

# Wexford Regional Game Council



Submission for CAP from the Wexford Regional Game Council

The following options should be considered under the next round of the C.A.P

- 1. Farmers should be encouraged to protect habitat areas on the farm and duly financially rewarded for doing so.**

The following natural features and habitat areas must be protected; Ponds, lakes, wetlands, bogs and small mixed species woodlands to protect these BISS payments must be double the average of the utilisable area on the farm. Benefits both in carbon capture and biodiversity increases.

- 2. Wetlands that are created for on farm treatment of dairy washings and brown water should be paid BISS payments equivalent to the farm average.**

This is to encourage farmers to treat dairy washings before discharge into waterways.



- 3. Habitat areas, rough grazing and scrub lands must not longer penalised under BISS or the code of good farming practice.**

To protect essential habitats for woodcock, snipe and ground nesting birds

- 4. Low impact agriculture e.g. extensive grazing, summer grazing or transhumance to be rewarded with higher payments.**

To protect essential habitats for woodcock, snipe, lapwing, curlew and ground nesting bird species. To decrease the reliance on nitrogen fertiliser and to manage scrub as an aid to wildfire prevention.

- 5. Extra payments where tillage farmers do not use pesticide or herbicide on the headlands of a cereal crop.**

This measure will increase **biodiversity, flora and fauna** by providing plants and insects that bird species and pollinators need to survive.



- 6. Bird nesting habitat. Long grass nesting habitat areas to be offered as an alternate option to cereals or oilseeds for tillage farmers.**

This is to protect essential habitats for woodcock, snipe and ground nesting birds. This will also increase **soil capture of carbon** in these areas over time

- 7. Plot size; payments to be paid to a maximum plot size of 10 ha for one tillage crop**

This is to discourage the creation of large fields of mono culture and the removal of ditches. As an aid to carbon capture by hedgerows and an improvement in water quality by slowing runoff.

- 8. Over wintered stubbles; a % non-tilled overwintered stubbles to be a requisite after cereals.**

The current practice of sowing a cover crop/winter cereal is removing a vital winter feed source for farmland birds. If volunteer cereals were allowed alongside planned cover crops there would be a saving in the need for tilling. This would also leave a feed area for birds in particular Linnet and yellowhammer.

- 9. A wild bird/pollinator feed crop to be sown on all tillage farms at a rate of 5% of total arable area maximum block size 2ha. The mix to contain at least 5 different plant types e.g. cereal, brassica, legume and two flowering species e.g. phacelia. This crop to be incorporated by 15 February by disking or topping unless a two year crop. All crops to be sown by 15<sup>th</sup> of April with random inspections on at least 5% of crops sown.**

To provide winter feed for migratory bird species and pollinator insects. Increasing the area available to insects beneficial to aphid reduction and increasing food sources for seed eating birds and as an aid to increasing soil carbon capture.

- 10. Approved deciduous tree planting; A native tree planting scheme to mitigate the effects of climate change. Each participant in BPS to sow 10 native trees per year to draw down BPS payments. Trees to be standalone capitol trees in hedgerows.**

To encourage native tree species and provide a carbon sink.

- 11. Tillage farmers to be encouraged to adopt a threatened species e.g. Yellowhammer, Twite, Grey partridge etc. and be paid a specific premium for farming sympathetically to said species.**

To aid the protection of endangered farmland bird species.

- 12. Farmers who allow access to their lands for the benefit of European citizens e.g. Hunting, Bird watching , Fishing, historical societies etc. should be rewarded for their generosity and civic spirit.**

To show European citizens the benefits of CAP and the value to society of funding environmental schemes.

- 13. Farmers who partake in heather management be rewarded for so doing; managed heather burning/flaying at the correct time, targeted predator control and sustainable sheep grazing.**

To protect endangered breeding wader and grouse species and to ensure farming populations in difficult upland areas are viable.

- 14. Ditches and hedgerows need to be invested in long term easements where farmers at the start of the CAP round guarantee not to remove any features for the 5 years of the specific CAP round.**

Hedgerow loss can **no longer be allowed under any circumstances** and the current practice of allowing “screening” (sowing a whitethorn hedge to replace a hedgerow) is degrading the quality and quantity of these vital wild life corridors.

- 15. A farm based review and census of all hedgerows as an aid to stopping decline and to provide a baseline where an increased can be measured from.**

To provide long-term data to show improvements and to help slow down leaching of NPK minerals from the soil into rivers.

- 16. A once of payment for pond creation similar to the hedgerow construction payment.**

To help biodiversity and amphibians and to slow the runoff from agricultural lands thus improving water quality.

- 17. Rewetting of smaller peat areas or reinstitution of flood meadows or splashes to be allowed as a measure under AEWC. To aid in the prevention of carbon release, decrease of flooding in urban areas and to increase the available habitat for waders, wildfowl and other migratory species.**

- 18. Farmers to be encouraged to manage invasive species both flora and fauna by attending an online course to aid control and identification of both.** To protect native flora and fauna

- 19. The creation of small copses and woodlands by both planting and natural regeneration.** To aid carbon capture and the creation of wildlife corridors and refuges.

We would be happy to discuss the above points if so required

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