

Chough Grazing Management

This is an old version of the page

Date published: 19 October, 2023

Date superseded: 15 December, 2025

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

Aim

The aim of this option is to benefit chough by providing suitable areas for the birds to forage throughout the year.

Choughs require areas of short grazed grassland, ideally grazed by cattle whose dung supports the insects upon which the birds feed.

Not treating these cattle with Avermectin-based wormers will benefit these insects. This option also allows for an early cut of silage or hay to be taken.

Chough benefit from having a variety of foraging habitats available to them throughout the year. Therefore, chough grazed grassland fields are most effective when managed alongside fields under the Chough Mown Grassland option. Where possible, apply the two options in combination to maximise the benefit to chough.

Eligibility

Grassland, including coastal heath, is eligible for this option.

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 – Chough Grazing Management \(PDF, Size: 613.2 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/17_Chough_Grazing_Management.pdf
This option is available within the target area shown on this map.

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 provide a map showing the locations of the areas to be managed, and prepare and submit for approval a chough management plan (which will include details of proposed grazing and details of other associated options or capital items to benefit chough).



Chough Management Plan (MS Word, Size: 100.7 KB)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Chough-Management-Plan---October-2023_1.docx [Plan template]

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 hectareage each year as long the area you manage each year is at least 90 per cent of the largest area you plan to manage under this option.

You must either:

- graze the grassland to provide a short sward throughout the year

or:

- take an early cut of silage or hay, not later than 30 June, and then graze to keep the sward short
- if cutting, hay or silage must be cut in a wildlife-friendly manner

For both:

- you must not treat any livestock with Avermectin-based drugs, unless advised by a veterinary surgeon and with prior written approval
- 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 £87.93 per hectare per year.

You will only be paid for the area that you manage and declare annually.

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

You have either:

- grazed the grassland to provide a short sward throughout the year

or:

- taken an early cut of silage or hay, not later than 30 June, and then grazed to keep the sward short
- if cut, hay or silage must have been cut in a wildlife-friendly manner

For both:

- you have not treated any livestock with Avermectin-based drugs, unless advised by a veterinary surgeon and with prior written approval
- you have not sprayed, unless with prior written notification or approval as appropriate
- you have maintained a diary

Additional guidance

Supporting guidance is available for this option.

Recent Changes

Section	Changes
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Application Requirements

Updated Chough Management Plan template.

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)