



**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: Simon Pain

Region: Gloucestershire

Farm: Billow Farm, Berkeley

Size: 125 hectares

Background

The farm is an organic, 125ha mixed farm with 20ha of cereals and the rest pasture land, including water meadows. The farm is situated in the village of Breadstone, on heavy clay loam. The Billow Brook runs through the farm, which leads into the River Severn.

In 2001 the farm diversified with an equine establishment and entered the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS). The farm is in the flight path for turtle doves to Slimbridge wetlands, plus the farm hosts good populations of lapwing, skylark, corn and reed bunting as well as barn and tawny owls.

What environmental management do you already undertake on your farm?

As mentioned the farm had a classic agri-environmental scheme since 2001, which this year has been moved to an OELS and HLS agreement.

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

The farm has embraced the OELS scheme, picking various key target options such as beetle banks, wild bird covers and over-wintered stubbles, skylark plots plus grassland and hedgerow options.

In addition the farm has a patch of uncropped land, which we are keen to maintain. This particular land is a notoriously wet area and it is not deemed practical to return to arable cultivation.

Will you be using an adviser?

The farm has utilised the expertise of both the Farm Consultancy Group in Gloucester and Gloucestershire FWAG.

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

The environmental benefits of the Campaign are the key focus at Billow Farm. With good farmland bird populations across the holding and resource protection measures now in place to protect the Brook, the Campaign – through OELS and uncropped land options – will enhance these two particularly important environmental areas that link in with the Campaign's themes.

The diversification of farm income that the OELS and HLS also offer holds a great benefit to the farm.

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

When the farm diversified in 2001, we found that the new environmental options worked particularly well with the new farming system, offering good integration of environmental management with mixed farming.

The timescales for the options have allowed, what is essentially a “one-man-band”, the flexibility necessary to implement and follow through. The new OELS and HLS options are working very well at Billow Farm.

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

We saw a definite rise in wildlife a couple of years into CSS and this was a real driver to continue to improve the environmental side of the farm. We further feel strongly about educating the general public about what farmers are doing for the environment and that it is through farm environmental management that wildlife and environmental habitats are here.

We feel that the Campaign is focused on what really matters without compromising our business ethos. Eventually, we hope that the general public will get to hear much more about the Campaign and what we farmers are achieving.