

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 BPS payments must be double the average of the utilisable area on the farm.
- 2. Wetlands that are created for on farm treatment of dairy washings and brown water should be paid BPS payments equivalent to the farm average.**
To encourage farmers to treat dairy washings before discharge into waterways.
- 3. Habitat areas, rough grazing and scrub lands must not longer penalised under BPS 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.
- 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.**
To protect essential habitats for woodcock, snipe and ground nesting birds
- 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.
- 8. Over wintered stubbles; 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.
- 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 removed by 15 February by disking or topping unless a two year crop. All crops to be sown by 15th of April with random inspections on at least 5% of crops sown.**
To provide winter feed for migratory bird species and pollinator insects.
- 10. Native 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 eg Hunting, Birdwatching , 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 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 whitetorn hedge to replace a hedgerow) is degrading the quality and quantity of these vital wild life corridors.

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

Padraig Breen

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