

16.1 Introduction

A number of schemes are available to farmers and land managers to provide financial incentives for management which produces wildlife and landscape benefits. This chapter provides a summary of some of the grants available to organisations and individuals managing unimproved semi-natural grasslands for conservation purposes. Payment rates are under constant revision, therefore it is important to check with the relevant administering body for the latest information (see Annex 5). Agricultural support measures for livestock production are detailed in section 16.9.

16.2 Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) scheme was introduced by UK agriculture departments in 1987 to encourage farmers to help safeguard areas of the countryside where the landscape, wildlife or historic interest is of national importance. Initially the management agreements were for five years. Ten year management agreements are now being offered.

ESA schemes are entirely voluntary and provide payments for agreed management practices designed to encourage environmentally-friendly farming. Management agreements are for 10 years with an optional break clause after five years.

Each ESA has one or more tiers of entry. Tier 1 payments are usually given for the maintenance or introduction of traditional management practices which are intended to maintain the nature conservation interest of farmed land. Tier 2 payments frequently involve some kind of 'enhancement' management with the aim of optimising or increasing the wildlife value. Tier 3 payments often involve re-creation of habitats (including grassland) hence payments in this tier are frequently higher than tiers 1 and 2. Additional payments are offered for capital works such as hedge planting, scrub removal etc. Annual payments range from £8 per hectare to £500 per hectare depending on the management practices adopted.

Detailed information on ESAs in England is available from the regional Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Service Centre (see Annex 5 for the address of MAFF HQ). More detailed information about ESAs in Northern Ireland and Scotland are available from the Department of Agriculture, Northern Ireland and the Scottish Office Agriculture and Fisheries Department respectively (see Annex 5). In Wales the new All Wales Agri-environment Scheme (AWAES or Tir Gofal), will combine existing schemes such as the ESAs and Tir Cymen (see section 16.4).

16.3 Countryside Stewardship (England only)

Countryside Stewardship offers management agreements to farmers and land managers to enhance and conserve certain important English landscapes and their wildlife habitats. It aims to integrate conservation and informal recreation with commercial farming and land management. The scheme is administered by MAFF. The scheme is voluntary and operates through 10 year management agreements. Payment rates are summarised in Table 16.1

Details about the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and how to apply are available in the *Application pack for Countryside Stewardship* available from MAFF (see annexe 5).

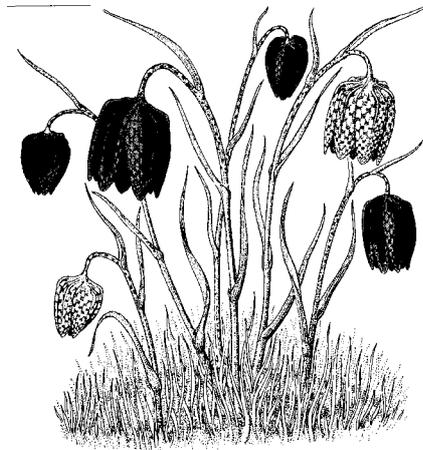


Table 16.1 Summary payments for The Countryside Stewardship Scheme

Item*	Payment (per ha per year unless stated)
Managing grassland:	
" Lowland haymeadows (plus for old meadows<3ha.)	£85 £30
" Upland haymeadows (plus for meadows<5ha.)	£80 £50
" Lowland and culm pastures (plus for old pasture <3ha)	£85 £30
" Upland in-bye pasture	£50
" Upland rough grazing pastures	£20
" Chalk and limestone grassland	£60
" Upland limestone grassland	£60
" Grassland supplement	£40
Managing historic landscapes	
" Restoring old orchards	£250
" Restoring water meadows	£225
Field boundaries	
" Hedgerow restoration	£2/m
" Ditch, dyke and Rhyne restoration	£2/m
Water levels and features	
" Culvert	£40
" Soil bund	£40
" Timber sluice	£140
" Concrete, brick or stone sluice	£400
Scrub clearance	
" Depending on degree of cover	£50 (base payment) - £500 >75% cover
" Bracken control (mechanical)	
" Bracken control (chemical)	£80 (base payment)
Stock management	
" Post and wire fencing	£0.80/m
" Sheep fencing	£1.20/m
" Rabbit or sheep netting	£0.60/m
" Field gate	£125 each
" Deer fencing	£3.50m
" Water supply	£0.40/m
" Water trough	£25

* All annual payments are for 10 years unless otherwise stated

16.4 Tir Gofal (AWAES -Wales only)

Tir Gofal combines the existing Tir Cymen and ESA schemes into one all Wales Agri-environment Scheme. It is a whole farm scheme available to farmers and others who have responsibility for, and control over, farmed land – usually an owner/occupier or tenant. The scheme will offer 10 year agreements with a five year break clause. The minimum size of holding eligible is three hectares.

