



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: Henry Lucas

Region: Warwickshire

Farm: Pleasance Farm, Kenilworth

Size: 181 ha (460 acres)



Background

Pleasance Farm is a mixed, arable and grassland, farm just outside Kenilworth in central Warwickshire. Located close to Kenilworth Castle, the farm incorporates a number of important archaeological features that were formerly part of the castle's estate – including The Pleasance, a grade 1 scheduled monument.

The main enterprises are beef cattle and barley (spring and winter crops). The total arable area is approximately 80 hectares. The farm's soils are mainly sandy clays and sandy loams, overlying sandstone.

A range of environmental measures have been introduced at Pleasance Farm and there is a great diversity of wildlife. There are breeding populations of several declining farmland bird species, including lapwings, skylarks, tree sparrows, yellowhammers and grey partridge. Among the many other bird species recorded are greenshank, hobby, goshawk and raven.

What environmental management do you already undertake on your farm?

The farm has a Higher Level Stewardship agreement (Environmental Stewardship Scheme), which includes educational access. Environmental measures currently in place at Pleasance Farm include arable reversion, fallows, grass margins, low-input grassland, low input cereal crops, unharvested cereal headlands, pollen and nectar mixes and wild bird seed mixtures. There has also been extensive new woodland and hedge planting on the farm.

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

As a strong supporter of the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, and an active member of the Warwickshire CFE Local Liaison Group, Henry Lucas has a significant area of his farm in management options that contribute towards the Campaign's targets. Most of the relevant in-field and field margin options, listed above, are included as part of the farm's ELS or HLS

agreements. In 2009, these included 2.4 hectares of pollen and nectar mix and 3.1 hectares of wild bird seed mixture (grown as single-species blocks of fodder radish, *Triticale*, millet, etc. In 2010, the area of pollen and nectar mix will be increased to 3.9 hectares.

Will you be using an adviser?

Although we will be working closely with the Warwickshire CFE Co-ordinator and the Local Liaison Group, no other professional assistance will be used. At Pleasance Farm we have several years of experience of managing environmental measures and we also have available 'in-house' professional expertise available.

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

The success of the Campaign should be important to all farmers with any arable land, as the alternative option of compulsory set-aside would be bad news for the industry as a whole. The Campaign offers a good opportunity to avoid new regulation and bring environmental benefits through the voluntary introduction of management options. Many of these options can be paid for through ELS, so careful choice of their location, could bring additional financial gains.

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

As Chairman of FWAG, Henry Lucas has strong beliefs in the importance of closely integrating farming and wildlife and argues that environmental measures can sit comfortably alongside commercial farming. ELS and HLS offer opportunities to gain an income from most of the environmental land management options at his farm, so such management makes good economic sense, particularly on areas of less productive land.

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

A belief in the aims of the Campaign for the Farmed Environment and the need to avoid the return of compulsory set-aside, which will only be achieved if the Campaign is a success, and a desire to share our experience of successfully integrating commercial farming and environmental management. We know that many farmers remain sceptical about the compatibility of farming and wildlife. Many have also heard scare stories about the difficulty of establishing some of the land management options that the CFE is promoting, such as wildflower strips or pollen and nectar mixes. As a Beacon Farm, we can share our experience with other Warwickshire farmers and help to convince them that participation in the Campaign is important and feasible for them.