StephensonsRural

Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) Greening Fact Sheet– England only
Issued October 2019

Claimants will receive 30% of their total BPS payment by following these three greening rules:

1. **Crop Diversification** – This is calculated on your total arable land which includes land cultivated for crop production, fallow land and temporary grass. Permanent crops are not included in arable land. Winter and spring crops count as separate crops. Permanent grassland is excluded from this calculation for purposes of crop diversification and cannot be used as a separate crop.

Area of arable land	Do you need crop diversification?
Less than 10ha	No
10ha – 30ha	At least 2 crops Maximum 75% in 1 crop
More than 30ha	At least 3 crops Maximum 75% in 1 crop Maximum 95% in 2 crops

2. **Ecological Focus Area (EFA)** – This requires farmers with more than 15 hectares of arable land to provide 5% of their arable land as EFA, unless you qualify for an exemption such as organic land.

Feature	Area it is worth to EFA (10,000 sqm = 1 ha)
Hedge and trees in line (both sides)	1 metre = 10 sqm
Hedge and trees in line (one side)	1 metre = 5 sqm
Buffer strip	1 metre length = 9 sqm
Field margin	1 metre length = 9 sqm
Nitrogen Fixing Crop	1 ha = 1 ha
Fallow	1 ha = 1 ha
Catch & Cover Crop	1 ha = 0.3 ha

Hedges and trees in line

- Only count if they are on or within 5 metres of arable land along their longest edge at the BPS claimant's disposal.
- Must be a continuous length of at least 20 metres. Gaps can be included in the length if each gap is less than 20 metres long.
- Must be a single row of trees situated on the boundary line of the parcel and must consist of a minimum of three trees.
- Can be any width or height but they must be maintained for the whole year in line with cross compliance rules.
- Newly planted hedges or trees in line can also count for EFA if they are in the ground when BPS application is made and meet the minimum length rules.
- Must show correctly on RPA online mapping.

Buffer strip
Must be:

- At least 1 metre wide.
- Next to arable land (or within 5 metres of it) and on the arable side of the watercourse.
- Next to a watercourse.

Field margin
Must be:

- At least 1 metre wide – note that as a hedge grows outwards, the margin will become smaller and so allow for wider than 1 metre.
- An uncultivated margin around the field boundary or surrounding internal landscape features within the parcel.
- Must not be used for crop production although it can be grazed or cut.

Nitrogen fixing crops

- NFCs may be grown on their own or in mixtures with other crops providing the nitrogen fixing crops make up at least 51% of the plants in the field.
- Plant Protection Products cannot be applied to EFA nitrogen fixing crops during the period from sowing to harvest.

Fallow
To count as an EFA, fallow land must be kept fallow from 1st January – 30th June. Fallow land must be located on arable land and must not be occupied by bales of hay/straw, silage, manure or farm machinery. Temporary grass can be used for EFA fallow and then grazed or cut after 30th June.

During the EFA fallow period farmers can do the following on their fallow land:

- Carry out land drainage work
- Sow wild bird seed mixes and/or nectar/pollen sources
- Top green cover or previous crop residue
- Sow grass for reasons other than agricultural production
- Plough the ground –only to prepare for sowing grass, wild bird seed mixes/nectar/pollen sources.

Farmers must not:

- Harvest or graze the EFA fallow area
- Plant or sow any crop (apart from those above)
- Apply fertiliser or manure unless required by sown grass, wild bird seed mixers and nectar/pollen sources
- Apply plant protection products during the fallow period

Catch & Cover crops

- Catch and cover crops must use a mix of at least 1 cereal and 1 non-cereal species from the list below:
  - Cereal: barley, oats, rye
  - Non-cereal: Lucerne, mustard, oil radish, phacelia, vetch

Or grass or leguminous crops or a mix of both can be counted as either an EFA crop or cover crop as long as it was under sown in the previous crop and is visible and dense enough to cover the ground by the start of the catch or cover crop periods.

Catch/cover crop period:
Catch crops from 20th Aug – 14th Oct
Cover crops from 1st Oct – 15th Jan

Plant Protection Products cannot be used between the following times:
Catch crops from 20th August – 14th October
Cover crops from 1st October – 15th January

Catch and cover crops can be grazed by animals after their retention period has ended.

3. **Permanent Grassland** – if the percentage of permanent grassland in England relative to the area of agricultural land falls by more than 5%, farmers who have cultivated permanent grassland may have to re-instate it.

Exemptions

Exempt from crop diversification and EFA rule (only need to meet one of the three criteria):

- Where more than 75% of the eligible agricultural land on the holding is permanent grassland, temporary grassland or used for the cultivation of crops grown in water for 6 months or more, or a combination of these.
- Where more than 75% of the arable land on the holding is fallow, temporary grassland or used for the cultivation of leguminous crops, or a combination of the these.
- Organic land – as long as it has been certified by an accredited organic control body. Farmers will need to send a copy of their 'organic documentary evidence' to the RPA when making a BPS application. If only some of the land is organic, farmers should only count their non-organic land when working out their arable area for their greening.

Exempt from crop diversification rule:

- Where all of the arable land parcels are planted with different crops compared to the previous calendar year and more than 50% of the arable land on the holding wasn't declared on their previous years BPS application.

Remember that Cross Compliance rules need to be followed in order to claim BPS – you can view the full Cross Compliance rules at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764890/Cross_Compliance_2019_rules_v1.0.pdf