

# Environmentally Sensitive Areas

## SCHEME PRESCRIPTIONS

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### COTSWOLD HILLS 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 1A ALL LAND

1. Do not increase your existing area of arable land without the Department's prior written approval.
2. Do not increase your existing application rates of organic or inorganic fertiliser. Do not apply any organic fertiliser within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole that supplies water for human consumption or within 10 metres of any watercourse.
3. Retain walls, banks and hedges and do not remove any part thereof. Do not plough or apply pesticides on land within 1 metre of any wall, bank or hedge.
4. Maintain stockproof walls, banks and hedges in a stockproof condition using traditional materials.
5. In addition, for a supplementary payment, all farms with drystone walls *MUST* agree a programme for the restoration of the walls using traditional styles and materials. You will be required to restore at least 0.25 metre of walls per hectare per year. The programme will last for a minimum of five years. Payment will be calculated on the basis of every metre of wall restored in each year.
6. On agreement land with hedges you must, within two years of the start of your agreement, undertake a management review of your hedges and agree in writing with the Project Officer the hedge management required. This would include aspects such as tagging, cutting heights, cutting frequency, time of cutting, identifying hedges to grow on in anticipation of laying.
7. For a supplementary payment all farms with hedges *MUST* agree a programme to restore non-stockproof hedges to a stockproof condition (including laying). The programme will last for a minimum of five years. You will be required to restore at least 0.5 m of hedges per hectare per year. Payment will be calculated on the basis of every metre of hedge restored in each year.
8. Retain and, where necessary, manage all individual and small groups of trees for which you are responsible.
9. Retain existing broadleaved woodland.
10. Within two years of the start of your agreement obtain written advice on the management of existing woodland and on any proposals to plant new woodland or trees.
11. Manage scrub.
12. Any bracken control must be carried out in accordance with a programme agreed in writing in advance with the Project Officer and any other consents obtained. Where bracken cannot be controlled by mechanical means and the use of a herbicide is necessary, only asulam may be used where application is by means of a boom sprayer (including aerial application). Other herbicides and application methods may be used only in agreement with the Project Officer.
13. Retain and manage watercourses, ditches, ponds and wetland (including margins and banks) for which you are responsible and carry out any necessary management by mechanical means, not pesticides.
14. Maintain any weatherproof traditional farm buildings for which you are responsible in a weatherproof condition using traditional styles and materials.
15. Retain rock outcrops.
16. Do not damage, destroy or remove any feature of archaeological or historic value or interest.
17. Do not plough or cultivate within 4 metres of the trunk of any tree situated within a field.
18. At the start of your agreement obtain written advice on the management of known archaeological and historic features on your land. Where standard advice on agricultural management is provided this should be implemented within 12 months. Where more specific advice is required this should be obtained within the first 12 months of your agreement and appropriate advice implemented within two years.

19. Do not erect any new permanent fences, other than for backfencing hedges or banks, without the Department's prior written approval.
20. Dispose of sheep dip safely. Do not spread sheep dip where it may affect areas of nature conservation value.
21. Obtain written advice on siting, design and materials before constructing buildings or roads or carrying out any other engineering or construction works that do not require planning permission or prior notification determination by the Local Planning Authority.
22. You must identify on your application any common land within the ESA where you have grazing rights. Where common land is not subject to agreement you must not remove stock from agreement land to the common land if you have to reduce stock levels as a result of your agreement. However, you may continue to carry out normal stock movements.
23. You must abide by the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Soil, Air and Water, published by the Department (references PB 0617, PB 0618 and PB 0585) as amended from time to time.

### **TIER 1B IMPROVED PERMANENT GRASSLAND**

*Observe prescriptions 1-23 (Tier 1A) plus additional prescriptions set out below:*

24. Where requested by the Department, agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement a Grassland Management Plan. This will include the type and number of stock that will be required to graze the area, the period of grazing, amounts of organic and inorganic fertiliser which may be applied, any necessary scrub and bracken management and any approved mechanical operations such as topping or cutting.
25. Maintain improved permanent grassland. Do not plough, level or reseed.
26. Do not chain harrow or roll unless you currently do so.
27. Graze with livestock other than pigs or poultry and avoid poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing. Horses may be grazed but only in association with cattle or sheep or both.
28. Rotate areas used for supplementary feeding of livestock so as to avoid poaching.
29. Land currently managed as traditional hay meadow and identified as such on the agreement map must continue to be managed as such.
30. Exclude stock from traditionally managed hay meadows at least 7 weeks before the first cut for hay and, in any event, by 20 May until the end of cutting.
31. Cut hay meadows annually for hay, but not silage. Do not cut in any year before 8 July. Remove the cut crop and graze the aftermath.
32. Wilt and turn any grass cut for silage and graze the aftermath.
33. Do not exceed your existing application rates of organic or inorganic fertiliser and, in any event, do not apply more than 175 kg total nitrogen per hectare per year.

34. Do not apply fungicides or insecticides.
35. Do not apply herbicides except to control bracken, stinging nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broadleaved dock or ragwort. With the exception of bracken control, apply herbicides only by means of a wick applicator or by spot treatment.
36. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.

