

CFE MONTHLY REPORT (FEBRUARY 2011)

This report provides you with a summary of CFE activity between 1 December and the 11 February covering the following topics:

Renewals and option uptake

Website

Online record for Campaign voluntary measures

Events and media activity

Local activity

Delivery Group issues

Evidence and Monitoring Group (EMG) issues

Renewals and option uptake

Renewals

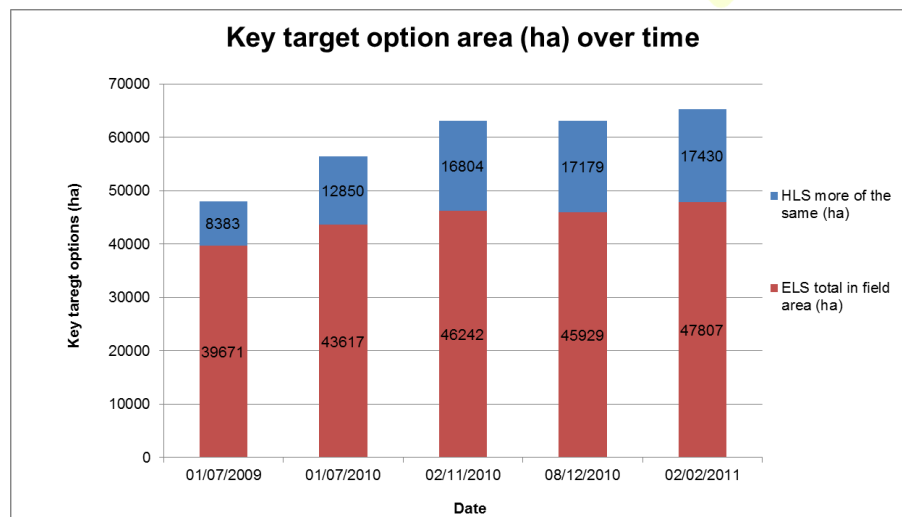
The oldest six tranches of ELS agreements, which started on 1 August, 1 September, 1 October, 1 November and 1 December 2005 as well as 1 January 2006, have now expired. The current renewal rate is slowly rising and is now gaining on expiries, but it is not yet quite up to the 90 per cent target: as at 17 January, 84 per cent of the area of these expired agreements had been renewed. The renewal area is now 1 325 266 ha.

The target for UAA% coverage by 31 March 2011 is 70 per cent. This equates to an area of 6 503 950 ha. The current UAA% figure is 68.0 per cent which equates to 6 318 636 ha.

Combined ELS and HLS option uptake

At the Delivery Group meeting in January members agreed that now the full details are available, progress towards the amalgamated target as agreed in the revised MOU for key target option uptake in ELS/HLS will be reported on a monthly basis.

The combined total of ELS and HLS targets are 96,800ha and as shown below the delivery to date is 65,237ha (47,807ha ELS and 17,430ha HLS), which is 35% towards the target.



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Overall, the current figures for key target option uptake in ELS are showing an improvement and now stand at 47,807ha which equates to an increase of 20.5% above 2009 baseline. At the beginning of 2011 a crude trajectory of CFE progress against key target options based on renewal percentages was produced. The trajectory (based on the renewal of 2005 – 2006 agreements) suggests that at this stage of the Campaign we would expect to be 40 – 45 per cent of the way to achieving the target. In reality option uptake is just over 30 per cent above the baseline.

HLS Option Uptake

In September 2010 the Steering Group agreed that 'more of the same' options within HLS. A new target was set to double the HLS 'more of the same' option uptake from July 2009 base line of 8400 by June 2012. The reports show that the increase is pretty static at 17,430ha which is unsurprising given the slowdown of HLS agreements being processed by Natural England. The increase remains the same at 108% on the July 2009 baseline.

Key target option uptake

There is still a mixed picture when looking at individual option uptake with the continued trend being played out each month of the more complex in-field options of EF9, 10 and 11 continuing to drop well below the 2009 baseline.