Tir Gofal comprises four elements:

- " Land management including payments for management, restoration and conversion of improved to semi-improved grassland.
- " Creating new permissive access.
- " Capital works (including hedgerow maintenance).
- " Training for farmers.

At the time of press, no details on payment rates have been finalised. Further details are available from the Countryside Council for Wales. (See Annex 5).

16.5 Scottish Countryside Premium Scheme (Scotland only)

The Countryside Premium Scheme is designed to encourage farmers, crofters and common grazing committees to adopt environmentally-friendly farming practices and to manage particular habitats and features in the interests of conservation. Individual scheme options of relevance to this handbook include:

- " management of grassland for birds
- " management of species-rich grassland
- " creation of species-rich grassland
- " management of scrub

The scheme is for a voluntary 10 year period with an optional break clause after five years.

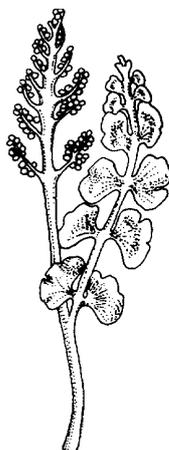


Table 16.2 Table of summary payments for the Scottish Countryside Premium Scheme

Item	Payment
Management of grassland for birds	£125 per ha
Management of species-rich grassland	£80 per ha
Creation of species-rich grassland	£250 per ha
Muirburn	£5 per ha for the area of moorland identified for burning
Management of cropped machair	£140 per ha or where cultivation is combined with the traditional application of seaweed and dung £220 per ha
Bracken control	£100 per ha
Stock fence	£2.50 per m
Planting, replanting, coppicing or laying of hedge	£3 per m

16.6 The Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme

This scheme is due to come into operation in 1999. At time of publication no details on payment rates are available. For further information contact DANI (see annexe 5).

16.7 Reserves Enhancement Pilot Scheme (EN)

This is an initiative by English Nature specifically targeted at voluntary conservation bodies (VCOs) who manage SSSIs in England. There are currently 33 VCOs in the scheme of which 30 are Wildlife Trusts. The current budget for RES is £850,000 and there are now 2,015 ha of lowland grassland in the scheme receiving payment of £50 a hectare.

16.8 Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (EN) (applies only to SSSIs)

The Wildlife Enhancement Scheme is discretionary a scheme run by English Nature to encourage appropriate management of SSSIs. The Scheme has an objective to show that farming skills can be used to benefit wildlife. The payments relevant to grassland are outlined below. Care must be taken when applying these standard payments to specific sites. The management requirements will influence the payment levels. Discussion with the local English Nature Team will be necessary (see Annex 5).

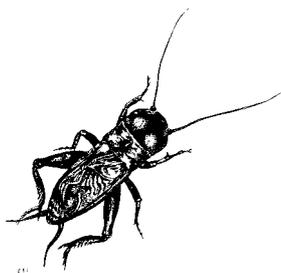


Table 16.3 Wildlife Enhancement Scheme

Wildlife enhancement scheme 1998	Payment	Notes
Culm Grassland Annual payments from 1.4.98 for five years	Tier 1: £50 per ha ungrazed land Tier 2: Scale: First 10ha £130 Next 10 ha £110 Next 20 ha £90 Thereafter £50 ha	Aim - re-establish a balanced mix of habitats by summer grazing and if necessary topping and burning of vegetation to maintain and enhance the wildlife interest.
Northumberland and Durham Dales Meadows Pastures and Allotments.	Meadow land - £290 per ha or £155 per ha as top-up to Pennine Dales ESA Tier 1 for meadow land Pasture land -£130 per ha or £35 per ha as top-up to Pennine Dales ESA Tier 1 for grassland Allotment land £35 per ha	Aim - Maintain and enhance the meadows, pastures and allotments to increase the flowering and number of special plants, and provide the right conditions for breeding birds
North York Moors Grasslands	Restoration of pasture -£110 per ha (for max of five years) Maintenance of pasture £65 per ha Meadow land - £120 per ha + supplement of £15 per ha for aftermath grazing Ungrazed land (managed by cutting) £50 per ha	Aim - increase the flowering and numbers of the many special grassland plants
Vales of Yorkshire - Lowland Wet Grassland	Meadow land - £185 per ha plus supplement of £25 per ha for aftermath grazing Pasture land £160 per ha	Aim - increase the flowering and numbers of many special lowland wet grassland plants and other wildlife.
Somerset Levels and Moors	Cultivation and late cutting £5 per ha Cutting and Grazing £5-£25 per ha Fertiliser - £25-£35 per ha (Tier 2 £40 per ha, Tier 3 £5 per ha) Protection of water courses £5-10 per 100m length (Tier 2 £5-£10 per 100m length) Water levels - £10-£30 per ha (Tier 2 £30 per ha)	Aim- The scheme is only available to farmers who have, or are applying for an ESA agreement and payments from English Nature are a supplement to the ESA payment

