



CFE County Priorities for Herefordshire

1. Aim

This document has been drawn together by the CFE Local Liaison Group for Herefordshire with input from all LLG members and their respective organisations. The aim is to ensure that all advisers and partners have a clear, concise and consistent message about the aims of CFE in Herefordshire that can be used by farmers and landowners to ensure their actions deliver maximum benefit to the environment. The action undertaken on each farm may differ depending on the farm type and enterprise.

2. County Overview

The landscape of the county includes the Black Mountains and Golden Valley, Herefordshire Lowlands, Herefordshire Plateau, and parts of Teme Valley, Malvern Hills, South Herefordshire and Over Severn, Forest of Dean and Lower Wye, Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills landscape character areas. The Rivers Wye, Lugg and Teme and their tributaries flow through the County.

Agriculture is the predominant land use in Herefordshire, amounting to 85% of the total land area. Farm types vary greatly across the county; while only 45 % of the Herefordshire lowlands are grassland this rises to over 78% in the western uplands on the Welsh border in the Black Mountains and in northwest Herefordshire.

Arable farming, orchards and soft fruit grown under poly-tunnels predominate elsewhere in the county. Livestock farming is mainly beef and sheep with some dairy units, and large scale broiler poultry units are an important component of agriculture throughout Herefordshire.

CFE options within Entry Level Stewardship agreements (excluding Uplands ELS):

		2013	2014		2015		2016 and later
			Jan-Jun	Jul to Dec	Jan-Jun	Jul to Dec	
Hereford and Worcester	Maintenance of watercourse fencing (EJ11) - km	0	0	0	3	21	50
	Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds (EF23) - tonnes	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Skylark plots (EF8) - number	0	0	0	0	111	103
	All other CFE2 options (hectares)	42	119	42	139	1252	2806
	<i>Permanent grassland with very low inputs: outside SDA & Moorland (EK3)</i>	40	110	35	130	952	2245
	<i>Field corner management (EF1, EK1)</i>	2	5	4	5	120	220
	<i>Wild bird seed mixture (EF2)</i>	1	4	3	2	43	102
	<i>Nectar flower mixture (EF4)</i>	0	0	0	0	30	47
	<i>6m/12m buffer strips next to a watercourse (EE9, EE10, EJ9)</i>	0	0	0	1	45	83
	<i>Extended overwintered stubbles (EF22)</i>	0	0	0	0	12	6
	<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	50	103

3. County designated sites and partnerships

There are four Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in Herefordshire including the River Wye, River Clun, Wye Valley Woodlands and Downton Gorge. The Wye Valley and the Malvern Hills are both Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

There are 75 SSSIs in Herefordshire covering a broad range of habitats including: broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland; acid grassland; calcareous grassland; fen, marsh and swamp; and rivers and streams amongst others. Lowland (broadleaved, mixed and yew) woodland and rivers and streams account for the greatest proportion of SSSI land, 31% and 23% respectively.

There are 878 Local Sites of which 743 are Local Wildlife Sites and 135 are Local Geological Sites. The majority of Herefordshire except in the western upland fringes is designated as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) and farmers with land in NVZs have to follow mandatory rules to tackle nitrate loss from agriculture.

4. County Priorities

The following sections aim to define the county priorities by theme.

a) Theme: Priority farmland habitats and description

The Herefordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) lists 16 BAP habitat plans including:

Habitat	Actions required
Cereal field margins	Promotion of maintenance, restoration and creation of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field margins – encourage active management of a range of margin options particularly safeguarding pollinator and farmland bird habitats. • Watercourses – rivers, streams and associated wetland and ponds, important for all wildlife as habitats and linkages. • Hedgerows • Grassland • Orchards - traditional, commercial and bush are all important particularly with reference to pollinators and wood decay insects. • Veteran Trees in grassland and arable fields
Hedgerows	
Orchards,	
Lowland meadows	
Floodplain grazing marsh	
Woodlands	
Acid grassland and heath	
Wood pasture and parkland (including veteran trees),	
Standing open water and rivers and streams.	
CFE Option Code	Description
VM1 and 2	Grass buffers and In-field grass strips
VM3	Management of maize to avoid erosion
VM4	Water course fencing
VM5	Winter cover crops
VM6 and 7	Wildflower mix and Pollen & nectar mix
VM8	Legume and herb rich temporary grass
VM13	Unsprayed and/or unfertilised cereal headlands
VM14	Cultivated margins
VM19	Fertiliser-free permanent pasture
VM20	Arable land reverted to grass

b) Theme: Priority species and requirements

The Herefordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan lists 14 BAP species including:

Species	Actions required
Barn owl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connectivity between habitats especially along river corridors and throughout the hedgerow and woodland network • Flower and legume rich areas for insects including pollinators (food, fuel, homes) • Summer and winter feeding and nesting habitats – The Big 3 for farmland birds
Black poplar	
Tree sparrow,	
Bats	
White clawed crayfish	
Dormouse	
Butterflies and moths (eg pearl bordered fritillary)	
Adder	
Noble chafer beetle	
Water vole	
<p>Others: Key species of farmland birds in Herefordshire include yellow hammer, snipe and skylark in addition to the priority HLS species targeted in HLS (lapwing, grey partridge, turtle dove, yellow wagtail, tree sparrow and corn bunting). Key additional river and wetland species include otter, dragonflies, amphibians and aquatic invertebrates and the pearl mussels in the River Clun</p>	
CFE Option Code	Description
VM6 and 7	Wildflower mix and Pollen & nectar mix
VM8 and 9	Legume and herb rich temporary grass and Ryegrass seed for birds
VM10	Wild bird seed mix and maize-free game mix
VM11 and 12	Skylark plots and Lapwing plots
VM13 and 14	Unsprayed and/or unfertilised cereal headlands and Cultivated margins
VM15 and 16	Over wintered stubbles Winter feeding for farmland birds
VM17 and 18	Field Corners
VM19	Fertiliser-free permanent pasture

c) Theme: priority river catchments

Very few catchments in Herefordshire are currently classified as “good” condition under the Water Framework Directive assessment of 2009 (see appendix). The majority were measured as “moderate” or “poor” with the main agriculturally related reasons for this failure being sediment, phosphate and pesticides. Water quality in the River Lugg is failing the Habitats Directive due to high phosphate levels which has led to development planning restrictions being put in place in the catchment. The Lower Wye is close to failing on phosphate.

Catchment	Actions required
Rivers Lugg and Wye	<p>Encouraging best practice in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil management • Managing farm inputs efficiently eg. pesticides, manures, nitrates and phosphates • Use of novel machinery, cultivation techniques and crop rotation to reduce risk of soil erosion • Managing river and stream land – in cooperation with land managers and local organisations specialising in river projects, including buffer zones • Water abstraction • Control and eradication of invasive species • Linking to long term sustainability and resilience of agriculture – water and energy efficiency
CFE Option Code	Description
VM1	Grass buffers
VM2	In-field grass strips
VM3	Management of maize to avoid erosion
VM4	Water course fencing
VM5	Winter cover crops
VM20	Arable land reverted to grass

5. Action Plan

CFE Local priority	Delivery action	Delivered by	Target area
To meet the WFD water quality targets	Best practice events, workshops and walks	WUF, EA, NE, CSF, Hfds Rural Hub, T&T, VI, CABA	Wye catchment
Farmland birds	Support the Big Farm Bird Count through linking farmers and birders and provision of Big 3 for birds	GWCT, NE, HOC, LLG members	Herefordshire
Promote community links to agriculture	Support Open Farm Sunday	OFS, LEAF, NFU, WUF, Hfds Rural Hub, LLG members	All farms opening on Open Farm Sunday or to school visits
Adding value to EFAs	Information events, walks to target EFAs to protect watercourses and create habitat	FAS, NFU, CLA, LLG, NE	Whole County
Soil management	Events and discussion groups on SOM, erosion etc	NFU, CSF, WUF, NE, EA, Hfds Rural Hub, T&T, agronomists	Wye catchment
Pollinators	Awareness raising and advice on food fuel and homes	BF, orchard groups, NE, VI,	Wye catchment
Long term sustainability and resilience of agriculture	Promoting links between farm energy and water efficiency and other CFE priorities	GGAP, NE, CSF, NFU, CLA, Hfds Rural HUB, AHDB, BF	Priority species, habitats and watercourses in Herefordshire.

Improving connectivity throughout the river catchments.		HNT, NE, WUF, CABA,	Wye catchment
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Appendix 1: WFD 2009 Ecological Classification Herefordshire Wye Catchment