The options clusters are detailed below:

Wild bird mix options

EF2	1149%
EF2NR	-26%
EF3	-64%
EG2	195%
EG2NR	-41%
Average	+243%

Nectar flower mix options

EF4	34%
EF5	-53%
EG3	-32%
Average	-17%

Key target option uptake in the CFE target counties

The graphs [overleaf](#) show the change in area of key target options for regions on a county basis. The key below shows monthly progress from the baseline level:

- 01/07/2009
- 01/07/2010
- 01/08/2010
- 01/09/2010
- 05/10/2010
- 02/11/2010
- 08/12/2010
- 02/02/2011

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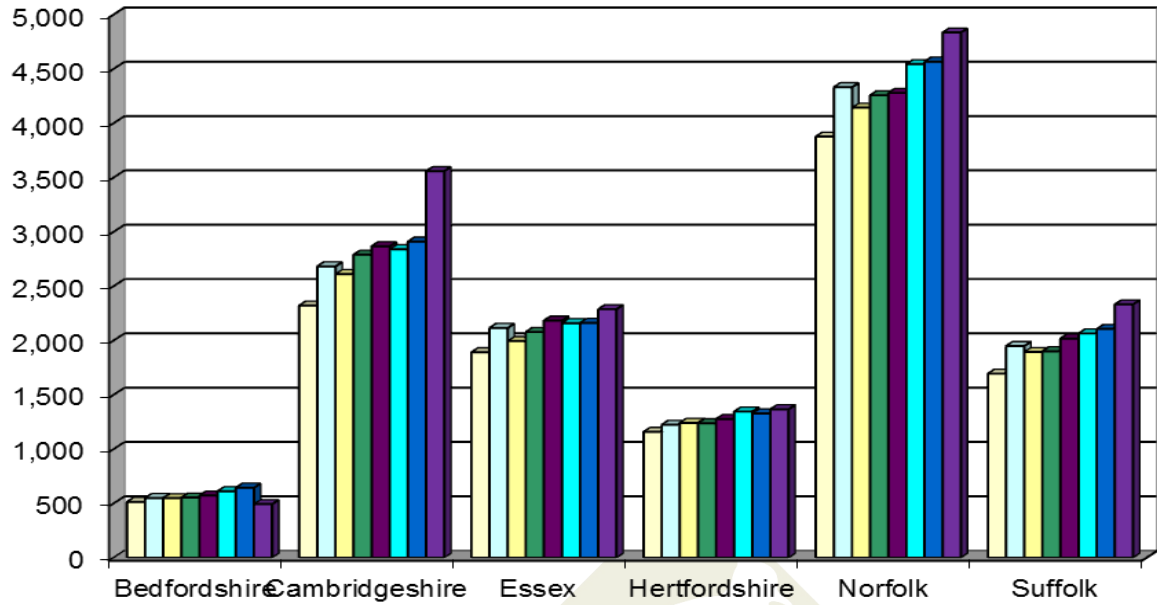


