



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: Phil Jarvis

Region: East Midlands

Farm: Hall Farm, Leicestershire

Size: 320 hectares



Background

I manage the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's farm at Loddington and having Denchworth and Oxpasture clay soils we grow mainly winter crops with a rotation of w wheat, w OSR, w wheat and w oats / s beans. We are mainly minimum tillage with plough based cultivations for the beans. Although used for demonstration and research purposes, the land is farmed in a commercial fashion for profit. Farming operations are carried out in conjunction with my neighbouring farmer Richard Wright to maximise the benefits of sharing labour and machinery. Although until recently we have had a patchwork of different crops we are moving towards block cropping, relying on well distributed ELS/HLS options to provide habitat diversity and wildlife corridors.

What voluntary management do you already undertake on your farm?

The farm is currently in both a CSS and ELS agreement, plus I have retained historical set-aside in the form of wild bird seed mix and grass margins. I am in the process of applying for a joint ELS/HLS agreement and will be transferring areas of old set-aside into ELS/HLS to both retain habitat and maximise income. We plan to continue to have a diverse range of conservation crops such as wild bird seed mix and nectar flower mixtures distributed across the farm, managed as ELS/HLS options.

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

I am and will be contributing to the Campaign through being in ELS and, just as importantly, by adopting ELS 'in-field' options such as wild bird seed mix, nectar flower mixtures and field corner management. I will also be recording areas of maize and sorghum shoot cover crops (that are not eligible as ELS/HLS options or CFE voluntary measures) as 'uncropped land' in the forthcoming June and December Defra surveys.

Will you be using an adviser?

I have used our in-house advisory service to put together the stewardship application form. A bit of 'steerage' was required now and then to keep my better land in production and ensure we have an agreement that is practical – at the end of the day, I'm the one who has to put things in place and make it work.

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

The benefit of being in stewardship is that we receive an income for providing game/wildlife habitat throughout the year and minimising nutrient run-off with conservation crops. Having distinct and separate conservation crops, my objectives for managing the rest of the land for production and profit are straight forward. I also hope that by being in stewardship and contributing to the Campaign I will not see compulsory set-aside again.

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

The stewardship schemes provide an alternative income, often on land next to hedges and woodland or on particularly wet and heavy soil that is less productive than the rest of the field. The land in ELS/HLS options also fulfils my wildlife habitat requirements to qualify me to grow Conservation Grade cereals, for which I get a premium price.

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

We have a longstanding commitment to conserve both game and wildlife on the farm and would have gone into stewardship regardless of CFE. However, I certainly want the Campaign to succeed to make sure we have a credible industry-led approach rather than be bound by more bureaucratic and mandatory regulations.