

## **Annex 2**

### **Changes to Scheme Prescriptions Following Five Year Policy Reviews for Each ESA**

## Changes to scheme prescriptions following 5-year policy reviews

Broads ESA - Changes to Scheme Prescriptions resulting from 1996 Policy Review

### 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 ~~cattle, sheep or horses~~ *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 should abide by the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water, Soil and Air, published by the Ministry*

#### 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 October~~ 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. Within two years of the start of your agreement you must agree a plan of dyke maintenance and implement it thereafter.~~

25. *The following guidelines 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 ~~do not dig new foot drains and grips.~~ 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

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 30 cm (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.*

#### TIER 4A (ARABLE REVERSION TO PERMANENT GRASSLAND)

Once under permanent grass this land must be managed in accordance with prescriptions 1-18. 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.

42. *Cease arable production and establish a new grass sward within 12 months of the start of the agreement.*

43. *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.*

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

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

#### TIER 4B (GRASSLAND MARGINS)

46. Cease production on a strip of land at least 6 m 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.
47. Cultivate the margin so as to create a seed bed and establish a grass sward within twelve months of ceasing arable cropping.
48. 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.
49. 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.
50. You may regularly cultivate and apply herbicides to a one metre edge of the margin adjacent to the cropped area.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE ON CHANGES PROPOSED TO THE BROADS ESA SCHEME

##### Prescriptions (2, 9 and 11): Amendments to Tier 1 - Permanent Grassland

Only minor changes to the prescriptions are proposed. These are to tighten the requirement to carry out rotational ditch and dyke maintenance, by including a requirement that this is carried out every 5 to 8 years; and include a requirement to carry out weed control as soon as any problems start to develop, rather than waiting until more extensive measures are required before taking action.

##### Prescription (20, 25, and 26): Amendments to Tier 2 - Extensive Grassland

For existing and new agreements, the current restriction on grazing between 31 October and 1 April would be replaced by a restriction between 1 January and 1 April. This modification would provide for grass to be better managed as it runs into the main winter period. The prescription dealing with foot drains and grips would be modified to encourage the selective use of foot drains (surface channels) where they can be used to create additional wet habitat by taking advantage of high dyke water levels. It is proposed that the dyke maintenance plans required under Tier 2

should be replaced by detailed prescriptions to ensure that dyke management is carried out in a sensitive manner to protect the wildlife resource of the dykes as far as practicable.

Prescriptions (31-36) : New water level supplement

It is proposed that a supplement should be introduced, payable where it is possible to achieve a 30 cm freeboard from March until the end of August. Agreement of an in-field Water Management Plan, using a network of created or maintained foot drains to distribute water back into the grazing marshes, would be obligatory. This would bring benefits in Tier 2 and 3, in particular on clay soils which currently have limited interest in terms of bird or botanical value.

Prescriptions (37-41): New Fen Tier

It is proposed to introduce a new tier for the support of traditional management practices on fens, including reed, sedge and litter marshes. A Fen Management Plan would need to be agreed, setting out the active management practices required. Fens are a key habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Somerset Levels and Moors - Changes to Scheme Prescriptions resulting from 1996 Policy Review

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 cattle or sheep but avoid poaching, undergrazing or overgrazing.
3. If you cut the grass for hay or silage, graze the aftermath.
4. Do not exceed your existing level of inorganic fertiliser and in any case do not exceed 75kg of nitrogen, 37.5kg of phosphate and 37.5kg of potash per hectare (60 units of nitrogen, 30 units of phosphate and 30 units of potash per acre) each year. Do not exceed your existing level of home produced organic fertiliser and do not apply any other organic fertiliser.
5. Do not use fungicides or insecticides.
6. Do not apply herbicides except to control creeping buttercup, soft rush, nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock or ragwort. Apply herbicides by weed wiper or spot treatment.
7. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance to reduce soil acidity.
8. Do not install under-drainage, do not mole drain, and do not subsoil or tunnel plough. Do not substantially modify your existing drainage system.
9. Maintain existing field gutters, surface piping, rig and furrow, ditches or rhynes by mechanical means not sprays. Do not install additional surface piping.
10. Do not spray irrigate your land.
11. Maintain hedges, trees and pollarded willows in accordance with local custom.
12. Do not plant any additional trees nor allow natural establishment of additional trees/bushes without prior agreement.
13. Do not damage or destroy any feature of historic interest.
14. 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.
15. Maintain existing gates with wing fencing but do not erect any additional permanent fencing without prior consent.

