

Converting Arable at Risk of Erosion or Flooding to Low-input Grassland

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Date published: 30 March, 2015

Date superseded: 17 December, 2015

Aim

The aim of this option is to benefit soils, water quality and wildlife by converting areas within arable fields that are prone to run-off and / or soil erosion or flooding to low-input grassland.

This will provide year-round cover, which will increase soil organic matter, improve soil structure, reduce surface run-off and protect against soil erosion.

Flowering plants within the grass will also provide pollen and nectar for invertebrates.

Eligibility

Land that has been in arable cropping for all of the last five years, or has been converted from arable to low-input grassland under a previous Scottish Natural Heritage or Scottish Government agri-environment scheme in the last five years, 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](#)

Spatial targeting



[Map of target area – Converting Arable at Risk of Erosion or Flooding to Low-input Grassland](#)
(PDF, Size: 1.2 MB)

doc_external_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/40_Converting_Arable_Risk_Erosion_Flood.pdf)

[resources/40_Converting_Arable_Risk_Erosion_Flood.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/40_Converting_Arable_Risk_Erosion_Flood.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 identify on a map the locations of the area to be managed.

Management requirements

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

- you must establish a grass sward by 1 June in the first year of your contract
- do not cut or graze the area from 1 May until 30 July
- do not plough or cultivate the area after the establishment of grass
- do not carry out supplementary livestock feeding
- do not allow the land to become poached or vehicle tracked
- do not apply fertilisers, except farmyard manure
- do not spray, except for the spot-treatment of injurious weeds (requires prior written notification) or treatment of invasive species (requires prior written approval)
- do not establish new drains
- you must maintain a diary

Payment

You can claim £284.80 per hectare per year.

There is a separate capital payment to support the creation of grassland:

- [Creation of Low-input Grassland to Convert Arable Land at Risk of Flooding or Erosion](#)

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- all grass swards must be in place by the 1 June
- there has been no cutting or grazing of the area from 1 May until 30 July
- that no ploughing, cultivation of the area after the establishment of grass has taken place
- that no supplementary livestock feeding has taken place
- that the area has not become poached or vehicle tracked
- there has been no application of fertiliser except farmyard manure
- 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](#).