Crop diversification

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Date published: 15 October, 2015

Date superseded: 12 March, 2016

Table of Contents

What is crop diversification?

I'm organic – am I exempt?

Do the crop diversification requirements apply to me?

What land is included in the calculation and then subject to crop diversification?

Crop diversification requirements

Other exeptions or exemptions

Can I grow more than two or three crops?

Eligible crops for crop diversification

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What is crop diversification?

Crop diversification is the growing of a number of different crops. It enhances biodiversity and may improve soil organic matter by:

- reducing soil erosion, pest and weed control
- improving water quality
- reducing the effects of climate change

I'm organic – am I exempt?

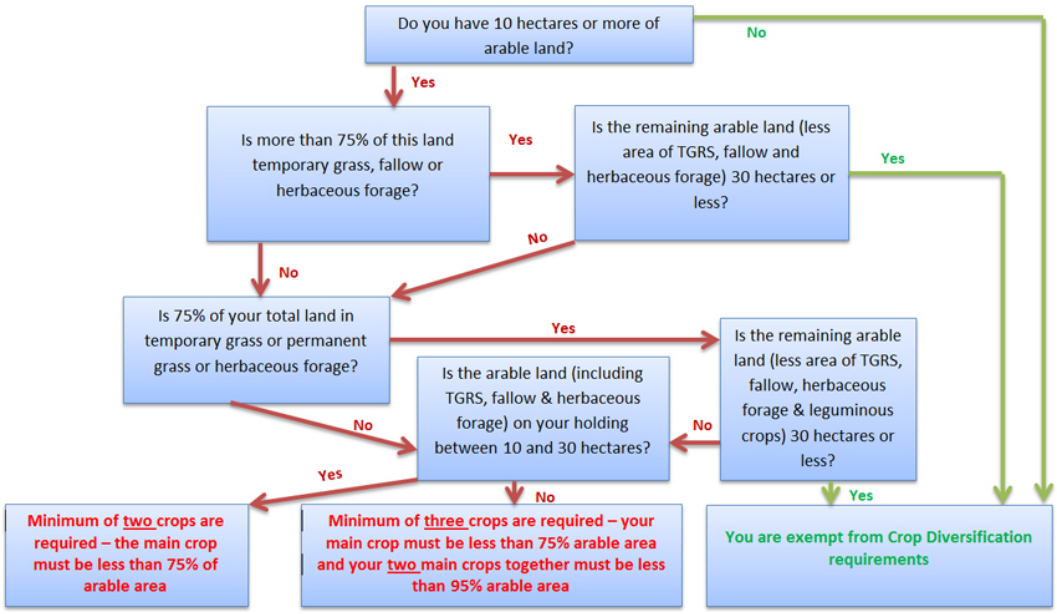
If all of your holding (all of the land claimed on your Single Application Form) is certified as organic, the crop diversification requirements do not apply to you so there's no need to read this section.

If part of your holding is certified as organic, the areas that are not certified as organic need to be considered for crop diversification.

If your holding is only partly organic, you may choose not to benefit from the exemption for organic land. Instead you need to meet Greening requirements across all your arable land. In this case the organic crops would count towards the crop diversification requirement.

Do the crop diversification requirements apply to me?

The areas of land are those claimed for Basic Payment Scheme. (Please also see below).



What land is included in the calculation and then subject to crop diversification?

For the purposes of calculating your crop diversification requirement, your arable land must include all of the land used to grow arable crops, fallow, temporary grassland, leguminous crops and herbaceous crops that you claim for the Basic Payment Scheme.

If you use some of your permanent grassland area as Ecological Focus Areas (for example, a buffer strip or field margin), this means that this area of EFA on your permanent grassland is now classed as arable land. You will claim it as permanent cover on your Single Application Form and it will be added to your total arable area calculation. An example would be:

Total area of holding = 125 ha

Total arable area = 100 ha

EFA is 5% = 5 ha

If all the five hectares of EFA is sited on permanent grassland this would now become arable and would be added to give your new total arable area, for the purpose of Greening.

Therefore: (original total arable area) 100 ha + 5 ha (EFA) = 105 ha (new total arable area).

All the arable land on your holding must be included in your calculation unless this is declared by another applicant for the Basic Payment Scheme and is included in their crop diversification calculation, see Annex C.

