



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development
Europe investing in rural areas



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

REAP

Results-based Environment-Agri Pilot

Project information booklet

Prepared April 2021

Introduction

The Results-based Environment-Agri Pilot project (REAP) is a two year project that will test on a national scale, the results-based model successfully used by the Burren Programme and various EIP projects including the Hen Harrier Project and the Pearl Mussel Programme. REAP aims to cover a broad geographic spread across a range of farm enterprises.

Results-based agri-environment payment schemes reward farmers for committed environmental effort by linking payments to the quality of environmental outcomes delivered. This contrasts with the standard 'prescription-based' model used in GLAS whereby a flat-rate payment is made for following the requirements independent of the environmental quality achieved.

In REAP, farmers are rewarded for their environmental services whilst having the freedom and flexibility to farm. Grassland, field margins and field boundaries are scored using indicators which reflect the environmental value of these features. The higher the environmental quality, the higher the payment a farmer receives. The indicators used for scoring have been carefully chosen so as to be fair to the farmer, in so far as they do not respond to changes outside the influence of his/her agricultural practices.

This approach has the effect of creating a market for environmental services including: biodiversity, carbon sequestration, water quality and soil health, and provides an opportunity and incentive for farmers to earn payments for managing their farmland in an environmentally friendly manner in tandem with our need to produce high quality food.

The Pilot project will run until December 31st 2022



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1. Farm with nature

New approaches to environmental measures like REAP are designed to balance food production with nature and climate friendly farming. Farming with nature helps tackle the biodiversity and climate crises, whilst helping to ensure long-term resilience and financial viability for farmers.

One third of our 99 bee species are at risk of extinction.

Bees need to be able to feed on a range of different flowers from March right through to October.

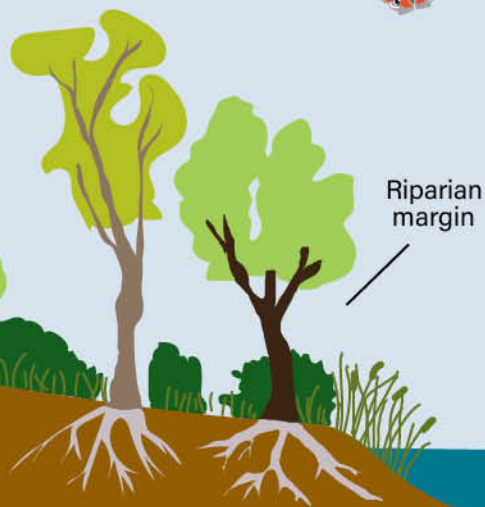


Incorporating legumes and other species into reseeded areas can greatly reduce dependence on expensive artificial fertilisers, while offering potential livestock health and other benefits.

Allowing some taller vegetation will benefit many insects including butterflies and grasshoppers, as well as birds such as yellowhammers and skylarks.



Managing your watercourses well – for example by having good buffer zones – will help avoid losing valuable nutrients and soil from your land and avoid creating unhealthy drinking sources for your livestock and for those downstream who depend on this water.



Riparian margin

Hedges cut on a three year cycle produce over twice as many hawthorn and blackthorn flowers across the three years compared to hedges cut every year, and about three times the weight of berries.

Field margins can greatly enhance the farmed landscape with multiple benefits, providing a buffer between farming and watercourses, protecting hedgerows and providing important wildlife corridors for a range of birds, insects and mammals.

Good hedgerows are very effective at capturing carbon, with sequestration estimates varying from 0.66–3.3 t CO₂/ha/year.



Dry stone walls provide nooks and crannies for shelter and nesting places for birds like pied wagtails, as well as shelter for plants to establish and thrive e.g. fairy foxglove.

2. Results-based approach

Payments are linked to nature quality of your farm.

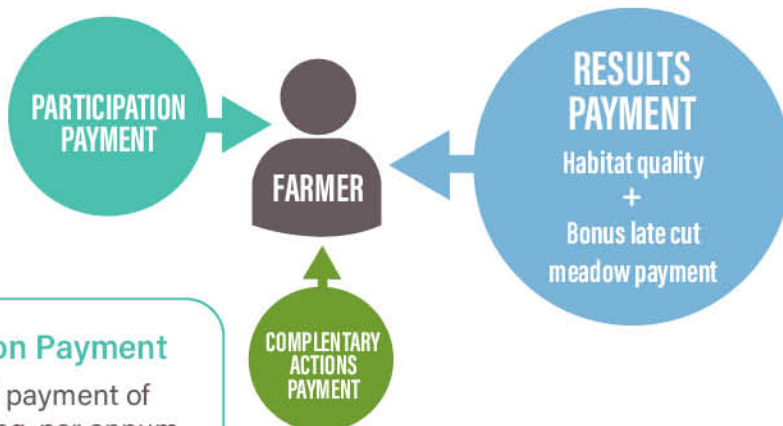
Higher nature quality = Higher Payment level



Each field is scored out of 10 using a scorecard that captures high and low quality habitat which reflect past and current management.

3. Payment streams

The project will use a mixture of payment types to farmers:



1. Participation Payment

This is a fixed payment of €1,200 per holding, per annum. It will compensate participants for transaction costs relating to the planning, preparation costs, advisors' fees and providing relevant records/feedback to the project team during the period of the pilot (*Participants must agree to adhere to REAP terms and conditions*).

3. Complementary Actions Payment

In certain situations the environmental score of a field could be improved by investing in "one off" complementary actions. These actions are related to improvement of the field boundary. Participants will be allocated a flat rate capital allowance of €1,200 per holding for these actions.

2. Results-based payment

This will be the main payment for project participants. Each field entered into the project will be assessed by your farm advisor using a scorecard which will estimate its environmental value.

The higher the field score the higher the payment which will be earned. There are 3 components to each field score: the field itself, field margins and field boundary.

Farmers will have the opportunity to increase their score and hence payments in subsequent years by adjusting management and/or completing certain complementary actions, where relevant.

