

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

SCHEME PRESCRIPTIONS

SOUTH WESSEX DOWNS 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 PART 1 – ALL LAND

1. Maintain field boundaries and do not remove any walls or hedges or any part thereof. Maintain stockproof hedges and walls in a stockproof condition using traditional methods and materials.
2. Where necessary, keep fence lines free from brambles, thorn and other overgrowth in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Project Officer within one year of the start of your agreement.
3. Do not erect any permanent fences without the Department's prior written approval.
4. Retain and manage trees, including pollarded willows, in accordance with local custom.
5. Do not plant any additional trees, hedges, woodland or allow any scrub to become established without the Department's prior written approval.
6. Maintain ditches and streams by mechanical means not sprays.
7. Retain and manage ponds and dewponds.
8. Do not damage, destroy or remove any feature of archaeological or historic value or interest.
9. Maintain any weatherproof traditional farm buildings which you own, or for which you are responsible, in a weatherproof condition using traditional methods and materials.
10. Dispose of sheep dip safely. Do not spread sheep dip where it may affect areas of nature conservation value.
11. Obtain written advice on siting and materials before constructing buildings or roads or carrying out any other engineering or construction works which do not require planning permission or prior notification determination by the Local Planning Authority.
12. 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 0587) as amended from time to time.

TIER 1 PART 2A – IMPROVED PERMANENT GRASSLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-12 (Tier 1 Part 1) plus additional prescriptions set out below:

13. Maintain improved permanent grassland. Do not plough or level except with the Department's prior written approval. You may reseed by direct drilling, slot seeding and oversowing only.
14. Restrict supplementary feeding of livestock to areas agreed in advance with the Project Officer.
15. Do not graze any land with livestock so as to cause poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing.
16. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.
17. Do not use fungicides or pesticides within 2 metres of any field boundary.
18. Do not apply herbicides within 2 metres of any field boundary, other than by means of a weed wiper or by spot treatment except as agreed with the Project Officer.
19. Do not exceed your existing application rates of inorganic and organic fertiliser.

TIER 1 PART 2B – LOW INPUT PERMANENT GRASSLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-12 (Tier 1 Part 1) plus additional prescriptions set out below:

20. Maintain low input permanent grassland. Do not plough, level or reseed.

21. Wilt and turn any grass cut for silage and graze the aftermath.
22. Restrict supplementary feeding of livestock to areas agreed in advance with the Project Officer.
23. Do not graze any land with livestock so as to cause poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing. Within 18 months of the start of your agreement agree in writing with the Project Officer a grassland management plan which you must implement.
24. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.
25. Do not use fungicides or insecticides.
26. Do not apply herbicides except to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock or ragwort. Apply herbicides by means of a weed wiper or by spot treatment.
27. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity.
28. Do not exceed your existing application rates of inorganic fertiliser and in any case do not exceed 50 kg nitrogen, 25 kg phosphate and 25 kg potash per ha per year. Do not exceed your existing application rates of well rotted home produced organic fertiliser and in any case do not exceed 12.5 tonnes per ha per year.

TIER 1 PART 3 – DOWNLAND TURF

Observe prescriptions 1-12 (Tier 1 Part 1) plus additional prescriptions set out below:

29. Maintain downland turf. Do not plough, level, reseed, chain harrow, roll or otherwise cultivate.
30. Do not cut any grass for hay or silage without the Department's prior written approval.
31. Restrict supplementary feeding of livestock to areas agreed in advance with the Project Officer.
32. Do not graze any land so as to cause poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing. Graze with cattle or sheep or both. Exceptionally horses may be grazed with written agreement from the Project Officer. Within 18 months of the start of your agreement agree in writing with the Project Officer a grassland management plan which you must implement.
33. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.
34. Do not use fungicides or insecticides.
35. Do not apply herbicides except to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock or ragwort. Apply herbicides by means of a weed wiper or by spot treatment.
36. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity.
37. Do not apply any inorganic or organic fertiliser.

TIER 2 PART 1 – DOWNLAND TURF CREATION

38. Cease arable or ley grassland production. Within 12 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.
39. During the first 12 months of your agreement do not apply any of the following without obtaining the Department's prior written approval:
 - (i) organic or inorganic fertiliser;
 - (ii) lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity;
 - (iii) fungicides, insecticides or herbicides.
40. Following establishment of the permanent grass sward you must cut the grass and remove as hay after 15 July at least once during the first 2 years and graze the aftermath. Cultivate only with a chain harrow or roller but not between 1 April and 15 July. Topping of weeds between 1 April and 15 July must be agreed with the Project Officer.
41. You must observe all the Tier 1 Part 1 prescriptions from the start of your agreement except that you need not graze the land during the first 12 months of your agreement. After the first 12 months of your agreement, you must also follow the prescriptions set out below.
42. Graze with cattle or sheep or both but do not cause poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing. Agree in writing with the Project Officer a grassland management plan which you must implement.
43. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.
44. Do not use fungicides or insecticides.
45. Do not apply herbicides except to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock or ragwort. Apply herbicides by means of a weed wiper or by spot treatment.
46. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity.
47. Do not apply any inorganic or organic fertiliser.
48. From the start of year five of your agreement you must not plough, level, reseed, chain harrow, roll or otherwise cultivate and you must not cut any grass for hay or silage without the Department's prior written approval.
49. On grassland reverted from arable, do not exceed an annual average stocking level of 1.4 Livestock Units (LU) per hectare.

