



**CAMPAIGN
FOR THE FARMED
ENVIRONMENT**



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: Chris Allhusen

Region: Norfolk

Farm: Bradenham Hall Farms, Bradenham, Thetford

Size: 950 hectares



Background

The farm grows a range of mainly winter drilled crops including wheat, barley, oil seed rape, beans, 40 ha of permanent pasture and 120 ha of blackcurrants. There are also 75 ha of farm woodlands, a horse livery business, commercial building lettings and cottage lettings. The soil ranges from heavy clay to sand loam, over clay and chalk. The blackcurrants can be irrigated and frost protected.

What voluntary management do you already undertake on your farm?

The whole farm is in Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). Our HLS and Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) options include wild bird mixes, nectar and pollen mixes, field corners, unharvested headlands, fallow headlands, 30 ha of six metre margins, footpaths and bridleways, hedge restoration programmes and protection of archaeological features. We were in Countryside Stewardship for 20 years, and amongst other things, have coppiced and restored over 15,000 metres of hedges over that time.

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

Our HLS was only signed up in February 2009, but we will try and include a few additional CFE options over the next 18 months. I will be seeing how the options work on other farms, to work out what is best for us; maybe some skylark plots.

Will you be using an adviser?

Yes, Richard MacMullen of FWAG and Roger Gerry of Natural England.

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

The Campaign is an excellent way of showing what we are currently doing, and with HLS is continually helping to improve the environment on the estate. In addition it helps with the Soil Protection Review and meets LERAP requirements, realises the potential of less productive areas on the farm, helps maintain breeding numbers of farmland and birds and provides a habitat for crop pollinators and natural enemies. The income is a useful way of retaining the money lost through modulation of pillar 1.

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

The wild bird mixes are helpful for our small family shoot, and the scheme returns a good profit on the less viable areas on the farm, like corners and headlands.

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

I have always been interested in enhancing the environment on the estate, and the campaign is an excellent way to share knowledge and look at best practice on a range of other farms. The totally different approach of the campaign with its “doing the right thing in the right place” is a refreshing change to the blanket rules for set aside, that neither achieved its objective of limiting production, nor enhancing the environment.