RESULTS-BASED PAYMENT

There are two scorecards to choose from in order to accommodate fields under different management:

Scorecard A

Low input grassland scorecard
€250-400/ha

Scorecard B

Multi-species ley scorecard
€125-275/ha

+

Bonus payment for late cut meadows

A bonus payment of €50/ha is available for low input grassland on meadows that are mown for hay/silage between July 1st and August 31st.

Habitat quality payment

=

Field score

+

Presence of field margins

+

Field boundary density/ha & condition (hedgerow/stonewall)

COMPLEMENTARY ACTIONS CAPITAL INVESTMENTS INCLUDE:

a. tree planting
€9.20 per tree

b. new hedgerow planting / hedgerow gapping up
€15.80 per metre



credit: Image from Cotswold Seeds

See pages 26 & 27 for specifications to be followed for complementary actions.

4. What fields on the farm should I enter into the project & what can I do to get a good payment?

1. LOW INPUT GRASSLAND (LIG)

What is a suitable field?

- ▶ An enclosed grassland field that receives low inputs of chemical and organic nitrogen fertiliser.
- ▶ Cover of ryegrass must be low (<30%) and the field must not contain heather. The field must have a minimum of 2 non-grass indicator species.
- ▶ A suitable field (pasture or meadow) should have a minimum of four grass species, e.g. cocksfoot, timothy, bent grasses, fescues, sweet vernal, yorkshire fog etc. *Unwanted agricultural weeds should be controlled by spot spraying or mechanical means.*

The pictures below illustrate the typical scores that can be reached from different grassland management types. N.B. The presence of field margins and boundaries in good condition can increase this score.



What can I do to help maximize my payment on these fields?

Put in field margins: Before July 15th 2021 and prior to advisor field assessment (whichever is sooner), fence off either a 1/2/3/m margin (either all around the full field perimeter or you may choose one or more end/side(s) of a field (in either case field margins must be established along full boundary lengths).

- ▶ Field margins are paid according to their density per hectare with higher marks awarded for 2m and 3m margin widths.

- ▶ If you select to put a margin next to a watercourse or drainage ditch, you will be awarded extra marks. (Margins must be additional to any existing Nitrates buffer margin requirement).

Marks are earned for maintaining field boundaries (hedgerows and stonewalls) in good condition (see pages 18 & 20).

Payment rates/hectare for Low input field at scores 0-10 :

FIELD SCORE	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	<4 (3,2,1)
PAYMENT RATE per ha	€400	€375	€350	€325	€300	€275	€250	0

Specification to Qualify for Late Meadow Bonus Payment (€50/ha)

Meadows must be closed-up with no grazing or machinery operations to take place for at least 6 weeks prior to cutting.

The earliest date meadows may be cut for hay/silage is July 1st (but may be cut up to the end of August).

Geo-tagged photograph(s), giving a clear representation of the mown meadow, must be submitted to Department of Agriculture, Food and The Marine (DAFM) on date of mowing or within 5 days after mowing activity (but must be prior to significant grass re-growth).



2. MULTI-SPECIES LEY (MSL)

What is a suitable field?

- (i) An enclosed field where there is an existing multi-species ley, managed either for grazing or silage.
- (ii) An enclosed ryegrass field where you wish to reseed with the multi-species ley. Fields where there is a risk of soil erosion or runoff during establishment should not be used. Choose fields that do not have a burden of weeds/control weeds prior to reseeding.

Important requirements for multi species ley:

Establish the crop (a mixed ley of grasses, legumes and herbs) before August 15th and retain until the end of the project. A 2m gap (unsprayed/uncultivated zone) should be kept between the field boundary (i.e. hedge, boundary fence) and the edge of the reseed.

Note that any reseeding for the purposes of establishing Multi-Species Leys must conform to the requirements of the EIA Agriculture Regulations. Should you intend to "Commence to use uncultivated land or semi-natural areas for intensive agriculture" for the purposes of establishing a multi species ley farmers/advisors must first contact the EIA Section, Johnstown Castle 076 1064 415, to determine whether you are required to make an application for screening to DAFM.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5c8ed-advice-for-farmers-on-environmental-impact-assessment-regulations/>

How to help maximize payment on these fields:

To achieve top marks for the diversity of species sown, at least **7 legumes/herbs** should be included in the seed mix e.g. red clover, late flowering red clover, birds foot trefoil, sainfoin, chicory, sheep's parsley forage herb, yarrow forage herb, ribwort plantain, salad burnet, alsike clover, sweet clover, white clover & lucerne.

Put in fenced field margins:

Before 15th August and prior to advisor field assessment (whichever is sooner), fence off either a 1/2/3/5m margin (either all round the full field perimeter or you may choose one or more end/side(s) of a field (in either case field margins must be established along full boundary lengths). Margins include/overlap with the uncultivated zone (2m) strip next to the boundary referred to on previous page.

Field margins are paid according to their density per hectare with greater marks awarded for 2, 3m and 5m margin widths.

If you select to put a margin next to a watercourse or drainage ditch, you will be awarded extra marks. Margin must be additional to any existing Nitrates buffer margin requirement.

Marks are earned for maintaining field boundaries (hedgerows and stonewalls) in good condition (see pages 18 - 21).

