



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: Andrew Scoley of Flintham & Scoley Limited

Region: East Midlands

Farm: Westmoor Farm, Martin Moor

Size: 182 ha

Background

The farm was until recently farmed by my father and uncle, together with farms at Branston and Bracebridge Heath, under the umbrella of the farming partnership. Since then, we have bought out my uncle's side of the family business, but I continue to farm the land as a Farm Business Tenancy.

The soil type varies from black sand to very heavy clay and to fen silt. It is the most difficult of our three units to farm, the other two being sandy clay loam on limestone heath.

What voluntary management do you already undertake on your farm?

Westmoor is what I would term a wetland farm; hence there are ditches around most of the fields. We put in 6m grass margins a few years ago to protect the watercourses and to make LERAP obligations easier to manage.

We run a small shoot on the farm primarily focusing on French Partridge and Pheasants. However we do have a good number of English Partridge and shooting a small number each year does not appear to be detrimental to the population. An owl box in an open fronted shed seems to produce a brood of barn owls every year. Barn, Little and Tawny owl sightings are quite common.

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

As well as being a beacon farm for the campaign, I sit on the Local Liason Group for the CFE in Lincolnshire. We will be hosting a farm walk to demonstrate the aims of the Campaign in November 2010.

I haven't been in ELS before, and we will be signing up this time.

Will you be using an adviser?

We will be using Natural England, FWAG and my agronomist.

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

We want to have control over our environmental work rather than having something else imposed upon us. The physical benefits to wildlife will take sometime to become obvious I think but I look forward to seeing an increase in the numbers of different species here. On the financial side, we haven't accessed environmental funding before so this will add something to bottom line.

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

Due to the fact that some years ago I took the decision to sell our machinery and use contractors, ELS and CFE work takes a bit more planning as we can't decide at short notice to do some of the necessary work. Jobs need to be planned with a local contractor to come and do the work

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

The campaign has come about due to the loss of the perceived benefits to wildlife of set-aside, even though set-aside was a production control, not an environmental measure. We wish to contribute to environmental improvement voluntarily by using the options which suit us best and not by other compulsory measures imposed upon us by central government. We want to be seen to be improving the environment and to be paid, at least in part for doing so too.