



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: Freddie de Lisle

Region: East Midlands

Farm: Quenby Hall, Leicestershire

Size: 445 hectares



Background

The farm serves many purposes ranging from business to pleasure. We combine interests in hunting and shooting with an open access policy for local villagers. Efforts are made to preserve historic buildings and landscapes, whilst, on the wildlife side of things, 63 different bird species were recorded on the Estate in a recent survey. On the commercial side, the farm has three income streams: arable, beef and the environment. Our beef is organic and comes from the Estate's Longhorn herd – slower growing animals finished on the farm's extensive grassland, so making best use of parkland and ridge and furrow ground and negating the need for more intensive finishing facilities. The arable land is conventionally farmed, having found our heavy soils unsuited to organic cereal production. Our third income stream, which is of great importance to the business, is money received through Entry and Higher Level Stewardship.

What environmental management do you already undertake on your farm?

Excluding land in government agri-environment schemes, we have areas dedicated solely to game cover that are drilled with either maize or chicory. In addition to the network of grass margins about the Estate, our maize and chicory plots contribute to the CFE's 'uncropped land' target.

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

We are taking part in the Campaign through being in Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) and by having 'in-field' ELS options, such as wild bird seed mix and nectar flower mixtures. (Just to

clarify a point – our in-field options, such as nectar flower mix, are not in the middle of fields (and do not need to be) but run down the side of hedges.)

Our maize cover crops also contribute to the CFE's uncropped land target, as mentioned above, and we will record this on Defra's June Survey (if we receive it) under the 'bare fallow' question.

Quenby is also a CFE Beacon Farm. We have already held a successful farm walk last June, which attracted over 50 farmers, at which we demonstrated how we established and manage our wild bird seed mix (despite a frighteningly dry spring). We intend to hold more farm walks next year.

Will you be using an adviser?

Nick Padwick, farm manager of the Co-Operative's Stoughton Estate, put together our ELS/HLS application

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

There are a number of benefits in taking part in the Campaign. Firstly, ELS and HLS is an essential part of our core farm business giving us a guaranteed income for the next 10 years. Secondly, we know that the ELS/HLS options that we have selected are having a positive impact in increasing the farmland bird population on the farm.

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

We enjoy a multitude of benefits from taking part in the Campaign, mainly through Entry Level Stewardship. We receive substantial payments through ELS (and HLS) which justifies the employment of staff to manage our hedges, woodland and the shoot. The wild bird seed mix acts as both a wildlife crop, attracting mixed flocks of linnet, goldfinch and reed bunting, as well as shoot cover for pheasants and red-legged partridges. Moreover, I take great personal satisfaction from managing the land and getting the best from both worlds.

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

We do what we want where we want to, to achieve what we want to achieve – as such the environmental side of things are fully integrated with both the farm and the shoot.

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

Financial considerations obviously rate highly when choosing to go into Entry Level Stewardship, but so does a genuine love for the environment and country sports. Another very good reason for contributing to the Campaign is to avoid further statutory controls.