

Beetlebanks

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

Note: In September 2023, references to Scottish Natural Heritage have been updated to NatureScot.

Aim

The aim of this option is to benefit valuable insects, such as beetles, spiders and bumblebees, by providing tussocky grassy strips for them to overwinter within large arable fields.

Providing this important habitat will support populations of beneficial beetles and other invertebrates, which in turn will help control crop pests or aid pollination.

Beetlebanks also benefit other wildlife by providing food and cover for birds, small mammals, amphibians, reptiles and flowers for pollinating insects. Suitably located across field slopes, they can also help intercept rain water and prevent soil erosion.

Eligibility

Land that is in an arable rotation with either an existing beetlebank, or where you propose to create a new beetlebank (which must be at least two metres wide and located within the field), is 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

For the purposes of this option, arable land is land which has been in crop for at least four of the past five years.

An existing beetlebank can include a two metre wide strip managed as a beetlebank under a previous AECS contract.

Spatial targeting



[Map of target area – Beetlebanks \(PDF, Size: 989.9 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/87332-AECS-Review---2018-map---Beetlebanks.pdf> This option is available within the target area shown on this map.

It may be possible to apply for this option outside this area where there is strong justification as endorsed by NatureScot.

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 beetlebanks to be managed.

Management requirements

This option must remain at the same location(s) for the duration of your contract.

- where you need to create a beetlebank, you must do so by 1 June in the first year of your contract
- the field where the beetlebank is located must be in arable crop for at least four years during the period of contract
- do not cut the beetlebank, with the exception of topping to aid establishment in the first year after 1 August
- do not plough, cultivate or use the area for any vehicle access
- you must exclude stock
- do not spray, except for the spot-treatment of injurious weeds (requires prior written notification) or treatment of invasive species (requires prior written approval)
- you must maintain a diary

Payment

You can claim £495.64 per hectare per year.

The eligible hectareage is calculated by the length of the beetlebank multiplied by two metres.

There is a separate item to support beetlebank creation:

- [Creation of Beetlebanks](#)

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- the strip is at least two metres in an arable field and not around the boundary
- all beetlebanks must be in place by the 1 June
- that the beetlebank grass has not been cut except for topping for establishment in the first year after 1 August
- you do not plough, cultivate or use the area for any vehicle access
- you have excluded livestock
- 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
Aim	Clarifying aim of option
Eligibility	Change to naming of previous contract in final sentence of this section

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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