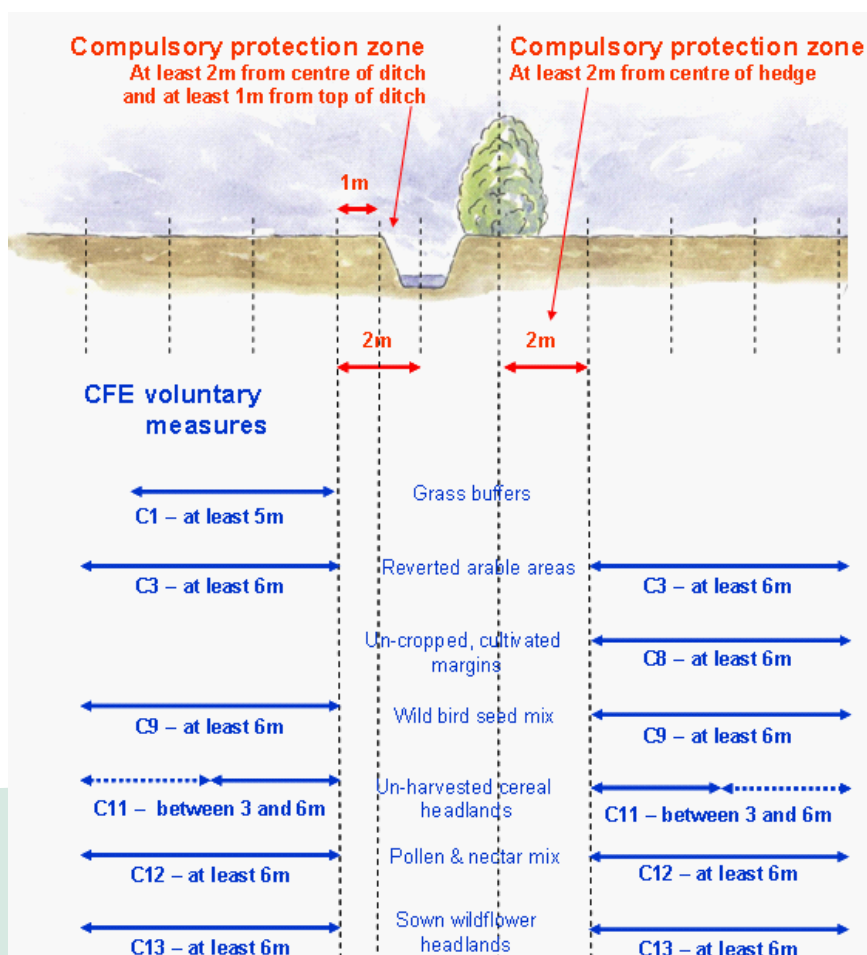
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LAND MANAGED UNDER CAMPAIGN MEASURES

- Please ensure that you adhere to cross compliance at all times when undertaking Campaign voluntary measures.
- Unless stated otherwise, only apply herbicides to spot treat or weed wipe where necessary to control the spread of injurious weeds (that is, creeping and spear thistles, curled and broadleaved docks, or common ragwort) or invasive alien species (for example, Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- Where known pernicious weeds occur, particularly on heavy land, some measures may not be appropriate.
- Unless stated otherwise, do not use any of the areas for voluntary measures for vehicle access, turning or storage of manure, machinery or bales. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.

In addition to these voluntary measures the Campaign encourages the uptake of nutrient management planning (RB209) for example, Tried & Tested Nutrient Management Plan which has been developed by the Industry (NFU, AIC, CLA, FWAG and LEAF) with support from England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative (ECSFDI).

Figure 1. Campaign voluntary measures and cross compliance protection zones

This diagram is designed to help you understand how the Campaign voluntary measures work with compulsory cross compliance protection zones around watercourses and hedgerows (always check your cross compliance guide if in doubt). The Campaign voluntary measures can sit alongside but do not overlap with options in formal Stewardship Schemes.



C1: GRASS BUFFERS ALONGSIDE TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT WATERCOURSES (NR)



Aims

When placed next to a watercourse a buffer strip can help catch potential pollutants such as sediment and nutrients carried in surface water run-off before it enters a watercourse. Buffer strips are also beneficial to wildlife as they offer new habitat and form links between areas of wildlife habitat.

How can this measure work for you?

Placing buffer strips in areas at risk of erosion and run-off can help to meet the voluntary buffer strips element of your Soil Protection Review (SPR).

Certain pesticides need an aquatic buffer zone. If you want to reduce this aquatic buffer zone, there is a legal obligation to carry out and record a Local Environment Risk Assessment for Pesticides (LERAP). This measure can help you both limit pesticide drift and meet what is needed for your LERAP. You need to leave a 5m buffer zone unsprayed to safeguard hedges, field margins etc from pesticides. This can be on areas of long-term former set-aside and you can also establish new buffer strips. These buffers will generally be permanent but can be relocated if necessary to meet agronomic or land use change.

Run-off and erosion should be controlled at source by good soil management rather than relying on strips to catch run-off. Strips are easily overloaded by too much channelled run-off.

Essential requirements:

- Establish or maintain a grassy strip with a minimum width of 6m (including the 1m protection zones under cross compliance) alongside a watercourse.
- Remove any compaction in the topsoil except on archaeological features.
- Do not cultivate the buffer area after the grassy strip has been established.
- Do not apply any fertilisers, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge)
- Do not use the grass area for regular vehicle access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, wheel ruts, compacted areas or poaching.