Figure 2. Change in key target option uptake in ELS in East region by county

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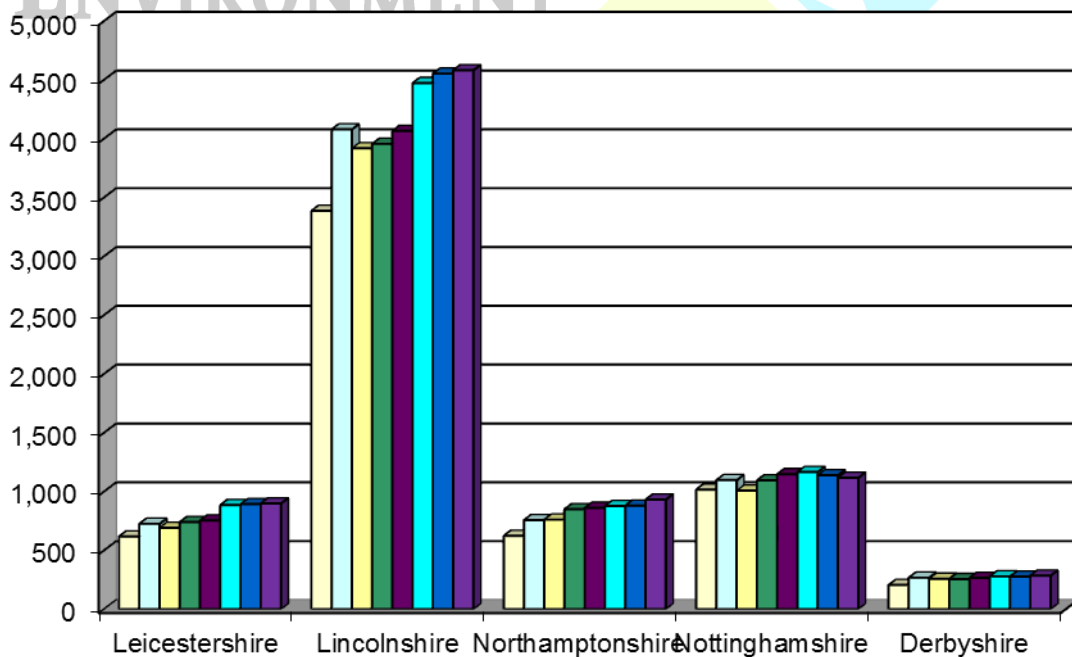


Figure 3. Change in key target option uptake in ELS in East Midlands by county

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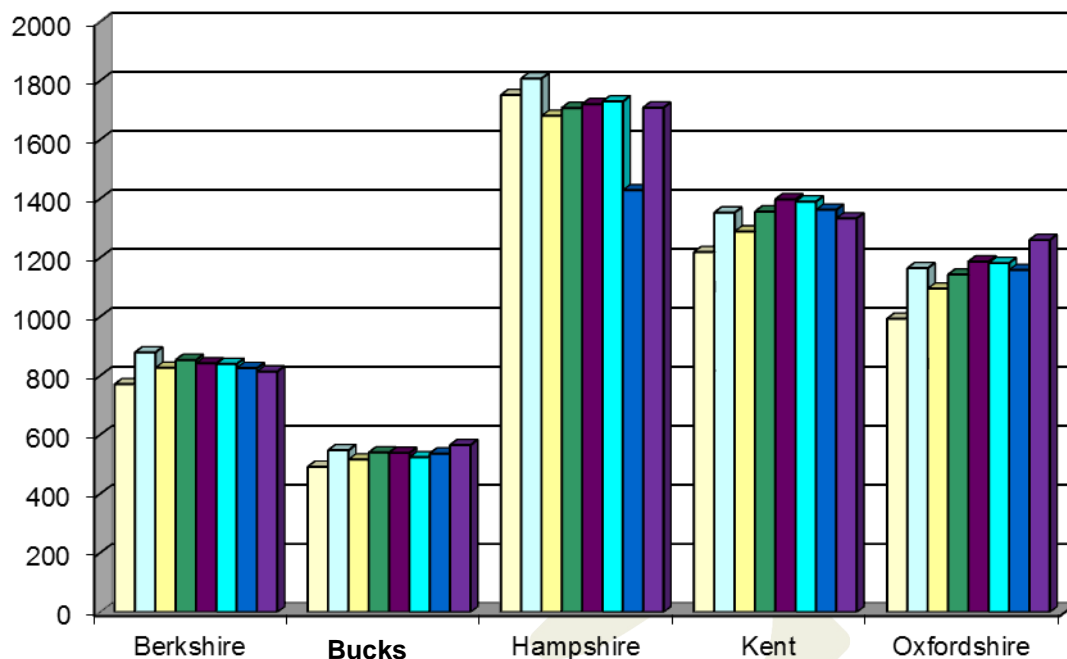


