

Permanent grassland

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](#) .

This guidance is effective from 1 January, 2026.

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Enhanced Greening requirements for permanent grassland

2026 Enhanced Greening marks the start of a transition period for permanent grassland where the Scottish Government will be recommending and providing links to best practice opportunities with the aim that customers will identify what could improve the biodiversity, carbon storage and effectiveness of the permanent grassland on their business.

The benefits that the large areas of permanent grassland within Scotland provide are recognised but there is still potential to improve. The Scottish Government encourages change and recognises the good practices that our industry is implementing.

In future years businesses may be mandated to perform a range of management activities in an equivalent manner to arable EFA which will reflect industry best practice focused on Environmental and climate change benefit.

During the transitional period you should start to prepare now and review opportunities for change that would add benefit to your business and align with this transitional change.

Examples:

- regenerative grazing practices including mob or adaptive grazing
- reducing nitrogen application, low input grassland
- limiting areas of bare soils and poaching, especially next to water courses (GAEC 5), minimising soil disturbance
- wildlife friendly mowing of grassland
- summer grazing of hill ground to create a more diverse vegetation
- retaining TGRS grassland to PGRS to lengthen lengths of leys
- high nature value farming

Best Practice information:

- [Species Rich Grasslands guidance leaflet | NatureScot](#)
- [Grazing for Profit and Biodiversity \(fas.scot\)](#)
- [What is mob grazing?](#)
- [Grassland | Helping farmers in Scotland \(fas.scot\)](#)
- [Grassland | NatureScot](#)
- [Species Rich Grasslands guidance leaflet | NatureScot](#)
- [Building resilience in low input grassland systems - SRUC](#)
- [Managing permanent grasslands for carbon sequestration in Scottish soils \(ed.ac.uk\)](#)

- [Regenerative agriculture - Farming and Water Scotland](#)
- [Farming with Nature | NatureScot](#)
- [Climate Change resources for farmers from Farm Advisory Service](#)
- [Biodiversity | Helping farmers in Scotland | Farm Advisory Service](#)
- [Technical notes | SRUC](#)
- [Factsheets Archive | Moredun](#)
- [High Nature Value farming](#)

What is permanent grassland?

Permanent grassland and permanent pasture (together referred to as permanent grassland) means land used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage naturally (self-seeded) or through cultivation (sown) and that has not been included in the crop rotation of the holding for five years or more.



Pictures above: examples of permanent grassland

For clarity, areas declared as Permanent Grassland (PGRS), Rough Grazings (RGR) or Open Woodland (grazed) (WDG) are all included within permanent grassland for the purposes of the Basic Payment Scheme and Greening.

Updated Environmental Impact Assessment regulations came into force in Scotland on 16 May 2017 and require that land managers should seek approval from the Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Division before carrying out certain projects (e.g. ploughing of unimproved land, drainage of wetlands or restructuring of agricultural land) if these projects are likely to have significant effects on the environment:

- [Environmental Impact Assessment guidance](#)

All farmers, including those farming organic land, are required to comply with Environmental Impact Assessment and Cross Compliance rules regarding ploughing of permanent grassland. If you have land in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), you must also observe site requirements that may apply to grassland habitats on the site.

If you want more information about this you should [contact your local area office](#) .

Enhanced Greening requirements for permanent grassland

Scotland's requirement for Enhanced Greening:

From 2015 onwards, the regulations require that the ratio of permanent grassland compared to the total agricultural area claimed must not decrease by more than 5%. The maintenance of this ratio will be monitored at a national level and it is only if there is a reduction in the ratio the Scottish Government will take action to increase the area of permanent grassland.

In addition, individual businesses must not convert or plough permanent grassland designated as Environmentally Sensitive Grassland (ESG) on their holding.

In Scotland, Environmentally Sensitive Grasslands have been defined as NATURA designated sites where land managers will already be bound by the existing specific management agreements in place to ensure they are protected and managed sympathetically.

