Inclusions in back pocket of booklet:

- Pilot Area map
- Base map request form (ELS 2)
- Application form (ELS 3)
- Example application map
- Example pilot area map

If any of these documents are missing please contact the RPA or your Pilot Area Co-ordinator (see Annex 2).
The Entry Level Agri-Environment Scheme – Pilot

Scheme Guidance Booklet

2003

Follow these steps to apply for the Scheme:

Check that all or part of your holding is within the pilot area boundary
Check that you and your land are eligible and that you can maintain an agreement

Send in a ‘Base map request form’ to RPA by 15 April

When you have got your base maps, follow the application guidelines:

❑ Prepare your Environmental Farm Record
❑ Choose which scheme options you would like to include in your application, and where you will locate them
❑ Check that you have reached your points threshold
❑ Check that you are not in conflict with any other grant scheme
❑ Consult with others who may have an interest in the land
❑ Fill in the application form and mark up your application maps

Send to RPA before 30 May deadline

RPA confirms acceptance into the scheme
Your agreement starts on 1 August 2003

This booklet contains essential information about the ELS Pilot and how to apply. All sections of the booklet contain useful information. Sections 1, 3, 5 and 6 contain important information about the scheme conditions, which you must agree to if you are to be accepted into the scheme.
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Background

What is the Entry Level Scheme (ELS) Pilot?

The Entry Level Scheme is a new agri-environment scheme which is being tested in four pilot areas by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Under the scheme, payments will be made to farmers and land managers in four pilot areas who agree to continue or introduce beneficial environmental management on their land.

The four pilot areas broadly represent four different English farming types. The four areas are:

- Tiverton in Devon – grassland farming
- Market Deeping in Lincolnshire – arable/cropping
- Barnard Castle in Durham – upland farming
- Mortimer, near Reading in Berkshire – mixed farming.

The areas are broadly representative of these farming types, but there are no restrictions on the type of holding that may enter the ELS Pilot. If your holding is wholly or partly in the pilot area, your land is eligible for the scheme, whatever your farm type.

Depending on the success of the ELS Pilot over the next two years, the Entry Level Scheme will hopefully be rolled out across the whole of England in 2005. Our intention is that at the same time, a new ‘narrow and deep’ agri-environment scheme will be launched as a higher tier of the same scheme for those farmers who want to implement further, more detailed agri-environment management. The new higher tier would replace the existing Defra Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs), and will be designed to complement the Entry Level Scheme.

The Entry Level Scheme Pilot is administered on behalf of Defra by the Rural Payments Agency office (RPA) in Exeter. Contact details are in Annex 2 of this booklet and on the application form.

Each Pilot Area has a co-ordinator who works for Defra’s Rural Development Service (RDS). Contact details are provided in Annex 2. Your Pilot Area Co-ordinator will be able to help you with general enquiries.
What are the scheme’s objectives?

The Entry Level Scheme aims to encourage a large number of farmers across a wide area of farmland to deliver simple yet effective environmental management on their farm.

Defra has designed the scheme to be simple to administer, with the minimum amount of paperwork. Anyone meeting the scheme’s requirements will be eligible to join. We hope that these features will encourage high uptake of the scheme.

A simple yet effective scheme implemented across a wide area will help to address particular countrywide environmental problems which cannot be completely resolved by focusing on relatively small and isolated areas of the countryside, including:

- Diffuse pollution – issues such as soil erosion and nutrient leaching can be tackled more effectively by environmental management measures that affect a high proportion of land from which the pollution is coming;
- Loss of biodiversity – tackling declines in dispersed wildlife species such as farmland birds, brown hares, bats and many common invertebrates (e.g. butterflies, bees) need suitable management across a wide area. Small patches of habitat lose some of their value if they are isolated from other similar areas, and areas of important wildlife habitat are directly influenced by what happens on surrounding land.
- Loss of landscape character – a broad approach is necessary to consistently influence what happens across large tracts of the countryside, to avoid the fragmentation of traditional landscape patterns. The maintenance of traditional field boundaries is particularly important.
- Damage to the historic environment – safeguarding historic features, such as archaeological sites and ridge and furrow grassland which are at risk of plough damage, also requires a consistent action over a wide area. Conservation of the historic environment is very important, as the features, once lost, are irreplaceable.

What payment will I receive?

For land outside the LFA, you will be paid a flat rate payment of £30 per hectare per year for the whole eligible area of your holding.

If you have land in an LFA the following payment rates will apply on that land:

- Parcels of LFA land of less than 15 ha – £30 per hectare per year.
- Parcels of LFA land of 15 ha or more – £15 per hectare per year.

Where you are entering LFA land which is within a single parcel of land of 15 ha or more the lower payment rate applies, even if the land you wish to enter is itself less than 15 ha.
In both cases the area of land which should be included in your application and will attract payments should include all farmland including woodland. It should not include roads, farmyards, hard standings or any other developed land.

In addition, you may not include land which is already receiving funding under another agri-environment scheme (see Section 4 of this booklet for more details). The payment rate for the pilot scheme will remain the same for each of the 5 years of the agreement.

When should I apply and when will I get my payment?

Applications for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot must be received at RPA, Exeter, by 30 May 2003. See Section 2 of this booklet (‘How to complete your Application’) for further advice on what to do.

We aim to make payments each February for 5 years, starting in February 2004.

Who can apply?

The Entry Level Scheme Pilot is open to all farmers and landowners who are either:

- Freeholders
- Tenants, or
- Contractual licensees

You must have possession of the land for five years. If you do not have possession of the land for five years, you can make a joint application with the person who does.

What if I do not own the land?

If you are a tenant you must discuss your proposal to enter the ELS Pilot with your landlord to ensure that you do not contravene the conditions of your tenancy. If you do not have sufficient control over management of the land, or if your tenancy has less than 5 years to run, you and your landlord may make a joint application or your landlord may apply for the scheme and discuss with you the delivery of the options and management required.

Joint Applications

If you are a tenant or a contractual licensee whose tenancy or licence last for less than 5 years, or which has less than 5 years remaining from 1 August 2003, you can make a joint application with a person (e.g. the freehold owner, your landlord, the person whose land you farm) who would, if required, take over control for the remainder of the agreement term. If you wish to make a joint application the relevant person will
have to complete, and sign, Section 7 of your Application Form to confirm that they will ensure that your agreement commitments are fulfilled if you cease to have control over the land.

Is my land eligible?

If your land is wholly or partly in the pilot area, it may be entered into the Entry Level Scheme Pilot. However, you may have to exclude from your application any common land and any land receiving funding under other agri-environment schemes. See below for further details.

What if my holding crosses the pilot area boundary?

If your holding crosses the pilot area boundary, you may apply for the scheme on the whole farm, providing it is in one block of land. Your holding is still one block of land even if it is cut across by roads, railways, rivers or similar.

What if I have some land outside the pilot area boundary?

If your holding is not one complete block of land, and some of your land is outside the pilot, only the land which is within the pilot area (including any blocks of land which cross the pilot area boundary) may be entered into the Entry Level Scheme Pilot. Unconnected parcels of land outside the pilot area boundary are not eligible.

Common Land

Common land is not eligible for inclusion in the pilot scheme. You will have to exclude any common land from your calculation of your area eligible for the ELS Pilot, and you will not be able to put ELS options on the common land.

This may change in the future if the Entry Level Scheme is rolled out to all farmers in England.

What if others hold rights over my land?

If others hold rights over your land, for example if you have let sporting rights, you should discuss with them your proposals to apply for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot. It is your responsibility as the applicant to deliver the options as specified in your application.

What if I have another scheme on my holding?

If you are already receiving payments from another agri-environment scheme, such as Countryside Stewardship (CSS), Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs), Organic Farming Scheme (OFS), English Nature or English Heritage schemes, or other schemes, you may still be able to apply for the ELS Pilot. However, the land receiving funding may not be included in your ELS application. Further details on what to do if you have another scheme on your land are provided in Section 4 of this booklet.
What if I am in a farm assurance scheme?
If you already take part in a farm assurance scheme, this will not affect your application for the ELS Pilot. In fact, you may find it easier to accumulate points towards your ELS target as a result of the management you are already following. This is particularly the case for assurance schemes which aim for improved environmental standards, such as LEAF Marque.

How do I apply?
What do I have to do to join the scheme?
In order to enter the scheme you must prepare a simple record of environmental features and areas on the farm. In addition, you must make a commitment to carry out environmental management activities which you choose from a wide-ranging list of options.

You will need to establish a target number of ‘points’ which you must meet for the farm. This target is directly related to holding size. Each activity is worth a certain number of points per unit of area (e.g. for land management such as buffer strips), or length (e.g. for boundary feature management, such a hedge management) or per unit.

Section 2 of this booklet explains how to apply for the scheme in greater detail.

Will my application be accepted into the scheme?
You will be accepted into the scheme if:

- You meet the eligibility requirements for the scheme (e.g. you have land in one of the four pilot areas)
- You fill in the Application Form and mark up the two Application Maps correctly and return these to RPA by 30 May 2003. Full guidance on how to do this is contained in Section 2 of this booklet
- You demonstrate that you meet the points target for your applications (further guidance on this is contained in Section 2)
- You agree to comply with the additional requirements of the scheme as set out in Sections 5 and 6 of this booklet.

There is no minimum holding size for entry into the ELS Pilot, and there are no restrictions on the number of farmers that may enter the scheme. The only restriction is that your land must be within the Pilot Area boundary.

You will then receive payments each year for the five-year duration of your agreement, so long as you fulfil your obligations under the scheme.
When should I send in my application?

To apply for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot, you will first need to send a base map request form to RPA Exeter. You will then be sent the maps of your holding which you need to make your application.

A base map request form (ELS 2) is included in the back pocket of this booklet. The closing date for requests for base maps is **15 April 2003**.

Once you have your maps, you will need to complete the Application Form (ELS 3), which is also included in the back pocket of this booklet, using the guidance provided in Section 2 of this booklet: ‘How to complete your application’.

The closing date for applications is **30 May 2003**.

What happens next?

Once your application has been received, RPA will send you an acknowledgement. RPA will write to you at a later date to confirm that you’ve been accepted into the scheme, and you will be given a reference number for future correspondence. In applying for and being accepted into the Entry Level Scheme Pilot you will be agreeing to:

- deliver the options set out in your application form, in accordance with the relevant management requirements. The details of the management requirements for all the options are set out in Section 3 of this booklet.
- follow Good Farming Practice and other scheme conditions as set out in Sections 5 and 6 of this booklet.

In January each year you will be asked to sign a simple declaration stating that there have been no changes to the ELS eligible area that you manage. The declaration will have to be returned to RPA before payment can be released.

How long will my agreement last?

