

Introduction and updates

Date published: 20 September, 2018

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#).

This guidance is effective from 1 January, 2018.

Following an extended period of drought, the UK has sought and received approval to be included in a derogation for 2018 EFA.

Specifically as a consequence of the derogation for 2018 only. *EFA Green cover may be established without sowing a mixture of crop species, provided that the crops sown are grasses or any herbaceous forage. In addition the establishment window has been extended to the end of December with no limitations on harvest or grazing within the calendar year.

What is permitted under Scottish Greening rules within the Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs) as of 16 August 2018	
EFA fallow	Although no agricultural activity is allowed in EFA fallow between 15 January and 15 July , agricultural activity can be resumed after the 15 July
EFA margins	Can be grazed or cut from the 15 July with the exception that livestock cannot graze in margins that contain or are adjacent to a watercourse
EFA catch crops	The catch crop (grass) must be maintained until 31 December however, grazing can take place after the nurse crop (cereal) has been harvested
EFA green cover	*Although no agricultural activity is allowed on green cover between 1 November and 31 December (the maintenance period), agricultural activity can resume after 31 December , allowing for spring grazing
EFA nitrogen fixing crops	Can be grazed or cut after 1 August with the exception that livestock cannot graze in margins that contain or are adjacent to a watercourse

Further to the news release issued in May 2018 relating to crop diversification (see link below), guidance has been updated to remove the crop diversification requirements for 2018.

[News release, May 2018](#)

This guidance provides details on the three Greening elements of the Common Agricultural Policy and should be read in conjunction with the guidance for the Basic Payment Scheme and Cross Compliance.

- [Basic Payment Scheme](#)
- [Cross Compliance](#)

Please ensure that you read all the relevant elements of this updated guidance ([including the annexes](#)) if you are intending to apply under the Basic Payment Scheme.

Scheme and other changes for 2018

Further to the changes listed below due to the EC Simplification Agenda, we have also had changes to Greening from the latest EU Regulation – the Omnibus Regulation published 13 December, 2017.

The compulsory changes introduced from 24 January, 2018 are:

- Crop diversification exemption changes – the inclusion of leguminous crops and the removal of the 30 hectare arable limit
- Ecological Focus Area exemption changes – the removal of the 30 hectare arable limit
- Crop diversification – Spring Spelt and Winter Spelt (*Triticum spelta*) to be added as new distinct crops
- Nitrogen fixing crops weighting increased from 0.7 to 1.0.

It was announced by the Minister that a number of changes to the Greening rules will be introduced from 22 August, 2017 for 2018.

Additionally, a list of potential changes to greening were identified under the EC Simplification Agenda, which have now been confirmed by the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/1155.

The following list highlights the changes which are detailed in the Greening booklet under the appropriate EFA section:

- 1. hedges will be a separate EFA option - [EFA hedges](#)
- 2. agro-forestry established since 2015 under FGS (Pillar 2) on BPS eligible, arable land in 2015 will be a separate EFA option - [EFA agro-forestry](#)
- 3. maintenance of drainage on EFA fallow - [EFA fallow](#)
- 4. the introduction of a compulsory ban on Plant Protection Products on EFA fallow, EFA nitrogen fixing crops, EFA catch crops and EFA green cover, subject to certain flexibilities [EFA fallow](#) , [EFA nitrogen fixing crops](#) , [EFA catch crops](#) - , [EFA green cover](#)
- 5. changes to EFA eligibility/location. Introduce a new definition of 'adjacent' when considering whether EFA features are 'on or adjacent to arable land', necessary for them to qualify as EFA - [Where can I put my EFA?](#)
- 6. changes to catch crop and green cover options. Setting a new minimum duration period for the retention of catch crop and green cover to meet the EFA option requirements. Remove the deadlines given in the Regulation for the sowing of catch crop and green cover - [EFA catch crops](#) , [EFA green cover](#)
- 7. changes to the EFA Nitrogen fixing crops option - [EFA nitrogen fixing crops](#)
- 8. a new option of EFA Margin will be introduced which will amalgamate the previous EFA field margin and EFA buffer strip options - [EFA margins](#)

In this guidance:

- [Greening overview](#)
- [Permanent grassland](#)
- [Crop diversification](#)
- [Ecological Focus Areas](#)
- [Case studies](#)
- [Glossary and abbreviations](#)
- [Annexes](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change
Main text	EFA table added to introduction

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)