

Frequently Asked Questions

2023 Multi-Species Sward Measure

Q. What is the Multi Species Sward Measure (MSSM)?

A. This measure aims to incentivise farmers to sow multi-species swards, which will reduce the reliance on nitrogen fertilisers and promote a more sustainable method of farming. Other benefits arising from this measure include improved biodiversity, greater tolerance to drought conditions and reduced anthelmintic requirements due to presence of chicory and plantain.

Q. Who can submit an application?

A. A farmer or his/her FAS approved advisor can apply for the measure.

Q. What will the payment rate be?

A. The Department will make a financial contribution of up to €300 per hectare for the establishment of Multi Species Sward to farmers participating in the measure. This aid will be provided to participating applicants to offset part of the cost that farmers will incur in the establishment of these swards. A reduced payment rate per hectare will apply as appropriate if eligible applications exceed the available budget for the Measure.

Q. Will the measure be operated similar to the 2022 pilot measure.

A. No, payments will now be made on a per hectare basis. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will make payments directly to the farmer as opposed to re-imbursing Agri-retailers/Co-ops who have discounted the price of seed.

Q. Will Agri-retailers/Co-ops need to be registered with the Department to participate in this measure?

A. No. However, only seed that meets the Department's Multi-Species Sward species mix is eligible for aid.

Q. Is there a minimum number of species that should be included in the mix?

A. Yes, the Department has a set list of plant species that must be included in the multi-species swards mixture and the minimum quantities of each type of seed that must be sown per hectare.

Q. Can I include additional species above the minimum requirement in the mix.

A. Yes, The 6 species mix required by this Department must at least contain the minimum quantities per hectare set out in the Terms & Conditions. If desired, additional species may be added in line with good agricultural practices for the establishment of multi-species swards.

Q. Can farmers in the Organic Farmer Scheme participate in the Multi-Species Sward Measure

A. Yes. Where there is no availability of the required organic seeds then a derogation application must be made by the applicant to the Organic Control Body for the use of non-organic seed which must be non-chemically treated.

Q. Can a farmer who did not/will not submit a 2023 Basic Income Support for Sustainability (BISS) application enter the Measure?

A. No, the Measure will only accept participants with a valid BISS application 2023. Participants will also have to declare the correct crop code(s) for the relevant parcel(s) on their BISS application.

Q. How will I know if my application was successful?

A. A Letter of Approval will issue to each successful applicant confirming acceptance into the scheme.

Q. Do I need to declare the area I will be sowing under Multi-Species Sward at application stage?

A. No, the application phase will consist of confirming an expression of interest in participating in the measure. It is not necessary to put in an area at application stage.

Q. Do I declare the area sown when submitting my claim.

A. Yes, applicants should indicate the area they have sown at claim stage and up-load their supporting documentation. Applicants must also indicate the crop type as Multi Species Swards on their 2023 Basic Income Support for Sustainability (BISS) Scheme application, on the parcel(s) where they are sowing multi-species sward mixture.

The following crop types are included on the 2023 BISS online portal:

- Permanent Pasture (MSS measure) (for reseeded permanent pasture with multi-species sward mixture)
- Grass Year 1 (MSS measure) (for multi-species sward mixture following an arable crop)

Q. Are partnerships eligible to apply?

A. Yes, Farmers in a Farm Partnership registered with the Department are eligible to apply provided that the application is made in the same name as the partnership's BISS application for 2023. Land entered will be across the entire 'partnership' holding. All partners are jointly and severally responsible for adhering to the measure's Terms and Conditions.

Q. Can partnerships get increased levels of contributions where there are two or more in the partnership.

A. No, each partnership application will be treated as a single entity and be subject to the maximum area of 20ha.

Q. How long will the application phase be open?

A. The application process will be open from 12/04/2023 till the 29/05/2023.

Q. When can I buy the multi-species seed?

A. Only seed purchased after the application has been submitted and before the closing date for sowing the seed of 15th July 2023 can receive aid under this measure.

Q. Can a herd number currently in the name "REPS of" apply?

A. No, "REPS of" herd numbers are not eligible to apply.

Q. What will happen if the measure is oversubscribed?

A. In the event of eligible applications being received in excess of the available budget for the Measure, a reduced payment rate per hectare will apply.

Q. Are all land areas eligible to be included in the 2023 Multi-Species Sward Measure

A. No. The following areas **are excluded** from the multi-species sward measure, Commonage land, Natura 2000 sites, NHA designated land as well as Environmentally Sensitive Permanent Grassland or land within archaeological monument buffer zones.

Q. Are applicants participating in the Multi-Species Sward Eco-Scheme eligible to participate in this measure.

A. Yes, Applicants participating in the Agricultural Practice 8 Eco-Scheme - Sowing a Multi-Species Sward are eligible to participate in the Multi-Species Sward Measure but **will only be eligible where the Multi-Species Swards Measure is adopted in different parcel(s) to Eco-Scheme Agricultural Practice 8.**

Q. Will cross checks be carried on seed purchased versus area claimed as multi-species sward.

A. Yes. The amount of seed purchased must support a minimum seeding rate of 30kgs/ha.

e.g., A farmer claiming 2 hectares of multi-species sward will be required to have purchased a minimum of 60kgs of multi-species seed i.e., 5 * 12kg bags. Checks will also be carried out that the minimum seeding rate per hectare for the six required species has been met.