Additional management considerations:

- Use either natural regeneration or sow grass to achieve this (especially if there is not enough green cover from natural regeneration).
- If tussocky grasses like cocksfoot and timothy are included in the seed mix they can provide overwintering habitat for beneficial natural enemies of pests, which can help control infestations in the crop during the summer. However, you should not use more than 10% cocksfoot in the seed mix on ground liable to run-off or erosion as it tends to outcompete other species leading to patches of exposed bare ground to appear.
- If you already have land next to watercourses with a green cover or temporary grass (including former set-aside areas), you may leave these covers in place.
- Including wildflowers in the mixture can also benefit natural enemies such as hoverflies, as well as encouraging crop pollinating insects like bumblebees.
- Regular cutting in the first 12–24 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Ideally cuttings should be removed. Avoid cutting when the soil is moist, to prevent further compaction.
- After the first 12 months, cut the 3m next to the crop edge annually after 31 July. Only cut the other 3m to control woody growth, and no more than once every two years.

C2: GRASS AREAS TO PREVENT EROSION AND RUN-OFF (NR)



Aims

This measure can include infield plots or strips along headlands. It aims to reduce the movement of sediment, nutrients and pesticides by wind and water erosion, both within fields and from field to field, through the careful placing of permanent grass areas. For example:

- A grass strip adjacent to a watercourse can filter surface run-off to reduce the amount of eroded soil, organic material, nutrients and pesticides reaching the watercourse.
- A grass strip placed in field corners or other areas prone to collecting run-off which could enter watercourses.
- A grass strip next to a field boundary can help reduce the movement of pollutants into boundaries and between fields.
- Grassing natural drainage pathways (for example, valley bottoms) will help to reduce the channelling of run-off water that can produce rills and gullies.
- It can also help flood management by reducing surface run-off.

How can this measure work for you?

This measure is suitable for land that has been identified as being at moderate (or greater) risk of causing soil erosion or run-off (use the Soil Protection Review Soil Risk Matrix to work out the risk).

Remember that run-off and erosion should be controlled at source where possible by good soil management rather than relying on strips to catch run-off. Strips are easily overloaded by too much channelled run-off.

Essential requirements:

- Sow or maintain a dense grassy area with a minimum width of 10m either by sowing or by natural regeneration.
- No fertiliser, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge) can be applied.
- Do not use the grass area for regular vehicle access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks wheel ruts, compacted areas or poaching.
- Do not graze the grass area.
- Pigs and poultry should be excluded from the area.

Additional management considerations:

- A suitable mixture for most soil types is perennial rye grass, red fescue, smooth meadow grass and common bent. If included cocksfoot should not be more than 10% of the mix. Species such as cocksfoot and italian rye grass should be avoided in areas where there is a risk of run-off and erosion. In these higher risk areas it is better to just use species that tiller quickly to create a good cover to trap and hold sediment.
- Remove any compaction in the topsoil and subsoil, except on archaeological features.
- Regular cutting in the first 12–24 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Avoid cutting when the soil is moist to prevent further compaction. Cuttings can be removed through baling, foraging etc.
- After the first 12–24 months, cut the 3m next to the crop edge annually after end-July. Only cut the remaining area to control woody growth, and no more than once every 2 years.

C3a: REVERTED ARABLE AREAS (NR/R)

C3b: OPTIONAL SCRUB MANAGEMENT (NR/R)

C3a: Aims

These can be plots, strips, field corners or whole/partial fields. Reverted arable areas have been shown to boost beneficial insect numbers (for example, bumblebees and natural enemies of pests) as well as providing important habitats for a range of wildlife including mammals. Flower-rich reverted arable areas can also provide foraging habitat for farmland birds and can also help to protect soils and watercourses.



How can this measure work for you?

This measure can be placed on retained areas of long-term former set-aside or new areas of arable reversion can also be established. In general these areas will be permanent but can be relocated if necessary to meet agronomic or land use change.

Placing of arable reversion in areas at risk of erosion and run-off can help to meet the voluntary buffer strips element of your Soil Protection Review (SPR).

Certain pesticides need an aquatic buffer zone. If you want to reduce this aquatic buffer zone, there is a legal obligation to carry out and record a Local Environment Risk Assessment for Pesticides (LERAP). This measure can help you meet what is needed for your LERAP to help protect aquatic life from pesticide contamination. You need to leave a 5m buffer zone unsprayed to safeguard hedges, field margins etc from pesticides.

Essential requirements:

- Establish or maintain a grassy area with a minimum width of 6m, which should be in addition to cross compliance protection zones next to a hedgerow or watercourse within this width.
- Maintain the grassy areas by light grazing or at least an annual cut. If cutting, allow the grass to set seed and do not cut the area earlier than 31 July.
- Remove any compaction in the topsoil and sub soil except on archaeological features.
- Do not cultivate the area after the area has been established.
- Do not apply any fertilisers, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge) to these areas.

Additional management considerations:

- Temporary storage of manure, machinery or bales and occasional vehicle access is allowed. But care should be taken to prevent the formation of tracks, wheel ruts, compacted areas or poaching that could cause run-off, for example, out of gateways onto roads, into road drains and watercourses.
- Use either natural regeneration or sowing grass to achieve the grassy cover (especially if there is not enough green cover from natural regeneration).
- If you already have land with an acceptable green cover (for example, former set-aside) or temporary grass, you may leave these covers in place.
- Regular cutting in the first 12–24 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Ideally cuttings should be removed.
- Cutting is only needed if scrub development is to be prevented and if cut there are benefits to not cutting all the area (up to 25% can be left uncut each year) and leaving some near the hedge uncut for insects especially that overwinter in the grass stems.
- Avoid cutting when the soil is moist, to prevent further compaction.
- Occasional light cultivation can be beneficial because it can aerate the soil and encourage a flush of weeds which will provide food and habitat for birds.
- If you wish to increase the benefit of this measure for birds its value can be enhanced by rotation around the farm every 3 years or so. These areas may add additional environmental benefits if sited next to watercourses and existing habitats such as hedgerows and woodland.