Your agreement is legally binding. It will run for five years, starting from 1 August 2003. You will be expected to fulfil your obligations for the full term of your agreement. You will be in breach of your agreement if you withdraw early from the Entry Level Scheme Pilot.

Can I apply for the pilot scheme next year?

It is anticipated the pilot scheme will only be open to people whose applications are received by **30 May 2003**.

How should I choose which options to put in my application?

Section 3 in this booklet: ‘Scheme options, management requirements and points allocations’ contains the complete list of scheme options. It describes the management to be carried out for each item of work and the standards that must be met. If you
include any option in your application, you are agreeing to carry out the stated management. You should read the guidelines for each option carefully to help you choose which ones to include in your application.

The Entry Level Scheme Pilot is operating in four areas of the country, each of which has been chosen to broadly represent a particular type of farming. In each case there are important features and characteristics of the area. These are described in the guidance note in the back pocket of this booklet. This description may help you to choose which options to have in your application. In addition, the information on your Information Map (provided by RPA after we receive your base map request form) may also highlight some features on your holding which may influence the options you choose and where you decide to locate them.

Apart from carrying out the environmental record for your farm (which is compulsory), you may choose from the list of options in order to reach your points.

What if I reach more than my points target?

The points target, and associated payment rate for the scheme, is fixed. This means that there is not a higher payment for delivery of additional options over and above your required target. If you find that you would like to deliver a higher level of commitment than required by the Entry Level Scheme Pilot, it might be worth considering applying for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, which has a wider range of more specialised options and payment rates, and more detailed and specific management prescriptions.

What help will be provided to understand the scheme and complete my application?

We hope that enough information is provided in this scheme booklet to enable you to send off for your base maps and, once you have received your maps, complete your application. However, Defra will also be holding workshops in each Pilot Area to explain the scheme and provide advice on applying. In addition there is a Co-ordinator for each Pilot Area who will be able to help you with general enquiries (see contact details in Annex 2).

Will I get a grant for help with my application?

The Entry Level Scheme Pilot has been designed to be as simple as possible. It is hoped that farmers will be able to complete the application themselves. If you would prefer to ask an adviser to help you prepare your application, then the decision is yours. However, no payment will be made towards this.

As part of the evaluation of the Entry Level Scheme Pilot we will be assessing whether there is a future need for advisory input, or whether most farmers have successfully prepared their application without help.
What else will I have to do?

In addition to the above, you will also be required to abide by the standards of Good Farming Practice and other requirements (see Section 5 of this booklet: Additional requirements which you must agree to).

Other pilot scheme information

What will happen if the Entry Level Scheme is rolled out across England?

Subject to the success of the scheme in the four pilot areas over the next two years, we hope that the Entry Level Scheme will be rolled out across England in 2005. If this happens, you may be able to choose to apply to terminate your ELS Pilot agreement, and to apply for the new countrywide Entry Level Scheme. Details on how to do this will be available at the time.

In the meantime, you should assume that your commitment will last for 5 years.

What happens if I need to change my agreement?

Details of the required management for each option are provided in Section 3 of this booklet. If you do not keep to these management requirements, you will be in breach of your agreement. However, where there are serious difficulties with meeting these, there is a system to allow you to deal with genuinely unforeseen situations (see Section 6 of this booklet). You must inform RPA of any proposed amendments or derogations before the associated changes to management take place, and any proposed amendments will not be valid without the RPA’s consent.

Will details of my agreement be made public?

Because the Entry Level Scheme Pilot involves expenditure of public money, there is a lot of interest in how the money is spent. This is particularly the case with a pilot scheme such as this, where new design concepts are being tested. Defra may therefore make information about your agreement available to organisations such as English Nature, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage, and to the public on request. The details to be provided will include: name of agreement holder, holding name, grid reference and total area under agreement.

Information about your agreement may also be used to publicise the scheme. It may also be used to produce maps to show, for example, how many farmers in your area are involved in agri-environment schemes.

Furthermore, information (including personal data) may also be released on request under the Environmental Information Regulations, the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
What follow up contact and visits will take place?

Defra will be carrying out an important detailed study to rapidly evaluate the ELS pilot, and a key part of this evaluation will be farmer feedback. All farmers in the Entry Level Scheme Pilot will therefore be asked to provide comments and views about the scheme and how it has worked at the farm level, covering issues such as how easy it was to apply for the scheme, the practicality and effectiveness of the scheme options and ideas on how the scheme design could be improved.

This information may be requested by Defra or by organisations or contractors who are taking part in the scheme evaluation. We will try to ensure that the amount of farmer involvement is kept to a reasonable level, and is not too demanding.

This feedback will help us to revise and improve the scheme before it is hopefully made available to all farmers in England in 2005. We hope that farmers in the pilot areas will appreciate how important their input is to the development of a practical, workable agri-environment scheme open to all farmers, and will make the most of the opportunity to influence future development in this area.

Other legislation which you should be aware of:

These Regulations seek to protect environmentally important land from agricultural intensification. Land managers are required to seek approval from Defra before carrying out any work which would bring uncultivated land or semi-natural areas into intensive agricultural use.

Before you apply for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot you should consider how these Regulations might apply to any land in the scheme at the end of a five year agreement. Enquiries about the Regulations should be addressed to the EIA helpline on 0800 028 2140.
In order to apply for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot, you will need to submit an application form. This application form should be supported by 2 marked-up farm maps, provided by RPA. Detailed instructions and guidance on how to complete the application form and how to prepare the maps are provided below. The flow chart on this page summarises the process.

### Summary of the application process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Complete and send Base Maps Request to RPA <strong>by 15 April</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Receive the 3 Base Maps showing the area around your holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Complete Section 2 (Record of Environmental Features) of the Application Form, and mark these features on Application Map 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Calculate the points target for your farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Choose from the list of options and complete Section 5 (Your points target and choice of scheme options) of the Application Form, and mark your option choices on Application Map 2. Check you have reached the points target for your farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Send the completed Application Form and Maps 1 and 2 to RPA <strong>by 30 May</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Receive Application approval. Agreement commences 1 August</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Requesting a set of base maps: form ELS 2

It will be essential for you to have a set of application maps to use as part of your application. In order to get your base maps you will need to complete a ‘Base maps request form’ (ELS 2), provided in the back pocket of this booklet, and return it to RPA at Exeter. You must do this by 15 April in order to get your maps back and have time to complete your application.

We will send you three base maps of the area including your holding, one for your information and two which you will need to draw on and send in as part of your application, along with your application form.

Please note that by requesting a set of base maps there is no obligation to apply for the scheme. Your commitment to the scheme will be made after you have sent in the application form and have received confirmation of acceptance into the scheme from RPA. Your agreement will start on 1 August 2003.

Before you start

To apply for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot, you will need the following:

- An application form (ELS 3, found in the back pocket of this Booklet)
- Your base maps (provided by RPA) as follows:
  - **Information Map** showing designations on your farm such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) and Less Favoured Areas (LFAs). This will allow you to identify high priority features on your farm which would benefit from the introduction of some of the scheme options.
  - **Application Map 1.** This should be used to prepare your Farm Environmental Record (see Step 3 and example application map), and should be returned with your application form.
  - **Application Map 2.** This should be used to show where you are putting your scheme options (see Step 5 and example application map). This map should also be returned with your application form.
- You will also need a number of different coloured pens.
How to fill in your Application Form

Step 1: Providing general information

On your application form, please complete Section 1: Applicant’s details. If you do not have a Defra holding number (County, Parish, Holding) please contact RPA on 01392 266508.

If you are a tenant you must discuss your proposal with your landlord to ensure that you do not contravene the conditions of your tenancy. If you do not have sufficient control over management of the land, or if your tenancy has less than 5 years to run, your landlord may need to apply for the scheme and discuss with you the delivery of the management required. For further details on who can apply for the ELS Pilot, please see page 5 of this booklet.

Step 2: Showing the boundary of your holding

You will need: Application Map 1 and Application Map 2.

Please indicate clearly on both maps the boundary of your whole holding, using a black pen.

Step 3: Preparing a Record of Environmental Features on your farm

You will need: Section 2 of the Application form and Application Map 1.

As a condition of the scheme you must agree to identify, map and retain important environmental features and areas on the farm.

Please complete Section 2: Record of Environmental Features. At the same time you will need to mark on Application Map 1 those features and areas from the list which are present on your holding. Use the colours indicated on the Application Form for each feature or area. The example map (included in the back pocket of this booklet) will help to show you how to mark your map and complete the table.

You will be awarded 5 points per ha for completing this record and map (see Section 5 of the application form).

Step 4: Identifying fields which have a high soil erosion risk

You will need: Section 3 of the application form and Application Map 1.

Please follow the instructions in Section 3 of the application form and indicate high soil erosion risk fields with orange hatching on Application Map 1.
Step 5: Calculating your points target and annual scheme payment

You will need: Sections 4 and 5 of the Application form and Application Map 2.

In order to enter the ELS Pilot, you will need to agree to carry out a programme of environmental management activities taken from a list of options (further information on the options can be found in Section 3 of this booklet). Each option is worth a certain number of ‘points’. In order for your farm to qualify for entry into the scheme you must reach a total target number of points for all the options combined.

For examples of the calculations to be used when determining the number of points for your target and choice of options please see Section 4 of the application form.

Please complete Section 5: ‘Your Target and Choice of Scheme Options’ as follows:

To calculate the points target for your farm you will need to work out the area in hectares (ha) of your holding. You should include all land (including woodland). Do not include roads and developed land which is not in agricultural use (e.g. farmyards, hard standings and made up tracks).

You should exclude any areas of common land from your application.

In order to avoid double funding, you must also exclude from your application any areas of land which are currently receiving funding from other schemes (e.g. Countryside Stewardship Scheme, ESAs, Organic Farming Scheme). See Section 4 of this booklet for details of the schemes and options concerned.

1) In the first Measurement box (Box T1) in the ‘Your Target’ section of the form enter the area of your holding, excluding LFA land in parcels of 15 hectares or more, any common land and any areas of land which are currently receiving funding from other agri-environment schemes. Multiply this area of land by 30.

2) In the second Measurement box (Box T2) enter the area of any LFA land in parcels of 15 hectares or more, excluding any common land and any areas of land which are currently receiving funding from other agri-environment schemes. Multiply this area of land by 15.

3) Woodland and any uncropped areas should be included but exclude any roads and developed land not in agricultural use.

4) Calculate your total area and Total Target Points (Box T3). (Please note that this figure also represents the payment (£) you will receive under the scheme each year).

5) Multiply the total eligible area of your holding (Box T3) by 5 to calculate the points available for the Compulsory Environmental Farm Record, and enter this in the compulsory Farm Environmental Record box (Box Q1).
Step 6: Choosing which options to include in your application

You will need: Section 5 of the Application form and Application Map 2.