### **TIER 1C EXTENSIVE PERMANENT GRASSLAND**

*Observe prescriptions 1-23 (Tier 1A) and 24-36 (Tier 1B) plus additional prescriptions set out below:*

37. Maintain extensive permanent grassland. Do not carry out any mechanical operations during the period 1 April to 8 July.
38. Graze with cattle or sheep or both. Horses may also be grazed but only in association with cattle or sheep or both.
39. On valley bottom grassland do not exceed a stocking level of 0.75 Livestock Units (LU) per hectare during the period 1 April to 31 May.
40. Restrict supplementary feeding of livestock to areas agreed in advance with the Project Officer.
41. Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser except for farmyard manure (FYM).
42. Do not exceed your existing application rates of FYM and, in any event, do not apply more than 12.5 tonnes per hectare in any three year period except applications on hay meadows where it can be 12.5 tonnes per hectare per year. Apply FYM only in a single dressing.
43. Do not apply slurry, pig or poultry manure or sewage sludge.
44. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity.

### **TIER 2 – REVERSION OF ARABLE LAND TO EXTENSIVE PERMANENT GRASSLAND**

45. Cease arable production (including ley grassland production). Within 7 months of the start of your agreement establish a permanent grass sward using suitable species chosen from an approved list. Agree in writing with the Project Officer before purchase the seed mix to be used. Seed of native origin and local provenance should be used wherever the Department considers it appropriate.
46. During the first 7 months of the agreement observe all the Tier 1A prescriptions plus "do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage" and do not apply any of the following without the Department's prior written approval:
  - i) lime, slag or any substance designed to reduce soil acidity;
  - ii) fungicides, insecticides or herbicides.
47. After the first 7 months follow all the remaining Tier 1B Improved Permanent Grassland and Tier 1C Extensive Permanent Grassland prescriptions.

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48. During each of the three years following establishment of the grass sward cut the grass, remove the cut crop as hay (but not silage) and graze the aftermath.
49. On grassland reverted from arable do not exceed an average stocking level of 1.4 Livestock Units LU per hectare.

### **TIER 3A – OVERWINTERED CEREAL OR LINSEED STUBBLE FOLLOWED BY A SPRING CEREAL CROP**

50. After you have harvested your cereal or linseed crop, you must follow these stubble management conditions until 1 March in the following year:
51. Straw from the previous cereal or linseed crop must be removed immediately after harvest unless chopped and spread evenly with a combine-mounted chopper as part of the harvesting operation.
52. Do not burn crop residues on agreement land.
53. Do not subsoil, plough or cultivate the agreement land.
54. Do not sow a cover crop.
55. Do not cut, top or graze the regenerating vegetation.
56. Do not apply any agricultural chemicals, apart from the herbicides mentioned below.
57. You may control serious infestations of grass weeds such as black-grass and wild oats by using products containing only the following active ingredients or any other compounds subsequently approved by the Department:
- Diclofop-methyl, Difenzoquat, Flamprop-m-isopropyl, Fenoxaprop-ethyl, Tralkoxydim, Clodinafop-propargyl
58. Alternatively you may use careful localised cutting for grass weed control, after discussion with your Project Officer.
59. Herbicide control of serious infestations of broad-leaved weeds may be allowed in exceptional circumstances, subject to prior written approval by the Department.
60. Do not apply any of the following materials to your agreement land:
- organic fertilisers such as farmyard manure, pig slurry or sewage sludge;
- inorganic fertilisers such as ammonium nitrate, triplesuperphosphate (TSP), muriate of potash or compounds;
- liming materials.
61. Organic waste (such as farmyard manure) produced on the holding may be stored on the agreement land. This must be no more than the amount needed to make a single moderate application to the field in which it is stored. Storage, disposal or dumping of other waste materials is not allowed.
62. Do not carry out any other mechanical operations on the land (such as drainage works).

63. After 1 March, you may carry out normal husbandry operations to grow a spring cereal crop (spring wheat, spring barley or spring oats) for the remainder of the agreement year.

### **TIER 3B – CONSERVATION HEADLANDS**

64. You must create and manage a 10-12 metre wide conservation headland along the edge of a cereal field. Management of the conservation headland will include normal cultivations and the sowing of the cereal crop.
65. Following harvest of the previous crop, do not apply any of the following to your conservation headland:
- organic fertilisers such as farmyard manure, pig slurry or sewage sludge;
- inorganic fertiliser such as ammonium nitrate, triplesuperphosphate (TSP), muriate of potash or compounds.
66. Fertilisers applied to adjacent land must not affect or encroach on the conservation headland.
67. Do not apply any insecticides on the headland between 15 March and harvest.
68. You may control serious infestations of grass weeds such as black-grass or wild oats by using one of the following selective herbicides or any other compounds subsequently approved by the Department:
- Tri-allate, Diclofop-methyl, Difenzoquat, Flamprop-m-isopropyl, Fenoxaprop-ethyl, Fenoxaprop-p-ethyl, Tralkoxydim, Clodinafop-propargyl.
69. Broad-leaved weed control, or the use of other herbicides, may be allowed in exceptional cases, subject to the prior written approval of the Department (contact your Project Officer).
70. Insecticides or herbicides applied to adjacent arable land must not affect or encroach on the conservation headland.
71. The conservation headland may be harvested in the usual way.

### **ACCESS TIER**

72. Make the access route available for public access at no charge.
73. Maintain a free passage over the access route.
74. Do not erect new fences on or adjacent to the access route without the prior written approval of the Department.
75. Keep the access route and fields crossed by it free of litter and other refuse.
76. 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.

77. Agree with the Department in writing in advance the Public Liability Insurance cover which you will maintain for the duration of the access agreement.
78. Provide and maintain adequate means of entry to the access route.
79. Affix and maintain appropriate signboards and waymarking.
80. 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.
81. Agree with the Department in writing whether the riding of horses or cycles may be permitted on the access route.
82. 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.