C3b: Optional management considerations for the maintenance of small areas of scrub:

Some former long-term set-aside areas developed small areas of scrub on arable reversion. This optional management aims to provide such areas, which are an important habitat both in terms of food and cover for a range of species and also offered protection to soils and watercourses. This scrub creation can be particularly valuable next to existing areas of scrub and woodland, but should not be allowed to develop on archaeological features.

- Where you want to maintain open ground, manage the grassy areas by light grazing or cutting. If cutting, allow the grasses/wildflowers to set seed and do not cut the area earlier than 31 July. Ideally cuttings should be removed.
- Scrub areas should be retained. Dense scrub is ineligible for Single Payment Scheme (SPS) payments and you should check your scheme handbook for specific rules.
- Scrub typically matures in 15 years so a light cutting regime whereby a different part of the scrub is cut each year is desirable. Scrub should be cut between September and February.
- Occasional mowing/flailing of scrub areas is permitted to maintain/create rides and create scalloped edges but not before the 31 July.
- Trees can be left to mature or alternatively can be removed and the stump treated with a suitable herbicide if you wish to prevent regrowth during September to February.
- Avoid removing stumps over features of archaeological interest.

C4: SKYLARK PLOTS (R)

Aims

This measure is suitable for winter cereals. It aims to create safe foraging and access to nesting sites for farmland birds within winter cereals. To successfully rear their young, ground nesting arable birds need areas where they have easy access to the ground to feed. Such opportunities are generally too limited in conventional winter cereals by mid-summer where the vegetation is greater than 50cm (20 inches) high. By including a number of skylark plots, you will provide these birds safe nesting/foraging sites and will extend their available breeding season.

Ideally this measure is best used in large, open winter sown arable fields where the plots can be sited away from hedges, trees and pylons.



How can this measure work for you?

By placing Skylark plots into your winter cereals you can maintain breeding numbers of this species across the farm, not only helping this declining farmland bird species to recover, but also keeping their beautiful song in the skies above your farm through the spring and summer months! The loss of yield associated with Skylark plots in winter wheat is less than 1% (or approximately £2.80/ha) assuming a yield of 8.5 tonnes per ha and wheat value of £110/ tonne.



Essential requirements:

- Plots should be placed in fields greater than 5ha in area and with an open aspect unbounded by trees in order to deliver the greater benefits.
- Plots can either be established by turning off your seed drill while planting winter cereals or by spraying the plots out before the 31 December. The plots should be at least 3m wide and have a minimum area of 16m² (for example, 3m x 6m or 4m x 4m). Plots should be established across the field at a minimum density of roughly 2 plots per hectare.
- Place the plots away from tramlines (a middle spot between two sets of tramlines is best) and field boundaries/margins (at least 50m into the field) in order to minimise nest predation.
- There must be no mechanical weeding of plots.

Additional management considerations:

- After drilling, there is no need to manage plots differently to the rest of the field (they can be oversprayed and can be fertilised).
- You are not required to keep the plots weed-free.

C5: FALLOW PLOTS/UNCROPPED, CULTIVATED AREAS FOR GROUND-NESTING BIRDS ON ARABLE LAND (NR/R)

Aims

This measure provides breeding sites for ground-nesting farmland birds such as lapwing and foraging habitats for other declining birds such as grey partridge, turtle dove, skylark, yellow wagtail, linnet, yellowhammer and corn bunting. It can also be beneficial to brown hares and rare arable plants.



How can this measure work for you?

This measure is both rotational and non-rotational.

This means that the fallow plots can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation. Alternatively, they can remain in the same place in the field. But relocating these areas of fallow at intervals will help

to avoid the build up of weeds or soil borne disease such as club-root. Game birds, hares etc may use the open ground as a drying off area when vegetation is wet, and it will also provide food resources for them.

Essential requirements:

- This measure should be used in large arable fields with an open aspect well away from trees and woodland.
- The fallow area/plot should be located in fields larger than 2ha.
- Do not locate fallow areas where they may generate erosion or provide run-off pathways for sediment or where there are archaeological features.
- The cultivated area must be at least 1ha and not exceed 2.5ha and at least 100m wide.
- Produce the rough fallow (for example, by using tines or discs) between 1 February and 20 March to make sure it is in place in time for the first breeding attempts of farmland birds.
- The fallow plots must be retained until 31 July.
- Do not apply fertilisers, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge).

Additional management considerations:

- Fields should be chosen carefully, ideally where Lapwings or Stone-curlews have nested before.
- Avoid fields with pernicious weeds and those which are prone to waterlogging.
- Areas of severe compaction should always be sub-soiled (except where there are archaeological features or when conditions are wet) to reduce the risk of run-off and erosion.
- Placing this measure in fields adjacent to extensively grazed grassland will provide additional chick-rearing habitat for lapwing.
- Do not place in fields bounded by tree lines or adjacent to woods, unless the field is larger than 10ha.
- Avoid cultivating in wet conditions and on historic features.
- If the regeneration is dense and more than 10cm high in early spring, and no nesting birds are present, spray or re-cultivate to restore suitable nesting habitat.
- Undesirable weed species such as blackgrass, sterile brome and wild oats should be controlled prior to creating the rough fallow, by spraying off these areas with a non-selective herbicide.
- If you keep this measure in the same place it may be necessary to spot spray to control pernicious weeds (thistles).



C6: OVERWINTERED STUBBLE FOLLOWED BY SPRING/SUMMER FALLOW (R)

Aims

This measure is annual and can be rotated and should be placed on areas of cultivated land immediately following harvest. It can provide food for seed-eating birds in winter and habitat for nesting farmland birds, overwintering insects and wildflowers.