16. Water levels in ditches and rhyes must either be:

From 1 April to 31 October maintained at or above the penning level, provided since 1987, by the relevant IDB or the Environment Agency (where appropriate) and from 1 November to 31 March maintained at or above the winter level provided since 1987 by the relevant IDB or the Environment Agency (where appropriate) with at least 15cm (6") of water in the bottom of the ditches/rhyes at all times.

Or, to obtain a supplementary payment:

From 1 May to 30 November maintained at not more than 30cm (12") below mean field level and from 1 December to 30 April maintained at not less than mean field level so as to cause conditions of surface splashing.

17. Agreement holders must not pump below these levels which will be fixed by reference to gauge boards set to Ordnance Datum Newlyn.

18. *You should abide by the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water, Soil and Air, published by the Ministry*

#### *TIER 1A - EXTENSIVE PERMANENT GRASSLAND*

Observe prescriptions 1-18 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

19. *Do not use a chain harrow or roller between 31 March and 1 July.*

20. *Do not exceed your existing level of inorganic fertiliser and in any case do not exceed 25 kg of nitrogen, 12.5 kg of phosphate and 12.5 kg of potash per hectare (20 units of nitrogen, 10 units of phosphate and 10 units of potash per acre) each year.*

21. *Unless traditionally the land has been used just for grazing each year mow at least one third (or one year in three) of the land but not before 1 July and do not graze the land prior to laying it up.*

22. *Do not cut or top the grass after 31 August.*

23. *Do not graze with sheep from 1 September to 1 March.*

24. *Do not use herbicides to control creeping buttercup.*

25. *Water levels in ditches and rhyes must be:*

*From 1 April to 31 October maintained at or above the penning level, provided since 1987, by the relevant IDB or the Environment Agency (where appropriate) and from 1 November to 31 March maintained at or above the winter level provided since 1987 by the relevant IDB or the Environment Agency (where*

*appropriate) with at least 15 cm (6") of water in the bottom of the ditches/rhynes at all times.*

26. Agreement holders must not pump below these levels which will be fixed by reference to gauge boards set to Ordnance Datum Newlyn.

#### TIER 2 - WET PERMANENT GRASSLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-18 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

27. Do not use a chain harrow or roller between 31 March and 1 July.

28. Do not exceed your existing level of inorganic fertiliser and in any case do not exceed 25kg of nitrogen, 12.5kg of phosphate and 12.5kg of potash per hectare (20 units of nitrogen, 10 units of phosphate and 10 units of potash per acre) each year.

29. Unless traditionally the land has been used just for grazing each year mow at least one third (or one year in three) of the land but not before 1 July and do not graze the land prior to laying it up.

30. Do not cut or top the grass after 31 August.

31. Do not graze with sheep from 1 September to 1 March.

32. Do not use herbicides to control creeping buttercup.

33. Water levels in ditches and rhynes must either be:

From 1 April to 31 October maintained at or above the penning level, provided since 1987, by the relevant IDB or the Environment Agency (where appropriate) and in any case not more than 45cm (18") below mean field level and from 1 November to 31 March, maintained at or above the winter level provided since 1987 by the relevant IDB or the Environment Agency (where appropriate) with at least 30cm (12") of water in the bottom of the ditches/rhynes at all times.

Or, to obtain a supplementary payment:

From 1 May to 30 November maintained at not more than 30cm (12") below mean field level and from 1 December to 30 April, maintained at not less than mean field level so as to cause conditions of surface splashing.

34. Agreement holders must not pump below these levels which will be fixed by reference to gauge boards set to Ordnance Datum Newlyn.

*BUFFER STRIP SUPPLEMENT (available on Tiers 1, 1A and 2)*

35. Cease application of inorganic fertiliser to a 6 metre strip adjacent to a field boundary.

*ALL-YEAR PENNING SUPPLEMENT (available on Tiers 1, 1A and 2)*

36. On peat soils to obtain a supplementary payment :

*From 1 November to 31 March maintain water levels in ditches and rhynes at or above the summer penning level, provided since 1987, by the relevant IDB or the Environment Agency (as appropriate).*

*TIER 3 - PERMANENT GRASSLAND RAISED WATER LEVEL AREAS*

Observe prescriptions 1-18 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

37. Do not carry out mechanical operations between 31 March and 1 July.

38. Apply no inorganic fertiliser and do not exceed your existing level of organic manure provided it is only home produced cattle farmyard manure and does not exceed 25 tonnes per hectare (10 tons per acre) per annum. No slurry should be applied.

