



The Campaign for the Farmed Environment is encouraging farmers and land managers to voluntarily adopt land management practices that will retain and exceed the environmental benefits that used to be provided by set-aside. There is a range of voluntary management measures or ELS options that you can adopt on your farm to benefit the environment, whilst at the same time being agronomically practical.

Name: Russell Toothill

Region: South Yorkshire

Farm: Ivy House Farm, Nr Doncaster

Size: approx 1500 acres (600 hectares)



Background

Ivy House farm is made up of blocks of land distributed over the South Yorkshire, Lincs, Notts border. Consequently the farm has soil types ranging from Clays to blow away sands and also includes some restored gravel pits.

The farm grows milling wheat, Oil Seed rape, winter and spring linseed, sugar beet, grain maize, short rotation coppice and this year is trailing a acre of soya beans . In addition to this the farm has areas of kale, turnips, temporary and permanent pasture which are grazed by the farms flock of 700 sheep.

The farm is a haven for wildlife with 110 species of birds recorded on the farm. The farm also has a strong water vole population.

What environmental management do you already undertake on your farm?

The farm is in ELS and has two Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS). The Stewardship schemes have range of options suited to the different parts of the farm.

Options include;

- Ditch management usually buffered with a 6 metre margins alongside.
- Wild bird seed mix
- Pollen and Nectar mix
- Field corner management
- Low input grassland
- Over wintered stubbles some followed by fallow
- Hedgerow management and planting through CSS

How will you be/are you taking part in the Campaign?

I am in environmental schemes delivering options that contribute towards the Campaigns objectives. When my existing schemes come to an end I will be renewing the ELS and hopefully gain entry into Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)

I am chairman of South Yorkshire Local Liaison Group and will be holding farm walk on 26 May 2010 to demonstrate how I am delivering the Campaign.

Will you be using an adviser?

In the past I have completed applications myself as I believe this ensures I know exactly what I need to do to comply with the agreement and understand how it will practically work for my farm business. I understand I may need help with the HLS completing the Farm Environment Plan but we will cross that bridge when we come to it.

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

I don't want to see a compulsory approach and if this was to happen it would turn me away from doing environmental work which I enjoy and take pride in. If a compulsory approach was introduced I would not re-join ELS.

How does undertaking voluntary management fit in with your farming business?

ELS and CSS make a significant contribution to the farm businesses bottom line profit.

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

I actually enjoy and take pride in delivering the environmental management on my farm. As County Chairman for South Yorkshire it is an opportunity to mix and work with the partner organisations involved with the Campaign. I see this as one of the greatest opportunities for the Campaign to bring farmers and the environmental bodies closer together.