Payment rates/hectare for Multi species ley at scores 0-10 :

FIELD SCORE	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	<4 (3,2,1)
PAYMENT RATE per ha	€275	€250	€225	€200	€175	€150	€125	0

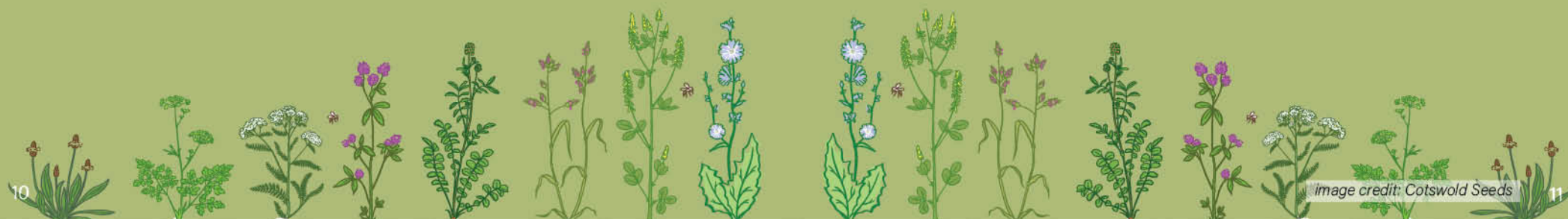


image credit: Cotswold Seeds

5. What are the positive and negative results indicators that make up my score?

Low input grassland Indicators

1. How many positive indicator plant species (or group of species) are present?
2. What is the combined cover of positive indicators throughout the field?
3. What is the vegetation structure/litter level?
4. What is the combined cover of negative indicators throughout the field?
5. What is the length of fenced field margins per hectare and their widths (1/2/3m)?
6. What is the length of hedgerow/dry stone wall per hectare and its condition?
7. What is the combined cover of negative indicators/invasive species throughout the boundaries and field margins?
8. To what extent is the field poached?
9. Is there any evidence of any damaging activities to soil/ vegetation/water?

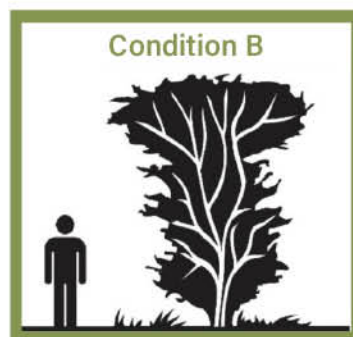
Multi species ley indicators

1. How many sown non grass species are present in the field?
2. What is the vegetation structure?
3. What is the length of fenced field margins per hectare and their widths (1/2/3/5m)?
4. What is the length of hedgerow/dry stone wall per hectare and its condition?
5. What is the combined cover of negative indicators/invasive species throughout the boundaries and field margins?
6. To what extent is the field poached?
7. Is there any evidence of any damaging activities to soil/ vegetation/water?

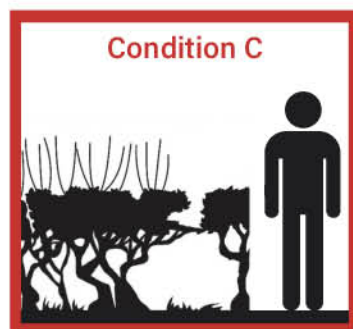
Condition of the length of hedgerow:



✓ GOOD >1.5m in height



✓ GOOD



X POOR <1.5m in height

6. Field Margins and how to manage them

MANAGED FIELD MARGINS IN LOW-INPUT GRASSLAND AND MULTI-SPECIES LEYS

1. Where selected, the fenced field margin must be established by July 15th 2021 (15th August for multi-species ley) and prior to advisor field assessment (whichever is sooner) by fencing off either a 1/2/3/5m margin (5m margin(s) are available for multi species leys only).
2. The fence must be appropriate to exclude livestock. Margin may be placed either all round the full field perimeter or you may choose one or more end/side(s) of a field (in either case field margins must be established along full boundary lengths).
3. If you select to put a margin next to a watercourse or drainage ditch, you will be awarded extra marks (margin must be added to any existing Nitrates buffer requirements).
4. The margin must be managed by either mowing/flailing or mulching at least once per year. This management can only take place between the 1st of September and the 28th of February. It is recommended to remove cuttings.
5. Fertiliser/lime must not be spread on the margin. Pesticides are not permitted, other than for the spot treatment of noxious/invasive weeds.

Notes:

- The width of a watercourse margin is measured from the top of the watercourse bank. (For farmers with a grassland stocking rate $\geq 170\text{kg organic N/ha}$ (prior to export), the watercourse margin for the project is measured after the 1.5m distance required by Nitrates Regulations SI 605 of 2017 (as amended)).
- The width of a field margin next to a hedgerow is measured from the edge of the base canopy. The base canopy is the lowest leafy growth coming from the structural woody plants in the hedge.
- If the field forms part of a Natura 2000 site, permanent fencing of margins is not permitted without prior permission from DAFM.



7. Low input grassland management guidance

1. Rest meadows and pasture during the main flowering season (May-July), in meadows. This will allow flowers to seed and replenish the seed bank, in pastures it reduces nutrient load and competition, encouraging more flowering plants to thrive.

2. Good diversity of plant and insect species present.

Grazing Pastures

3. Graze in late Summer, Autumn or Winter at an appropriate stocking rate, avoiding poaching (especially on wet ground) or undergrazing.

4. Mulch any encroaching scrub before it gets too large or before it encroaches too widely. Invasive species - creeping thistle, bracken, spear thistle - controlled before seeding and before they become dominant.

5. After grazing, aim for a grassland with 'tufts and lawns' as this will allow the best range of biodiversity to prosper.

Mowing Meadows

6. If the weather permits, save hay instead of silage as more seeds will be shed in the meadow as the crop dries out.

7. Start mowing in centre of meadow as this will allow any remaining wildlife a better chance of escaping and leave a 1-2m margin uncut around the headlands

8. Don't mow if you suspect the presence of ground nesting birds.

9. After saving the grass crop, graze the 'aftermath' with livestock - they will help to enhance the vegetation structure and create niches for new seedlings to establish.