Figure 4. Change in key target option uptake in ELS in South East by county

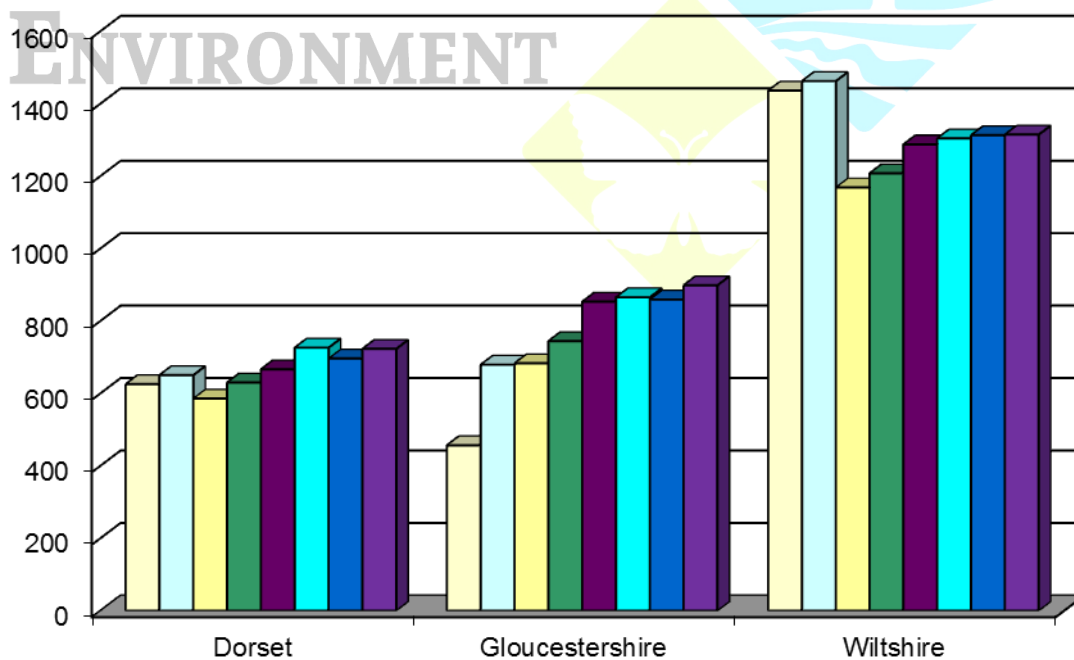


Figure 5. Change in key target option uptake (ha) in ELS in South West by county

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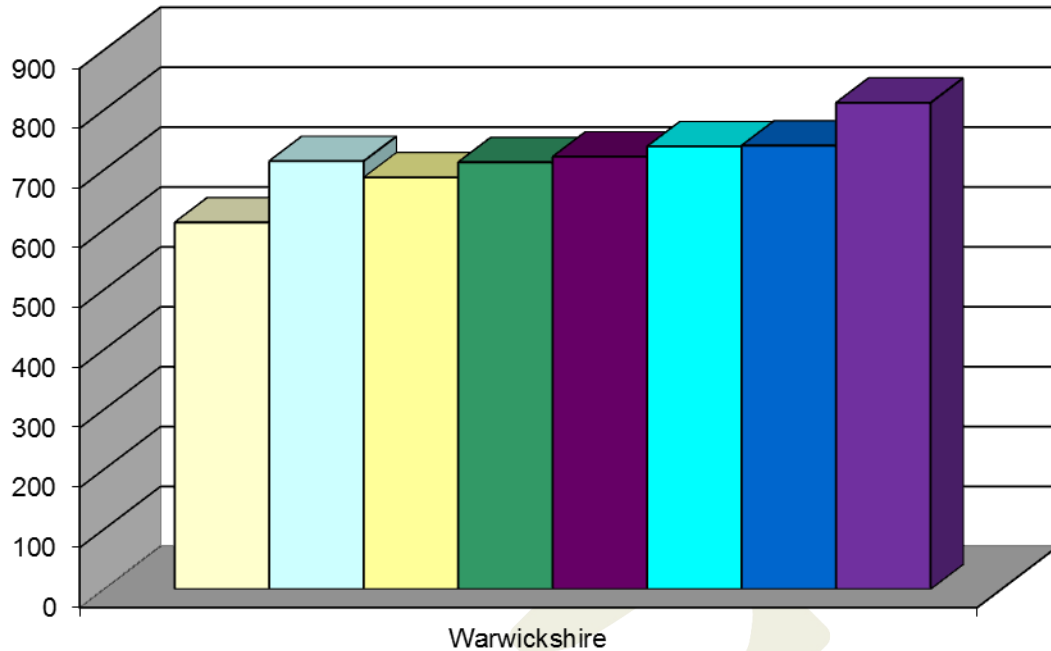