If you have a computer with an Internet connection an interactive version of the Section 5 of the application form, which carries out the calculations, is available at www.rpa.gov.uk.

In this booklet, read Section 3: ‘Options, Management Requirements and Points Allocations’ to find out what things can be included in your application. You will see that there are a wide range of options which are designed for a variety of farming systems. Please read through all of the options and then decide which ones you would like to include in your application.

Please also have a close look at your Information Map provided by RPA. This will show important environmental features on the farm. This information may help you to decide which options to choose and where to locate them.

For each option you wish to include you should do the following:

1) Decide where the option is going to be located on your holding

2) Draw the location on Application Map 2 in a different colour for each option (excluding rotational options and management plans – see below).

3) Measure the total length or area of the option concerned on your holding. Round all area measurements down to the nearest 0.01 hectare (100m$^2$) and length measurements down to the nearest 100m.

4) Fill in a row in the table in Section 5 of the application form.

5) Calculate how many points this option has contributed towards your total points target.

6) On the application form enter the colour or shading you have used on your map to identify each chosen option in the Colour Key boxes adjacent to each option.

Please note:

For the following rotational options, you will not need to mark the location on the map, as they will move location from year to year. However, you must ensure that the declared area and required management is delivered in every year of your agreement:

E4 Over-wintered stubbles
E6 Skylark plots
E7 Conservation headlands in cereal fields
E8 Conservation headlands with no fertilisers
F1 Cereals for whole crop silage, followed by over-wintered stubble
F2 Brassica fodder crops followed by over-wintered stubble
F3 Management of maize crops to reduce erosion
H1 Undersown spring cereals
For management plan options (M1, M2, M3, M4), you will not need to mark the map, but if you are intending to have them as part of your application you must include them in Section 5 of the application form, and ensure that the plans are prepared.

For the option to reduce soil erosion (G1) this may only be located in high soil erosion risk fields indicated with orange hatching on your Application Map 1.

Step 7: Confirming that you have reached your points target

Once you have chosen your options and completed Section 5, you should calculate the total points accumulated. This should at least match your Total Points Target in order to be eligible for this scheme.

Remember that you are responsible for ensuring that all the options listed in Section 5 of your application form are delivered.

Step 8: Declarations and undertakings

Please read, complete and sign the declaration at Section 6.

If you wish to make a Joint Application (see page 5 of this booklet for information on Joint Applications), you will need to get the relevant person (e.g. the freehold owner, your landlord, the person whose land you farm) to complete Section 7 of the application form, and sign the declaration in that section.

If necessary, complete the ‘Authorisation for a Partner or Agent to make the Entry Level Agri-Environment Scheme Pilot Application’.

Please return the following to RPA at Exeter by 30 May 2003:

- Your completed and signed Application Form
- Application Map 1 showing the record of environmental features on your holding
- Application Map 2 showing the options you have chosen

RPA Exeter address:

Entry Level Pilot Scheme
Rural Payments Agency
Clyst House
Winslade Park
Clyst St Mary
Exeter
EX5 1DY
If your application for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot is successful, RPA will write to you confirming your acceptance into the scheme. Stamped copies of your completed Application Form and Application Maps will be returned to you. You must retain these copies, as Defra may ask to see them during inspections. You are also advised to retain your own copies of the completed application form and application maps before sending them to RPA, for your records.
To join the Entry Level Scheme Pilot you must make a commitment to carry out environmental management activities on your farm.

You will need to establish a target number of ‘points’ which you must meet for the farm. This target is directly related to holding size. Each environmental management activity is worth a certain number of points per unit of area (e.g. for land management such as buffer strips), or length (e.g. for boundary feature management, such as hedge management) or per unit. If you agree to deliver options which meet your whole holding points target, you will be guaranteed entry to the scheme.

Section 2 of this booklet explains how to apply for the scheme in greater detail.

The following two pages contain a summary table of the options available and the points allocations. This is followed by more detailed descriptions of the management requirements for each option.
# List of options, management requirements and points allocations

## Summary: options and points available

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Detailed management requirements for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot Options

Some of the option details below refer to an ‘Information Map’. You will receive this map when you send a ‘Base Maps Request Form’ (ELS 2, contained in the back pocket of this booklet) in to RPA.

Options for field boundaries, trees and woodland

B1 & B2 Hedgerow Management

Hedges and hedgebanks are important elements of the countryside, as landscape and historic features, for wildlife habitat, for stock management and shelter. You should:

- Leave a 1m uncultivated grass strip next to them as a buffer from farming operations. This should be measured from the edge of the hedge when you join the scheme. Do not apply fertiliser, manure\(^1\) and pesticides.
- Maintain them at a height and width characteristic of the local area.
- Do not cut the same hedge/hedgebank every year.
- Avoid cutting all hedges in the same year.
- Do not cut during the bird breeding season (1 April to 31 July).
- Hedge laying is allowed.
- Where the hedge includes gaps, these may be included in the length measurement, providing they amount to no more than 20% of the total length of that hedge.

B1 30 points per 100m where management carried out on both sides of the hedge

B2 15 points per 100m where management carried out on one side of the hedge

\(^1\)Manure includes all organic fertilisers for example manures and slurries and liquid sludge, except where otherwise stated.
ILLUSTRATIONS OF HEDGEROW MANAGEMENT

B1: Hedgerow management on both sides of the hedge

- Do not cut the same hedge every year and avoid cutting all hedges in the same year.
- Hedge left uncut between 1 April and 31 July to protect nesting birds.
- 1m wide uncultivated margin along both sides of the hedge.

B2: Hedgerow management on one side of the hedge

- 1m wide uncultivated margin along one side of the hedge only.

B3 Enhanced hedgerow management

This option is only available where you have control of the management of both sides of the hedge.

In addition to the above conditions:

- Maintain hedges to a height which is characteristic of the local area, but no less than 1.5 m. A mixture of heights and widths will provide the best range of habitat. (You may use this option to manage hedges that are less than 1.5m high at the start of the agreement, but in this case the top of the hedge should not be cut until it reaches 1.5m in height.)
List of options, management requirements and points allocations

- Cut no more than one third of your hedges in any one year, ideally in January or February (to retain berries for birds), but not before 1 September or after 28 February.
- You may leave saplings to grow into hedgerow trees at intervals, for example at about every 50m, where this fits in with the local landscape character.
- Where necessary for road safety, one side of the hedge may be trimmed more frequently.

**B3 50 points per 100m**

**B3: Enhanced hedgerow management**

You may leave local saplings at appropriate distances (one every 50m or so).

Hedge with a variety of heights and widths, achieved by cutting no more than one third of the length each year.

B3 gives the broadest range of wildlife habitats.

1m wide uncultivated margin along both sides of hedge.

(All illustrations by Catherine Grundy, Defra)
B4 Ditch Management

Leaving one ditch bank uncut provides essential cover for the water vole

This option is available for ditches (excluding moorland grips) where the ditch regularly contains standing or flowing water. You must have control over the management of both sides of the ditch. The aim is to establish a diverse bankside and aquatic vegetation.

- Cut up to half your length of ditch bank every year, between 1 September and end of 28 February. Cut only one side of the ditch bank in any one year.
- Leave a 1 metre uncut grass strip between the top of the ditch bank and the adjoining crop.
- Clean ditches no more than twice during your 5-year agreement with no more than half the ditches cleaned in any year. Clean ditches between 31 July and 31 January.
- Only use mechanical means to clean your ditches or trim your bank.
- Any dredging or spoil should be levelled along the bank and bankside vegetation should be re-established by natural regeneration.

30 points per 100m
B5 Stone Wall Protection and Maintenance

This option is available where you have control over the management of both sides of the wall.

Stone walls of all types (including stone faced banks) are important for stock management and as landscape and historic features. They are also potentially important habitats for lichens, mosses and ferns, invertebrates, reptiles, birds and small mammals.

- Protect stone walls and stone-faced banks from deterioration, i.e. repair gaps where these occur during the course of your agreement.
- Do not remove any in-situ stone from walls
- The measurement should include complete walls or complete sections of walls.

20 points per 100m
B6 & B7 Protection of In-field Trees

Mature trees are of historic and landscape significance in both arable and grassland situations, and also provide habitat for many invertebrates and birds. To protect them:

- Do not carry out any supplementary feeding of stock, storage of materials or machinery, cultivations or weed control (apart from spot treatment) under the canopy of the tree.
- Leave fallen timber within the protected area.
- This option can be applied to groups of up to 3 trees.

**B6 15 points per tree protected on cultivated land**

**B7 10 points per tree protected on grassland**

(All illustrations by Catherine Grundy, Defra)
B8 Maintenance of Woodland Fences

Maintain fences to prevent damage to woodlands, such as overgrazing and soil erosion.

This option will protect the woodland flora and encourage regeneration.

- Where you have responsibility for the woodland boundary, maintain these fences in a stockproof condition to ensure exclusion of livestock, or to permit controlled grazing. Avoid damaging woodland boundary banks.

4 points per 100m

B9 Management of Woodland Edges

Hedges and shrubs in the woodland edge provide habitat for small mammals and birds and are to be encouraged. This option is designed to encourage the woodland edge to grow out and requires 2m to be left uncultivated from the edge of the wood. Additional benefit can be achieved if this option is combined with 6m buffer strips (D3/D6) around the edge of the woodland.

- In cultivated fields, do not cultivate within 2 metres of the woodland edge and allow the woodland edge to grow out for up to 2 metres.
- In grassland situations, do not poach or overgraze the woodland edge strip or apply fertilisers, manure or herbicides and allow the woodland edge to grow out up to 2m.
- Trim no more than one third of the shrubby growth in any one year.

13 points per 100m managed
B10 Maintenance and Management of Woodland Rides

Rides add structural diversity to woodland and assist with woodland management. The ride must be large enough to have a break in the tree canopy above, and allow sunlight to reach the ground. This option refers to the maintenance and management of existing rides within woodland and does not involve felling or removal of trees. (If you intend to create new rides within woodland by felling trees you should discuss your plans with the Forestry Commission. You will need a felling licence from the Forestry Commission if you fell more than 4 tonnes per calendar quarter).

- Mow the central strip, and where width permits, allow tall grass and scrub to develop along edges.

400 points per ha mown
Archaeological sites, traditional buildings, and designed landscapes such as parkland, give the countryside its local character and its interest, as well as providing a record of human activity over centuries. Changes in agriculture have damaged or destroyed many of these features, or resulted in their dereliction. Beneficial management can protect these important sites and help to retain and enhance the distinctive and varied character of the countryside.