10. Dung and farmyard manure helps improve organic matter levels in the soil.

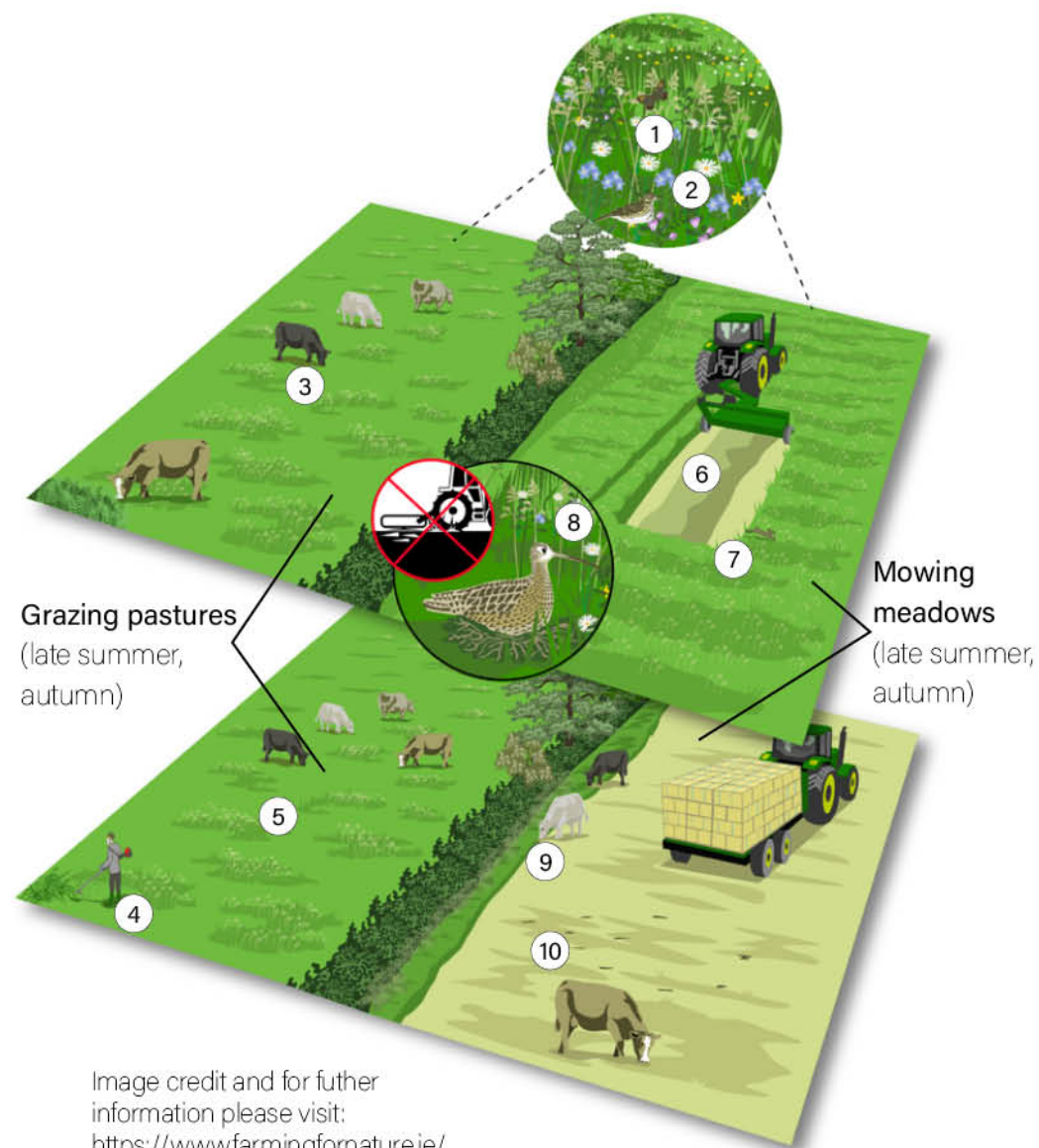
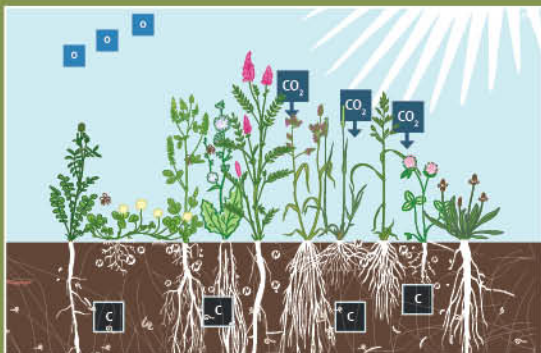


Image credit and for further information please visit:
<https://www.farmingfornature.ie/>



Carbon capture:

- deep rooting leys
- more carbon sequestration

image credit: Cotswold Seeds

8. Multi-species leys

Research of multi species leys has shown that they may be higher yielding and contain more trace elements, minerals and medicinal components that benefit the grazing animal.

Why choose a multi-species ley?

Multi-species leys (MSL) can be used to help modify the mineral and trace element content of the sward and have a role to play when livestock depend upon forage as the main source of minerals and trace elements in their diet.

Individual forage species have a different mineral and trace element profile and red and white clover and chicory contain more minerals and trace elements than perennial ryegrass.

Benefits of multi-species leys

- A **wider range of forage plants** with additional benefits compared to mono-culture ryegrass swards.
- Increased forage intake and **improved livestock performance**.
- Provides **dietary protein** from legume content and fixes nitrogen.
- Potential to **improve mineral content in the diet**.
- Contains **forage species suitable for your soil type**, e.g. timothy on heavy soils, chicory on drought prone soils.
- Diverse root structure in a multi-species ley can **improve uptake of plant nutrients and water, soil structure and nutrient cycling within the soil**. These properties in turn improve the sward's resilience to adverse weather conditions i.e. droughts.
- Deep tap roots may have a role to play in breaking up compacted layers in the soil.
- The selection of a diverse mix will **increase floral diversity** and help ensure **continuous flowering from April to August**, particularly in May for bumblebees and hoverflies and in August for hoverflies and solitary bees.
- Increasing species richness makes it possible to **sequester and store more carbon**.