When calculating your arable area you should ensure that you include any land that is fallow, any land in an EFA buffer or EFA field margin (see Ecological Focus Areas) and any land that is currently in an agri-environment scheme that does not allow production, which was formerly arable. For example: beetle banks, grass margins and water margins where grazing is excluded. These areas may be declared as LIEM-A (LFASS Ineligible Environmental Management).

Permanent crops are not included in the calculation of your arable area (see the Glossary for a definition of permanent crops).

Crop diversification requirements

Unless exempt, you will be required to have a minimum of two or three crops as detailed in the flow chart above.

Other exeptions or exemptions

1. In addition to the exemptions in the flow chart above there are a small number of businesses that an additional refinement to the crop diversification rules apply to. If you comply with the following regulation you will be exempt:

- where the temporary grassland, herbaceous forage or fallow land covers more than 75 per cent of the arable land on your holding and you don't meet any of the exemptions in the flow chart above because the rest of the arable land on your holding is more than 30 hectares

You must grow at least two other crops on the remaining arable land. The main crop on this remaining arable land must not cover more than 75 per cent of this area, unless this main crop on the remaining arable area is grass, herbaceous forage, or fallow. In this case, you don't need to reduce the percentage covered by this main crop.

2. If you have taken control of new land that is more than 50 per cent of what you claimed in the previous year, and provided that this land is being cultivated differently to that of the previous year, you may be exempt. You should contact your local area office to clarify your crop diversification requirements.

Can I grow more than two or three crops?

You can grow as many crops as you like, but if you are not exempt and have between 10 and 30 hectares of arable land you must have at least two crop types with no one crop occupying more than 75 per cent of the arable land.

If you have more than 30 hectares of arable land and are not exempt, then you must have at least three crops with the main crop not occupying more than 75 per cent of the arable land and no two crops occupying more than 95 per cent of the arable land area. Any additional crops must therefore occupy at least five per cent of the arable land area.

These limits are maximum percentages that you must not exceed but you can grow smaller amounts and/or more crops if you wish. For example, if you had 100 hectares of arable land you could grow:

- 40 hectares of spring barley
- 30 hectares of winter wheat
- 20 hectares of temporary grass
- and leave 10 hectares as fallow

Fallow can also count towards your EFA requirement. See Ecological Focus Areas.

Eligible crops for crop diversification

For the purposes of crop diversification, a crop is defined in the regulations as any of the following:

- (a) a culture of any of the different genera defined in the botanical classification of crops
- (b) a culture of any of the species in the case of Brassicaceae, Solanaceae and Cucurbitaceae
- (c) land lying fallow
- (d) grass or other herbaceous forage (clovers, lucerne, sainfoin and Forage vetches) on arable land (temporary grass).

Winter and spring crops count as separate crops.

Most crops grown in Scotland meet the definition of a crop outlined in the regulations. The exceptions to this are permanent grassland and permanent crops which do not count as crops for the purposes of crop diversification.

Permanent crops are non-rotational crops other than permanent grassland that occupy the land for five years or more and yield repeated harvests. The table in Annex D provides examples of crops which meet the definitions of (a) and (b) above. It should be noted that these are not exhaustive.

If the crop that you are intending to grow is not on the list or you have any queries as to what would be regarded as a separate crop for the purposes of crop diversification, please contact your local area office.

It's important to note that individual crops which fall within a single genus or single species (in the case of Brassicaceae, Solanaceae and Cucurbitaceae) count as only one crop for the purposes of crop diversification. We have grouped crops of like genus or single species into a 'crop family'. If you grow only

onions and leeks, these would count as only one crop because they fall within the same genera (Allium) as we have identified these as the ‘onion family’.

The end use of the crop has no impact on how it is counted for the purposes of crop diversification. For example, if you grow some winter wheat as wholecrop and some for grain, this counts as one crop (winter wheat). Potatoes will be considered to be a single crop regardless of whether they are being grown for seed or ware markets.

See the list of arable crops to meet the requirements of crop diversification at Annex D.

Helpful tips

- for the purposes of crop diversification only, land in fallow (FALWCD) must not be subject to any agricultural production throughout May and June.

- if you wish to carry out any production or maintenance on fallow land within May and June, you should use the uncropped arable land (UCAA) crop code, noting that this land is not eligible as EFA fallow land

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