

Away Wintering Sheep

This is an old version of the page

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

Aim

The aim of this option 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 \(PDF, Size: 1.0 MB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Updated-targeting-map---Away-wintering-sheep-16-12-2015.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 detail in your moorland management plan the number of ewes, gimmers and / or hogs 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 hogs recorded on the holding as of 1 December for the three years prior to application. You must submit flock records in support of this.

If you have recently acquired the holding, you cannot apply for away wintering sheep as you do not have three years sheep figures. For any succession cases, (where all land and stock transfer to the new owner), you must consult RPID before applying for this option and they will advise if you are eligible.

If you are applying for continuation of away-wintering previously funded under a legacy NatureScot or Scottish Government agri-environment scheme, you must provide evidence that away-wintering is still required to maintain habitat in good condition.

If your IACS business has changed significantly since away wintering was first agreed, (due to purchasing additional land and stock) then you must re-calculate your IACS business baseline figure, using the last three years figures.

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 Template \(MS Word, Size: 211.2 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-Moorland-Management-Plan-2023.docx>

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 IACS business 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.](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change
Application requirements	<p>Insertion of updated Moorland Management Plan.</p> <p>Revised text stating the Moorland Management plan must provide evidence of the total number of ewes, gimmers and hogs recorded on the holding as of 1 December for the three years prior to application.</p> <p>Revised text stating that if you are applying for continuation of away-wintering previously funded under a legacy NatureScot or Scottish Government agri-environment scheme, you must</p>

provide evidence that away-wintering is still required to maintain habitat in good condition.

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