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## Grassland Conversion to Low Input Grass

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This scheme applies to existing grassland, receiving more than 200kgN/year. This scheme will limit Nitrogen application to 50kgN/year from inorganic fertiliser and/or organic manures

### Payment rate:

An annual payment rate of:

- £250/ha/year a year for fields in the High Priority Area
- £150/ha/year for fields in the Wider Safeguard Zone

### Length of scheme

- Minimum 2 year period up to a maximum of 5 years, exact length of scheme can be agreed with your Wessex Water catchment adviser.

### Benefits

- Minimise usage of fertiliser and mechanical operations.
- Reduced Nitrogen fertiliser usage, leading to improved Nitrogen use efficiency and therefore a reduction in nitrate leaching.
- Lower inputs results in lower costs for your farm business. It also aids in disease management of your stock, as lower stock numbers results in reduced host opportunities for parasites.

### Eligible Areas

- Improved grassland fields that are currently receiving over 200kgN/ha/year within the Shapwick & Sturminster Marshall catchment

### Non-eligible areas

- Grassland fields that are already in a low input option which is funded by other schemes (such as Countryside Stewardship, Sustainable Farming Incentive, Biodiversity Net Gain or nutrient neutrality) are not eligible.
- Land outside of the SGZ catchment

## Requirements

### Fertiliser rate:

- Maximum usage is 50kg N per year from fertiliser and/or organic manures.
- If applying manure or slurry as well as Nitrogen fertiliser, a slurry test can be organised through your agricultural adviser, to establish the maximum rate that slurry can be applied to your land.
- Applicants must share annual fertiliser records with the catchment adviser to demonstrate they are adhering to the scheme limits

### Grazing:

- Grazing is permitted during the spring and summer by cattle or sheep
- Exclude all livestock grazing in the field from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 15<sup>th</sup> March
- Applicants must hold a monthly record of the number of livestock grazing the land and this must not exceed more than 0.8 Livestock units per Ha at any given time – see table 1 below for guidance. This excludes Pigs that do not qualify for this scheme. Standard livestock units are provided in the table attached.

Table 1: Summary of Livestock Units

Cattle	Livestock Unit	Sheep	Livestock Unit
Dairy Cow	1	Rams	0.08
Beef Cattle	0.75	Lowland Ewes	0.11
In calf Heifer/Rearing	0.80	Upland ewes	0.08
Bulls	0.65	Hill ewes	0.06
Cattle Under 1 year old	0.34	Store lambs Under 1 year old	0.04
Cattle between 1-2 years old	0.65	Breeding ewe hoggs 6 months – 1 year old	0.06
Cattle 2 years old and over	0.80	Other sheep over 1 year old	0.08

Source: DEFRA 2010, Definitions of terms used in Farm Business Management

### Cutting:

- Topping and mowing is permitted.
- Hay and silage can also be made. However, ensure you do not set the cutting height too low. Allow at least 1 tiller/blade to be left after the cut to allow photosynthesis to continue and therefore faster regrowth, to minimise bare ground being exposed. This will normally equate to a cutting height of between 4-8cm depending on grass varieties.

### Other field management:

- Any field chosen under this scheme must not be ploughed, cultivated, or reseeded, during its time in the scheme.

## **Application process**

- Please fill out the expression of interest form, stating an approximate area of land you wish to enter into the scheme.
- Upon submitting the Expression of interest form, your Catchment Adviser will be in contact with you to discuss the scheme further.
- Once the scheme and area is agreed a formal contract will be drawn up between the Farmer and Wessex Water.

## **Record keeping, validation and data collection**

- In entering the scheme, you are agreeing to allow a Wessex Water adviser to visit land in a scheme for visual inspection before, during and after the implementation of the scheme.
- In entering the scheme a Wessex Water catchment adviser may request farm records from you demonstrating fertiliser rates, the change in cropping, stocking rates, manure test results etc.
- In entering the scheme Wessex Water may carry out soil sampling, porous pots, grain samples and crop tissue samples for nutrient analysis. Any data collected will be shared with the farmer. Wessex Water will store data on an internal Wessex Water database and may be used to contribute to a larger aggregated and anonymised data set.

## **Payment terms**

- Payment will be made annually.
- To claim payment for the scheme your Wessex Water adviser will request you to send an invoice to be sent directly to them.
- Wessex Water payment terms are end of the month plus 30 days
- The invoice should be submitted between the 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January to guarantee payment by 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- You may be required by the Wessex Water payments team to be registered as “suppliers” to Wessex Water Services Limited, please ensure paperwork is filled out and returned.