## TIP SHEET <br> ACRES <br> Grassland SCORECARD

TIPS Start the 'W' walk a few steps out from unrepresentative areas such as field margins or pinch-points.

Ensure that the field boundaries are assessed at relevant points along the ' $W$ '.
Note any comments or management actions which may be useful to the CP team in the section provided in the app
Positive indicators have been selected as they indicate semi-natural grasslands which have received little or no fertiliser, herbicide or other agricultural improvement.
Plant leaves tend to overlap; look beneath other plants when recording cover of positive indicators.
Not all positive indicators will be in flower at the same time, look for leaves as well as flowers.
Positive indicators may occur throughout, in clumps or sparsely (e.g. orchids)

Do not spend excessive amounts of time in one area or nice hummocks/corners as this isn't representative and is not the protocol that will be followed during an inspection.

## A1 Species richness thresholds

Low: 0-4 indicators present. Occur in small patches/scattered throughout field. Not highly visible in the sward. The sward appears to be generally grassy.
Medium: 5-8 indicators present. Scattered in patches over the entire field. Majority of the sward appears grassy.
High: 9-12 indicators present. Good cover of positive indicators when looking down on the sward but still missing from large patches of the field. Only parts of the sward appear grassy.

Very High: 13+ indicators present. Visible throughout more than half of the sward with only small patches appearing as grassy. Good diversity of leaf shapes and flowers present.

## A2 Species cover thresholds

Low: <5\% of Sward. Encountered approx. every 5-10 steps.
Occurring in small patches/Very scattered. Not highly visible when looking down on the sward, which will appear to be generally grassy
Moderate: 5-20\% of sward.
Encountered occasionally (every 3-5 steps). Occurrence is scattered/in patches across field. Occasional occurrence when looking down on sward. Majority of sward appears grassy.
High: 20-30\% of sward. Encountered regularly (with almost every step). Good cover of several indicator species when looking down on the sward. Only parts of the sward will appear grassy at this threshold.

Very high: 30\%+ of the sward. Multiple species encountered with and between every step. High Cover (>50\% of sward) with a diversity of leaf shapes/flowers present. Only small patches of field appear grassy.

## A4(a) Vegetation structure - grazed field only



Uniform grass dominated vegetation of even height. Can indicate over or under grazing.

Poor structure: Short OR rank throughout with limited variation.


Moderate structure: $>50 \%$ sward is short with tall patches OR 50-75\% is tall sward with litter present.


Good structure: Sward is of medium height throughout with positive indicators flowering. Areas of taller and shorter vegetation also occur.

## A6 Field boundary assessment thresholds

Poor: Wire fences. Narrow, low, gappy hedgerows. Poorly vegetated earth banks Drainage ditches damaged by livestock/vehicles with few aquatic plants and/or algal growth. Unmaintained stone walls with no lichens/mosses. Treelines with non-native conifers only.
Moderate: Hedgerows $<2 \mathrm{~m}$ wide $\&>1.5 \mathrm{~m}$ tall. Occasional gaps along the base, 'A' shape \& $2 / 3$ native species. Grassy earth banks \& drainage ditches (little damage from fording/drinking). Maintained stone walls with poor lichen/moss cover. Mature
native-dominated Treelines.
Good: Hedgerows $>2 \mathrm{~m}$ wide $\&>1.8 \mathrm{~m}$ tall with few gaps, varied structure \& 'A' shape throughout. 3+ native species. Earth banks with flowering plants / broadleaved herbs / thick vegetation. Drainage ditches with aquatic flora \& no damage. Stone walls with abundant lichens / mosses. Mature, native-only treelines.

## Condition of the length of hedgerow:



Condition of the length of dry stone wall:
$\qquad$
Not stockproof ${ }^{\circ}$ 을 in
 early stages of dereliction
MODERATE
8k ix Signs of advancing or potential deterioration GOOD
Stockproof and in
Sound and stockproof with minor defects

Positive Indicator species

1. Bedstraws \& Stitchworts
2. Bird's-foot-trefoil
3. Carline thistle
4. Cowslips \& Primrose
5. Eyebrights
6. Forget-me-nots
7. Heathers
8. Kidney vetch
9. Knapweeds
10. Lady's mantle
11. Lady's smock (Cuckooflower)
12. Lesser spearwort
13. Louseworts (Common \& Marsh)
14. Marsh cinquefoil
15. Marsh marigold
16. Marsh pennywort
17. Marsh thistle
18. Meadowsweet
19. Meadow thistle
20. Mints (all)
21. Orchids
22. Ox-eye daisy
23. Purple loosestrife
24. Ragged robin
25. Scabious (Devil's-bit \& Field)
26. Sedges
27. Self-heal \& Bugle
28. Sorrel (Common \& Sheep)
29. Small rushes (Spike, Woodrushes, Heath)
30. Sphagnum \& Branched mosses
31. Tormentil (Common \& English)
32. Umbels large (Angelica, Valerian, Common hogweed)
33. Umbels small (Pignut, Yarrow, Wild Carrot)
34. Vetches \& Vetchlings
35. Violets (all species); Harebell
36. Wild Thyme
37. Yellow Composites (Cat's ear, Hawkweeds, Hawkbits
38. Yellow Flag Iris
39. Yellow rattle (Hay rattle)


Negative species


These pictures display the flowering forms of different plant species which are positive indicators of well managed semi-natural grasslands which receive limited fertilizer, herbicide, or other agricultural improvements
During the "W" walk, of the field, identify and tick off each positive indicator
species/group present, excluding the field margins. Higher cover of positive Higher cover of
indicator species/group is indicator species/group is
associated with better quality associated with better quality
semi-natural grasslands, unless one or a few species dominate, which can indicate sub-optimal quality.
Cover of a plant is based on the visible above ground parts, i.e. leaves, flowers, and stems.

