Unharvested Conservation Headlands for Wildlife

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To see recent changes to this guidance, check the bottom of this page.

Aim

The aim of this option is to benefit wildlife by leaving headlands in arable fields free of herbicides and insecticides, and leaving the crop unharvested in the ground over the winter.

This will allow a variety of arable plants to develop, providing feeding and a habitat for insects, birds and small mammals.

Leaving the crop unharvested will provide additional bird seed and also help to protect the soil.

Eligibility

Headlands on arable land that are growing a spring-sown or autumn-sown cereal or oil-seed crop are 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 – Unharvested Conservation Headlands for Wildlife (PDF, Size: 1.2 MB) doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Unharvested-conservation-headlands-for-wildlife---Update-Aug-2020-2.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 areas to be managed under this option each year.

Management requirements

This option can be moved around the farm within the normal rotation and on an annual basis.

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.

Additionally:

- headlands must be at least six metres wide
- do not harvest, graze, plough or cultivate the area before 1 March following the year of establishment
- 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 £657.57 per hectare per year subject to the following maximum claims:

- five hectares per year per location code unit of up to 250 hectares
- 10 hectares per year per location code unit of greater than 250 hectares
- your eligible hectarage must be calculated by the length of the headland multiplied by six metres
- you will only be paid for the area that you manage and declare annually

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- the crop is a cereal or oil-seed rape and is not under-sown, and was not harvested, grazed, ploughed or cultivated before 1 March following the year of establishment
- the strip is at least six metres wide
- 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
Spatial targeting	Updated PDF

Previous versions

Previous versions of this page

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