Moorland Management

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Aim

The aim of this option is to benefit a range of moorland habitats, including upland heath and peatland habitats, by maintaining appropriate levels of wild and domestic stock. It is also intended to protect sensitive peatland areas at risk of soil erosion from herbivore trampling and vehicle tracking.

Moorlands cover a range of habitat types from dry and wet heath through to blanket bog. It can also include some grasslands. Sustainable grazing levels and careful use of vehicles will ensure that both the vegetation and soils remain as intact and undisturbed as possible. Moorlands support a range of important wildlife and biodiversity, and peatlands in particular can contribute to climate change by storing carbon.

This option is an entry option for all upland management, including peatland restoration, where livestock and / or deer are present. It provides a foundation to build in additional options or capital items where further benefit to the habitat or species present can be achieved from undertaking works such as grip / ditch blocking, stock reduction, muirburn or summer cattle grazing. A full list is given below.

Eligibility

Land that is rough grazing and where livestock and / or deer are present 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 – Moorland Management (PDF, Size: 1.3 MB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/21_Moorland_Management.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 prepare and submit for approval a moorland management plan.

Where livestock are present, the plan must detail your current livestock numbers. Where deer are present, and you are responsible for managing them, the plan must detail current deer numbers, their locations and current and proposed deer cull targets.

You must also identify on a 1:10,000 map the location of proposed supplementary feeding sites and routes where you plan regular vehicle use.

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]

Management requirements

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

- where livestock are present, you must maintain agricultural livestock activity on the area subject to payment
- where livestock are present, you must adhere to the grazing regime which defines livestock units and grazing dates in your moorland management plan
- you must not carry out supplementary feeding out with the area(s) shown in your plan, unless you have prior written approval
- you must not cause vehicle rutting out with the vehicle use areas identified in your plan (the definition of rutting is where the soil is both depressed and bare soil is exposed)
- where you are applying for payment under this option for managing deer, you must maintain deer culls as agreed in your plan and send your annual cull returns to Scottish Natural Heritage
- you must not cut peat without prior approval
- if approval has been given to cut peat by hand, you must replace the turfs on top of the cut surface, with the vegetation side on top
- you must not undertake muirburn, unless you have prior approval
- do not plant trees, unless you have prior approval
- do not undertake any drainage work, unless you have prior approval
- you must maintain a diary

You must describe what management is needed to benefit the moorland habitats and species. This could include (but is not restricted) the following:

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]

Deer Management Plan (MS Word, Size: 137.7 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Deer-Management-Plan-AECS-April-2015.docx [Deer Census Plan and Habitat Impact Assessment Plan template]

Peatland Restoration Plan (MS Word, Size: 133.2 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Peatland-Restoration-Plan-AECS-April-2015.docx [Plan template]

Muirburn Plan (MS Word, Size: 134.9 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Muirburn-Plan-AECS-April-2015.docx [Plan template]

Bracken Management Plan (MS Word, Size: 136.4 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Bracken-Control-Plan-AECS-April-2015.docx [Plan template]

Any other capital items, e.g. Fencing.

Payment

You can claim:

- where managing livestock only: £3.60 per hectare per year

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- where managing deer only: £1.24 per hectare per year
- where managing deer and livestock: £4.84 per hectare per year

There are separate capital items to support moorland management:

- Ditch Blocking – Peat Dams
- Ditch Blocking – Plastic Piling Dams
- Muirburn and Heather Cutting
- Primary Treatment of Bracken – Manual
- Primary Treatment of Bracken – Mechanised or Chemical
- Heather Restoration
- Open-range Deer Management
- Upland Habitat Impact Assessment for Deer Management
- Deer Census – Helicopter Counts

The following management options can support moorland management:

- Stock Disposal
- Away Wintering Sheep
- Summer Hill Grazing of Cattle
- Predator Control

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- where livestock are present, you have maintained agricultural livestock activity on the area subject to payment
- where livestock are present, you have adhered to the grazing regime which defines livestock units and grazing dates in your moorland management plan
- you have not carried out supplementary feeding out with the area(s) shown in your plan, unless you have prior written approval
- you have not caused vehicle rutting out with the vehicle use areas identified in your plan (the definition of rutting is where the soil is both depressed and bare soil is exposed)
- where you are applying for payment under this option for managing deer, you have maintained deer culls as agreed in your plan and sent your annual cull returns to Scottish Natural Heritage
- you have not cut peat without prior approval
- if approval has been given to cut peat by hand, you have replaced the turfs on top of the cut surface, with the vegetation side on top
- you have not undertaken muirburn, unless you have prior approval
- you have not planted trees, unless you have prior approval
- you have not undertaken any drainage work, unless you have prior approval
- you have maintained a diary

Additional guidance

Supporting guidance is available for this option.

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