How can this measure work for you?

Overwintered stubbles, especially those that have un-sprayed weeds within them, offer farmland birds the equivalent to a huge bird table! If glyphosate is used to spray off the area prior to cultivating the fallow, excellent weed control can be achieved.

The fallow area is important to many ground nesting species such as Lapwing, Skylark and Yellow wagtail and as it 'greens up' may also provide food for Turtle dove and Brown Hare. Once again if the glyphosate is applied after the 15 May, a second chance of achieving good weed control is possible, offering you the chance of not only 'resting' a field from production, but also helping to control difficult weed problems. Finally, this measure allows early entry into the following crop, regardless of whether harvest is running late. Overwintered stubbles also provide excellent winter habitat for partridges and other game birds.

Essential requirements:

- This measure should be located on an arable field following harvest of any crops except maize, and should be retained until 31 July in the following year.
- Create a fallow through light cultivation in late February.
- On sloping fields tramlines should be subsoiled, following harvest, where compaction may lead to erosion and run-off, except where there are archaeological features or when conditions are wet.
- No fertiliser, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge) can be applied during this time.
- Herbicides can be applied for weed control from 15 May.
- Do not apply pre-harvest desiccants or post-harvest herbicides to the crop/stubble (except on oilseed rape crops).
- Do not cut the vegetation before 31 July.

Additional management considerations:

- You may cultivate land to control weeds from 1 June on organic fields in environmental management without having to replace the green cover afterwards. You may not cultivate for any other purposes before 31 July.
- If you use a non-selective herbicide, leave the residue of the cover in place for as long as possible to provide cover from predators for young birds in the nest. Wherever possible, treat only the area where the weed problems are present.
- Avoid any agricultural operations which could harm the biodiversity interest of the green cover for example:
 - Nesting birds (particularly between March and July).
 - Overwintering insects (up to mid-May).
 - Wild flowers that have not yet set seed.
- In exceptional circumstances (for example, if you have specific plant health or other problems) you may apply herbicides to destroy the green cover before the end of May.
- Organic manure may be stored on this land prior to spreading on the field in the next growing season but it must not be used to store larger quantities of manure than are to be applied to the field on which they are being stored.
- Temporary storage of manure, machinery or bales and occasional vehicle access is permitted. Care should be taken to prevent the formation of tracks, compacted areas or poaching.



C7a: OVERWINTERED STUBBLE (R)

C7b: OPTIONAL FOR VULNERABLE SOILS (R)

C7a: Aims

Overwintered stubbles provide an important winter food source for seed-eating birds, which feed on spilt grain and the seeds of broad-leaved weeds. They are also a habitat for brown hare, and the spring sown crops that follow can provide breeding sites for ground-nesting birds, such as lapwing and skylark.

This measure manages stubble following the harvest of combinable crops, such as oilseed rape, linseed, cereals or field beans (but not maize), ideally until the last day in February in the following year.

Alternatively, if sown with a winter cover crop can provide protection for soil and watercourses.

How can this measure work for you?

This measure is rotational which means that the stubble can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation. An obvious measure to consider if you already have spring cropping within your rotation and can provide excellent winter habitat for Partridges and other game birds.

For soils at risk of run-off, the sowing of a winter cover crop/green manure can significantly reduce nitrate leaching on land where soil would normally be left bare overwinter. In addition, in certain situations, cover crops may provide protection against soil erosion and loss of other pollutants carried in surface run-off water.

Essential requirements:

- Do not apply pre-harvest desiccants or post-harvest herbicides to the crop/stubble (except for desiccants on oilseed rape crops).
- Do not locate where there is a moderate to high risk of soil erosion/run-off.
- On sloping fields tramlines be subsoiled, following harvest, where compaction may lead to erosion and run-off, except where there are archaeological features or when conditions are wet.
- Do not apply any pesticides, fertilisers, manure (including manure heaps) or lime to the stubble.
- Do not top or graze.
- From 1 March, the stubble can be returned to the farm rotation.

Additional management considerations:

- This measure is not recommended in fields with infestations of undesirable weed species such as black grass, wild oats or sterile brome.
- Where the stubble is mainly clean after harvest, a light surface cultivation can be made before the end of September or within the first month following harvest if later, to encourage weed germination and loosen any surface compaction or capping.

C7b: Optional management considerations for resource protection on vulnerable soils – sow a winter cover crop/green manure:

This optional management aims to significantly reduce nitrate leaching, erosion (use Defra's 'Controlling Soil Erosion booklet' to determine risk) or surface water run-off. Land managed in this way will have more limited biodiversity benefits:

- Establish a cover crop by 25 September in order to take up sufficient soil nitrate before winter drainage leaches it below the depth of the developing plant roots.
- Drill or broadcast a quick growing cover crop. The choice of cover crop will be dependent upon herbicide choice and rates of application in the previous crop. Choose one of the following:
 - Ryegrass/vetch mix – in order to avoid weed problems in the subsequent crop, this mixture must be prevented from setting seed and will require regular topping.
 - Clovers - red clover or crimson clover. The clover could be sown with grass.
 - Mustard.
 - Rye.
 - Persian Clover.
- Other cover crops/green manures are available. Please seek agronomic advice.
- Sow at a seed rate that will provide a dense cover and protect from soil erosion.
- Stubbles may be ploughed from 15 February only if essential, to establish a following crop, but leaving them for longer will provide valuable food resources at a time of year when research has shown that many birds struggle to find enough to eat. Cover crops should be retained where a spring crop is not going to be sown and can be used for silage making.
- Land may need to be loosened to remove surface compaction prior to drilling.



