



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.

Farm: Norfolk House Farm, Gedney Marsh, Holbeach

Name: Phillip Hubbert, J.E. Piccaver & Co

Region: East Midlands

Size: 800 ha.



Background

The Piccaver family have farmed in South Lincolnshire for at least 100 years; Norfolk House Farm was bought by the late Major John Piccaver in 1946. The farm was traditionally run with beef cattle, cereals, sugar beet and potatoes being the main enterprises. Then, with expansion of the farm came a split, with the conventional arable cropping let, leaving the business concentrating on 440 ha of high value salads grown both on the home farm and rented land locally.

The salads are grown for processing mainly bag packs for the multiples. The highly motivated team pride themselves on top quality products joined by the highest level of service.

In November 2010 the farm was awarded the coveted FWAG Silver Lapwing Award for the conservation work carried out alongside the commercial salad enterprise.

What environmental management do you already undertake on your farm?

- The farm is covered by ELS and HLS schemes. This includes an extensive reed-bed re-creation area.
- Wild bird cover mixes cover around 4ha. These comprise kale, quinoa and spring cereals
- Pollen & nectar mixes are dispersed across the farm to provide foraging areas for bees, insects and birds.
- Hedgerow planting has created over 8 miles of new habitat.
- Farm Woodland Grant Schemes covering 4 ha are now well established.
- Grey partridge numbers have increased by around 40% since 1998.

- In the same time period tree sparrow & yellowhammer numbers have also risen by 15-20%; this due almost entirely to the above mentioned conservation work undertaken on the farm.

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

As well as being a Beacon Farm, I sit on the Local Liaison Group for the CFE in Lincolnshire. We hosted a farm walk to demonstrate the aims of the Campaign in July 2010.

Will you be using an adviser?

FWAG will continue to advise on the environmental options best suited to our business.

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

This is an ideal opportunity to show f. www.cfeonline.org.uk ment does not have to affect the economic efficiency of their businesses.

The measures undertaken on our Estate can be used to show others the positive benefits that can be achieved for wildlife, within a profitable fenland farming business.

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

It allows us to plan internally, minimise disruption to cropping, whilst controlling the long term environmental features to maximum benefit.

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

Previous set-aside rules on large areas of land did not give long term stability for wildlife and removed valuable cropping land from our business. By improved management of a relatively small area of land, the voluntary option gives us an ideal opportunity to control these issues.