Before considering these options, please look carefully at your information map, which has been supplied by RPA. This shows the selected historic features on your farm. If there are additional features which you are aware of, please mark these on your Application Map 1 and label them, including listed and unlisted traditional buildings. If you wish to carry out works other than those specified in the measures below which affect Scheduled Monuments, you will need to consult English Heritage.

If you have historic features on your farm you must meet the following scheme conditions:

- Do not cause ground disturbance on known and currently uncultivated archaeological sites (as shown on your information map provided by RPA).
- Do not deliberately plough more deeply, de-stone, subsoil or undertake additional drainage on those areas containing known archaeological sites (shown on your information map provided by RPA) already under cultivation.
- Do not run free-range pigs on archaeological sites (shown on your information map provided by RPA).
- Do not remove any useable building stone, walling stone or traditional roofing material off the holding, excluding materials produced from established quarries.
- Do not damage, demolish or remove stone from substantially complete ruined traditional farm buildings or field boundaries.
C1 Maintenance of Traditional Farm Buildings

Traditional farm buildings are buildings usually pre-dating 1940 and mainly built of locally available materials. These buildings provide information about the rural economy and past farming practices. While many are not suited to modern agriculture, they are often valued features in the landscape and make a major contribution to local character. The annual active maintenance of weatherproof buildings prevents the onset of serious structural problems, which may need expensive restoration in the future.

- Continue to protect and maintain any weatherproof traditional farm buildings (including fixtures and fittings and adjacent associated features such as mounting blocks or stook bases) which you own, or for which you are responsible.
- Maintenance works and minor repairs should be carried out on a ‘like for like’ basis (using traditional material and methods), in order to retain the character of the building.
- Obtain current photographs of the building as evidence of the condition of the building when you joined the scheme.
- Keep a record of work done, and carry out and record a brief annual visual inspection.

2 points per square metre of floor area
C2 Take archaeological features currently on cultivated land out of cultivation

Archaeological features, both individual sites such as barrows, settlement sites or hill forts, and more extensive landscape features such as ridge and furrow and ancient field systems, are often our only record of past human activity. They cannot be replaced and once destroyed are gone forever. Cultivation can be particularly destructive to archaeological sites. Taking these features out of cultivation is an essential step in conserving them for present and future generations to see and understand. You should:

- Take archaeological sites out of cultivation.
- Choose a boundary which encompasses the site and provides a sensible and practical field division where necessary.
- The area can be sown or left to regenerate, then carry out the following management:
  - Manage the area as permanent grassland by grazing or mowing.
  - Maintain a continuous grass sward and do not allow bare patches of soil to develop (for example, by considering carefully the regular routing and rotation of stock movements, and gathering points such as water troughs).
  - Do not supplementary feed on or next to the archaeological site.
  - Prevent scrub development.
  - Minimise the use of heavy vehicles on the site, particularly in wet weather, to prevent damage caused by wheel rutting and compaction.
  - Do not tip or dump any material on the site.
  - Avoid obvious earthworks if chain harrowing and rolling.
  - Follow the grass management requirements as outlined for option J3 ‘Permanent grassland with low inputs’. Note that you cannot also claim the points for option J3 on the same land if you have this option.

50 points plus 500 points per ha
C3 Reduce cultivation depth on land where there are archaeological features

Where removal of sites from cultivation cannot be achieved within the management of your farm, minimising cultivation is a ‘next-best’ option. Minimal cultivation prevents damage to features in the sub-soil.

- Avoid deep soil disturbance by using minimum tillage (i.e. less than 10cm, 4 inches) or no-till practices.
- This may be on the whole or part of the field where the archaeological feature is, depending on what is practical on your farm.

40 points per ha where minimum tillage practised.

C4 Management of Archaeological Sites where scrub is present

Trees and shrubs can be very damaging to archaeological sites as a result of damage caused by root penetration, wind throw, or by attracting burrowing animals or sheltering stock.

- Where scrub is present on a site, further encroachment should be prevented by grazing and/or mowing.
- Do not remove scrub between 1 April and 30 June to protect nesting birds.
- Prevent the spread of weeds, shrubs, saplings or scrub to avoid damage by roots.
- Avoid using heavy machinery and ensure works do not disturb the ground. Stumps and roots must not be grubbed out, but stumps may be cut (or ground down) level with the land surface.
- Remove cuttings or brash from the site.
- Do not tip, dump or burn any material on the site.
- Do not remove mature trees without Forestry Commission approval.

100 point per ha
C5 Archaeological Features on grassland

Maintaining land as permanent pasture preserves archaeology

This option is a supplement to the grassland options. Your land must also be in one of the following options: J1, J3 and J4 in lowland grassland and K1 and K2 in upland grassland. This option is only available as a supplement where archaeological features are present in the field concerned (see your Information Map supplied by RPA).

Well-managed permanent grassland is the best agricultural management option for archaeological sites and landscapes, to conserve them for present and future generations.

In addition to the management required for the relevant grassland option, you must

- Maintain a continuous grass sward and do not allow bare patches of soil to develop (for example, by considering carefully the regular routing and rotation of stock movements, and gathering points such as water troughs).
- Do not supplementary feed on or next to the archaeological site.
- Control weed growth and prevent scrub development.
- Minimise the use of heavy vehicles on the site, particularly in wet weather, to prevent damage caused by wheel rutting and compaction.
- Do not tip or dump any material on the site.
- Avoid obvious earthworks if chain harrowing and rolling.

10 points per ha (supplement)
Buffer strips potentially have a wide range of benefits, such as creating new habitat for small mammals, invertebrates and birds; protecting habitats from sprays, fertiliser and cultivation, protecting archaeological or historic features from damage by mechanical operations; stabilising banks, protecting water courses and reducing diffuse pollution.

Choose the width that is most suitable for you and your machinery and use these options alongside or adjoining the features listed as requiring mapping in Section 2 of your Application Form (e.g. ponds, ditches, riverbanks, hedges, stone walls etc.). Generally speaking, the wider the buffer strip, the greater the protection and wildlife habitat that will be provided. These buffer strips should not overlap with any buffer strips required under other options, such as those in Section B (Options for field boundaries, trees and woodland).

D1 & D2 Buffer strips on cultivated land

- Establish a grassy strip by natural regeneration or by sowing. Regular cutting in the first year may be needed to control coarse vegetation and encourage tillering.
- These strips should not receive any fertilisers or manure.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious grass weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- After the first year, cut strips only to control woody growth, and no more than one year in five (where next to woodland, one year in ten)
- Occasional vehicle use is permitted, but do not use buffer strips for regular access, turning or storage.

D1 2m buffer strip on cultivated land: 10 points per 100m
D2 4m buffer strips on cultivated land: 20 points per 100m
D3 Buffer strips on cultivated land

(All illustrations by Catherine Grundy, Defra)

Follow the management for options D1/D2, and in addition:

- After the first year, cut the three metres abutting the crop edge annually after mid July and only cut the other three metres to control woody growth, and no more than one year in five (where next to woodland, one year in ten).

D3 6m buffer strips on cultivated land: 30 points per 100m
D4, D5 & D6 Uncropped, cultivated margins on arable land

These margins will provide beneficial management for rare arable plants

- On free draining, sandy or stony soils, cultivate an uncropped arable margin.
- Cultivate annually in spring or autumn to a depth of about 15 cm (varying the depth and season may prevent the build up of undesirable weeds).
- These strips should not receive any fertiliser or manure.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious grass weeds, (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- If the weed burden becomes unmanageable, you may develop these strips into grass buffer strips (see options D1, D2, D3), and adopt their required management. You must adopt the option with the equivalent points value.

D4: 2m uncropped cultivated margin: 10 points
D5: 4m uncropped cultivated margin: 20 points
D6: 6m uncropped cultivated margin: 30 points
D7, D8 & D9 Buffer strips on intensive grassland

These options are available on improved grassland receiving more than 100kg/per ha N per year.

On fields which will be mown:

- Leave an uncut 2m/4m/6m buffer strip around mown grass fields; graze along with the aftermath, following the final cut.

OR

- On fields that will be grazed: do not poach or overgraze the buffer strip

In addition:

- These strips should not receive any fertilisers or manure.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious grass weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- After the first year, cut strips only to control woody growth, and no more than one year in five (where next to woodland, one year in ten).
- Occasional vehicle use is permitted, but do not use them for access, turning or storage.
- It is not a requirement to fence these buffer strips.

D7 2m buffer strips on intensive grassland: 10 points per 100m
D8 4m buffer strips on intensive grassland: 20 points per 100m
D9 6m buffer strips on intensive grassland: 30 points per 100m
E1 Field corner management

Taking field corners out of cultivation helps to increase numbers of insects and birds. These areas are often awkward to reach with machinery and are of lower productivity. However, the provision of a grassy corner will greatly increase the wildlife interest of the field.

- Take unproductive or awkward field corners out of cultivation.
- Patch size should be no more than 0.5 ha and there should be a maximum of one paid patch per 10 ha of arable land.
- Establish by natural regeneration.
- Regular cutting in the first year may be needed to control coarse vegetation and encourage tillering.
- After establishment, cut no more than one year in five to allow the development of tussocky grass and low scrub, except on archaeological sites where scrub will need to be controlled by cutting as required.
- These areas should not receive any fertilisers or manures.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious grass weeds, (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- The area should not be used for access, turning or storage.

500 points per ha
E2 Wild bird seed mixture

This type of crop will feed seed-eating birds in arable landscapes, where there is little remaining food source. The aim is to provide a year round continuous supply of food.

- Sow a mixture (or a mix of rows) of at least three seed bearing crops (e.g. a cereal, kale, quinoa).
- Sow in strips at least 6 metres wide at the edges of fields and/or in blocks. Blocks should not exceed 0.5 hectares and you should have no more than one block per 20 ha.
- To maintain seed production, re-sow at least every other year.
- Only apply fertiliser or manure if necessary for establishment.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious grass weeds, (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed). However, Glyphosate may be used prior to spring re-sowing to facilitate re-establishment.
- Do not apply any other pesticides.
- The area should not be used for access, turning or storage. Do not graze.

500 points per ha
Incorporating flowering plants in a plot will boost the numbers of pollen and nectar feeding insects, including butterflies and bumblebees.

- Sow a mixture of at least three pollen and nectar rich plants (e.g. red clover, alsike clover, bird’s foot trefoil).
- Sow in strips at least 6 metres wide at the edges of fields and/or in blocks during July to August or Mid-March to Mid-April.
- Blocks should not exceed 0.5 hectares and you should have no more than one block per 20 ha.
- Once the pollen and nectar source fails, typically after 2-4 years, you will need to re-establish the mixture.
- Glyphosate may be applied prior to re-establishment, apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious grass weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- Do not apply any other pesticides, fertiliser, manure or lime.
- To stimulate late flowering, cut half the area to 20 cm in July and the whole area to 10 cm between 15 September and 31 October.
- The area should not be used for access, turning or storage.
- Winter autumn grazing benefits legumes and is allowed, but do not graze in the spring or summer.
- Avoid poaching.