C8: UNCROPPED, CULTIVATED MARGINS (NR/R)

Aims

These margins provide the ideal conditions for rare arable plants to grow, habitat for insects as well as foraging sites for seed and insect-eating birds. They are best sited on light, free-draining sandy or calcareous soils, and are especially valuable where populations of rare arable plants are known to occur. This measure can either rotate around your holding or be kept in the same place.



How can this measure work for you?

This measure, although originally designed to benefit some of our rarer arable plants, can in fact deliver a wide range of gains for wildlife. It is a very simple measure to choose, just cultivate a given headland and leave in situ to green up. Given a light soil type without any particularly injurious weeds present, this measure can produce a colourful picture of flowering plants in mid-summer offering an excellent public relations chance – especially if positioned alongside a footpath. The strip will be full of insects, offering a great food source to young Pheasant and Partridge, as well as other farmland birds. Brown Hare will appreciate the 'mixed salad' on offer and you never know, it might just throw up a plant that is the rarest species on the farm – if not the county! Game birds and hares also benefit from this open ground as a drying off area when vegetation is wet.

Essential requirements:

- Do not place this measure:
 - Within 6m of a watercourse (or ideally a road).
 - On land at moderate or high risk of soil erosion (use Soil Protection Review Soil Risk Matrix to determine the risk).
 - On land prone to pernicious weed problems.
- Cultivate an arable field margin annually, in either spring or autumn to a depth of about 15cm (6 inches), but not in moist conditions where it may lead to compaction and do not overwork the soil where it may cause capping and increase the risk of run-off.
- Margins should be a minimum of 3m wide (this is not inclusive of the cross compliance uncultivated buffer zones next to a hedgerow).
- No fertiliser, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge) can be applied during this time.
- Do not apply any pesticides (except after seed set if necessary).

Additional management considerations:

- Varying the depth and time of cultivation may help prevent the build-up of undesirable weeds.
- The time of cultivation will affect the environmental benefits of this measure. For example, a spring cultivation may improve its benefit for birds. Therefore there may be additional benefits to cultivating some of these margins in spring and some in autumn.
- You can leave these margins in the same place over the winter.
- These margins can be relocated within the same field to avoid the build up of pernicious weeds. Where severe pernicious weeds have developed, targeted broad-spectrum herbicides can be used, once annual species have set seed (typically in September).

C9: WILD BIRD SEED MIXTURE - ARABLE/GRASSLAND AREAS (NR/R)



Aims

Wild birds often find it difficult to find enough seed food on farms during the winter months. This measure can be sown as plots or headlands and will provide important food resources for farmland birds, especially in winter and early spring, on arable and mixed farms. The aim is to maximise the production of small seeds suitable as bird food in either annual or biennial mixtures, while also providing a source of invertebrates for birds.

How can this measure work for you?

This measure can be rotational. This means that the plots or headlands can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation. Alternatively, they can remain in the same place in the field. However, relocating these blocks or strips at intervals will help to avoid the build up of weeds or soil borne disease such as club-root.

Essential requirements:

- Sow in blocks and/or strips averaging at least 6m wide at the edges of fields (this should be in addition to the cross compliance protection zone next to a hedgerow/watercourse) with a minimum area of 0.4ha.
- Do not include giant sorghum or maize in the wild bird seed mix.
- Retain the crop mixture until at least 1 March before re-establishment.
- Only apply insecticides during establishment where there is a strong risk of crop failure due to severe pest attack (identified through monitoring and use of thresholds). Advice must be taken from a BASIS professional before any insecticides are used. Seed treatments are preferred.
- Do not graze.



Additional management considerations:

- Either:
 - Sow a balanced combination of at least three small-seed bearing crops chosen from wheat, barley, triticale, kale, quinoa, linseed, millet, mustard, fodder radish, dwarf grain sorghum and sunflower, either as a single crop or in mixtures. If a single crop is sown adjacent drill widths can be sown with different crops within the same strip or block. It may be more effective to sow adjacent strips of different crops as they don't compete with each other in the rows and the drill can be set correctly for each one. If sown as a mixture, no single species should make up more than 70 per cent by weight of the mix, and always make sure they cover a range of crop groups, to minimise any pest and disease impacts.
- Or:
 - If you wish to establish several blocks/strips across your holding you could sow each block/strip with one small-seed bearing crop but be sure to vary the crops used between blocks/strips that is, do not use the same crop for each one.
- The mixture chosen could be locally tailored on advice from your local wildlife adviser.
- In the first year, sow at the optimum time for the chosen species mixture, which may be autumn or spring, ensuring that any areas of soil compaction are removed prior to establishment, except on sites of archaeological interest.
- The mix can be sown annually or every other year (by including biennial crops such as kale) to maintain seed production.
- Tramlines and other areas of severe compaction should be sub-soiled following harvest, where compaction may lead to erosion and run-off (except where there are archaeological features or when conditions are wet) .
- Avoid sowing too early in the spring, when seedbeds may be dry, cold and of poor quality.
- To help with weed and pest management, the seed can be sown in separate drill widths or as strips within the measure area.
- Non-residual, non-selective herbicides may be used prior to sowing, to help re-establishment.
- Fertilisers, manures (but not within 10m of a watercourse) or seed treatments may be used to aid establishment, minimise impact to non-target invertebrates and ensure sufficient seed production to deliver the aim of this measure.

C10: GAME STRIPS (NR/R)

Aims

This measure provides winter food and cover for a range of farmland birds including game species.

How can this measure work for you?

If you run a shoot, either commercially or just for entertaining a few friends, this measure obviously gives you a great opportunity to enhance bird numbers. By planting a seed bearing crop, you can provide good cover to hold game birds on the farm over the winter and also supply them, and other farmland birds with a rich seed source. It may be that you do not always have to completely change your current practice, of keeping your Maize or Sorghum strips in place, but simply add onto it an area of crop that will produce small seeds – game birds will love the hiding cover with the seed rich area adjacent! Moving this measure around your holding can help avoid a re-establishment problem at the same site and can help reduce rat problems too.