Wildlife enhancement scheme 1998	Payment	Notes
White Peak, Derbyshire, Staffordshire and The Peak District	Unimproved pastures and dales - £90 per ha where tractor access is possible and £70 per ha where tractor access is not possible Hay meadows - £150 per ha – mowing and aftermath grazing and £100 per ha for grazing only Restoration of haymeadows - £175 per ha Tall grassland - £90 per ha – maintenance of naturally occurring flower-rich tall grasslands and £60 per ha for management of long-abandoned tall grasslands Grasslands on lead rich soil £90 per ha	To maintain and enhance the various habitats within the White Peak Natural Area and thus increase flora and fauna
Yorkshire Wolds chalk grassland	£90 per ha with £10 per ha special flowering supplement	Aim - to increase the flowering and numbers of many special plants of chalk grassland
Yorkshire Dales meadows and pastures	Meadow land - £250 per ha or £115 per ha as a top up to the Pennine Dales ESA Tier 1 for meadow land Pasture land - £150 per ha or £55 per ha as top-up to Pennine Dales ESA Tier 1 for grassland	Aim - maintain and enhance the meadows and pastures to increase the flowering and number of special plants and provide the right conditions for breeding birds
Pevensey Levels, Sussex	£74 per ha	Aim - maintain and enhance the wildlife interest of the ditches bankside and grassland
Hereford and Worcester grasslands	Annual payments of £125 per ha. With a minimum payment of £100 per agreement	Aim - protect and increase the numbers of wildflowers characteristic of neutral grassland and benefit all other wildlife.

16.9 Churchyard conservation

A national 'living churchyards' campaign promotes sympathetic churchyard management for wildlife. A DIY Information Pack has been produced which gives good advice on surveying, preparing management plans, management techniques and where to find additional help and advice. The pack costs £5 and is available from The Wildlife Trusts or The Church and Conservation Project, The Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ, tel: 01203 696969.

16.10 Grant aid from the statutory agencies

Grant aid from the statutory agencies covers a wide range of nature conservation activities such as management of sites and land purchase. Up to 50 per cent of costs can be covered. Further details from EN, SNH, CCW and the Environment and Heritage Service , DoE NI (see annexe 5).

An RSPB/SNH Corncrake Initiative exists to encourage suitable management of grassland and forage crops for breeding corncrakes, by re-establishing traditional management of hay meadows.

16.11 Landscape Conservation Grants

Landscape Conservation Grants for small scale works such as tree planting and hedgerow restoration (up to 50 per cent of the costs) are available from the Countryside Commission, CCW and some local authorities (see annexe 5).

16.12 Agricultural Production Grants (MAFF)

16.12.1 Sheep Annual Premium Scheme (SAPS)

This is an annual payment of c. £14 (lowlands)/£20 in Less Favoured Areas) LFA) for each breeding ewe or replacement gimmer (must be 12 months old by 15 May) kept from February to May in the year of the claim. No extensification premium is payable and the entitlement is restricted by quotas which can be acquired by purchase, lease or application to the national reserve via agriculture departments.

16.12.2 Suckler Cow Premium (SCPS)

Each adult beef cow entitles its owner to claim a MAFF payment of c £120 for each year in which it is kept for at least six months after making the claim. The cow must be at least 50 per cent recognised beef breed and must have produced at least one calf by the time the annual claim is submitted. Entitlement to this payment is tied to the possession of the appropriate number of suckler cow quota units. These are allocated by agriculture departments from the national reserve.

16.12.3 Beef Special Premium (BSPS)

Each male bovine entitles the owner to claim payment of c£90 when the animal is eight months old and again when it is 20 months. Payment is only made after the animals have been retained for two months on the claimants farm. Payments are not limited by quota but no more than 90 head may be claimed per year.