Figure 6. Change in key target option uptake (ha) in ELS in West Midlands by county

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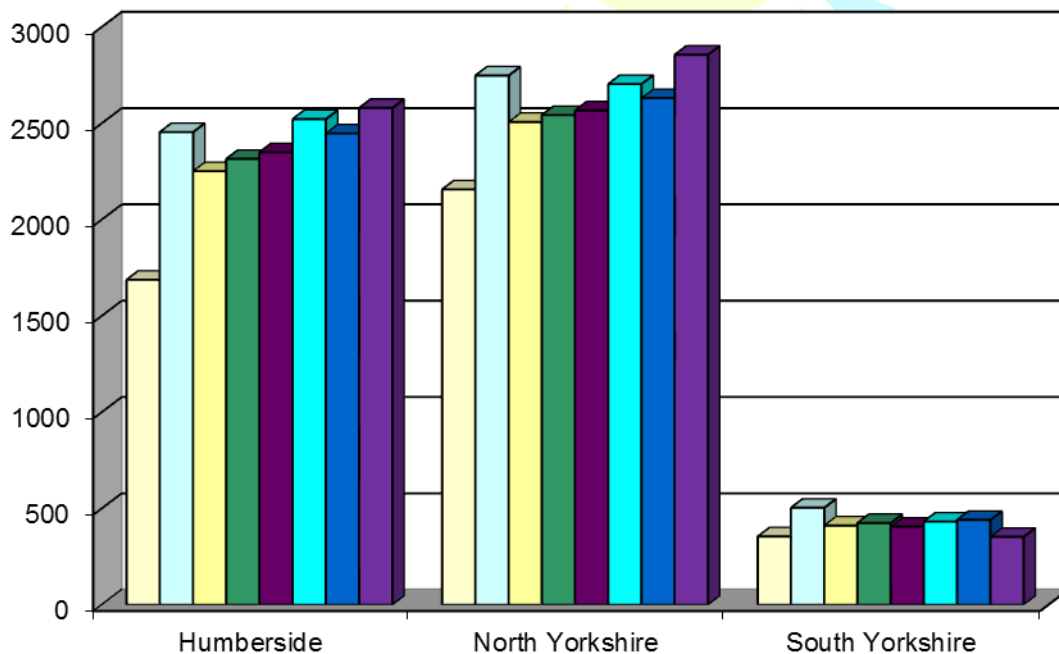


Figure 7. Change in key target option uptake (ha) in ELS in Yorks & Humber by county