Essential requirements:

- Establish a game mixture (but not maize or giant sorghum) as a strip or block.
- The game strip must be retained until mid February in the year that the area is returned to crop production.
- Do not graze.

Additional management considerations:

- The game mix can be established from an unharvested cereal crop or a sown mixture of plants. The mixture can be annual or biennial.
- More benefit is gained where these blocks and/or strips are at least 6m wide at the edges of fields and at least 0.4ha in size. Try to ensure that they are well distributed across your farm which makes sure food is always available for seed-eating birds.
- Tramlines and other areas of severe compaction should be sub-soiled prior to drilling where compaction may lead to erosion and run-off (except where there are archaeological features or when conditions are wet).
- Fertilisers, manures (but not within 10m of watercourses) and seed treatments may be used to aid establishment, minimise impact to non-target invertebrates and ensure sufficient seed production to deliver the aim of the measure.
- Non-residual, non-selective herbicides may be used prior to sowing, to help re-establishment.
- The aim of this measure is to provide seed and cover to birds every winter. In order to achieve this you may wish to consider a range of establishment dates.
- Avoid sowing mixtures too early in the spring, when seedbeds may be dry, cold and of poor quality.
- Leaving the crop later than mid-February can be beneficial if seed is still present.



C11: GAME WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY TRUST (GWCT) UN-HARVESTED CEREAL HEADLANDS (NR/R)

Aims

These areas will offer farmland birds excellent insect rich foraging habitat during the summer and a good grain supply during the winter months. They also provide a potential refuge for rare arable flowers and for small mammal species such as the harvest mouse. The headland of a normal cereal crop can be left unharvested, or cereals can be drilled around other crops. The measure will deliver most when sited next to a buffer strip, stubble or area planted for wild bird seed or nectar flower mixtures.

Unfertilised cereal headlands can be difficult to manage where grass weeds are a problem, particularly where herbicide resistance is present.

If an unexpected weed infestation occurs and becomes unmanageable, select a less weedy location in following years.

This is a 'rotational' measure. This means that the headlands can move around the farm within the normal rotation or remain in the same place in the field.



How can this measure work for you?

This measure provides grain, insects and cover for game birds alongside its wider benefits for farmland birds.

Essential requirements:

- Sow and manage a 3–6m wide cereal headland along the edge of an arable crop outside the cross compliance protection area. This could be simply sown as part of your normal cereal rotation in that field.
- Do not apply insecticides between 15 March and the following harvest.
- Leave untreated with pesticides except where necessary to protect the adjacent crop or to control pernicious weeds. Graminicides for grass weed control are allowed where applicable and amidosulfuron is allowed for cleaver control.
- If autumn sown the area must be left for 18 months so that the grain is available for farmland birds through the second winter. Spring sown margins must be left for 12 months.
- No fertiliser, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge) can be applied.

Additional management considerations:

- The headland can be planted by drilling or broadcasting (in order of preference) in the autumn or the spring with Triticale, Wheat, Barley or Oats. Establishment from broadcasting can be poor.

C12a: POLLEN AND NECTAR MIXTURES FOR ARABLE OR GRASSLAND AREAS (NR/R)

12b: OPTIONAL FOR USE WITH HORTICULTURAL CROPS (NR/R)

Aims

This measure differs from C13 because the species mix produces a denser, less penetrable vegetation, more targeted for invertebrates. The sown pollen and nectar mixture in this measure provides an important habitat for a range of valued insects including butterflies and bumblebees. With the correct management and choice of species, these areas can last a number of years without the need to re-establish the mixture.

How can this measure work for you?

As well as providing benefits for wildlife, this measure can also provide important habitat for pollinators and natural predators which may benefit your crop. Once again this can offer a good public relations opportunity if positioned where people will see it.

Essential requirements:

- Sow in blocks and/or strips averaging at least 6m wide at the edges of fields (this should be in addition to the cross compliance protection zone next to a hedgerow/watercourse), with a minimum area of 0.4ha in early spring or late summer.
- The mixture should contain at least four nectar-rich plants (for example, red clover, alsike clover, bird's-foot-trefoil, sainfoin, musk mallow, common knapweed), with no single species making up more than 50 per cent of the mix by weight.
- Remove any areas of soil compaction prior to establishment except on archaeological features.
- Cut the whole area to 10cm between 15 September and 31 October, removing or shredding cuttings to avoid patches of dead material developing.
- Do not graze in the spring or summer.
- No pesticides, fertiliser, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge) can be applied.



Additional management considerations:

- Re-establish the mix as necessary, to maintain a sustained nectar supply.
- To stimulate valuable late flowering to meet the peak demand for bees, cut half the area to 20cm between mid-June and the end of the first week of July.
- Do not cut areas where ground nesting birds are known to be present.
- Late autumn/early winter grazing of areas is allowed and will benefit legumes, but take care to avoid poaching damage and compaction, particularly when conditions are wet.
- You should avoid adding lime, however it may be beneficial for the legumes in your mix if the soil pH is too low.

C12b: Optional management considerations for growers of horticultural crops

Environmental management on high value land used for horticultural production must work not just for wildlife and the environment, but it must also work for the grower. Flower mixes specifically designed to target particular insect groups often deliver little or nothing for other groups of beneficial insect species. Therefore, by choosing certain species within the pollen and nectar mix, it is possible to promote insects which, as well as being pollinators, can provide the added benefit to the grower as biocontrol agents. The aim of this optional management for pollen and nectar mixes is to suggest species which can deliver both these benefits for the grower.

