



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: Stephen Tuer**

**Region: North Yorkshire**

**Farm: Hutton Grange, Northallerton**

**Size: approx 970 acres**

### **Background**



The farm is located just north of Northallerton on fairly heavy soils some of which is prone to seasonal flooding. The farm has traditionally being a mixed dairy, pigs and arable farm. The farm is in a period of transition with Stephen taking over the business from his father Willis. With this succession the decision has been taken to leave the dairy industry and concentrate on pigs and arable. In future staffing will consist of Stephen with one full time member of staff.

Arable cropping consists of winter wheat, winter barley, oilseed rape and spring beans. All field work is done in house. The farm is in a steady move from a plough based system to min till in an effort to reduce costs improve timeliness and soil structures. Stephen is starting to make use of precision farming techniques and sees the farm moving in this direction.

Organic manures will continue to play an important role in maintaining soil fertility with a ready supply of manures from the pigs and a neighbouring turkey farm.

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

The farm has never participated in a formal agri-environment scheme but has had a 4 hectare woodland grant scheme to establish 4 blocks of woodland around the farm. The farm does have environmental value and some of the management we have carried out such as not trimming the hedges annually and growing areas of game cover crops has had a benefit to wildlife.

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

In order to contribute to the Campaign we have decided to enter ELS and have agreed to become one of the Campaigns beacon farms. We are going to put together an ELS agreement that reflects a typical arable farm to demonstrate how ELS can be integrated into the farm business. We are considering the following options;

- 6m buffer strips along all watercourses
- 12-24m buffer strips on watercourses that flood
- Wild Bird seed mix
- Field corner management
- Nectar mix
- Hedgerow and ditch management

We anticipate retaining game cover crops outside of the ELS agreement as we have concerns that the shoot may undertake activity (i.e. locating feeders etc) not be fully compatible with ELS. This is where a voluntary approach has value in that we are not trying to shoehorn every last little bit of environmental management into ELS which we would have done under a compulsory environmental set-a-side approach.

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

We intend to put together the ELS application ourselves with help from CFE campaign co-ordinator. We have agreed that as a Beacon farm the co-ordinator will guide us through this process in order to consider how the range of options we use contributes towards the Campaign.

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

If all farmers are all doing their bit for the environment, that has to be a good thing for perception of the industry. I also see some of the options promoted under the Campaign such as buffer strips along watercourses becoming compulsory if farmers are not taking up the options voluntarily.

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

As with most farms we have areas of land that produce lower crop yields, are susceptible to flooding or are an awkward shape. By entering ELS we intend to use these areas to locate our in field options. Ultimately I aim that participating in ELS & the Campaign will provide an alternative income stream helping re-coup some of the money lost through modulation by doing something positive for the environment.

Buffering watercourses and particularly taking areas out of production that flood will help with LERAPS and the new soil protection review and at a practical level by re-shaping the cropped part of the field will make fieldwork and general management of the farm easier.

Although I have some reservations about entering ELS I hope that once the scheme is up and running the management involved will be very straight forward.

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

In taking on the farm I want to develop a business I am proud of and I view the environmental aspects of running a farm a key part of that. In many ways we should have entered ELS in the past however we have always been reluctant due to fact it was more paperwork and this underlying fear that if we made a minor mistake with the paperwork or management we would be unfairly penalised.