39. Graze only with cattle but do not graze before 20 May in any year.

40. Do not exceed a grazing density of one animal per 0.75 hectare (one animal per 1.8 acres) from 20 May to 8 July. Do not cause poaching, over-grazing or under-grazing.

41. Do not make silage. Unless traditionally the land has been used just for grazing each year mow at least one third (or one year in three) of the land but not before 8 July and do not graze the land prior to laying it up.

42. Do not cut or top the grass after 31 August.

43. Do not use herbicides to control creeping buttercup.

44. Water levels in ditches and rhynes must:

From 1 May to 30 November be maintained at not more than 30cm (12") below mean field level and from 1 December to 30 April, maintained at not less than mean field level so as to cause conditions of surface splashing.

45. *To further the objective of conserving, enhancing or protecting landscape, wildlife and historical features the Minister may specify different water level requirements.*

46. Agreement-holders must not pump below these levels which will be fixed by reference to gauge boards set to Ordnance Datum Newlyn.

## EXPLANATORY NOTE ON CHANGES PROPOSED TO THE SOMERSET LEVELS AND MOORS ESA SCHEME

### Prescriptions (19-26): New Extensive Permanent Grassland tier - Tier 1A

This would be a new option designed to protect and enhance the semi- and unimproved species-rich grassland, through reduced inputs and tightened management requirements akin to those in tier 2, but with the existing tier 1 water level requirement. This proposal has been welcomed by English Nature.

### Prescription (35): New Buffer Strip Supplement

A new voluntary supplement for Tiers 1, 1A and 2 is proposed, whereby agreement holders can undertake to stop applying inorganic fertiliser to a 6 metre strip adjacent to all their field boundaries to protect the aquatic environment including diverse plant and insect communities in the adjacent ditches.

### Prescriptions (36): All-Year Penning Supplement

In addition to the existing water level requirements in Tiers 2 and 3 and the existing water level supplement which are primarily designed to provide appropriate conditions for over wintering and breeding wading birds, it is proposed that a new supplement should be introduced in Tiers 1, 1A and 2 to maintain "summer penning" levels throughout the winter. Research has shown that the maintenance of constantly high water levels is particularly valuable for the protection of peat soils (and their associated archaeological remains).

### Prescription (45): Flexibility to specify different water level requirements

We propose to introduce some flexibility into the precise requirements contained in individual agreements. For example, where a rare species (such as a plant or invertebrate) requires a special water level management regime to allow it to survive, this could be specified in the agreement. Research and modelling (available on request) has been used to demonstrate the benefits that this will deliver.

## Avon Valley Esa & Test Valley Esa - Changes to Scheme Prescriptions resulting from 1997 Policy Review

### TIER 1A - IMPROVED PERMANENT GRASSLAND

1. *Agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement a grassland management plan which will cover grazing and mowing rotations, stocking densities, fertiliser and manure use, weed control and ditch maintenance.*

2. Maintain grassland and do not plough, level or reseed the land. You may use a chain harrow or roller but no other form of cultivation is allowed.

3. Graze with cattle and/or sheep but avoid poaching, undergrazing or overgrazing. Other animals including horses may only be grazed by prior written agreement with the Ministry.
4. If you cut the grass for hay, or silage graze the aftermath.
5. Do not increase your existing application rates of inorganic fertiliser or organic fertiliser and in any case do not exceed 250 kg per ha of total nitrogen per year. Do not apply organic fertiliser within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole that supplies water for human consumption or within 10 metres of any watercourse.
- ~~6. Restrict supplementary feeding of livestock to areas agreed in advance~~
7. *Do not apply any fertilisers within 5 metres of hedgerows.*
8. *The Ministry will make a supplementary payment if you agree in writing with the Project Officer to restrict application rates of inorganic or organic fertiliser to 50 kg per hectare per year of nitrogen in total.*
9. *Injurious weeds (spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock and ragwort) together with nettles must be controlled.*
10. *Do not use fungicides, insecticides and herbicides, except to control injurious weeds and nettles by spot treatment or weedwiper.*
11. *Supplementary feeding of livestock must be agreed in advance in writing with the Project Officer.*
12. Do not moledrain, use a sub-soiler or install any new field drainage system or substantially modify any existing land drainage system so as to improve the drainage.
13. Maintain existing watercourses and ditches in rotation by mechanical means, not sprays. After drying, spoil must be spread adjacent to the watercourse or ditch. Do not fill in any watercourses or low areas in the field.
14. Retain and manage hedges. Stockproof hedges must be maintained in a stockproof condition using traditional methods.
15. Maintain ponds, lakes, pools, sedgebeds and reedbeds on a rotational basis. Obtain written advice within two years of the start of your agreement on the management of these features and implement it.
16. Do not damage, destroy or remove any feature of archaeological or historical value or interest.
- ~~17. Unless previously obtained under a former agreement you must within two years of the start of your agreement obtain written advice on the management of broadleaved woodland including copses, sallow thickets, alder carr and groups of trees and scrub.~~

