



The Campaign for the Farmed Environment is encouraging farmers and land managers to voluntarily adopt land management practices that will retain and exceed the environmental benefits that used to be provided by set-aside. There is a range of voluntary management measures or ELS options that you can adopt on your farm to benefit the environment, whilst at the same time being agronomically practical.

Name: Charlie Stephenson
Region: East Anglia
Farm: Elm Farm, Wetheringsett
Size: 77ha



Background

The farm has been in the family for around fifty years and the soil is predominantly clay. Wheat, rape, beans and sugar beet are in the rotation. The farm borders Mickfield Meadow, a SSSI hay meadow, containing the rare snake's head fritillary.

What voluntary management do you already undertake on your farm?

I buffered the watercourses separating the farm from Mickfield Meadow, so my farming activities wouldn't impact on the watercourse or the meadow. I have created margins along some of my hedgerows. I have created a lagoon which is teeming with frogs and toads.

How will you be/are you taking part in the Campaign?

I have joined ELS for the first time and obtained over 70% of my points from key target options including: buffer strips, nectar flower mixes, wild bird mixes and extended over winter stubbles.

Will you be using an adviser?

I gained advice from CFE at a one-to-one visit.

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

Income through ELS payments, options such as extended overwinter stubbles in ELS aiding the agronomy by controlling black grass, and options such as wild bird seed mix helping the breeding numbers of farmland birds. Also, I will hopefully establish some snake's head fritillaries on my ELS margins!

How does undertaking voluntary management fit in with your farming business?

All my voluntarily managed land is now in ELS.

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

To be doing your bit for wildlife and the farming community and helping to avoid regulation. To be paid for margins I've established anyway. Also, my son is very passionate about conservation and wildlife, so he will enjoy the environmental improvements I'll be making on the farm to support the Campaign.