500 points per ha
E4 Over-wintered stubbles

Over-wintered stubbles provide an important winter food source for seed eating birds, from spilt grain and the seeds of broad-leaved weeds. It is also beneficial habitat for brown hares. Following a stubble crop (such as oilseed rape, linseed, cereals or field beans (but not maize):

- Bale or chop straw after harvest.
- Do not cultivate until 14 February.
- Do not apply pre or post-harvest glyphosate.
- Do not apply any pesticides, fertilisers, manure or lime to the stubble.
- Do not top or graze.
- You can carry out light cultivations in the first month following harvest, to encourage weed germination.
- The stubble must be followed by a spring sown crop.
- This option is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move round the farm with the normal arable rotation.

70 points per ha

Caption: Winter stubbles are a vital source of food for many farmland birds.
E5 Beetle Banks

Beetle banks are permanent grass mounds, generally about 2 metres wide, that run the length of the field, across the middle, whilst still allowing the field to be farmed. They provide habitat for ground nesting birds, small mammals and insects (including aphid predators).

• Plough furrows that point towards each other from either side during cultivation, to create a raised bank of at least 0.4m along the plough line.
• Follow former field boundaries wherever possible.
• The bank width should be at least 2m.
• You may leave working gaps at each end of not more than 25m.
• Sow with a mixture of perennial grasses, including some tussock forming varieties such as Cocksfoot or Timothy.
• You may need to cut the grass several times during the first summer to aid establishment, thereafter do not cut.
• Do not apply any pesticides, fertilisers, manure.
• Apply herbicide only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious grass weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
• Once established, only top if necessary to control weed spread into the crop and no more than one year in three.

12 points per 100m
The UK skylark population has declined severely. This is largely due to the move from spring to winter cereals and the intensification of grassland management. Skylarks occupy open fields to avoid predators. They nest on the ground between April and August, (two to three nesting attempts are made) in open vegetation of no more than about 50cm high. The aim of this option is to provide suitable habitat in arable fields.

- Each year, select a field that is to be sown with a winter cereal, more than 5 ha in area and of an open aspect. A good guide is the presence of skylarks singing over the field in previous years.
- To create the plot, turn off the drill during sowing in order to leave an unsown area. This area should be no less than 3m in length or width and no more than 12m in length or width. The precise size and shape within these limits depends on what is practical with the drill.
- Avoid fields bounded by tree lines or adjacent to woods unless greater than 10ha.
- Do not create the plots so that they are connected to tramlines, and make sure they are well away from field boundaries.
- Space the plots across the field, creating no more than 2 plots per ha.
- After drilling manage the plots as if they are a cropped part of the field (i.e. they can be over-sprayed, receive fertiliser applications etc).
- This option is a ‘rotational option’. This means that the plots can move round the farm with the normal arable rotation, but the number of plots must be maintained.

4 points per plot
E7 Conservation Headlands in cereal fields

Conservation headlands are headlands of cereal crops that are sprayed selectively to allow populations of broadleaved weeds and their associated insects to develop. This provides feeding habitat for several farmland birds, such as the grey partridge, tree sparrow, yellow hammer and corn bunting. Rare arable plant communities will also benefit. If an unexpected weed infestation occurs, select a more appropriate location in following years.

- Manage a 6 to 24m wide headland along the edge of cereal.
- Do not apply insecticides between 15 March and harvest.
- Apply herbicides only to control broad-leaved weeds, blackgrass and wild-oat as follows: For broad-leaved weeds use only amidosulfuron up to 31 March. For blackgrass and wild oats use only the following active ingredients: tri-allate, diclofop-methyl, difenzoquat, flamprop-M-isopropyl, fenoxaprop-ethyl, fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, tralkoxydim or clodinafop-propargyl.
- This option is a ‘rotational option’. This means that the headlands can move round the farm with the normal arable rotation, but the total area must be maintained.

80 points per ha
E8 Conservation Headlands in cereal fields with no fertilisers or manure

Unfertilised headlands increase numbers of annual plants, insects and birds

Not applying fertilisers or manures on the headlands creates an open crop structure, which will provide greater potential for rare arable plants and more beneficial habitat for insects and birds. You may not have this option on the same land as option E7.

In addition to E7 management:

- Do not apply fertiliser or manure to the headland between harvest of the previous crop and harvest of the headland.
- This option is a ‘rotational option’. This means that the headlands can move round the farm with the normal arable rotation, but the total area must be maintained.

220 points per ha
F1 Cereals for whole crop silage followed by overwintered stubbles

The benefits of this are the provision of a seed source in the winter stubble and from the unripe grain.

- Sow the cereal in the autumn or spring.
- Harvest as whole crop silage.
- Do not apply insecticides between 15 March and harvest.
- Apply herbicides only to control broad-leaved weeds, blackgrass and wild-oat. For broad-leaved weeds use only amidosulfuron up to 31 March. For blackgrass and wildoats use only the following active ingredients: tri-allate, dicloflop-methyl, difenzoquat, flamprop-M-isopropyl, fenoxaprop-ethyl, fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, tralkoxydim or clodinafop-propargyl.
- There are no restrictions on the use of fungicides or growth regulators.
- Retain stubble until 15 February in the following year.
- No more than 5 ha of this option may be included in your application.
- This option is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move round the farm with the normal arable rotation, but the total area must be maintained.

225 points per ha

F2 Brassica fodder crops followed by overwintered stubble

The management of fodder brassicas grazed in situ, such as rape, kale and stubble turnips, where weeds are allowed to persist in the crop and set seed, provide an important habitat for small-seed eating birds. Do not locate these crops in those fields identified in Section 3 of your application form as high soil erosion risk.

- Graze carefully to minimise poaching and soil erosion.
- Glyphosate may be used to control weeds prior to cultivations. In addition the use of the soil residual herbicide, Propachlor (Ramrod) is permitted when growing kale or swedes.
- Retain the area uncultivated as stubble until 15 February in the following year.
- Do not apply any pesticides, fertilisers, manure or lime to the stubble.
- This option is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move round the farm with the normal rotation, but the total area must be maintained.

70 points per ha
F3 Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion

There are inherent soil erosion risks wherever maize is grown. You should not grow maize on high soil erosion risk fields (as identified on your Application Map 1).

You must either:

1. Undersow with grass.
   Harvest by 15 October and do not cultivate till following spring.
   Or

2. Harvest by 15 October and establish an autumn sown crop by 15 November.
   Or

3. Rough plough or cultivate immediately after harvest.
   • This option is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move round the farm with the normal rotation, but the total area must be maintained.

15 points per ha
Soil erosion leads to the removal of topsoil with possible loss in productivity of the soil, blocked drainage channels and adverse impact on water quality and aquatic life. It can be a problem on sandy and loamy soils and particularly on slopes.

This option will only be available for cultivated fields which are at risk from soil erosion, as identified in Section 3 of your application form and marked on your Application Map 1.

If you have fields which are high risk, you may consider the option to prepare a soil management plan (see option M1). In addition, the careful location of buffer strips, the use of cultivations along the contour and the introduction of beetle banks can all help to reduce soil erosion risk.

You may wish to consider the following management:

- Avoid growing certain crops (see option G1 below).
- Prepare a soil management plan (see option M1).
- Carefully locate buffer strips (see options D1 – D3).
- Introduction of beetle banks along the field contour (see option E5).
- Cultivate along the field contour.
- Where appropriate establish crops by direct drill.

Beetle banks established along field contours help to reduce erosion, and attract insects which control agricultural pests.
G1 Management of high erosion risk cultivated land

- Do not grow crops such as potatoes, maize and brassica fodder crops in high-risk cultivated fields.

- This option is only available on high soil erosion risk fields as identified Section 3 of your Application Form and marked on your Application Map 1.

15 points per ha
Options to encourage diversity of crop type

The decline of mixed farming is one of the causes of the falling number of farmland birds in England.

**H1 Undersown spring cereals**

The addition of a grass/legume mix as an under storey to the cereal crop will reduce the need for agrochemical inputs, increase the diversity of habitat provided in the field and benefit farm wildlife.

- Undersow a spring cereal crop with a grass ley, including 10% legume by weight.
- Establish the crop between 14 February and 20 April.
- The cereal crop must not be harvested before 1 July (and the cereal crop is fully ripe).
- Do not destroy the grass ley before 15 July the following year.
- This option is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move round the farm with the normal rotation, but the total area must be maintained.

**190 points per ha**

**H2 Wild bird seed mixture in grassland areas**

This type of crop will feed seed-eating birds in grassland landscapes. The aim is to provide a year round continuous supply of food.

- This option may not be used on areas of permanent grassland.
- Sow a mixture (or a mixture of rows) of at least three seed bearing crops (e.g. a cereal, kale, quinoa).
- Sow in strips at least 6 metres wide at the edges of fields and/or in blocks. Blocks should not exceed 0.5 hectares and you should have no more than one block per 20 ha.
- To maintain seed production, re-sow at least every other year.
- Only apply fertiliser or manure if necessary for establishment.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious grass weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed). However Glyphosate may be used prior to spring re-sowing to facilitate re-establishment.
- Do not apply any other pesticides.
- The area should not be used for access, turning or storage. Do not graze.

**500 points per ha**
H3 Pollen and nectar flower mixtures in grassland areas

Incorporating flowering plants in a plot will boost the numbers of pollen and nectar feeding insects, including butterflies and bumblebees.

• This option may not be used on areas of permanent grassland
• Sow a mixture of at least three pollen and nectar rich plants (e.g. red clover, alsike clover, bird’s foot trefoil).
• Sow in strips at least 6 metres wide at the edges of fields and/or in blocks during July to August or Mid-March to Mid-April.
• Blocks should not exceed 0.5 hectares and you should have no more than one block per 20 ha.
• Once the pollen and nectar source fails, typically after 2-4 years you will need to re-establish the mixture.
• Glyphosate may be applied prior to re-establishment, otherwise apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious grass weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
• Do not apply any other pesticides, fertiliser, manure or lime.
• To stimulate late flowering, cut half the area to 20 cm in July and the whole area to 10 cm between 15 September and 31 October.
• The area should not be used for access, turning or storage.
• Winter autumn grazing benefits legumes and is allowed but do not graze in the spring or summer.
• Avoid poaching.

500 points per ha
Options for lowland grassland outside the LFA

If you have land within an LFA, you cannot use these options on that land. Please see the options for LFA land (K1–K6).

J1 Maintain permanent grassland

The aim of this option is to maintain the pastoral landscape character and protect historic features, which tend to survive best in grassland. By not ploughing these areas, diffuse pollution will also be reduced.

