



CFE County Priorities for Lancashire

1. Aim

This document has been drawn together by the CFE Local Liaison Group for Lancashire 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 Lancashire 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

Lancashire is a very varied county with a mix of agricultural land grades, moving from the higher grade land on the west coast to more upland LFA land moving east across the county towards the Pennines, and this is reflected in the farming types with intensive dairy and arable out to the west and smaller beef and sheep units to the east.

South West Lancashire (the Lancashire & Amounderness Plains) is predominantly grade 1 agricultural land used for growing crops such as salad, potatoes and cereals. The coastal plains of the Fylde (North West Lancashire) are classed as mainly grade 2 land used for a mix of dairy farming and arable cropping. Moving east across the county the land gradually becomes lower grade with the Forest of Bowland and large parts of south west Lancashire Pennines area being classed as grade 5.

Over 50% of the farms keep grazing livestock (2/3 LFA and 1/3 lowland), 12% are dairy and 25% are crops and horticulture. There are a very small number of specialist pig and poultry units. Relatively small family farms dominate in the county with over 50% of the holdings being between 5-50ha. 19% are between 50-100ha and 14% are over 100ha. The majority of the land to the east of the M6 (excluding Preston) is classed as being LFA.

The county also comprises the large urban areas of Blackpool, Preston, Manchester, Blackburn and Lancaster.

3. County designated sites and partnerships

The county is covered by 6 CSF priority catchments (see below for more detail in priority river catchments section).

A relatively small proportion of the county is classed as NVZ – the grade 1 growing land south west of the River Ribble.

There is a small Nature Improvement Area – Morecambe Bay Limestone & Wetlands in the northwest of the county.

The Morecambe Bay (including Leighton Moss) area is recognised nationally as a Nature Improvement Area and supports a number of important species of bird and other wildlife.

4. County Priorities

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

a) Theme: Priority farmland habitats and description

To be confirmed

Any specific action required:

b) Theme: Priority species and requirements

The following species have been categorised as being high priority in at least some parts of the county.

Species	Requirements	CFE Voluntary Measure
Brown hare	Diverse cropping on open farmland to provide shelter	VM 17 – field corners
Water voles, dragonflies, newts and toads	Well vegetated banks alongside unpolluted water courses	VM 1 – grass buffer strips
Butterflies and bees	Flower-rich hedgerows and field margins	VM 6 – wildflower mix VM 7 – pollen & nectar mix
Bird species including grey partridge, lapwing, turtle dove, yellow wagtail, tree sparrow and corn bunting	Feed for over winter during the 'hungry gap' months. Provide food through insect-rich habitats for the summer months.	VM 9 – ryegrass seed for birds VM 10 – wild bird seed mix VM 12 – lapwing plots VM 15 – over wintered stubbles VM 16 – supplementary winter

		feeding for farmland birds
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Any specific action required:

Organise one (or if possible a series) of on-farm pollinator events across the county this summer to take into account the national importance of the issue and provide farmers in Lancashire with the correct information on what they can do on a practical level to encourage more pollinators on their farms.

Organise a farmland bird event in the west of the county where this is a priority to focus on the VM's that are most suited to encourage birds and how these measures can easily be implemented on farm. Try to also tie in the other priority species in this area as well as promoting the best practice messages to reduce water pollution.

c) Theme: priority river catchments

Catchment	Priority	CFE Voluntary Measure
Keer	Bathing and shellfish waters in Morecambe Bay	For all the areas education of farmers is key, particularly in the importance of using Tried & Tested and adhering to the Voluntary Initiative codes of practice. Uptake of voluntary measures will help to reduce diffuse pollution into watercourses: VM1 – grass buffer strips VM 3 – management of maize to reduce erosion VM 4 – watercourse fencing
Lower Lune	Non compliance of bathing waters in Morecambe Bay, pollution of shellfish waters	
Ribble	Failure to meet Good Ecological Status, bathing & shellfish waters	
Wyre	Protection of drinking water, bathing & shellfish waters	
Alt Crossens	Possible pesticide issues. This area is an NVZ.	
Kent Levens	Diffuse water pollution into Leighton Moss SSSI, sheep dip in watercourse, pollution of shellfish waters	

Any specific action required:

As much of the county is well covered by CSFO's it is vital that CFE works alongside them to promote the same messages to farmers and avoid any duplication of events or knowledge transfer activity.

Pesticides in watercourses have been flagged up as being an issue particularly from grassland farms and so this should be tackled using VI information as a tool to help grassland farmers manage their chemical use to reduce pollution.

The Rivers Trust are also active within the county (Ribble, Irwell and Lune) and so we must work together to the greatest effect rather than duplicating effort.

The good practice messages from VI & T&T should be promoted wherever possible and all LLG members made aware of the resources available to them. In addition the Environment Agency 'good practice for farmers' guidelines should be promoted, including slurry and manure handling, storage and management, soil management and managing livestock access to watercourses.

5. Action Plan

CFE Local priority	Delivery action	Delivered by	Target area
Management of farm land to encourage the high priority species	Promotion of the relevant VM's to farmers and advisers through on-farm events	CFE working together with RSPB and local advisers	Target activity in those areas that are high priority for certain species eg. Farmland birds event on Fylde coast
Pollinators	On-farm event	CFE and other partners	East of the M6 (Bowland area) as this is high priority for pollinators
Pollution in watercourses from a variety of sources including pesticides and nutrients	On-farm events and workshops, promotion of best practice guides	CFE, EA, CSF and other local partners, VI, T&T	All county, focus in certain catchments on issues relevant to that area.