

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

SCHEME PRESCRIPTIONS

BROADS ESA

NB. If you carry out any work contrary to the scheme's objectives, for example the destruction of features such as walls, buildings or hedges, or the ploughing of valuable grassland, shortly before applying to join or rejoin the scheme, the Department is likely to reject your application.

The Department may modify the prescriptions set out below, to introduce additional requirements or amend existing ones, where this will help to protect and/or enhance habitats and species which are of importance within the designated area. Such modifications may be made for the lifespan of the agreement or from time to time, by means of a written agreement with you which will form part of your ESA agreement for the term specified.

TIER 1 – PERMANENT GRASSLAND

1. Maintain grassland and do not plough, level or re-seed the land. You may use a chain harrow or roller but no other form of cultivation is allowed.
2. Graze with livestock other than pigs or poultry, but avoid poaching, under-grazing or over-grazing.
3. Take no more than one cut of hay or silage each year.
4. If you cut the grass for hay or silage, graze the aftermath.
5. Do not exceed your existing level of inorganic fertiliser and in any case do not exceed 125kg of nitrogen, 75kg of phosphate and 75kg of potash per hectare (100 units of nitrogen, 60 units of phosphate and 60 units of potash per acre) per year.
6. Use no more than 94kg of nitrogen per hectare (75 units of nitrogen per acre) in any one application.
7. Do not apply pig slurry or poultry manure and do not in any case exceed your existing level of organic manure. Do not apply more than 30 tonnes per hectare (12 tons per acre) of home-produced manure in any year. Do not apply more than 30 cubic metres per hectare (2,600 gallons per acre) of home-produced cattle slurry at 10% dry matter in any year or the equivalent if dry matter is less than 10%.
8. Do not use fungicides or insecticides.
9. Do not apply herbicides except to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broadleaved dock or ragwort. Infestations of these weeds must be controlled by cutting or by herbicides. Herbicides used for these purposes shall be applied by weed wiper or spot treatment. Weed control should be carried out as soon as any problem starts to develop.
10. Do not install under-drainage or mole drain and do not subsoil or slit drain. Do not substantially modify your existing drainage system.
11. Maintain existing dykes in rotation over the period of your agreement and by mechanical means, not sprays. Spoil must be levelled following slubbing out, after allowing to dry. Slub out ditches and dykes once every 5 - 8 years.
12. You must maintain water at a suitable level for livestock to graze on your grazing marshes; ensure that there is at least 30cm (12") of water in the bottom of dykes between 31 October and 1 March; begin to increase dyke water levels to summer levels no later than 1 March to ensure adequate dyke water during the summer.
13. Maintain hedges, ponds and reedbeds.
14. Do not damage or destroy any feature of historic interest.
15. Obtain written advice on siting and materials before constructing buildings, roads or any other engineering operations which do not require planning permission or prior notification determination by the Local Planning Authority.

16. Obtain written advice on the management of woodland or scrub or proposals to plant any new woodland.

17. You must abide by the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water, Soil and Air, published by the Department (references PB 0617, PB 0587 and PB 0618) as amended from time to time.

TIER 2 – EXTENSIVE GRASSLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-17 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

18. Water levels on your grazing marshes must:
 - be maintained at not more than 45cm (18") below marsh level between 31 March and 1 November;
 - provide at least 60cm (24") of water in the bottom of the dyke between 30 November and 1 March;
 - begin to be raised no later than 1 March in order to achieve the maximum summer freeboard as early as possible.
19. Do not carry out any mechanical operations between 31 March and 16 July.
20. Do not graze with livestock between 31 December and 1 April.
21. Do not cut for silage. Do not cut for hay before 16 July.
22. Do not exceed your existing level of nitrogen and in any case do not exceed 44kg of nitrogen per hectare (35 units of nitrogen per acre) per year. Do not apply phosphate or potash.
23. Do not apply any organic manure.
24. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance to reduce soil acidity.
25. The following shall apply when carrying out dyke maintenance on a 5 - 8 year rotation:
 - dyke management shall be carried out between 31 August and 1 April;
 - to protect aquatic and marginal vegetation, either leave one bank or other sections untouched as a refuge for wildlife and a resource for re-colonisation;
 - when re-profiling dykes, leave sides no steeper than 45° or create a stepped profile;
 - on SSSIs, agreement holders must contact the Project Officer or English Nature before commencing any maintenance work.
26. Maintain existing foot drains and grips and only dig new foot drains and grips with the prior agreement of the Project Officer.

