

AT A GLANCE**Jan 2023**

DEFRA ENVIRONMENTAL LAND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

STRUTT & PARKER'S KEY POINTS AND SUMMARY

This document summarises the objectives and changes under each of the three Environmental Land Management schemes and also lists all of the options available by type of land, including their payment rates, some of which are to be confirmed.

Please contact your local S&P team if you have any questions about the schemes, to discuss which options might suit your land or to make an application.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAND MANAGEMENT SCHEMES

Defra made a major announcement on all three Environmental Land Management schemes on 26th January 2023.

The aim was to provide as much detail as possible on firstly, the government's thinking on the schemes due to rumours about their future before Christmas, and secondly, the options that will be available under the schemes to try to boost take up and reduce 'waiting to see'.

The announcement clearly aims to give land managers as much information as possible and to be as flexible as possible in an attempt to boost the numbers entering schemes, including tenants. The government's target is to double the number of land managers and area of land in agri-environment schemes by 2028, to at least 70,000 agreements, covering 70% of farmed land and 70% of all farms. How the schemes are operating, payment rates and barriers will all be reviewed and changes made. This is ambitious but not impossible.

However, the concern for many stakeholders is that what has been proposed, at least initially, is like a 'pick and mix' for land managers. They decide their level of ambition and what they do. This is not vastly different to previous agri-environment schemes, including the Entry

Level Scheme, and they have not delivered the scale or quality of environmental outcomes that are needed to meet previous environmental targets.

Many organisations have called for the government to provide a long-term vision, for example to more whole farm agroecological approaches, to help farmers do more than make small changes and that there is a join-up between actions to avoid a piecemeal approach. The government's response to these challenges is that the ambition under these schemes, and the regulatory baseline, will increase over time; however, there is no indication of the strategy for this evolution. There is also no indication of how Defra will monitor the outcomes delivered by the schemes.

FARMING / COUNTRYSIDE / LANDSCAPE

SUSTAINABLE FARMING INCENTIVE (SFI)	COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP (REPLACES PROPOSED LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY SCHEME)	LANDSCAPE RECOVERY
Pays farmers through three year flexible agreements for sustainable farming practices.	Pays for more targeted actions relating to specific locations, features and habitats.	Pays for bespoke, longer-term, larger scale projects, often including land use change.
Roll out speeded up with six, not three, new standards available from 2023 onwards.	30 new options available from 2024 onwards, including more options under the Wildlife Offers and Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Packages.	Second round confirmed to open in spring 2023, with around 25 projects to be funded.
<p>New options to choose include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving hedgerow management • Ending insecticide use (£45/ha) • Natural pest management • Optimising the use of fertilisers • Incorporating “companion crops” • Grassland management for ‘improved’ and ‘low-input’ grassland • Grassland buffer strips 	New option – called Countryside Stewardship Plus – for collaborative work with other land managers.	Second round priorities are net zero, protected sites and habitat creation.
Land managers can pick what options to implement. The previous ‘ladder’ of ‘introductory’ and ‘intermediate’ levels has been removed.	Ability to stack CS and SFI options so long as there is no duplication. There will be an integrated online service to help with stacking.	Third round confirmed for spring 2024
SFI management payment of £20/ha up to £1,000 pa to cover cost of entering the scheme.	More flexibility to add CS revenue agreements to existing Higher Level Stewardship agreements.	
Further standards expected to be launched in 2024 on organic farming, agroforestry, and public engagement.	Some options previously in ‘Higher Tier’ now available in the ‘Mid Tier’.	
	Agreement holders have now three years to complete capital works. Extensions for existing agreements can be requested.	
	Catchment Sensitive Farming offer extended across England and no longer restricted to high priority areas.	
	New Higher Tier capital only grant to open this year	

GRASSLAND

Desired outcomes from options for this land:

- Increasing grassland species biodiversity, including wildflowers and grasses
- Maintaining habitat for farmland wildlife
- Creating and maintaining priority habitats, such as lowland calcareous grassland and upland hay meadows, and other important grassland habitats, such as wet grasslands
- Benefits for climate change mitigation and adaptation through soil health
- Improving water quality and protecting waterbodies
- Supporting flood risk mitigation
- Minimising the risks and impacts of herbicides through integrated pest management
- Effective nutrient management and planning, to cut production costs, increase nutrient use efficiency and improve water and air quality

OPTIONS UNDER CS	£/ha pa unless otherwise stated
Protecting in-field trees on intensive grassland (BE2)	£295
Taking field corners out of management (GS1)	£333
Managing permanent grassland outside Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs) with very low inputs (GS2)	£151
Using ryegrass seed-set as winter food for birds (GS3)	£474
Establishing and maintaining legume and herb-rich swards (GS4)	£382
Managing permanent grassland in SDAs with very low inputs (GS5)	£98
Managing species-rich grassland (GS6)	£182
Restoring grassland towards species-rich grassland (GS7)	£235
Creating species-rich grassland (GS8)	£428
Creating wet grassland for breeding waders (GS11) and managing it (GS9)	£547/£353
Creating wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl (GS12) and managing it (GS10)	£450/£217
Creating grassland for target features (GS14) and managing it (GS13)	£432/£152
A supplement for haymaking (GS15)	£37
A supplement for rush control (GS16)	£79
A supplement for lightly grazing to produce habitats for insects and birds (GS17)	£23
A supplement for threatened species (SP9)	£171
A supplement to control invasive plant species (SP4)	£347
Creating and managing 4-6m buffer strips on intensive grassland (SW2)	£235
Managing intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse (SW8)	£207
Removing livestock from intensive grassland at particular times of year (SW9)	£115
Removing livestock on grassland in SDAs next to streams, rivers and lakes (SW10)	£77
Applying very low nitrogen input to slow or reverse nutrient levels in ground waters (SW13)	£396
A supplement to apply no fertiliser or manure (SW14)	£156
Creating successional areas and scrub (WD8 and WD9)	£149/£74
Managing rough grazing for birds (UP2)	£121
A supplement for raised water level (SP2)	£127
Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly (SP7)	£279

OPTIONS UNDER CS	£/ha pa unless otherwise stated
Completing a soil assessment and producing a soil management plan (Introductory and intermediate)	£28/£58
Testing soil organic matter (Introductory and intermediate)	£28/£58
Minimising bare ground by having no more than 5% of the total area of land entered into the standard left bare over winter (Introductory and intermediate)	£28 £58
Establishing and maintaining herbal leys on at least 15% of land in the intermediate level of the standard (Introductory and intermediate)	£28/£58
Completing a soil assessment and producing a soil management plan (Introductory and intermediate)	£28/£58
Testing soil organic matter (Introductory and intermediate)	£28/£58

NEW OPTIONS PLANNED (WHICH SHOULD BE ABLE TO BE ADDED TO EXISTING AGREEMENTS):

Advisory visits on nutrient use efficiency	SFI 2023	£589
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Establishing and maintaining legumes in existing swards	SFI 2023	£102
Managing floodplain meadows	2024	£200-300
Managing scrapes and gutters for waders and waterfowl	2024	TBC
Paying for using precision farming approaches.	TBC	£10-50



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