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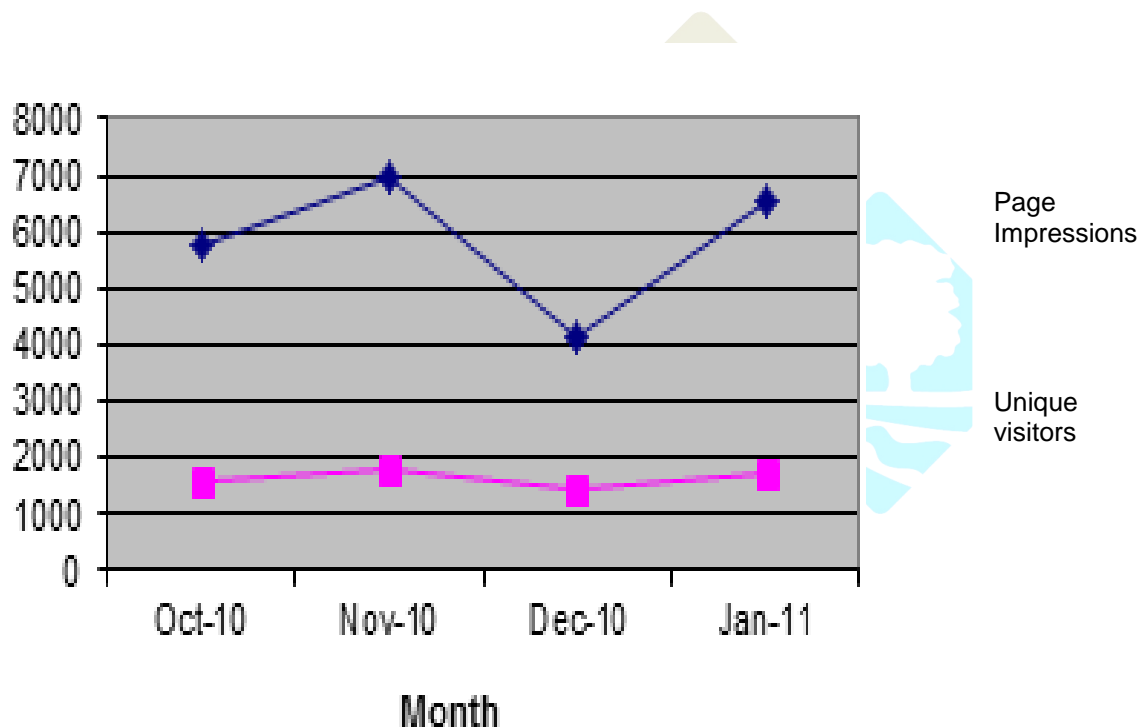
ELS 6m buffers against watercourses

In September 2010 the Steering Group agreed that ELS 6m buffer strips alongside watercourses (EE9 and EE10) should count towards the Campaign. A new target was set to increase the uptake of options EE9 and EE10 to 8240ha by June 2011. The uptake currently stands at 1,513ha which is an 18.4% increase toward the target for June 2011.

Website

The website statistics have picked up since December and it is hoped as the month's progress that the amount of page impressions will exceed 8000 per month.

There are now over 40 case studies on the website. The most popular pages include the news, advice and events pages.



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Online record for Campaign voluntary measures

The online record formally closed on the 14 January and a total of 337 farmers completed it. The table below details the percentage uptake of each Campaign voluntary measure.

Voluntary Measure		% Uptake
C1	Grass buffer alongside temporary and permanent water courses	32.3%
C2	Grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off	14.2%
C3a	Reverted arable areas	39.5%
C3b	Reverted arable areas with scrub management	9.5%
C4	Skylark plots	11.6%
C5	Fallow Plots	5.3%
C6	Overwinter stubble followed by spring / summer fallow	7.4%
C7a	Overwintered stubbles	26.7%
C7b	Overwintered stubbles – optional for vulnerable soils	5.3%
C8	Uncropped, cultivated margins (not GAEC 14 margins)	4.2%
C9	Wild bird seed mixture (arable / grassland areas)	19.3%
C10	Game strips	27.6%
C11	Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust Un-harvested cereal headlands	1.8%
C12a	Pollen & nectar mixtures – arable / grassland areas	12.2%
C12b	Pollen & nectar mixtures – management for horticultural growers	1.5%
C13	Sown wildflower headlands	3.3%
C14	Selective use of spring herbicides	5.6%
C15	Enhanced management of Short Rotation Coppice (Margins)	1.2%
	Enhanced management of Short Rotation Coppice (Cropped Area)	1.8%

80 per cent of the respondents have an ELS agreement and 82 per cent responded that they have or will renew their agreements when they expire. For those respondents that have or intend to renew, they indicated what key target options (in-field options) they will include in their agreements. As shown below the most popular key target options are management of field corners, wild bird seed mixture and nectar flower mixture. This trend is shown in the actual data for key target options provided by Natural England on a monthly basis.