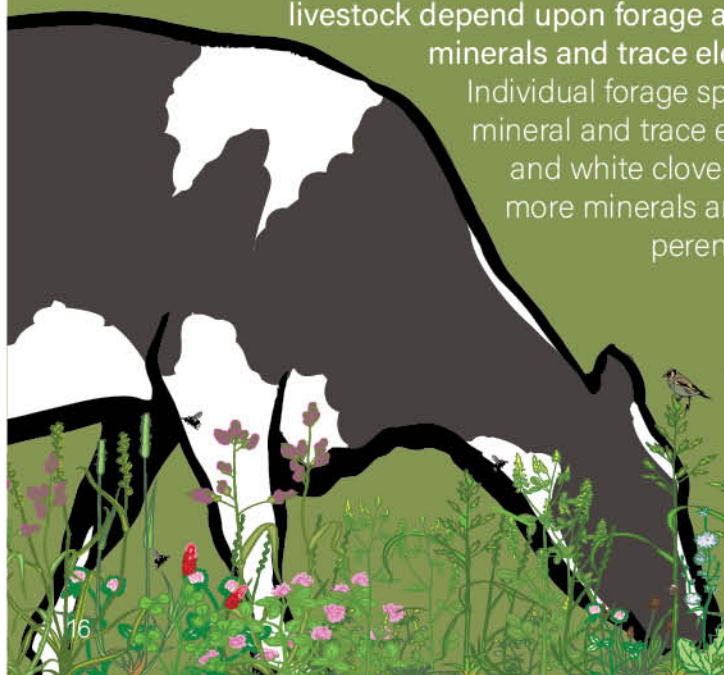
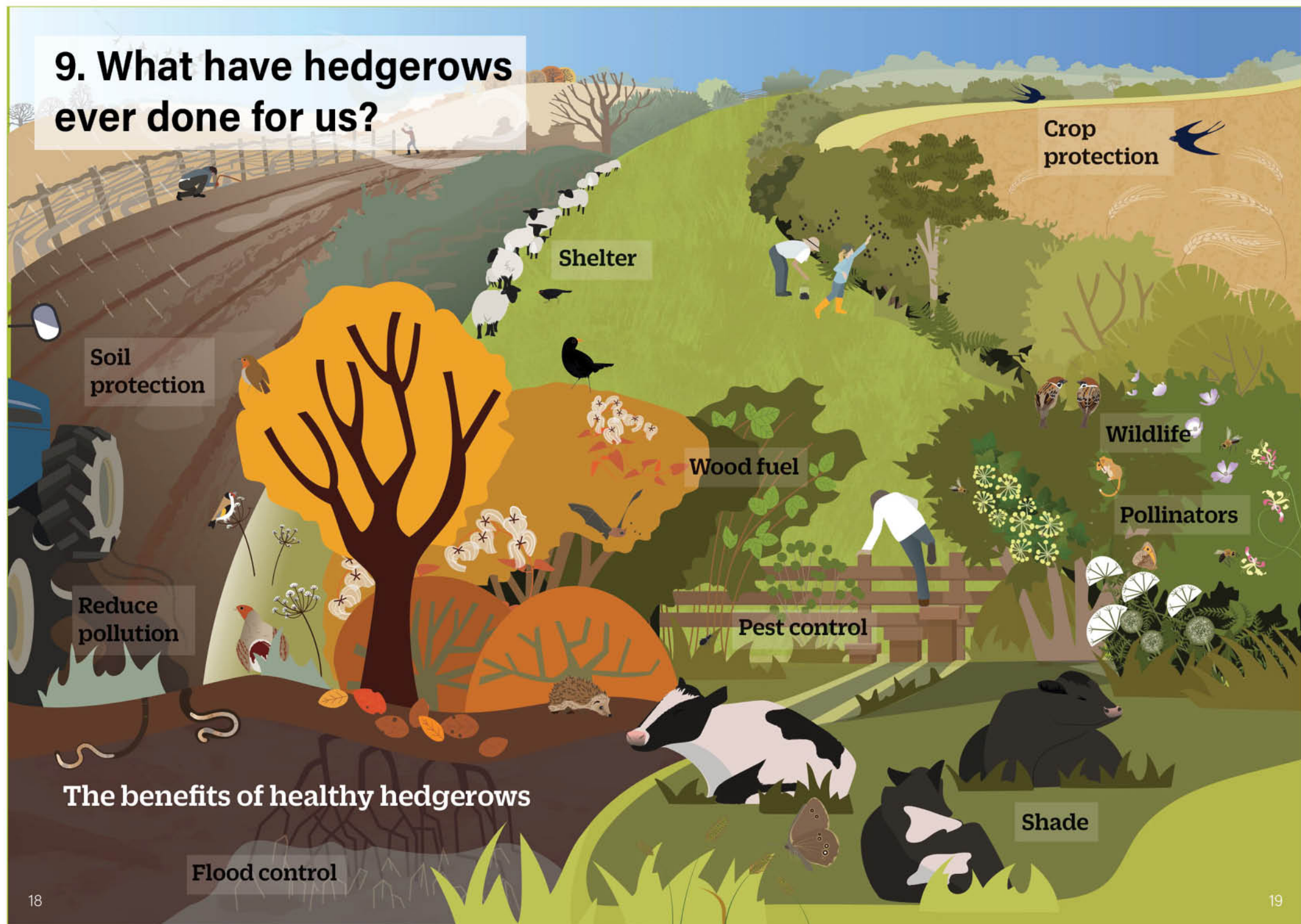


image credit: Cotswold Seeds

9. What have hedgerows ever done for us?



10. Hedgerow Management

Threats to hedgerows:

Over-trimming Hedges lose base vegetation, gaps form, hedge is slowly lost, especially hedges cut to the same point repeatedly.

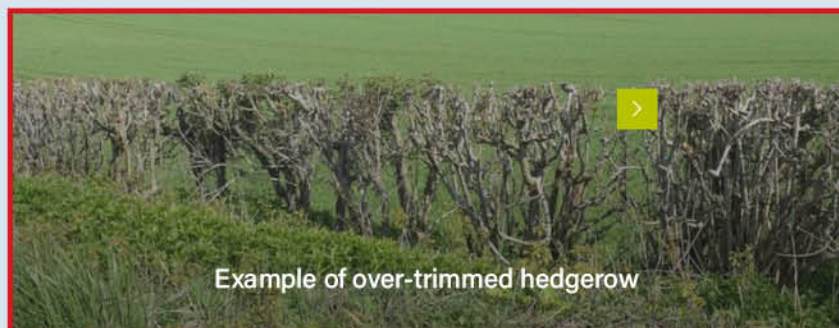
Neglect Overtime hedges lose the vegetation at their base and turn into a line of trees.