18. 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.

19. Dispose of sheep dip safely. Do not spread sheep dip where it may affect areas of nature conservation value.

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

~~TIER 1B - UNIMPROVED PERMANENT GRASSLAND EXTENSIVE PERMANENT GRASSLAND~~

*Observe all prescriptions 1-20 (Tier 1A) plus additional prescriptions set out below:-*

21. Do not use a chain harrow or roller during the period 1 April to 30 June.

22. Do not top or cut the grass for hay or silage before 1 July.

23. Do not apply inorganic or organic fertiliser except for farmyard manure (FYM) produced on the farm. Do not apply slurry.

24. Do not apply more than your existing application rate of farmyard manure and, in any event, do not apply more than 12.5 tonnes of farmyard manure per hectare (5 tons per acre) per year.

25. Do not apply farmyard manure during the period 1 April to 31 May and, outside this period, apply it only in a single dressing.

26. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce the acidity of the soil.

~~27. Do not apply herbicides except to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broadleaved dock or ragwort or for stump treatment of cleared scrub. Apply herbicides by wick applicator or spot treatment.~~

**BREEDING WADER BIRD SUPPLEMENT**

28. *Restrict stocking densities to not more than 0.75 livestock units per hectare during the period from 1 April - 30 May on areas specified by the Project Officer to contain breeding wader birds. Stock more heavily in the summer and autumn to create an agreed sward condition for the following year. Sheep may only be grazed in conjunction with cattle.*

**TIER 1C - WET GRASSLAND**

Observe prescriptions 1-20 (Tier 1A) and 21-27 (Tier 1B) plus additional prescriptions set out below:-

29. Graze with cattle or cattle and sheep but avoid poaching, undergrazing or overgrazing. The land must not be grazed between 1 April and 31 May and during June the stocking density must be restricted to 0.75 livestock units per hectare. Stock the land in the summer and autumn to create an agreed sward condition for the following year. Do not graze with sheep from 1 September to 30 March.

30. Manage field water tables so that at least 20% of the site is covered in shallow surface water from 1st December to 31 March and shallow pools remain over at least 10% of the site until 31 May.

31. Ditches should be maintained so as to allow the control of field water levels by the operation of appropriately sited water control structures. In order to achieve the surface pools it must be possible to bring ditch water levels up to bank top for short periods of time. At all times of year a minimum of 300 mm depth of water must be maintained in the ditches.

32. No grazing must take place between 1 April and 31 May. During June stocking must be restricted to 0.75 livestock units per hectare. Sheep grazing is prohibited from 1 September to 30 March.

#### TIER 2A - REVERSION OF ARABLE LAND TO PERMANENT GRASSLAND

33. Cease arable production 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 Ministry considers it appropriate.

34. During the first 12 months of the start of the agreement do not apply any of the following without obtaining the Ministry's prior written approval.

- (i) inorganic or organic fertiliser;
- (ii) lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce the acidity of the soil;
- (iii) fungicides, insecticides or herbicides.

35. Cut the grass and remove as hay, but not silage, during the first three years following grassland establishment and graze the aftermath. Do not cut the grass before 1 July.

36. From the start of the agreement follow all the Tier 1A guidelines from prescription 11, "Supplementary feeding of livestock...."

37. After the 12 month period you must also follow the remaining prescriptions in Tiers 1A and 1B, except number 8.

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

#### *TIER 2B - ARABLE MARGIN BUFFER STRIPS*

39. Establish a permanent grass sward over a width of 5-30 metres using an appropriate grass seeds mixture. 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 Ministry considers it appropriate.