- **Suggested annual plant species** suitable for biocontrol include: common vetch; buckwheat; cornflower; bishopsweed.
- **Suggested perennial plant species** suitable for biocontrol include: bush vetch; perennial cornflower; fennel; greater burnet saxifrage.
- To suppress weeds from the seed bank, it is advisable to use 50-80% grasses in the seed mixture. To prevent grasses outcompeting the herbs, it is advisable to use non-tussocky grasses such as crested dog's-tail, red fescue, common bent and smaller cat's-tail.



C13: SOWN WILDFLOWER HEADLANDS (NR)

Aims

Wildflower headlands provide important pollen and nectar sources for a range of insects. They also provide feeding opportunities for farmland birds in terms of invertebrates during spring/summer months and seed during winter months. Wildflower headlands can also be used to buffer hedges, woodland and watercourses from sprays, fertilisers, run-off and soil erosion.



How can this measure work for you?

As well as providing benefits for wildlife, this measure can also provide important habitat for crop pollinators and natural enemies of certain crop pests which may benefit your crop. This measure also offers a wonderful opportunity to improve your reputation for conservation on your farm! Particularly if placed near to a footpath, walkers will see firsthand that the farm is making an effort for wildlife and many growers who have already used this measure, say that it has been a tremendous way of improving local relationships with the public.

Placing buffer strips in areas at risk of erosion and run-off can help to meet the voluntary buffer strips element of your Soil Protection Review.

Certain pesticides need an aquatic buffer zone. If you want to reduce this aquatic buffer zone, there is a legal obligation to carry out and record a Local Environment Risk Assessment for Pesticides (LERAP). This measure can help you limit both pesticide drift and meet what is needed for your LERAP. You need to leave a 5m buffer zone unsprayed to safeguard hedges, field margins etc from pesticides.

Essential requirements:

- Establish the margin with a minimum average width of 6m which should be in addition to the cross compliance protection zones next to a hedgerow/watercourse).
- Remove any areas of soil compaction prior to establishment except on archaeological features.
- The headland should be cut annually in the autumn/winter.
- Cuttings should be removed to benefit flower production and survival.
- Do not apply pesticides fertilisers, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge) on the wildflower margin area.
- Sow a mix of fine-leaved grasses and flowers, such as knapweed, bird's-foot-trefoil, self-heal, oxeye daisy and yarrow.

Additional management considerations:

- Where possible take advice on the best wildflower mixture to suit your land.
- Cutting:
 - Regular cutting in the first 12 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Ideally cuttings should be removed.
 - Leaving a metre or two uncut next to the hedge or other boundary will provide a refuge for overwintering insects and small mammals.
 - Avoid cutting when the soil is moist, to prevent compaction.
- If excess vegetation threatens to suppress the flowers, cut again before April.



C14: SELECTIVE USE OF SPRING HERBICIDES (R)

NOTE: This should **only be considered** where the weed spectrum is known to be suitable, and herbicide programmes should preferably be planned with advice from a BASIS qualified agronomist to ensure that crop health and productivity is safeguarded. Light soils without serious grass weed infestations are likely to be most suitable.

Aims

To reduce herbicide inputs within fields without pernicious weeds, both as a way to increase biodiversity and to reduce herbicide input costs. This measure can be used on a partial (for example, headlands only) or whole field basis.

A single spring application of a selective herbicide (in the SAFFIE project this was a single spring application of amidosulfuron) can allow a diverse weed population to develop which can support insects important in the diet of farmland birds. While the value of unsprayed or selectively sprayed field margins has already been demonstrated for a variety of farmland wildlife including butterflies, small mammals and songbirds, there are challenges associated with applying this strategy within the field itself because of the difficulties in managing pernicious weeds, the larger areas involved and the potential impact on crop yields. This is because weed species vary in their competitive ability. Therefore some species can be tolerated at higher populations than others. Very high populations of most weed species are likely to lead to some yield penalty, but for less competitive species such impacts on yield are unlikely to occur within a single growing season if the herbicide regime is carefully chosen and targeted to the species present.

How can this measure work for you?

Trials conducted as part of the SAFFIE project have demonstrated that there is scope to manipulate selective herbicide inputs within the crop to allow some increase in weed populations that can be both beneficial for wider farmland biodiversity, save on herbicides input costs and at the same time would not significantly compromise productivity.

Essential requirements:

- Do not use an autumn herbicide and reduce the spring herbicide regime to a single application of a selective herbicide (amidosulfuron) to remove only the most competitive weeds.
- The herbicide programme to encourage beneficial species should be carefully tailored by your adviser to the soil type and weed spectrum present at any particular site and circumstances and impact on subsequent crops must be considered.
- Do not use this measure where there are known to be undesirable weed species or in particular problem grass species.
- Do not use this measure where there is known herbicide resistance within the weed population.

Additional management considerations:

- The most beneficial herbicide treatment for wider biodiversity in the SAFFIE project was found to be a single spring application of amidosulfuron in March. This can be effective primarily in controlling cleavers, but can also control or suppress some other undesirable broad-leaved species with similar efficacy to that achieved by sequences of herbicides.
- To avoid the expansion of weed populations to detrimental levels, it is recommended that this measure should not be located in the same field or part field in consecutive years.

C15: ENHANCED MANAGEMENT OF SHORT ROTATION COPPICE - WILLOW OR POPLAR ONLY (NR)

Aims

This measure provides ways of enhancing the environmental value of new plantings of Short Rotation Coppice (SRC). Margins around SRC and rides between plantation blocks have been found to contain large numbers of butterflies and other insects, and can also support plants that are typical of open farmland and long-term set-aside. Within the SRC crop itself, the plant and bird communities are more similar to those of woodland habitats, so don't contribute greatly to recapturing the benefits of set-aside. Hence it is the margins and rides that are particularly important in this context. For this reason, 100% of margins, headlands and rides will contribute towards the Campaign area targets, but only 25% of the area planted with SRC.



