



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:** John & Cathy Charles-Jones

**Region:** East Midlands

**Farm:** Woodborough Park Farm

**Size:** 285 ha (700 acres)



### **Background**

We came to Woodborough Park Farm in 2004; it is a mainly arable farm growing combinable crops with permanent pasture on land that cannot be cropped. Soils are Keuper Marl based and are capable of good yields if crops are established well. Current cropping is based on Winter Oilseed Rape, Winter Wheat and Winter Barley, with approx 35ha of grassland grazed with sheep by a local grazier.

The holding also has two areas of ancient woodland with a further five ha. of woodland that has been planted under the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme and more recently the English Woodland Grant Scheme.

All land is minimally cultivated wherever and whenever possible.

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

The farm is in both the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) and the Entry Level Scheme (ELS). The CSS is due to expire in 2014, whereas the ELS is due for renewal in 2010.

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

Our main contribution will be in renewing our ELS agreement later this year, and taking advantage of in-field options to replace points that are no longer eligible from management plans. We will also be ensuring that voluntary areas of conservation are recorded.

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

FWAG were instrumental in getting us started on both CSS and ELS. We intend to consult with them further to ensure that the options that we choose for our ELS renewal not only produce the maximum financial return to the farm, but also compliment our CSS and contribute to the aims of the campaign.

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

As an industry we have to ensure that 'Option A', or 5% compulsory set-aside does not come back to haunt us. Not only were the environmental benefits of set-aside difficult to quantify or even see on this farm frankly, so much more can be achieved for the environment through the targeted three themed approach of the campaign. If the industry does not support the campaign, then it will only have itself to blame for the inevitable consequences that that will bring

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

ELS not only allows us to claim back some of our modulated single farm payment, environmental stewardship in general has become a crucial enterprise in its own right and is now vital in contributing to the overall financial performance of the farm.

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

As mentioned above, we do not want to see any return to compulsory set-aside and the inevitable cross-compliance issues that would accompany it. Whether or not it is a symptom of increasing age, but when we originally entered ELS it was on the basis of maximising financial return for as little disruption to the farming business as possible. What both CSS and ELS have taught us in the last six years is that the rewards of stewardship surpass the undoubted financial benefit. The potential for the increase in bird species on the farm is as exciting as the elusive 12t/ha wheat crop, although in reality far more likely.

Environmental stewardship and responsibility sit comfortably alongside intensive agriculture; the campaign will hopefully allow us to play our part in proving this to any doubters.