40. Do not apply any fertilisers or pesticides on this strip.

41. Agree in writing with the Project Officer appropriate management of the buffer strip. Normally this will involve either taking a hay crop or topping, both after 1 July. In the first years of establishment, topping to control weed growth may be permitted by agreement with the Project Officer. Where the buffer strip adjoins a grazed ley it can be grazed, once it is established, rather than cut.

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

#### *WOODLAND TIER*

43. 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 net-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 Ministry.

Suffolk River Valleys ESA - Changes to Scheme Prescriptions resulting from 1997 Policy Review

TIER 1 - GRASSLAND

1. Maintain as grassland and do not plough, level or re-seed. *Selective seeding is allowed to repair damaged swards, but use appropriate long-term seeds mixtures which must be previously agreed with the Project Officer.*
2. Graze with livestock other than pigs or poultry but avoid poaching, undergrazing or overgrazing.
3. If you cut the grass for hay or silage, graze the aftermath.
4. Do not increase your existing application rates of inorganic or organic fertiliser and, in any case, do not exceed 250 kg of total nitrogen per hectare per year. Do not apply organic fertiliser within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole that supplies water for human consumption, or within 10 metres of a watercourse.
5. Do not use fungicides or insecticides.
6. Do not apply herbicides except to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock, ragwort or bracken. Infestations of these weeds must be controlled either by cutting or by herbicides. Apply herbicides by wick applicator or by spot treatment. Where bracken cannot be controlled by mechanical means then asulam must be used.
7. Do not install underdrainage or mole drainage or use a sub-soiler. Do not improve or substantially modify your existing drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.
8. Maintain existing ditches and dykes (including banks and margins) in rotation over the period of your agreement by mechanical means, not sprays. Spoil must be levelled, after allowing to dry out, but must not be used to fill low areas.
9. Maintain trees, pollarded willows, ponds and reedbeds using traditional methods.
10. Do not remove any hedges, banks or parts thereof. Maintain all hedges using traditional methods and materials. All stockproof hedges must be kept in a stockproof condition. The Ministry will make a supplementary payment if you agree in writing with the Project Officer a programme to restore your non-stockproof hedges. This may involve replanting, laying, coppicing, gapping and back-fencing. Payment will be calculated on the basis of the length of hedge restored in each year.

11. Do not damage, destroy or remove any feature of archaeological or historical value or interest. Obtain written advice on the management of known and important archaeological sites and historical features on land covered by your agreement.
12. Obtain written advice on siting, design 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.
13. Obtain written advice on the management of ~~woodland, scrub or reedbeds~~ or proposals to plant any new woodland unless previously obtained under a former ESA agreement ~~scrub or reedbeds~~.
14. Dispose of sheep dip safely. Do not spread sheep dip where it may affect areas of nature conservation value.
15. *You must abide by the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Soil, Air and Water, published by the Ministry (references PB 0617, PB 0618 and PB 0587) as amended from time to time.*

#### TIER 2 - LOW-INPUT GRASSLAND

*Observe prescriptions 2 - 15 (Tier 1) plus additional prescriptions set out below:-*

16. 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.
17. Where the land lies on the flood plain or is inherently wet you must ensure that water levels:
  - i) are maintained at not more than 45 cm (18") below marsh level between 31 March and 31 October
  - ii) provide at least 30 cm (12") of water in the bottom of the ditches between 31 October and 1 March;
  - iii) begin to be raised no later than 1 March in order to achieve the required summer freeboard as early as possible.
18. Do not carry out any form of mechanical operations between 1 April and 16 July.
19. ~~Do not graze between 1 April and 15 May~~ *Where the land lies on the flood plain or is inherently wet, do not graze between 1 April and 1 May. From 1 May until 15 May, do not exceed a grazing density of 1 Livestock Unit (LU) per hectare.*
20. Do not top the sward or cut for hay or silage before 16 July.
21. Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertilisers or manure.

22. Do not apply lime, slag or any substance to reduce soil acidity.

23. Restrict supplementary feeding of livestock to areas agreed in advance.

24. Within two years of the start of your agreement you must agree in writing a plan of ditch/dyke management and implement it thereafter.

#### TIER 2A - MARSHLAND

*Observe prescriptions 16-24 (Tier 2) plus additional prescriptions set out below:-*

25. Begin to raise your water level to winter level no later than 1 November and maintain at marsh level so as to create field wetness or occasional shallow pools between 1 January and 30 April.