SRC can help to reduce soil erosion and loss of nutrients through leaching, compared to arable cropping. However, land will be susceptible to erosion until the crop becomes established and (to a lesser extent) following harvest, and care should be taken to minimise this risk (for example, on sloping land, rows should be planted across, not down, the slope).

How can this measure work for you?

SRC can help to protect the soil and requires less management than arable crops. It can provide valuable cover for game birds.

Essential requirements:

- This measure only applies to SRC, **not** Miscanthus. Only SRC planted on previously cropped land will qualify.
- Do not locate SRC in open areas where bird species such as grey partridge, stone curlew and yellow wagtail are present, or adjacent to damp grassland areas used by waders such as lapwing, snipe, curlew and redshank.
- Do not plant individual blocks larger than 3 ha without including 8m rides (to allow light to penetrate) or other open uncropped areas between them. Restrict plot sizes to 15ha maximum.
- Follow landscape design guidance in Forestry Commission guideline note (Bell & McIntosh, 2001).
- Maintain 8m margins around plantations.
- Do not use herbicides after planting.
- Do not use insecticides.
- Fertiliser and manure applications should be restricted to those recommended in Defra's Best Practice Guidelines. Do not apply to headlands and rides.
- After the first year, cut margins and rides only as necessary and no more than twice a year. Do not cut between 1 March and 31 July. Leave 1-2 metres uncut next to the hedge or other boundary, unless cutting is necessary to prevent scrub growth.
- Harvest blocks in different years to provide a range of habitat structures of different age classes within the landscape.
- Do not harvest in wet conditions.
- Use low ground pressure tyres.



Additional management requirements:

- Establish SRC adjacent to farm woodlands, wooded field margins and hedgerows to create more continuous habitat.
- Plant mixed willow varieties, using 'English' varieties wherever possible. This will reduce risks of pest and disease problems.
- Make use of the 20% allowance for open ground by creating open areas along rides or patches within plantings, or leaving awkward corners unplanted.
- Create additional 8m rides (uncropped/open ground) through the crop where required for cross-field vehicle access, under power lines or over pipelines and other utilities.
- Manage row lengths to reduce need for reversing/manoeuvring harvesting trailers for offloading.
- If a range of plant species is not already present, consider sowing grass/wildflower mixture (seek site-specific advice).
- Consider sowing shade-tolerant wildflowers into the understorey. If you wish to do this, seek advice on appropriate seed mixtures.



GLOSSARY

| | |
|--------|---|
| AIC | Agricultural Industries Confederation |
| AICC | Association of Independent Crop Consultants |
| BASIS | British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme |
| CAAV | Central Association of Agricultural Valuers |
| CFE | Campaign for the Farmed Environment |
| CLA | Country Land and Business Association |
| ECSFDI | England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative |
| ELS | Entry Level Stewardship |
| FWAG | Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group |
| LEAF | Linking Environment and Farming |
| LERAP | Local Environment Risk Assessment for Pesticides |
| LLGs | Local Liaison Groups |
| NFU | National Farmers' Union |
| RSPB | Royal Society for the Protection of Birds |
| SAFFIE | Sustainable Arable Farming For an Improved Environment |
| SPR | Soil Protection Review |
| SPS | Single Payment Scheme |
| SRC | Short Rotation Coppice |

FARM RECORD 2010-2011

| Code | Campaign Voluntary Measure | Field/part-field | Total Area (ha) |
|--------------|---|------------------|-----------------|
| C1 | Grass buffers alongside temporary and permanent watercourses | | |
| C2 | Grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off | | |
| C3a C3b | Reverted arable areas Optional scrub management | | |
| C4 | Skylark plots | | |
| C5 | Fallow plots/Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land | | |
| C6 | Overwinter stubble followed by spring/summer fallow | | |
| C7a C7b | Overwintered stubble Optional for vulnerable soil | | |
| C8 | Uncropped, cultivated margins | | |
| C9 | Wild bird seed mixture (arable/grassland areas) | | |
| C10 | Game strips | | |
| C11 | Game Wildlife Conservancy Trust (GWCT) Un-harvested cereal headlands | | |
| C12a C12b | Pollen and nectar mixtures for arable or grassland areas Optional for use with horticultural crops | | |
| C13 | Sown wildflower headlands | | |
| C14 | Selective use of spring herbicides | | |
| C15 | Enhanced management of Short Rotation Coppice - willow or poplar only | | |
| | Total | | |

FARM RECORD 2011-2012

| Code | Campaign Voluntary Measure | Field/part-field | Total Area (ha) |
|--------------|---|------------------|--------------------|
| C1 | Grass buffers alongside temporary and permanent watercourses | | |
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| | Total | | |

FARM RECORD 2012-2013

| Code | Campaign Voluntary Measure | Field/part-field | Total Area (ha) |
|--------------|---|------------------|-----------------|
| C1 | Grass buffers alongside temporary and permanent watercourses | | |
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A farmer's guide to voluntary measures

2010-2013 Record Form

Please retain this for your records.

You may be asked to produce this in the future

The Campaign for the Farmed Environment website

Visit www.cfeonline.org.uk to find out more about the Campaign targets, themes and voluntary measures. This information hub will also provide information about the key target counties and activities at a local level including coordination, a diary of events and progress on the development of beacon farms.

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Campaign for the Farmed Environment partners - NFU, CLA, FWAG, LEAF, AIC, GWCT, AICC and CAAV – working in partnership with Defra and its agencies, Natural England and the Environment Agency, as well as the RSPB and other wildlife representatives.