Close ploughing Damages tree and hedge roots leaving them more vulnerable to disease, drought and other threats.

Spray drift Affects the plants, insects and animals able to live in a hedge

Disease Can have a terrible impact on our hedgerow tree species.

Direct removal Even when replacement hedges are planted, it's a very long time before they are as valuable as a mature hedge.



Raising the cutting height by 4 to 6 inches each time leads to about 1.5 times as many flowers and berries compared to cutting back to the same point.



Hedgerow Management Questions

I like to see neat and tidy hedgerows and keep them trimmed every year. Why should I do things differently?

This may be a different way of thinking about hedgerows for lots of people. When the mechanical hedge-cutting flail was introduced in the mid-20th century, the priority was to maximise food production and to maintain stock-proof barriers. The environment was not a major consideration, so under those circumstances annual cutting was correct. Now that wire fences make many hedges obsolete as stock-proof barriers, and the environment being high on the public agenda **less frequent cutting is once again appropriate for most hedges.**

Isn't flailing a mature hedge bad for it because there are so many bashed and broken stems?

On balance it is better for wildlife, and better for the hedge itself, to cut once every few years rather than every year. The cut ends may look unpleasant for a while but this is more than outweighed by the benefits to wildlife.

Do I need to keep hedgerows trimmed to prevent damage and earthing of electric fence?

If you put in a field margin this sets the fence back from the hedge

so there won't be this issue. On arable and dairy farms, where you choose not to have a margin next to the hedgerow, trimming the side annually, but trimming the tops on a three year cycle is the most effective option (*and cost effective option for the farm business*).

Will cutting three-year-old growth damage my flail?

Providing your cutting head and flails are well maintained, and you are using the right rotor and forward speeds, there should be no problem. But you are likely to need to take more time over the hedge, with more passes and a slower forward speed. Standard flails are designed to cut growth up to 38 mm thick, so cutting most three-year-old growth is unlikely to be a problem, even with prolonged use. Three-year-old hawthorn, hazel and oak shoots and branches are only between 15 and 20 mm thick. The shoots of fast-growing species such as willow and ash may be 40 mm or more thick after three years, in which case heavier duty flails and more powerful cutting heads will be required.

How can I respond to complaints that hedges with three years' growth look untidy, and that cutting them leaves an unsightly mess?

It may be helpful to explain that modern farming is not just about food production, but also about producing environmental benefits, such as creating wildlife habitats and attractive landscapes. Let your questioner know that you are following government advice to manage your hedges in this way.

What should I do about hedges alongside roads, and where there are visibility and safety issues?

Land owners and occupiers are legally obliged to take all reasonable care to ensure that the trees, hedges and other vegetation growing on their land are not, or could not become a danger to people using or working on a public road. Often it will be safe to limit annual cutting to places where the verge is narrow, to junctions and entrances, and to the inside of bends. Even here, it is usually only necessary to trim the near-side, leaving the top and far-side to grow on.

11. Repairing dry stone walls

Repairs to old dry stone walls should be done using the same stone.

If a wall has collapsed in sections it should be fixed without the use of cement.

Introducing mortar to a section of dry stone wall can have the effect of destabilising the wall either side of it, and rapid collapse of previously intact sections of wall can occur due to decreased flexibility and pressure transferred by the now rigid mortared section. Consequently, an entire stretch of dry stone wall can end up being replaced by a mortared wall, which is neither appropriate nor environmentally friendly. A cemented wall can hold moisture in the stone, leading to rapid decay of the stone.

Condition of the length of dry stone wall:

Condition A
GOOD



Stockproof and in excellent condition



Sound and stockproof with minor defects

Condition B
GOOD/MODERATE



Signs of advancing or potential deterioration

Condition C
POOR



Not stockproof, and in early stages of dereliction



Derelict



12. Sample farm payment calculations

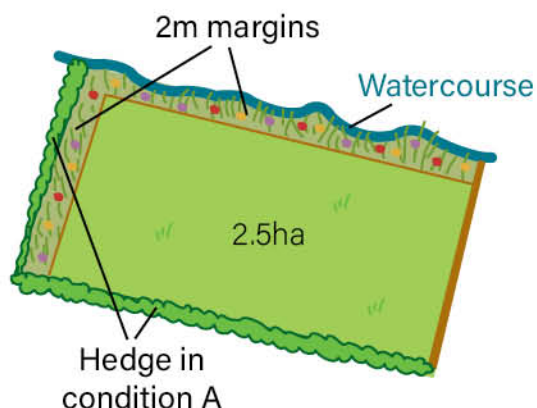
Scenario 1: Low input grassland

Low number of indicator species present throughout the field (low cover).

Good diversity in sward structure.

Hedgerows in condition A at medium density/ha.

Score of 6/10 = €750



Scenario 2: Low input grassland

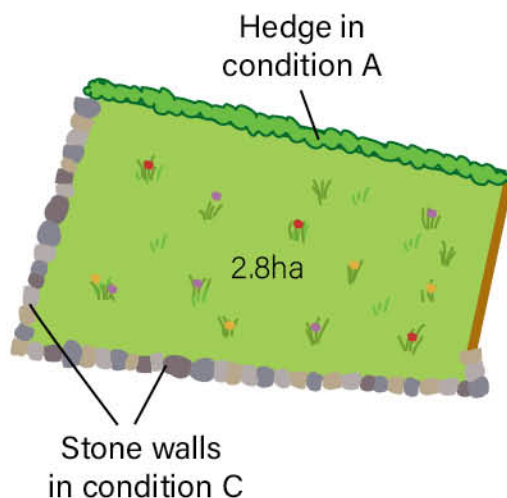
High number and cover of positive indicators - indicating semi-natural grassland - no requirement to fence margins.