In-Field Option		% Uptake
EJ9	12m buffer strips for water courses on cultivated land	8.3%
EJ5	In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off	12.8%
EF1	Management of field corners	48.4%
EF8	Skylark plots	11.0%
EF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land	9.5%
EJ13	Winter cover crops	4.5%
EF15	Reduced herbicide cereal crop preceding over-wintered stubble	3.6%
EF22	Extended winter stubbles	16.6%
EG4	Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubbles	1.2%
EF11	Uncropped cultivated margins for rare plants	7.4%
EF2 / EG3	Wild bird seed mixture	32.9%
EF10	Un-harvested cereal headlands	5.0%
EF9	Unfertilised cereal headlands	4.7%
EF4 / EG3	Nectar flower mixture	26.1%
EF7	Beetle banks	12.2%

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Respondents were given the opportunity to record any other voluntary management on their holding which included ponds, wetlands, woodlands, bird boxes and bird feeders.

The survey will re-open again in May 2011 when the results of the 'Survey of land managed under the Campaign for the Farmed Environment current 2010/11 crop year' are published. The survey is being sent on February 14 to 5,500 farmers and land managers with 10 hectares or more arable land.

Events and media activity

The CFE had a stand at the fringe events at the Oxford Farming Conference which was well visited by farmers and advisers. A week later advisers at the AICC Conference were addressed by the NFU President and they were encouraged to visit the CFE stand at the event. Visitors to the CFE stand at LAMMA in January were encouraged to take part in the Campaign which involved partners and wider industry including Kings Game Cover and Conservation Crops, Syngenta and Grow How.

So far this year, the CFE has attracted increased media interest based around the Campaign trail at Lamma 2011, the annual survey and most significantly the open letter to industry from the Minister. The latter was featured heavily in the trade press and regional and national non-farming titles.

The Minister for Agriculture was interviewed on Farming Today on the 10 February and in Farmers Weekly on the 11 February the CFE received three pages of coverage including an exclusive Talking Point with the Minister. Farmers Guardian is also continuing to support the CFE by including regular features.

The reaction to the open letter warning farmers that the threat of regulation may well be a reality if the Campaign fails, has been rather varied, in that some farmers are pleased that the Minister has put the record straight. Others have expressed a concern that if they have renewed their stewardship agreements in response to the CFE will they be penalised if a compulsory approach is brought in by having to put additional land out of production. This issue has been raised with Defra for clarification.

Local activity

On the 14 January all of the LCCs, regional CLA/NFU leads and farmer chairs gathered together at the second annual CFE meeting to share best practice and reflect on what has been achieved over the past year on the ground. Reports from the LCCs demonstrated the creativity that is being used on the ground to engage with farmers and advisers including interactive workshops which take advisers through real life ELS agreements and CFE advice provided at auction marts to try and get messages through to the disengaged. Looking forward the LCCs asked for clearer communication messages from above and a strengthened call to action from Government.

On the ground from January onwards, LCCs have focused on producing creative communication materials and organising events. In East Anglia, CFE calendars highlighting case studies were sent to farmers and land managers at the beginning of 2011 and this was followed up with a postcard campaign promoting the voluntary measures alongside a free seed offer from Kings Game Cover and Conservation crops. Other LCCs have organised the dissemination of postcards promoting the

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voluntary measures in time for the Defra annual survey. The post card recently sent to farmers in Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Dorset is shown below.



KEY SURVEY COMING TO AVOID SET-ASIDE

The second annual Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE) survey is being sent out on the 14th February 2011 to 5500 farmers across England. If you are invited to take part:

- It is your opportunity to show how you are taking part in the Campaign.
- You can report back that farmers are delivering environmental management.
- It is your chance to prove that this voluntary approach works.