TIER 2 PART 2 – REVERSION OF ARABLE LAND TO PERMANENT GRASSLAND

50. Cease arable or ley grassland production and establish a permanent grass sward within twelve months of the start of the agreement 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.
51. During the first 12 months of the agreement do not apply any of the following without obtaining the Department's prior written approval:
 - (i) inorganic or organic fertiliser;
 - (ii) lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity;
 - (iii) fungicides, insecticides or herbicides.
52. From the start of your agreement you must follow all the Tier 1 Part 1 prescriptions except that you need not graze the land during the first 12 months of your agreement.
53. After the first 12 months of your agreement you must also follow all the Tier 1 Part 2(B) prescriptions.
54. On grassland reverted from arable, do not exceed an annual average stocking level of 1.4 LU per hectare.

TIER 2 PART 3 – CONSERVATION HEADLANDS

Observe prescriptions 1-12 (Tier 1 Part 1) plus additional prescriptions set out below:

55. Do not apply any insecticides to a strip at least 6m wide at the edge of any cereal field except during the period 1 September to 31 December. The strip may continue to be cropped.
56. Do not apply herbicides to the strip other than:
 - (i) Tri-allate, diclofop-methyl, difenzoquat, flamprop-M-isopropyl, fenoxaprop-ethyl, fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, tralkoxydim, fenoxaprop-P-ethyl + diclofop methyl or clodinafop-propargyl;
 - (ii) Glyphosate provided it is applied in the pre-harvest period by spot treatment and solely for the control of couch, black bent or onion couch;
 - (iii) Amidosulfuron provided it is applied by spot treatment and solely for the control of cleavers.
 - (iv) Fluroxypyr for the control of cleavers but only with the approval of the Project Officer.

57. You may regularly cultivate and apply herbicides to a one metre strip on the edge of the conservation headland alongside a field boundary.
58. Do not roll the conservation headland from 10 April until after the cereal crop has been harvested.
59. Do not use surface cultivation methods of weed control within the conservation headland.

TIER 2 PART 4 – PERMANENT GRASSLAND ENHANCEMENT

60. Do not use a chain harrow or roller during the period 1 April to 30 June.
61. Exclude stock from permanent grassland at least seven weeks before the first cut for hay or silage.
62. Do not apply any inorganic or organic fertiliser.
63. Do not top or cut the grass for hay or silage before 1 July or after 31 August.
64. In the case of any permanent grassland which has not been cut for hay or silage you must either top one half of the grassland each year or top all of the grassland one year in two.
65. From the start of your agreement you must also observe all the Tier 1 Part 1 prescriptions plus all the Tier 1 Part 2(B) prescriptions with one exception: you must not apply any inorganic or organic fertiliser.

EXTENSIVE GRAZING SUPPLEMENT

66. Graze with cattle at a stocking rate not to exceed 0.25 LU per hectare per annum. Exceptionally sheep may be grazed with written agreement from the Project Officer. Within 18 months of the start of your agreement agree in writing with the Project Officer a grassland management plan which you must implement.
67. Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser, otherwise follow the guidelines applicable to the Tier or part thereof on which you are receiving this supplement.

WOODLAND TIER

68. Retain any woodland, copses or groups of trees. Agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement a programme to maintain and enhance the conservation and landscape value of non income generating woodland. All farm woodland on or adjacent to your agreement land must be entered into this woodland tier. Other woodland not on or adjacent to your agreement land may be entered at the discretion of the Department.

PUBLIC ACCESS TIER

69. Make the access route available for public access at no charge.
70. Maintain a free passage over the access route.
71. Do not erect new fences on or adjacent to the access route without the prior written approval of the Department.
72. Keep the access route and fields crossed by it free of litter and other refuse.
73. 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.
74. Agree with the Department in writing in advance the public liability insurance cover which you will maintain for the duration of the access agreement.
75. Provide and maintain adequate means of entry to the access route.
76. Affix and maintain appropriate signboards and waymarking.
77. 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.
78. Agree with the Department in writing whether the riding of horses or cycles may be permitted on the access route.
79. 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.