Good vegetation structure.

No marks for stone walls in condition C (poor).

Hedgerow in condition A at medium density/ha.

Score of 9/10 = €1,050



Scenario 3: Multi-species ley

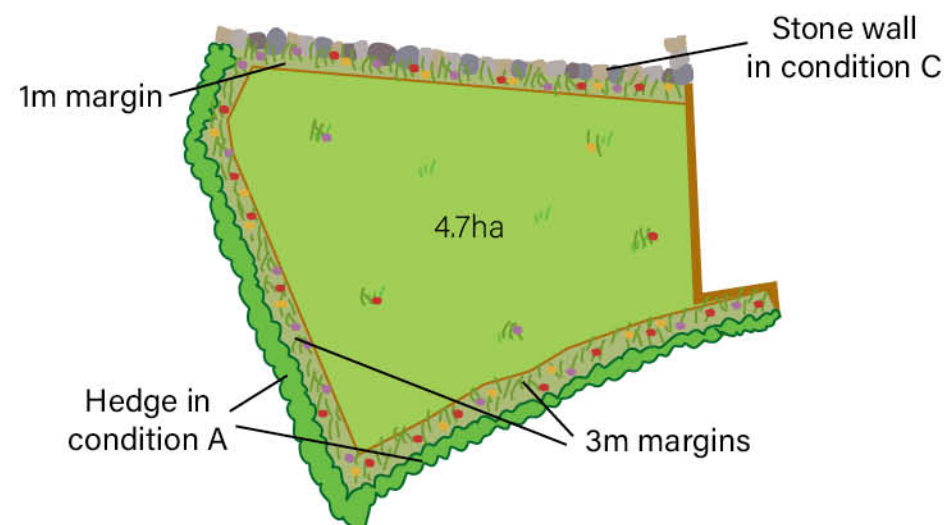
Medium number of sown species.

Good vegetation structure.

Hedgerow in condition B (good) at low density /ha.

Stone wall in Condition C (poor)- no marks.

Score of 7/10 = €940



Payment rate per hectare for low input grassland (scenario 1 & 2):

FIELD SCORE	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	<4 (3,2,1)
PAYMENT RATE per ha	€400	€375	€350	€325	€300	€275	€250	0

Payment rate per hectare for multi-species ley (scenario 3):

FIELD SCORE	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	<4 (3,2,1)
PAYMENT RATE per ha	€275	€250	€225	€200	€175	€150	€125	0

13. Complementary Actions

Only permitted in project fields

Actions not permitted in Natura 2000 sites, Nature Reserves, pNHAs, landscapes targeted for breeding waders such as curlew, or on an archaeological monument.

PLANTING A NEW HEDGEROW /HEDGEROW GAPPING UP

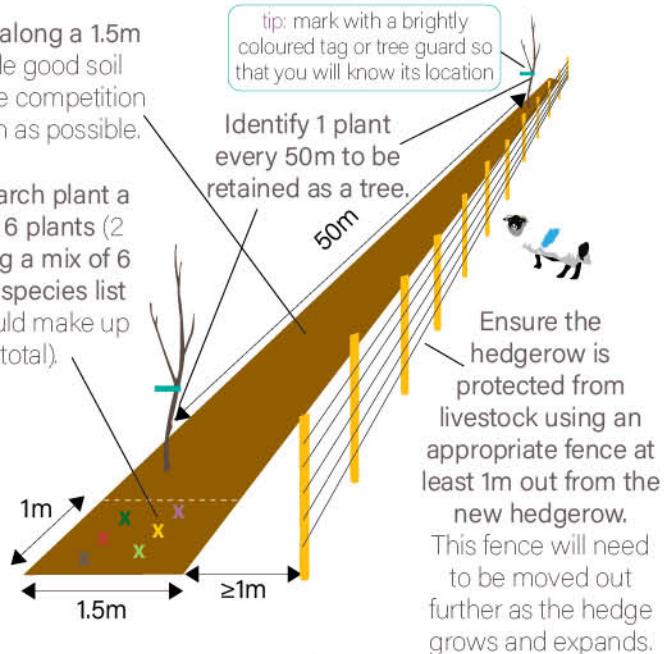
n.b. Plants must be of native provenance and purchased from registered producers or growers.

Prepare the ground along a 1.5m wide strip to provide good soil conditions and as little competition from other vegetation as possible.

tip: mark with a brightly coloured tag or tree guard so that you will know its location

Between November and March plant a double staggered row with 6 plants (2 yr old whips) per metre using a mix of 6 species from the approved species list below. (No one species should make up more than 70% of the total).

Keep free of weeds until plants have established. Annual maintenance will be needed. Failed or dead plants to be replaced in the following planting season.



Approved Species List

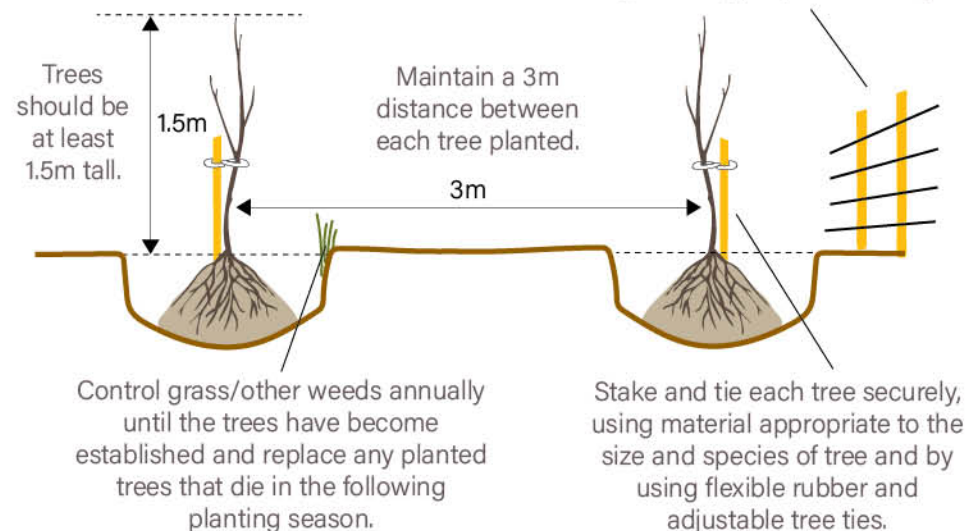
Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>)	Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>)
Dog Rose (<i>Rosa canina</i>)	Spindle (<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>)
Guelder Rose (<i>Viburnum opulus</i>)	Bird Cherry (<i>Prunus padus</i>)
Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>)	Crab Apple (<i>Malus sylvestris</i>)
Hawthorn/Whitethorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)	

PLANTING TREES

Between November and March, plant trees of native provenance from the list below.