It is really important for farmers who receive this survey to complete it fully and accurately. It is primarily the way in which the Campaign's voluntary measures are being monitored. The uptake of ELS options is reported separately by Natural England and uncropped land area is recorded through DEFRA's June Census.

YOU MAY BE DOING MORE THAN YOU THINK

Many farmers may already be contributing to the Campaign without realising it. Remember there are a total of 15 CFE voluntary measures, including reverted arable areas, grass buffers alongside watercourses or game strips. These measures count towards the CFE if they are outside of an agri-environment scheme.

Details can be found in the CFE booklet "A Farmer's Guide to the Voluntary Measures" - available on the website www.cfeonline.org.uk - this explains the management required for these areas to count towards the Campaign.

By recording any of these measures that you are delivering, on the CFE survey, you will be helping the national campaign to avoid compulsory set-aside.

If you need help with the survey or a paper copy of the farmer's guide then get in touch with your local CFE co-ordinator Louise Stratton on 01985 844356 or louise.stratton@cfeonline.org.uk

Support the CFE to
AVOID COMPULSORY SET-ASIDE

CAMPAIGN FOR THE FARMED ENVIRONMENT

Events which have taken place so far this year and are due to take place during the remainder of February include:

- Advice clinics in Yorkshire for farmers that receive the annual survey from Defra
- CFE seminar in Leicestershire which aims to attract around 100 attendees
- Partnership farmer event in the South West supported by the CFE, Catchment Sensitive Farming and the South West Farmland Bird Initiative
- CFE presence at Green Futures meetings in the East Midlands
- Resource protection CFE event in Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire
- A breakfast meeting for land agents in Herefordshire

Delivery Group issues

The Delivery Group met on the 20 January and the main issues discussed included the following:

ELS option uptake

1. Key target option in LES uptake alongside the crude trajectory for progress
2. Barrier to engagement - concern about what happens if regulation of some description is bought in those who have committed will be penalised once farmers are tied into their Environmental Stewardship agreement.

Communications

1. The need for an open letter from the Minister to industry which highlights the good work which is being done and the need for increased activity in farm.
2. Development of clear and meaningful messages to help with communications on the ground and to increase key target option uptake. The messages developed are detailed below:

If every farmer in England established just one hectare of pollen and nectar mix, and two of wild bird seed on every 100 hectares of land in production,

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together with buffers beside vulnerable watercourses, then the Campaign will succeed.

There are no fixed percentages for options that count towards the Campaign's success but as a guideline if every farm put 3 - 4% of arable area into key target options in ELS and Campaign voluntary measures, then farmers can avoid losing a minimum of 3 per cent of farm payments and 6 per cent of productive land. Every farmer and manager has the power to make the Campaign a success. They need to work with their agronomists and advisers to decide the best way to contribute to the Campaign on their individual holdings.

For farmers renewing or entering ELS one third of your agreement points should be put in key target options including field corner management and pollen and nectar and wild bird seed mix.

3. The Delivery Group members are working with Defra to find out what will happen to farmers if they sign up for an ELS agreement with the right options but then a regulatory option is adopted. Farmers want to know that they can either withdraw from ELS without penalty should a regulatory option be introduced or will there be a transitional period whereby they will not have to meet the regulatory requirements until their agreement ends.

The Delivery Group next meet on the 21 February (teleconference).

Evidence and Monitoring Group (EMG) issues

The Evidence and Monitoring Group met on the 29 November, issues which they are currently working on include the following:

- **Signed off the Defra annual survey which was sent out to farmers on the 14 February**
- **Trends in key target option uptake and progress towards the targets**
- **Monitoring outstanding Campaign targets**
- **Updating of the CFE cost calculator – in progress**

The Evidence and Monitoring Group next meet on the 22 February which will include a pre-meeting to discuss environmental outcomes as result of the CFE.