



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:** Fraser Hugill  
(CFE coordinator North/South Yorkshire)

**Region:** North Yorkshire

**Farm:** Hall Garth Farm

**Size:** 120 acres



### Background

Fraser runs the family farm which is made up of two different holdings, one lowland arable and one upland livestock. Fraser has just taken over the agricultural side of the business from his father coinciding with leaving full time employment at North York Moors National Park and setting up an environmental consultancy business with his partner Rosy Eaton (another CFE co-ordinator).

Fraser and Rosy live at the upland holding in the North York Moors National Park. The 60ha upland farm is primarily grass, with 4-6 hectares of undersown spring oats. The farm runs 35 pedigree Beef Shorthorn suckler cows. All females that are sold go for pedigree breeding stock. Bulls are finished on oats/barley and beans, grown on the lowland part of the family farm.

The lowland holding is 60 hectares of arable land approx 7 miles from the upland part by road, where Fraser's parents live. Cropping consists of Winter Wheat, Winter Barley, Spring Beans and temporary grass. This land provides feed and straw for the upland farm. All work is done using our own machinery with exception of spraying and bailing. Labour on the farm consists of Fraser with help from his father and involves fitting CFE and farm work together.

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

The whole farm is in ELS. Options include wild bird mix (1ha), over wintered stubbles (4ha), 6m buffer strips/ buffer strips next to watercourses all sown in a floristically enhanced mix (0.47ha), undersown spring cereals (4ha) as well as grassland, boundary options and UELS options.

We also deliver Campaign voluntary measures, this year we have additional 0.2 ha of wild bird mix, 8ha of over wintered stubble and approx 3.5 ha of game cover we grow for the shoot on the upland farm.

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

We've just renewed our ELS and retained many of the existing options such as buffers along watercourses and wild bird mix. We never had management plans in the previous agreement so did not need to find additional points. Some options are not key target options for the Campaign, however they work for our farm (practically and environmentally) and I believe that is the key thing for any agreement.

### **Will you be using an adviser?**

No, but we do intend to get a bird survey done of the farm so we know exactly what species are using the land and benefitting from the environmental management. For example, spring cropping to accommodate over-wintered stubbles, and to grow beans as a protein source for the livestock, has resulted in Lapwing nesting on the lowland farm which had not happened prior to ELS with a winter cereal rotation.

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

Taking part in the Campaign by renewing our ELS makes sound economic sense for our farm business: the areas of land taken out of production are lower yielding and generally more difficult to manage. Autumn 2008 emphasised this as it would have been impossible to get these areas sown due to wet ground conditions.

The environmental options we are now delivering far exceeds the environmental value of the set-a-side we had previously. Hopefully if we do our bit on our farm and everyone else does the same, the real benefit will be to us as farmers in that we avoid more regulation and are ultimately seen by the general public, our customers, to be doing the right thing for the environment.

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

The lowland farm has a small shoot which is enhanced through ELS options such as wild bird seed mix. Entering ELS and including over wintered stubbles brought spring cropping back into the rotation in the form of spring beans. This enables us to grow and feed our own protein and the £120 ha associated with the stubble makes beans look a more attractive break crop.

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

As Campaign coordinator it would look bad if I didn't! The reality is that using ELS makes participating in the Campaign easy. When entering ELS the thought of taking areas out of production was painful however the reality is that it has made the farm easier to manage, it makes economic sense. It is also rewarding to see species such as lapwing back on the lowland farm for the first time in 20 years.