



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:** Charles Clarkson  
**Region:** North Yorkshire  
**Farm:** Beck House Farm, Nr Malton  
**Size:** 112 hectares



### Background

Charles farms at Beck House Farm with his wife Andrea and his son Josh. The farm is a tenanted arable unit with a small area of permanent pasture which is grazed by a neighbour's Dexter cattle to meet the requirements of their Environmental Stewardship agreement.

Cropping is focused on high quality malting barley: this year there is 70 acres of winter and 118 acres of spring barley. 17 acres has been let to a neighbour to grow potatoes. The remainder of the land is dedicated to environmental management.

The farm has a good range of wildlife with tree sparrow nesting on the farm. Barn and little owls also nest in the area and habitat has been created and enhanced on the farm to help them flourish. The farm also has lapwing, yellow wagtail and a range of other bird species.

### What environmental management do you already undertake on your farm?

The farm has been in Entry and Higher Level Stewardship (ELS and HLS) for approximately four years. This was prompted by the closing of the sugar beet factory at York, which meant that there was no longer a reason to include sugar beet in the rotation and an alternative use needed to be found for some of the land.

The Stewardship agreement contains the following options:

- 2.16ha of 2/4/6 m grass margins to buffer watercourses and hedgerows providing habitat for barn owls
- 1ha of nectar flower mixture
- 0.34ha of cultivated margins for rare arable plants
- 2.3ha of field corner management

- 1.5ha of wild bird seed mixtures
- 4ha of unharvested fertiliser-free conservation headlands
- 4 ha of cultivated plots for lapwing
- 10ha of overwintered stubble
- 3.5ha of species rich grassland in HLS
- 3.5ha of grassland managed to protect ridge and furrow and a deserted medieval village site
- 7000m of hedgerow management on a combination of 2 and three year cutting cycles
- 1500m of hedgerow restoration
- 12 tree sparrow nesting boxes
- 0.8ha of woodland creation on former set-a-side land.

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

We are supporting the Campaign through our Environmental Stewardship management options. The options delivered through ELS and HLS have taken 16.1 ha of arable land out of production which equates to approximately 16% of the arable land on the farm.

In addition to the above we grow 1.5 ha of game crop for the landowner. We are trying to convince him and the game keeper to grow a wild bird seed mixture instead of maize.

### **What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?**

Supporting the Campaign through the Environmental Stewardship agreement brings in a valuable alternative source of income and it is something I want to do to improve the environment on the farm. Much of my former set-a-side land is now in some form of positive environmental management as part of the Environmental Stewardship agreement. This is enabling us to deliver positive management for a range of species across the farm.

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

Grain storage is limited on the farm so when we were no longer able to grow sugar beet we had to find a land use which would not require additional storage. Working up an ELS/HLS agreement was an opportunity to identify alternative users for those areas of the farm that were less productive and also have the optimum environmental benefit.

### **What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?**

What we are doing to support the Campaign is an integral part of the farm system and makes good economic sense. We are also very interested in the environment. Since being in the Scheme we have learnt about the different species on the farm, particularly bees which have benefitted from the habitat provided under the agreement.