Away Wintering Sheep

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Aim

The aim of this benefit is to maintain or improve the condition of moorland by away-wintering sheep which would usually graze the moorland.

Heather and other dwarf shrubs are particularly susceptible to grazing damage over the winter period, and sheep tend to favour them at this time of year as grass availability and digestibility declines.

Restricting or removing grazing pressure during the winter will help to maintain important moorland plants and benefit a wide range of associated birds and wildlife.

Eligibility

Land that is rough grazing 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

You must combine this option with the Moorland Management option.

Spatial targeting

Map of target area – Away Wintering Sheep (PDF, Size: 1.3 MB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/23_Away_Wintering_Sheep.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 Scottish Natural Heritage.

Application requirements

You must detail in your moorland management plan the number of ewes, gimmers and / or hoggs that you propose to away winter, and that these numbers will benefit the moorland habitat.

The plan must provide evidence of the total number of ewes, gimmers and hoggs recorded on the holding as of 1 January for the year of application, plus the previous two years.

The plan must also provide evidence that the number of sheep you propose to away winter are over and above the number which you traditionally away winter.

Moorland Management Plan (MS Word, Size: 139.1 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Moorland-Management-Plan-AECS-April-2015.docx [Plan template]

Moorland Grazing Management Plan (MS Word, Size: 137.5 kB)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Moorland-Grazing-Management-Plan-AECS-April-2015.docx [Plan template]

Management requirements

You must manage the same location and extent each year for the duration of your contract.

- you must remove the agreed number of sheep from the area subject to payment from 1 November until 1 March each year for the period of the contract
- you must maintain a diary

Payment

You can claim £25.83 per hectare per year.

For the purposes of payment, it is assumed that each ewe or gimmer or hogg away wintered will benefit 0.8 hectares of moorland.

Payment will be restricted to sheep away wintered in addition to those that are traditionally away wintered.

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- you have managed the same location and extent each year for the duration of your contract
- you have removed the agreed number of sheep from 1 November until 1 March each year for the period of the contract. There may be a records check
- you have maintained a diary

Additional guidance

Supporting guidance is available for this option.

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