- Do not reduce the area of permanent grassland on your holding. Permanent grassland includes grazing, pasture and any other areas which have been in grass for five years or more.
- Land entered into options J2, J3, J4 and J5 may not be counted towards land in this option.

11 points per ha

J2 Take field corners out of management

The provision of unmanaged areas will increase the biodiversity of the farm.

- Take unproductive or awkward corners of improved grass fields out of management. Improved grass is that receiving over 50 kg/N per ha.
- Patch size should be no more than 0.5 ha and there should only be one patch per 10ha.
- Do not apply fertiliser or manure.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds (creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- You may cut no more than one year in five to allow the development of tussocky grass and low scrub, except on archaeological sites where scrub will need to be controlled by cutting as required.
- Do not allow livestock access to the area.

500 points per ha
J3 Permanent grassland with low inputs

Permanent grassland managed with low inputs of fertiliser and herbicides will sustain higher numbers of plants, butterflies and insects than those subject to greater intensification. In addition, the more extensively managed the grassland, the less the likelihood of run-off of nutrients into watercourses.

- Maintain as grass, do not re-seed or direct drill.
- Livestock manures can be applied at rates supplying no more than 100kg/ha per year of total nitrogen. Where livestock manures are not used nitrogen fertiliser can be used to supply no more than 50 kg/ha nitrogen. Do not apply between 1 April and 31 May. If your current manure and fertiliser regime is less than this, you must not increase applications.
- Do not chain harrow or roll between 1 April and 31 May.
- Supplementary feeding is allowed, but move feeders as often as required to avoid excessive poaching and do not feed on or next to archaeological sites, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses.
- Manage by grazing and/or cutting but do not cut between 1 April and 31 May.
- Apply herbicides only as spot treatment or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds, (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

80 points per ha
J4 Permanent grassland with very low inputs

Grassland managed with no fertiliser has a higher value for wildlife. Over 90% of traditionally managed grassland has been lost to agricultural intensification so it is important to maintain and where possible, increase this resource.

- This option includes grasslands on acid, chalk or limestone soils, but may not be located on heathland.
- You may apply up to 12.5 tonnes/ha (5t/acre) of Farmyard Manure (FYM) a year in a single application, but only where the grassland is regularly cut. FYM must not be applied between 1 April and 30 June to avoid damage to ground nesting bird sites. No other type of fertiliser or manure may be applied.
- Do not cultivate.
- Do not supplementary feed.
- Manage by grazing and/or cutting, to remove the year’s grass growth, but do not cut or top between 1 April and 30 June.
- Do not chain harrow or roll between 1 April and 30 June.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

125 points per ha
J5 Management of Rush Pastures

This option is available for fields where at least a third of the field area is covered by rushes. Damp pasture on farmland is a very important potential habitat for lapwings, curlews, redshanks, snipe and reed buntings. Different types of wading birds like different vegetation heights, so a variety in the sward structure is most beneficial.

- Cut rush dominated fields each year, but not between 1 April and 1 August. A second cut, four to eight weeks later, may be needed if cattle grazing is not available.
- Cut no more than a third of the area of rushes in each field, or a third of the fields if they are small (i.e. less than 3ha) in rotation.
- Where possible graze the aftermath with cattle.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- It may be impractical to cut rushes in the wettest flushes, therefore these can be left. Cattle trampling may help to control these areas.

10 points per ha over the whole field
J6 Mixed stocking

The decline of mixed stocking is one of the underlying causes of the reduction in numbers of several important farmland bird species. Mixed stocking encourages a diversity of sward structure and species.

- A minimum of 15% of your livestock units must be cattle.
- A minimum of 15% of your livestock units must be sheep

Animal numbers are converted into Livestock Units (LUs) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livestock</th>
<th>Livestock Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairy cow</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef cow</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle over 2 years old</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle 6 months to 2 years</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland ewe and lamb</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill ewe</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ram and teg over 6 months</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pony</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 points per ha on all grassland
Options for LFA land

The options in this section (K1 – K5) are only available on LFA land in parcels of less than 15 ha.

LFAs are Less Favoured Areas, where the natural characteristics (geology, altitude, climate etc.) make it difficult for farming. LFAs are shown on your information map provided by RPA.

K1 Manage permanent inbye grassland with low inputs

Meadows and pastures managed with low inputs of fertiliser and sprays will sustain higher numbers of plants, butterflies and insects than those subject to greater intensification. Grassland offers the best protection for archaeological features and is an important part of the landscape character. In addition, the more extensively managed the grassland, the less the likelihood of run-off of nutrients into watercourses.

- Livestock manures can be applied at rates supplying no more than 100kg/ha per year of total nitrogen. Where livestock manures are not used nitrogen fertiliser can be used to supply no more than 50 kg/ha nitrogen. Do not apply between 1 April and 31 May. If your current manure or fertiliser regime is less than this you must not increase applications.
- Do not cultivate.
- Supplementary feeding is allowed, but do not feed on or next to archaeological sites, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses.
- Manage by light grazing and/or cutting but do not cut or top between 1 April and 31 May.
- Do not chain harrow or roll between 1 April and 31 May.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds, (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

55 points per ha
K2 Manage inbye pasture and meadows with very low inputs

Grassland managed with no fertiliser has a higher value for wildlife. Agricultural intensification has destroyed much species rich grassland and it is important to maintain and, where possible, increase this resource.

- You may apply up to 12.5 tonnes/ha (5t/acre) of FYM a year in a single application. This must not be applied between 1 April and 30 June to avoid damage to ground nesting bird sites. No other type of fertiliser or manure may be applied.
- Do not cultivate.
- Manage by grazing and/or cutting, to remove the year’s grass growth.
- Do not supplementary feed.
- Do not cut or top between 1 April and 30 June.
- Do not harrow or roll between 1 April and 30 June.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock, and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

**90 points per ha**

K3 Field corner management

The provision of unmanaged areas will increase the biodiversity of the farm.

- Take unproductive or awkward field corners out of management.
- Patch size should be no more than 0.5 ha and there should only be one patch per 10ha.
- Do not apply fertiliser or manure.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds, (e.g. creeping or spear field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock and common ragwort), (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- You may cut no more than one year in five to allow the development of tussocky grass and low scrub, except on archaeological sites where scrub will need to be controlled by cutting as required.

**100 points per ha**
K4 Enclosed rough grazing

Commonly known as allotments, these are areas of enclosed land of less than 15ha used exclusively for grazing, of which the majority has not been drained, reseeded or regularly cultivated. They will have received only minimal applications of fertiliser, lime, slag or pesticides. They will contain predominantly semi-natural vegetation and, sometimes, rocky and very wet areas. They may also contain small areas of agriculturally improved land.

- Do not apply fertiliser, manure, lime or slag.
- Do not cultivate.
- Do not supplementary feed.
- Do not increase your existing stocking level.
- Protect permanently waterlogged wetlands, including peat bogs and other mires, and hillside flushes. Do not install any new land drainage or modify any existing land drainage, or remove any peat or sediment.
- Do not remove rocks, scree or mineral spoil.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds, (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed). Bracken should be controlled by mechanical means wherever possible. Where it is not possible, Asulam is the only permitted herbicide to be used.

25 points per ha
K5 Management of Rush Pastures

Managed rush pastures are used by breeding birds such as lapwing.

This option is available for fields where at least a third of the field area is covered by rushes. Damp pasture on farmland is a very important potential habitat for lapwings, curlew, redshank, snipe and reed bunting. Different types of wading birds like different vegetation heights, so a variety in the sward structure is most beneficial.

- Cut rush dominated fields each year, but not between 1 April and 1 August. A second cut, four to eight weeks later, may be needed if cattle grazing is not available.
- Cut no more than a third of the area of rushes in each field, or a third of the fields if they are small (i.e. less than 3 ha) in rotation.
- Where possible graze aftermath with cattle.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock and common ragwort).
- It may be impractical to cut rushes in the wettest flushes, therefore these can be left. Cattle trampling may help to control these areas.

8 points per ha on the whole field
K6 Unenclosed Moorland Rough Grazing

This option is only available on LFA land in parcels of 15 ha or more.

- Manage the land without applying fertiliser, manure, lime or slag.
- Do not cultivate.
- Protect permanently waterlogged wetlands, including peat bogs and other mires, and hillside flushes. Do not install any new land drainage or modify any existing land drainage, or remove any peat or sediment.
- Leave rocks, scree and mineral spoil in place.
- Apply herbicides only to spot treat or weed wipe for the control of pernicious weeds (e.g. creeping, spear or field thistle, curled or broadleaved dock and common ragwort), or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed). Bracken should be controlled by mechanical means wherever possible. Where it is not possible, Asulam is the only permitted herbicide to be used.

8 points per ha
M1 Soil Management Plan

This option is only available where at least 10% of your fields have been identified in Section 3 of the application form as being at risk from soil erosion.

Soil is a vital resource for farmers. Damage to soil structure and loss of soil through erosion reduces farm profitability and damages the environment. In both grass and arable fields, the ability of soil to resist run-off of water and soil erosion varies due to several factors, including soil type, rainfall, and the structure of the soil as a result of its management.

It is important to evaluate the risks of erosion and excessive run-off, to avoid problems with crop emergence and development, localised flooding, and to minimise polluting material such as fertilisers, manures, pesticides, and sediment from entering watercourses. Having evaluated the risks you can then plan how to modify your operations to reduce the risks.

A Soil Management Plan should be documented and include the following steps:

- Obtain and read the relevant Defra publications on controlling run-off and erosion (see Annex 1 for details). In addition you may wish to refer to the Environment Agency (EA) publications also listed.

- Using the field guide or the advice of a consultant, prepare an assessment of the risks of run-off and erosion for your farm. Produce a map showing the risk class for each field or part of fields.

- Record on a field-by-field basis the steps you will take during the coming year to minimise the risk of run-off and erosion.

- Repeat the field-by-field assessment each year incorporating the experiences of previous years.

See Annex 1 for guidance publications

2 points per ha. This should be based on the area of land excluding unimproved land (as identified on your Application Map 1).
M2 Nutrient Management Plan

A Nutrient Management Plan should take into account all sources of nutrient supply as well as soil nutrient status and the influence of soil type, rainfall and irrigation. The Plan should follow a recognised fertiliser recommendation system (see Annex 1 for suggested guidance) and should be prepared in conjunction with a FACTS (Fertiliser Advisers Certification and Training Scheme) qualified person.

A Nutrient Management Plan should be documented and include the following steps:

1. Prepare an up to date soil analysis. Soils should be analysed every 3-5 years, depending on cropping system, for pH, P, K, and Mg. Use the results to adjust inputs of lime, phosphate, potash and magnesium nutrients.