26. Do not graze with livestock between 1 November and 15 May.

#### *WATER LEVEL SUPPLEMENT (available on Tiers 2 & 2A)*

27. Agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement an In-field Water Management Plan including the creation, re-instatement and management of ditches and foot drains.

28. Maintain ditch water levels within 15cm (6 inches) of marsh level from 15 March until 30 June.

29. Begin to raise ditch water levels to the maximum summer level no later than 1 March.

30. From 1 May until 30 June do not exceed a grazing density of 1 beast per hectare.

31. Do not graze with sheep until 1 June.

#### TIER 3 - ARABLE REVERSION TO GRASSLAND

32. Cease arable production and establish a grass sward within 12 months of the start of the agreement. *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 Ministry considers it appropriate.*

33. During the first 12 months of the agreement do not apply any of the following without obtaining prior approval:

34. organic or inorganic fertilisers;

35. lime, slag or any substance designed to reduce soil acidity;

36.pesticides.

37.From the start of your agreement you must follow all the Tier 1 prescriptions from 7 onwards. After the 12 month period you must also follow the remaining guidelines in Tier 1 except you must not apply more than 125 kg/ha of nitrogen per year and must use no more than 90 kg/ha of nitrogen in any one application.

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

*BUFFER STRIP SUPPLEMENT (available on Tiers 1 & 3):*

39.*Do not apply inorganic fertiliser or other agricultural chemicals to a 6 metre strip adjacent to all boundaries alongside hedgerows of watercourses of land under agreement.*

*FEN TIER*

40.*Agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement a Fen Management Plan.*

41.*Do not apply any inorganic or organic fertiliser.*

42.*Do not apply lime, slag or any substance to reduce acidity.*

43.*Do not use any pesticides, fungicides, insecticides or herbicides.*

44.*Do not damage or destroy any feature of historic interest.*

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

*WOODLAND TIER*

46.*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 net-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 Ministry. Seek written consent from the Project Officer before planting any woodland.*

Upper Thames Tributaries ESA - Changes to Scheme Prescriptions resulting from 1998 Policy Review

New Prescription 5: A new option to protect the often species-rich areas adjacent to hedges and watercourses in permanent grassland fields.

Revised Prescription 9: A modification to allow selective maintenance of existing mole drainage systems on Tier 1A land where this would not conflict with the scheme objectives.

Revised Prescription 15: This new restoration option replaces the hedge management supplement which has not proved effective in maintaining the area's hedgerows. In addition, the simplified arrangements for operating the programme will make it easier for applicants to understand and simpler to administer.

Revised Prescription 21: An enhancement of the existing prescription designed to afford greater protection of historic and archaeological features through appropriate positive management.

New Prescription 24: A new option to improve protection for breeding waders on areas of wet grassland through exclusion of stock in the spring months.

Prescription 26: Removes the requirement to observe a general stocking restriction which was not adequately targeted at areas where it would be beneficial. Where breeding birds are known to occur the supplementary payment for total exclusion of stock in the spring months will be targeted and promoted.

New Prescription 28: A new option to promote traditional hay-making on extensive permanent grassland for the benefit of a variety of wildlife including ground-nesting birds.

Revised Prescription 31: A modification to reduce the maximum amounts of farmyard manure which may be applied.

New Prescription 35: Introduces the requirement to agree a Grassland Management Plan to cover grazing and mowing regimes and water level management.

New Prescription 36: Tightens the requirement to agree a programme of management of any ditches.

Prescription 37: Replaced by prescription 38.

New Prescription 38: A modification to the existing requirements for water management on Wet Grassland which are seen as insufficient to benefit breeding waders. The revised requirements are aimed at attaining the shallow surface splashing conditions favoured by wading birds.

Prescription 39: Replaced by prescription 40.

New Prescription 40: Introduces tighter stocking restrictions during the times when breeding wader birds are most sensitive to disturbance.

Prescription 42: Replaced by prescription 36.

Revised Prescription 43: Requires a native seed mix of local provenance to be used where appropriate.

Revised Prescriptions 47 and 53: Removal of redundant text.

New Prescription 48: As prescription 35 above.

New Prescription 49: As prescription 36 above.

Prescriptions 50, 51 and 54: Now covered by details incorporated in Grassland Management Plans.

New Prescriptions 55 - 57: New Arable Margin Buffer Strip option. Grass buffer strips around arable fields adjacent to watercourses where fertilisers and pesticides are prohibited can contribute to an improvement in water quality and benefit wildlife.