TIER 3 – WET GRASSLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-26 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

27. You must maintain the water table at marsh level so as to create field wetness or occasional shallow pools from 1 January until 30 April, and;
maintain dyke levels at no more than 45 cm (18") below marsh level from 1 June until 31 October;
begin to raise your water level to winter level no later than 1 November.
28. Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser.
29. Do not graze with livestock between 1 November and 15 May.
30. Graze between 16 May and 31 October. Before 30 June do not exceed a grazing density of one bovine animal per 0.75 hectares (one animal per 1.8 acres) and do not cause poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing.

WATER LEVEL SUPPLEMENT (available on Tiers 2 and 3)

31. Agree an in-field water management plan with the Project Officer to include the creation, reinstatement and management of foot drains and grips.
32. Maintain dyke water levels at not more than 30cm (12") below marsh level from 15 March until 31 August.
33. Begin to raise dyke water levels to the maximum summer freeboard no later than 15 February.
34. Do not apply any inorganic or organic fertiliser or manure.
35. From 1 April until 31 May, do not exceed a grazing density of one bovine animal per 0.75 ha and do not cause poaching, over-grazing or under-grazing.
36. Do not graze with sheep until 1 June.

FEN TIER

37. Agree a Fen Management Plan with the Project Officer. (This may need to be discussed with the Broads Authority and on SSSIs it will need to be agreed with English Nature.)
38. Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser.
39. Do not apply any lime, slag or any other substance to reduce soil acidity.
40. Do not use any pesticides, fungicides, insecticides or herbicides.
41. Do not damage or destroy any feature of historic interest.
42. You must abide by the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water, Soil and Air, published by the Department as amended from time to time.

TIER 4A – ARABLE REVERSION TO PERMANENT GRASSLAND

Once under permanent grass this land must be managed in accordance with prescriptions 1-17. If you wish you may also offer it for inclusion under Tier 2 or Tier 3 in which case you should seek further guidance on its management from the Project Officer.

43. Cease arable production and establish a new grass sward within 12 months of the start of the agreement.
44. During the first 12 months of the agreement do not apply any of the following without obtaining prior approval:
organic or inorganic fertiliser;
lime, slag or any other substance to reduce the acidity of the soil;
pesticides.

45. From the start of your agreement you must follow all the Tier 1 guidelines from prescription 10 onwards.

46. On grassland reverted from arable do not exceed an annual average stocking level of 1.4 Livestock Units (LU) per hectare.

TIER 4B – ARABLE GRASSLAND MARGINS

47. Cease production on a strip of land at least 6m wide at the edge of a field used for arable cropping. This margin must be taken from the existing arable land and must adjoin an open drainage channel e.g. a ditch or watercourse.
48. Cultivate the margin so as to create a seed bed and establish a grass sward within twelve months of ceasing arable cropping.
49. Maintain the grass sward on the field margin by cutting at least once a year. Do not cut before 30 June and do not allow any cut material to enter the dykes.
50. Do not apply to the margin without obtaining prior approval:
organic or inorganic fertiliser;
lime, slag or any substance to reduce the acidity of the soil;
fungicides and insecticides;
herbicides (except to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock or ragwort).
Apply herbicides by weed wiper or spot treatment.
51. You may regularly cultivate and apply herbicides to a one metre edge of the margin adjacent to the cropped area.
52. You must abide by the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water, Soil and Air, published by the Department as amended from time to time.

PUBLIC ACCESS TIER

53. Make the access route available for public access at no charge.
54. Maintain a free passage over the access route.
55. Do not erect new fences on or adjacent to the access route without the prior written approval of the Department.
56. Keep the access route and fields crossed by it free of litter and other refuse.
57. Exclude bulls from the access route and fields crossed by it, except for bulls which do not exceed the age of 10 months or are not of a recognised dairy breed and are at large in any field or enclosure in which cows and heifers are also at large.
58. Agree with the Department in writing in advance the public liability insurance cover which you will maintain for the duration of the access agreement.
59. Provide and maintain adequate means of entry to the access route.
60. Affix and maintain appropriate signboards and waymarking.
61. Do not permit any of the following activities on the access route or on fields crossed by it: camping, caravanning, lighting of fires, organised games or sports, riding of motor vehicles (except those used for agricultural operations on the land) without the Department's prior written approval.
62. Agree with the Department in writing whether the riding of horses or cycles may be permitted on the access route.
63. If you wish to apply for temporary closure of the access route you must agree this with the Department in writing in advance. Where temporary closure is permitted you must post signs giving notice of the intended closure and the reasons for it at each entry point to the access route at least two weeks in advance of the date of closure.