16.12.4 Extensification payments

These are top up payments on BSPS and SCPS claims when the overall stocking density for the claimants holding is less than 1.4 LU/ha. It is worth £30 per animal and an additional £10 if the rate is below 1.0 LU/ha.

16.12.5 Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance (HLCA)

This scheme is designed to supplement the incomes of LFA farmers to take account of the permanent natural handicaps (eg climate and topography) under which they operate. The objective is to ensure the continuation of livestock farming in the LFAs thereby helping to maintain a viable population and conserve the countryside in those areas. These payments are part funded by the EU under Council Regulation 950/97.

An allowance is paid to claimants who keep breeding cows in a regular breeding herd, maintained primarily for the production of beef calves, and breeding sheep in a qualified flock. The claimant must have the use of at least three hectares of eligible land in the LFA and keep the number of animals claimed for a six month retention period for cattle and a fixed 100 day retention period for sheep. The headage payment varies between the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) and the Disadvantaged Area (DA).

Stocking density limits restrict the amount that a claimant can be paid. There is an overall EU limit of 1.4 Lus per ha (equivalent to 1.4 cows). For sheep there are national limits of six ewes per ha on SDA and nine ewes per ha on DA land. There are also EU financial limits per ha. These can have an effect on the value of a claim.

The different values for cows and ewes are determined annually and are not known far in advance. In the 1997 claim year the HLCA for each cow was £97.50 in the SDAs and £69.75 in the DAs. For ewes the allowance was £5.75 in SDAs and £2.65 each in DAs. The payment limits per hectare were £121.49 for SDA and £97.65 for DA.

16.12.6 Organic Aid Scheme (see also Chapter 4)

Aid is available throughout England to farmers who wish to convert to organic production in accordance with the rules of the UK Register of Organic Food Standards (UKROFS). Annual Payments are progressively reduced over five years, going from £14/ha to £5/ha for farmers in less favoured areas and from £70/ha to £25/ha for other farmers. For the first 5ha, there is an additional annual payment of £30/ha for all farmers. The Organic Conversion Information Service (OCIS) provides access to a telephone helpline and free advisory visits to help farmers examine the options available for organic farming. The OCIS helpline number is 0117 922 7707.



16.13 Administration

In order to qualify for subsidies and to comply with BSE regulations, livestock farmers must comply with detailed administration and record keeping requirements.

16.13.1 Cattle

a. Registration

Keepers of cattle must register with their nearest MAFF regional service centre and be allocated their own unique herd number. They must keep specified records of their herd and make them available for inspection at MAFFs request.

b. Identification

All cattle must have a permanent tag in their right ear bearing a unique identifying number. Normally this is applied within one week of birth and the number also denotes farm of origin. As yet there is no formal identification for other forms of livestock.

c. Documents

- i. all cattle born since 1996 must have an official passport document issued by MAFF stating its identity, date of birth, breed, farm of origin and dam identity. It must accompany the animal when transported to a new owner.
- ii. Cattle Identification Document (CID). These documents are issued for male cattle only. They identify an animal by ear tag number and farm of origin and are used to claim Beef Special Premium Payments. They must accompany the animal when sold or slaughtered. Cattle born after September 1998 do not require this document. The passport will suffice. At this point all cattle registration will become the responsibility of the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS), a centralized agency based at Workington.

16.13.2 Other information

In addition, farm registers must be maintained for sheep, detailing births, deaths, purchases and sales, and submission of an annual return indicating all the land used for livestock. The information is recorded on Integrated Administration and Control System forms (IACS). Details about land use are recorded using O.S 4 digit field numbers and areas in hectares. Details of the agricultural use of the land are also required (crops grown, agri-environment scheme, woodland). Livestock headage payments are dependent on the return of an IACS form. The register is used by MAFF to calculate stocking density based on the number of livestock units claimed under the various subsidy schemes. If overall stocking rate exceeds 2.0 LU/ha the producer is penalised by reductions in subsidy payments. Farmers can only include land rented on an annual basis on their IACS form if they a) have occupancy for seven months or more in any one year and b) occupancy starts before 31 March of the year in question. Land which can be let on this basis, is likely to be of more interest to local graziers, and possibly command a higher price.

References and further reading

NIX, J. 1998. *Farm Management Pocketbook*. 29th edition. Ashford: School of Rural Economics, Wye College.

