

This fact sheet aims to guide arable and sheep farmers in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) who are interested in applying to Entry Level Stewardship (ELS), part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) Environmental Stewardship Scheme. It outlines the environmental features commonly found on medium to large arable and sheep farms in the area and highlights ELS options most appropriate to the Cotswolds AONB. By following this guidance, you will help provide wildlife habitat, contribute to the recovery of farmland birds, conserve archaeological features, reduce diffuse pollution and keep dry stone walls and hedges in good repair and condition.

Does your farm have the following characteristics?

- Arable land located on flat or gently sloping ground
- Grassland in valleys and/or parkland
- Arable cropping which is predominantly winter wheat with break crops of oil seed rape and set-aside
- Sheep grazing across the main areas of grassland

And some or all of the following environmental features?

- Arable crops, particularly cereals but also set-aside
- Limestone grassland on valley banks and more improved grassland along valley bottoms
- Parkland with veteran trees
- Broad-leaved woodland on valley sides and small farm woodlands elsewhere
- Valley streams and springs
- A network of dry stone walls and hedges
- Historic and archaeological features such as traditional farm buildings, barrows and earthworks
- Public rights of way across the farm

If so, the ELS options shown in the table below are probably appropriate for your farm.

If you have other features on your farm you may find it useful to look at the other fact sheets in the series - Cereal Farm, Dairy Farm and Livestock Farm.

When selecting ELS options for your farm, you should consider those options which target environmental features which are of particular importance in the Cotswolds AONB as well as those which are required for general compliance purposes (including management plans and buffer strips) and those which address any recognised environmental problems on your farm. In addition the ELS options chosen should be practical, easy to implement, achieve a minimum of 30 points per hectare across the farm and take account of your set-aside requirement.

ELS code	ELS option	Benefit and application
EA1	Farm Environment Record	Identifies and maps important environmental features on the farm. Must be completed before the application is submitted
EB1, EB2	Hedgerow management on both sides or one side of hedge	Benefits wildlife and maintains landscape
EB6, EB7 (EB8, EB9)	Ditch management or half ditch management (or combined hedge and ditch management)	Provides diverse bankside and aquatic vegetation
EB11	Stone wall protection and maintenance	Protects and maintains remaining dry stone walls
EC2	Protection of in-field trees - grassland	Protects mature trees which have historic, landscape and wildlife value
EC4	Management of woodland edges	Provides habitat for birds and small mammals
ED2, ED3	Take archaeological features currently on cultivated land out of cultivation, or reduce cultivation depth where there are archaeological features	Protects archaeological features such as barrows and earthworks
EE1, EE2, EE3 EE4, EE5, EE6	Buffer strips on cultivated land and intensive grassland	Provides habitat and food for nesting birds and alongside streams and ditches helps prevent water pollution. Can also be located alongside bridleways and footpaths
EF1	Field corner management	Provides grassy habitat for wildlife
EF2, EF3, EF4, EF5	Wild bird seed mixture or Pollen and nectar flower mixture	Provides feed for seed-eating birds and increases numbers of insects such as butterflies and bumble bees. Available on set-aside or other land
EF6	Over-wintered stubbles	Provides winter food source for birds such as skylark and grey partridge and a good habitat for brown hares
EF8	Skylark plots	Provides open ground in wheat fields for foraging skylarks
EF9, EF10	Conservation headlands in cereal fields	Allows broad-leaved weeds and insects, providing feeding habitat for birds such as grey partridge and corn bunting. Also helps rare arable plants
EF11	6m uncropped, cultivated margins on arable land	Provides habitat for rare arable plants and beneficial insects and food for birds
EK2, EK3	Permanent grassland with low or very low inputs	Enhances wildlife interest of limestone grassland, parkland and other grassland
EM1, EM2, EM3, EM4	Soil, Nutrient, Manure and Crop Protection Management Plans	Improves soil, nutrient, manure and crop protection management to prevent pollution and reduce costs

The map illustrates the application of some of these ELS options to a typical arable and sheep farm in the Cotswolds AONB



Contacts

For further information about applying to ELS contact the Defra helpline for your area:
 Gloucestershire, Wiltshire & Avon tel: 08456 024098 • Oxfordshire tel: 08456 024092
 Warwickshire & Worcestershire tel: 08456 024095 • or visit www.defra.gov.uk

For further guidance on special features of the Cotswolds AONB contact the Cotswolds Conservation Board,
 The Old Police Station, Cotswold Heritage Centre, Northleach, Gloucestershire GL54 3JH tel: 01451 862000
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