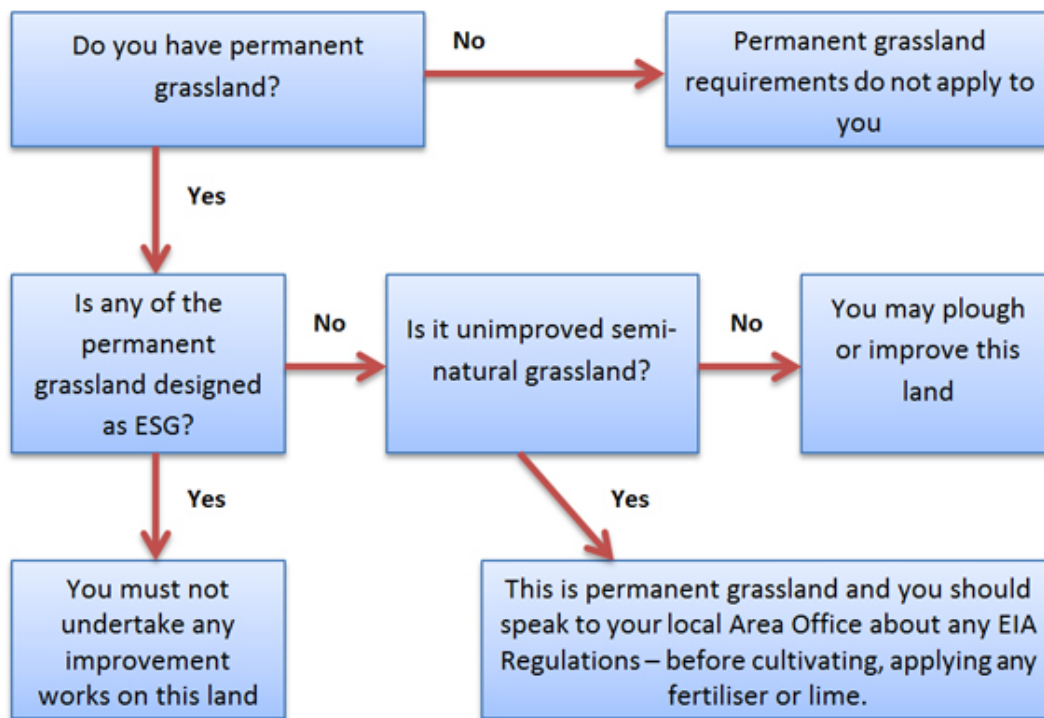
You can check the ESG on your holding using Map Viewer when you log in to Rural Payments and Services.



Pictures above: examples of environmentally sensitive grassland

What permanent grassland requirements apply to me?

Use our flowchart below to see what applies to you.



Rule Changes for Enhanced Greening 2026

The requirements for Enhanced Greening have changed there is no longer a requirement to complete (and retain) an annual nitrogen fertiliser and lime plan for fields of permanent grassland or open grazed woodland.

Helpful tips for Permanent Grassland

- permanent grassland is grassland more than five years old
- if your permanent grassland is designated (e.g. SSSI, SAC, SPA) in any way you should always consult NatureScot before carrying out any works
- if you cultivate permanent grassland to establish any other crop apart from grass, the land will convert to arable and future grass will be temporary (for at least five years)
- if you cultivate permanent grass and immediately sow a new grass ley, the land will retain its status as permanent grass
- if you use some of your permanent grassland area to claim EFA margin or EFA Hedge, this means that this area of EFA on your permanent grassland is now classed as arable land for the purposes of the Enhanced Greening calculation only. You will have to claim it as Permanent Cover (PC) on your Single Application Form and it will be added to your Enhanced Greening 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 only.

Therefore: (original total arable area) 100 ha + 5 ha (EFA) = 105 ha (new total arable area). New area of EFA required is now 5.25 ha. 5% of 105 ha.

What is temporary grassland?

Temporary grassland is land that has been in grass or other herbaceous forage for five years or less.

How to claim your new grassland

There are four traditional ways of establishing a temporary grassland sward:

- example one: spring sown (prior to 15 May). This is the main crop for that year and will be claimed as temporary grass, for example 'TGRS1' on the Single Application Form
- example two: undersown grass where the main cereal nurse crop, for example 'SB' will be claimed on the Single Application Form
- example three: autumn sown grass where the previous arable crop, for example 'SO' will be claimed on the Single Application Form
- example four: permanent grassland cultivated post 15 May and sown out to a brassica crop and then sown to grass the following Spring

If the land remains in grass for a number of years following establishment, it should be entered on the Single Application Form as follows:

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Example one	TGRS1	TGRS2	TGRS3	TGRS4	TGRS5	PGRS	PGRS
Example two	SB	TGRS1	TGRS2	TGRS3	TGRS4	TGRS5	PGRS
Example three	SO	TGRS1	TGRS2	TGRS3	TGRS4	TGRS5	PGRS
Example four	PGRS	TGRS1	TGRS2	TGRS3	TGRS4	TGRS5	PGRS

Your arable land includes any temporary grassland in your crop rotation. Temporary grassland is grass that is five years old or less.

Recent changes

Section	Change
	Removal of reference to Crop Diversification

Previous versions

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