Retention of Winter Stubbles for Wildlife and Water Quality

Date published: 23 January, 2021

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the bottom of the page .

Aim

The aim of this option is to benefit wildlife by retaining the stubbles from a combinable crop over the winter.

Leaving stubble until early spring will allow a variety of arable plants to develop, providing food and cover for insects, birds and small mammals. In particular, spilt grain and arable plant seeds provide valuable food for farmland birds.

Retaining the stubble also helps to protect the soil.

Eligibility

Arable land that is growing a spring-sown or autumn-sown cereal or oil-seed crop is eligible.

Under-sown crops are not eligible.

You should not include areas of land covering rocks, scree, water, dense bracken etc. We will check this using the same approach we use to check land for the Basic Payment Scheme.

Assessing your land eligibility

Spatial targeting

Map of target area – Retention of Winter Stubbles for Wildlife and Water Quality (PDF, Size: 1.1 MB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/87332-AECS-Review---2018-map---Retention-of-winter-stubbles-for-wildlife.pdf This option is available within the target area shown on this map.

You can check if this option is available on your holding using the search targeting tool which can be found on any of the following AECS guidance pages:

AECS Home

Eligibility

How to Apply

Management Options and Capital Items

Capital Items

Application requirements

You must identify on a map the locations of any areas to be managed under this option each year for the duration of your contract – see 'Management Requirements'.

A hectarage limit of 10 hectares per year, per location code, is permitted for this option.

Management requirements

This option can be moved around the farm within the normal rotation and on an annual basis. The 5 year rotation must be confirmed /agreed once it is confirmed that your application has been successful and before your contract is issued. This rotation agreed can only be altered under exceptional circumstances.

To maximise flexibility you can manage a different total hectarage each year as long as the area you manage each year is at least 90 per cent, and no more than 100 per cent, of the area you plan to manage in the first year under this option.

- do not spray, graze, plough or cultivate (with the exception of sub-soiling) the area before 1 March following harvest
- do not apply pre-harvest desiccants
- do not spray after harvest, except for the spot-treatment of injurious weeds (requires prior written notification) or treatment of invasive species (requires prior written approval)
- do not apply slurry or farmyard manure after harvest
- you must maintain a diary

Payment

You can claim £96.18 per hectare.

You will only be paid for the area that you manage and declare annually.

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- the crop is cereal or oil-seed rape, and not under sown
- visual inspection that there is no evidence of desiccants, and a check of the spray records for the crop. This will be carried out at the main inspection in the autumn
- there is no evidence of ploughing / cultivation prior to 1 March following harvest with the exception of sub-soiling. This will be checked at the second visit in the following spring
- you have not sprayed, unless with prior written notification or approval as appropriate
- you have maintained a diary

Note

If you choose to apply for this option over the same area of land that you are allocating as an Ecological Focus Area to meet your Pillar 1 greening requirements, there may be an issue of double funding.

Additional guidance

Supporting guidance is available for this option.

Recent changes

Section	Change
Management requirements	5 year rotation

Previous versions

Previous versions of this page

Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printer-friendly version of this guidance that you can save or print out.