2. Assess the nutrient requirement of the crop. Either obtain from a recognised recommendation system or, for land registered as “organic” or “in conversion”, prepare a NPK balance, including step 3 and go to point 5.

3. Assess the nutrient supply from organic manures (see Annex 1 for suggested guidance).

4. Calculate the need for fertiliser nutrients by deducting the contribution from organic manures (step 3) from the crop nutrient requirement (step 2).

5. Spread organic manures and fertilisers as accurately and uniformly as possible. Equipment should be in good working order and recently calibrated.

6. Keep clear field records of cropping, organic manure and fertiliser applications. This will aid future decisions on nutrient management and demonstrates the practical outcome of the plan.

7. Update the plan at the start of each cropping year.

See Annex 1 for guidance publications.

2 points per ha. This should be based on the area of land which receives inputs of manure and/or fertilisers.
M3 Manure Management Plan

This option is only available on holdings where manures are spread. A Manure Management Plan should include the preparation of a field risk map (risk of causing water pollution) and an assessment of the need for any extra slurry or dirty water storage. You can either draw up your own plan or get professional advice from a consultant (see Annex 1 for suggested guidance).

A Manure Management Plan should be documented and include the following steps:

• Identify areas where animal manures should never be spread. These non-spreading areas (red) should be marked on a farm map.

• Identify areas where animal manures should not be spread under certain conditions or where application rates should be restricted. These very high-risk areas (orange) and high-risk areas (yellow) should be marked on a farm map. The remaining areas should be marked as lower risk (green). Identify on the map any areas in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones affected by the closed periods (non-spreading periods).

• Calculate the minimum area of land needed for spreading animal manures. The maximum field application of total nitrogen from spread manures should be limited to 250 kg per hectare.

• Identify the area of land that may be used for spreading sewage sludge or other organic wastes. This step is not required if these materials are not brought onto the farm.

• Assess whether extra storage is needed for slurry and dirty water. Use the risk map (coloured map) and your experience of spreading over the winter period to identify whether extra storage is needed to minimise the risk of causing water pollution.

• Update the risk map if you take on extra land.

• Update the storage assessment if slurry or dirty water production increases.

• Use the plan to help you with field spreading and minimise the risk of causing pollution.

See Annex 1 for guidance publications

2 points per ha. This should be based on the area of land excluding unimproved land (as identified on your Application Map 1).
M4 Crop protection Management Plan

Land registered as ‘organic’ or ‘in conversion’ is not eligible.

The Crop Protection Management Plan should be documented and include the following steps:

• Produce your plan in conjunction with a qualified BASIS agronomist.
• Ensure your plan is site-specific and is updated annually.
• Make full use of all biological, cultural and chemical methods that can be economically and practically implemented on your farm.
• Consider farm location, soil type, previous cropping, rotations and any pesticide resistance issues. This can help you anticipate and predict potential problems.
• Adopt non-chemical control options whenever economic or practical. Include the use of rotations, cultivations, and resistant varieties and encourage natural predators by incorporating beetle banks and field margins.
• Inspect crops regularly, and identify weeds, pests and diseases. Cultural and/or chemical techniques should be used and the environmental impact of each choice assessed.
• Select a pesticide that effectively controls weeds, pests or diseases. The chosen pesticide should minimise impacts on crop pest predators and non-target organisms. Neighbouring crops, wildlife habitats and watercourses should be taken into account before finalising pesticide choice.
• Minimise environmental impact by spraying under optimum conditions. Avoid field margins, watercourses and minimise spray drift. Always leave hedge bottoms unsprayed. Where appropriate undertake a Local Risk Assessment for Pesticides (LERAPS).
• Keep accurate records. These should include the justification for a particular course of action.
• Regularly maintain all spray machinery in accordance with the manufacture’s instructions.
• Store pesticides in accordance with the Green Code and HSE requirements.
• Dispose of any surplus pesticide waste and containers in a responsible manner so as not to contaminate the environment.

See Annex 1 for suggested guidance publications

2 points per ha. This should be based on the field area growing all annual crops other than grassland.
Payments cannot be made under two different schemes for the same work (double funding). Listed below are those areas which may overlap with the Entry Level Scheme Pilot.

**Arable Area Payments Scheme (AAPS)**

Land receiving Entry Level Scheme payments is not eligible for AAPS payments, with the exception of the following options:

- C3: Reduce cultivation depth where there are archaeological features (depending on crop grown)
- E4: Overwintered stubbles (depending on crop grown)
- E7: Conservation headlands in cereal fields
- E8: Conservation headlands with no fertilisers
- F1: Cereals for whole crop silage followed by overwintered stubble (providing the cereal crop is maintained until the date of first flowering)
- F3: Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion
- H1: Undersown spring cereals. (This land may not also be claimed for forage).

Land on which you have other ELS options which involve taking arable land out of arable crop production, such as taking archaeological features out of cultivation (C2), buffer strips (D1, D2, D3), cultivated arable margins (D4, D5, D6), areas of wild bird seed mixtures (E2), areas of Pollen and nectar seed mixture (E3), and skylark plots (E6) will not be eligible for AAPS payments and will not count towards your set-aside requirements. You can have these options in fields for which you are claiming crops subsidies under AAPS, but you will have to deduct the area of these options from any AAPS claim. Adjustments should be made on your IACs return, starting with the 2004 return.

**Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)**

If you already have a Countryside Stewardship Scheme on your farm, you may still be able to apply for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot. However, in order to avoid double funding, you may not include land which is receiving CSS payments in your application. You will have to exclude the area of land receiving CSS payments from your calculation of your eligible area for the ELS Pilot, and you will not be able to put ELS options on the land receiving CSS payments.

However, for some boundary features, you may include features which are a part of your CSS agreement towards your ELS application.
What to do if you have another scheme on your land

The following situation applies for CSS boundary features:

1. **Field boundaries marked green on your CSS agreement map**
   Those lengths of a field boundary marked green on your CSS map are eligible for the ELS.

2. **Field boundaries marked orange on your CSS agreement map**
   Those lengths of a field boundary marked orange on your CSS map are **eligible** for the ELS.

3. **Field boundaries marked red on your CSS agreement map**
   Those lengths of a boundary marked red on your CSS agreement map, where capital works are scheduled are **not eligible** for the ELS. Other lengths of ‘red’ boundaries are **eligible** for the ELS.

Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)

If you have land which is subject to an ESA agreement, this land is not eligible for the ELS Pilot. You will have to exclude the area of land subject to the ESA agreement from your calculation of your eligible area for the ELS Pilot, and you will not be able to put ELS options on the land which is in the ESA agreement.

Organic Aid/Organic Farming Scheme (OAS/OFS)

If you already have land which is in the Organic Farming Scheme, this land is not eligible for the ELS. You will have to exclude the area of land subject to the OFS agreement from your calculation of your eligible area for the ELS Pilot, and you will not be able to put ELS options on the land which is in the OFS agreement.

Other environmental scheme commitments

If you receive payments from other agri-environment scheme commitments on your farm, such as an English Nature management agreement (including the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme), or an English Heritage management agreement, this land is not eligible for the ELS. You will have to exclude the area of land subject to the agreement from your calculation of your farm size, and you will not be able to put ELS options on the land in the other agreement.

Other SSSI or SAM/SMR land which is not receiving payment is eligible for the ELS, but you must keep to the required management of the land concerned.
What to do if you have another scheme on your land

Farm Woodland Premium Scheme and Farm Woodland Scheme (FWPS and FWS)
Land under the FWPS or the now closed FWS is eligible to be entered into the ELS.

Hill Farm Allowance
Land on which you are claiming Hill Farm Allowance may also be entered into the Entry Level Scheme Pilot.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)
If you are in an NVZ, you should be aware of the mandatory NVZ Action Programme rules that apply. If your ELS land is within an NVZ, it is your responsibility to ensure that you can meet the rules of both schemes. Where the rules overlap you must meet those that are the most demanding.

Other obligations
You must make sure there are no other duties or obligations on you or the land that would conflict with an ELS agreement.
Good Farming Practice (GFP)

All those in Defra agri-environment schemes, including the ELS Pilot, must meet the standards of Good Farming Practice over the whole holding. These are as follows:

- **overgrazing**: you should avoid overgrazing, which means grazing your land so as to adversely affect the growth, quality or species composition of vegetation (other than vegetation normally grazed to destruction) on that land to a significant degree. Cases of suspected overgrazing will be investigated and failure to follow subsequent professional advice would be a breach of your agreement.

- **undergrazing**: stock should be distributed across your holding to ensure that you avoid undergrazing. This is defined as where annual growth is not being fully utilised, or where scrub or coarse vegetation is becoming evident, and is detrimental to the environmental interests of the site. Cases of suspected undergrazing will be investigated and failure to follow subsequent professional advice would be a breach of your agreement.

- **supplementary feeding**: where supplementary feeding is permitted by your agreement, the feed must be provided in such a way that the vegetation is not trampled or poached by animals or rutted by vehicles used to transport feed.

- **field boundaries**: you must not remove or destroy any hedges or stone walls on your holding except by special derogation. Enforcement will be through visual assessment of any recent damage during field checks.

- **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)**: if you have an SSSI on your holding, you must obtain consent from English Nature before proceeding with any operations likely to cause damage.

- **silage and slurry stores**: if you construct a new silage or slurry store you must notify the Environment Agency before starting to use it. We will check to see if this notification has taken place.

- **disposal of sheep dip**: if you propose to dispose of sheep dip on your holding you must obtain prior authorisation from the Environment Agency. Checks will be made to see that either an authorisation has been obtained or that there is a reason why no authorisation is needed in that individual case.

Additional requirements which you must agree to

- **soil, water and air**: you will be encouraged to follow the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Soil, Water and Air (published by Defra: reference PB0617, PB0587 and PB0618 respectively). You will be required to retain copies of the Codes for the life of your agreement.

**Public rights of way**

As a condition of joining the ELS, you must maintain existing rights of way and abide by relevant legislation. The Highways Act 1980 for instance requires you to keep rights of way open and passable.

**Other activities on agreement land**

Subject to any other existing restrictions, country pursuits such as shooting, hunting and fishing are allowed. You should discuss an intended application with any sporting tenants and anyone else with rights over your land, e.g. profits à prendre, easements etc. You should make sure that any activities, and the exercise of other rights, on the land under agreement, will not conflict with the delivery of the required management of the scheme options.

**Metal detecting on agreement land**

Metal detecting is not permitted on sites of archaeological interest on land which is being managed under ELS options, without the written consent of English Heritage. This requirement is to ensure that archaeological features which the land manager is being paid to conserve and protect are not damaged.