Requirements:

Protect trees from livestock damage with appropriate fencing.



Approved Species List

Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>)	Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>)
Mountain ash (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>)	Goat willow (<i>Salix caprea</i>)
Whitebeam (<i>Sorbus aria</i>)	Rusty willow (<i>Salix cinerea</i> subsp. <i>oleifolia</i>)
Bird Cherry (<i>Prunus padus</i>)	Eared willow (<i>Salix aurita</i>)
Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)	White willow (<i>Salix alba</i>)
Silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>), Downy birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>)	Hawthorn/Whitethorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)
Sessile oak (<i>Quercus petraea</i>), Pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	Scots pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>)
	Any fruit tree of native provenance

Do not: Fasten guards to the tree itself or allow guards to cause damage to the growing tree.

Do not: Plant trees beneath or near overhead power lines, or other overhead and underground services.

Upon receiving an acceptance letter into REAP from DAFM, you need to decide which fields will be entered into REAP and where appropriate to fence off field margins ahead of the annual assessment. If the farm does not have low input grassland, or an existing multi species ley, and you are interested in establishing a new multi species ley, this should be planned now.

Only relevant if the low input grassland scored is a late cut meadow cut for hay/silage on or after July 1st. A geo-tagged photograph must be submitted to DAFM within 5 days of cutting.

The results of the advisors assessment will be submitted to DAFM for review and payment. All payments will be made by DAFM directly to the farmer, with a copy of the scorecards used to determine each field's payment.

In year 1 training will be carried out by the farm advisor. Participants may be required to attend a training event in year 2 of the Project. Training may cover such topics as: scoring of habitats, field boundary and field margin management.

ENGAGE REAP
FARM ADVISOR
MAY

ANNUAL
ASSESSMENT
JUNE - AUG

BONUS PAYMENT
FOR LATE
CUT MEADOW
AFTER 1st JULY

COMPLEMENTARY
ACTIONS
NOV - MAR

FARM ADVISOR
SUBMITS
RESULTS
AUGUST

FARMER
TRAINING



On an annual basis (between June and August 2021 and 2022) the advisor (having successfully passed REAP training), working with the farmer, will score suitable fields on the farm and make recommendations with regards to future management. Deadlines for submission of assessments for the different scorecard types will be set down by DAFM.

The farmer, supported by the advisor, may also propose complementary actions at the time of the first annual assessment. The advisor needs to screen these actions for approval on the DAFM online system before they can be undertaken. When approved, hedge/tree planting actions can be undertaken by the farmer between November 2021 and March 2022.

When you have completed the hedge/tree planting according to the specification you will need to submit a geotagged photograph through the DAFM app in order to claim for the completed work.



Project Participation Timeline

image credit: Cotswold Seeds

15. Frequently asked questions

1. Will my BPS be affected?

The payments will be in addition to other supports such as BPS and ANC. The Project recognises the importance of farming in sustaining a high quality environment. The actions in the project are designed to be compatible with BPS eligibility rules.

2. Who pays the advisor?

The farmer will pay the advisor. The cost of advisor input has been factored into the participation payment.

3. What measures do I have to do?

This is a voluntary results-based pilot project whereby the farmer gets paid according to the environmental result achieved. The approach allows for a high level of flexibility for the farmer. The farmer can choose the means by which they manage their lands in order to achieve the result. Moreover, optimising field boundary management and having fenced field margins in place will improve the field score.

4. How can I achieve a higher result and increased payment?

It is ultimately up to the farmer as to how they manage their farm. The farm advisor will explain the scoring system and can advise what can be done to help improve the result. By having fenced field margins in place and boundary management that is good for biodiversity, marks achieved for a field will be higher.

5. Are there dates the land can't be topped or grazed?

No, this is a results based project. A field will be scored on the structure of the vegetation. Good marks for structure will be achieved by extensive grazing management. Field margins must be mulched/mown/flailed between September 1st and February 28th. Farmers availing of the late cut meadow bonus payment will have to adhere to the close-off/allowable mowing dates.

6. Can I boom spray or weed wipe rushes?

If a farmer boom sprays a field, this will result in no positive indicator species in the field, so the field score would be affected. Weed wiping can take place but care should be taken so that the licker does not come into contact with positive indicator species. Also the presence of some rush will contribute positively to the structure of vegetation heights in the sward. Topping is the method recommended for the control of soft rush. *Rushes should not be topped between March 15th and July 1st.*

7. Is there a requirement for soil sampling and NMP to establish lime recommendation, etc.?

No. The project is paying for results, not for following prescriptions. The farmer has the freedom to deliver the required results by tailoring management to their own farm's needs.

8. Will I be subject to inspection?

DAFM in line with EU funded projects, will be carrying out desk and field checks on the scores submitted by the advisor and on complementary action claims submitted. Significant differences between advisor scores and DAFM assessments may require corrections to the payable amount and/or penalties may apply where certain tolerances are exceeded.

9. Where can I get further information on the project?

Further details on the Project including, detailed Terms and Conditions and Specifications can be provided by your farm advisor or are available on the DAFM website.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine/>



REAP

Results-based Environment-Agri Pilot

Lo call 0761 064451 or contact
rbp@agriculture.gov.ie



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



The European
Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development:
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rural areas

credit: Image from Cotswold Seeds