Over the remainder of the holding, you are required to protect and maintain archaeological sites and other landscape features.

**Protection of historic features**

Your Information Map supplied by RPA will show any known historic features on your holding. If you have historic features on your farm you must meet the following scheme conditions:

- Do not cause ground disturbance on known and currently uncultivated archaeological sites (as shown on your information map provided by RPA).
- Do not deliberately plough more deeply, de-stone, subsoil or undertake additional drainage on those areas containing known archaeological sites (shown on your information map provided by RPA) already under cultivation.
- Do not run free-range pigs on archaeological sites shown on your information map provided by RPA.
- Do not remove any useable building stone, walling stone or traditional roofing material off the holding, excluding materials produced from established quarries.
- Do not damage, demolish or remove stone from ruined but substantially complete traditional farm buildings or field boundaries.
Allow inspection
Authorised Defra staff or their agents may visit you to inspect your land during the course of your agreement. You must give them access at any reasonable time. An appointment will usually be made shortly beforehand, and you may be asked to accompany them to help identify work and discuss the requirements of your agreement.

Keep necessary records
If your application for the Entry Level Scheme Pilot is successful, RPA will write to you confirming your acceptance into the scheme. Stamped copies of your completed Application Form and Application Maps will be returned to you. You must retain these copies, as Defra may ask to see them during inspections. You are also advised to retain your own copies of the completed application form and application maps before sending them to RPA, for your records.

You must also keep records for the location and timing of ‘rotational options’ and any specific records referred to in the management options in Section 3 of this booklet.
Land Transfers

You must give RPA one month’s prior notice of any change in freehold ownership or change of tenant or licensee of the land entered in the ELS Pilot. This includes the sale, transfer or lease of any part of your holding or land on your holding which you have entered into an ELS Pilot agreement. In the case of inheritance, the new owner should give notice within 1 month of being in a position to do so.

You must tell the new occupier about your ELS agreement before transfer.

- If you transfer your entire holding, you continue to be liable for your undertakings. However, if within 3 months the new owner applies to continue your commitments for the remaining agreement period and the Secretary of State accepts their application, you will be released from your undertakings and will not be in breach.

- If you transfer part of your holding, you will need to adjust your existing agreement to reflect the new farm area and the new points threshold. The agreement on the land sold would be terminated.

- If you transfer part of your holding and the transferee also has an ELS Pilot agreement, it may be possible to adjust their agreement to take account of the new land.

Remember that payments under the ELS pilot are made to whoever is the registered agreement holder on 1st February for each year of the agreement.

Amendments

Hopefully you will be able to carry out the options and management required under your ELS Pilot agreement without any difficulty. However, the situation may arise where you may need to change the choice or location of your chosen options due to an unforeseen and serious situation arising (e.g. flooding, severe and prolonged weed infestation). An amendment may be made to your ELS agreement in such a genuinely unforeseen circumstance where there is no other solution to the problem. Amendments are not intended to be used for changes which are purely convenient.

You must inform RPA about your proposed amendment before you make any changes to your options. Your amendment will not be valid until you have received a letter from RPA giving consent to the amendment.

It is anticipated that RPA will only consent to one amendment during the course of your 5 year agreement.

If an amendment is required, you should contact RPA to request an amendment form (or see the RPA website at www.rpa.gov.uk). You must complete this form providing the following information, and return it to RPA:

- The nature of the problem.
- Confirmation that the situation was unforeseen and that other solutions have been considered which would not require a change to the agreement.
Changes to your agreement

- What option, and how much, you would like to remove from your agreement.
- The ‘value’ in points of the option removed.
- The option, and how much, you wish to introduce to replace the option removed.
- The ‘value’ in points of the option introduced (which must be at least equivalent to the value of the option removed).
- A map showing the location of the option removed and the location of the option introduced.

RPA will write to you to let you know whether your amendment has been approved.

An amendment record will be kept on file and will be checked during any compliance inspection.

Derogations

A derogation is required where a change from the agreed management requirements is needed on a single occasion. These may involve permission to control serious weed infestations using herbicides, relaxation from time-based prescriptions, or requests to change cutting or cultivating prescriptions due to practical problems.

If a derogation is required, you should contact RPA to request a derogation form (or see the RPA website at www.rpa.gov.uk). You must complete this form providing the following information, and return it to RPA:

You must give the following details:

- Why the derogation is needed.
- What exactly the proposed course of action is (including precise location details, choice of pesticide and pesticide application rate where relevant).
- Confirmation that the situation was unforeseen and that other solutions which are within the allowed prescriptions have been considered.
- Countersignature by an independent third party to confirm that the request is reasonable, will not compromise the objectives of the agreement and is the most appropriate response in the situation concerned (see below).

You must inform RPA about your proposed derogation before you make any changes to your management.

You may go ahead with the proposed changes to management. You do not need RPA’s consent for a derogation, provided that you have properly registered your derogation.

As a guide, we would not expect to see more than 3 derogations during the course of a five-year agreement.

The derogation record will be kept on file and all details, including those of the countersigning adviser, will be checked during any compliance inspection.
Countersigning derogation record forms

When the derogation involves the use of pesticides it must be countersigned by a suitably qualified independent BASIS agronomist who has undertaken some training in environmental management. This could be a private agronomist or one employed by a conservation organisation (e.g. FWAG, English Nature, RSPB).

Where the derogation does not involve the use of pesticides, other farm conservation advisers such as FWAG or English Nature may countersign the record form.

Breaches of agreement

You will be in breach of your agreement in the following circumstances:

- if you fail to comply with any agreement conditions; or
- if you make any false or misleading statements in your application or in any other correspondence relating to your ELS Pilot agreement

This is the case whether it is you or anybody else who causes a breach. It is your responsibility to ensure that all agreement conditions are fulfilled, and that all information in your application and other correspondence is accurate.

Penalties for breaches of agreements

If you breach your agreement, any future payments due may be withheld. Part or all of the payments already made may be reclaimed and interest charged covering the period between payment and reimbursement. Your agreement may be terminated.

Before penalties are imposed, you will be told the reason why and given an opportunity to make any representations you wish. A final decision will be made after taking all your representations into account.

‘Force majeure’

Where a breach is due to things beyond your control that could not have been avoided by reasonable action, the Secretary of State has a discretion to decide not to take enforcement action to recover or withhold payments. In order for force majeure to be taken into account, you must have notified the RPA of the force majeure event in writing within ten working days of you, or your representative, being in a position to do so. Please note that these categories are very narrow and cover only the most exceptional circumstances.
Examples of ‘force majeure’ are:

- death of the agreement holder;
- long-term incapacity of the agreement holder;
- expropriation of a large part of the holding provided it could not be anticipated when the agreement was signed;
- severe natural disaster gravely affecting the holding;
- accidental destruction of livestock buildings on the holding;
- an epizootic (such as foot and mouth disease) affecting part or all the agreement holder’s livestock.

Variation of your agreement by the Secretary of State

Very rarely it may be necessary for the Secretary of State to vary your agreement in line with changes to European law or in other exceptional circumstances. In applying for the scheme you are accepting that such changes may be made at any time. You will be given notice in writing of any such changes.

What if I disagree with Defra’s decision or proposed action?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the way your agreement has been dealt with, you should write to the RPA who will ensure that your case is properly investigated and advise you of the procedure to be followed in your case.
Soil management plan

Defra advice (available from Defra publications. Tel: 08459 556000) is contained in the Soil Code and the Controlling Soil Erosion series, which comprises:

- A field guide for an erosion risk assessment for farmers.
- An advisory booklet for the management of agricultural land.
- An advisory leaflet for preventing erosion by grazing livestock in lowland England.

In addition you may wish to refer to the following:

- Environment Agency – ‘Best Farming Practices’ booklet (Tel: 0845 9333111)
- NSRI Guide to Better soil structure (www.cranfield.ac.uk/soil)
- SMI Guide to Managing Crop Establishment (www.smi.org.uk)

Nutrient management plan

- The Defra ‘Fertiliser Recommendations for Agricultural and Horticultural Crops (RB209)’, 7th Edition 2000 (obtainable from the Stationery Office – Price £15) is one example of a recognised fertiliser recommendation system for non-organic land, but other sources can be used for guidance.
- Guidance on the assessment of the nutrient supply from organic manures is available from the above publication, or, from the MANNER (Manure Nitrogen Evaluation Routine) Decision Support System. Available free of charge from ADAS Gleadthorpe Research Centre (Tel. 01623 844331). For organic farms, see the Defra booklet ‘Managing Manures on Organic Farms’.

Manure management plan

- Defra advice on manure management is provided in the “Step by step guide for farmers” (Defra Land Management Improvement Division, Tel: 020 7238 6262) and in the Water Code (PB 0587, obtainable free from Defra Publications – Tel: 08459 556000).
- Independent professional advice is available from members of the National Farm Waste Register available from Races Farm, Aston Tirrold, Didcot, Oxford OX11 9DJ (Tel: 01398 361566).

Crop protection management plan

- Detailed guidance on the production of Crop Management Protection Plans should be available in the near future under the Voluntary Initiative (VI). Please see www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk for more details.
Pilot Area Co-ordinators:

**Arable/Cropping (Market Deeping)**
David Jackson  
Defra Rural Development Service  
Ceres House  
2 Searby Road  
Lincoln  ·  
LN2 4DW  
Tel: 01522 514420  
Email: david.c.jackson@defra.gsi.gov.uk

**Grassland (Tiverton)**
Mike Izzard  
Defra Rural Development Service  
5 Hanover Court  
Matford Business Park  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 8QJ  
Tel: 01392 824434  
Email: michael.izzard@defra.gsi.gov.uk

**Upland (Barnard Castle)**
Cara Courage  
Defra Rural Development Service  
Government Buildings  
Kenton Bar  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
NE5 3EW  
Tel: 0191 2141800  
Email: cara.courage@defra.gsi.gov.uk

**Mixed (Mortimer, near Reading)**
Ruth Garner  
Defra Rural Development Service  
Block A  
Government Offices  
Coley Park  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG1 6DE  
Tel: 0118 9392307  
Email: ruth.garner@defra.gsi.gov.uk
The Rural Payments Agency:
Rural Payments Agency
Clyst House
Winslade Park
Clyst St Mary
Exeter
EX5 1DY
Tel: 01392 266508
Email: ELS@rpa.gsi.gov.uk
Internet: www.rpa.gov.uk

Defra
www.defra.gov.uk

Defra Helpline: 08459 33 55 77 – available between 09:00 and 17:00 on working days.
Inclusions in back pocket of booklet:

- Pilot Area map
- Base map request form (ELS 2)
- Application form (ELS 3)
- Example application map
- Pilot Area advisory/guidance note

If any of these documents are missing, please contact the ELS of your Pilot Area (see Annex 1).