

Chris Seabridge & Associates Ltd.

Autumn Newsletter

Basic Payment Scheme - Greening update

Revised and updated rules for Greening 2016 were published on 29th September. Key changes from 2015 are;

- Oil radish can now be used as part of a mix for catch/cover crops planted in 2016. This is a great relief as oil radish is a key constituent in many green cover mixes.
- Some Ecological Focus Area (EFA) features can now be up to 5 metres away from arable land, rather than immediately next to it.

For the full update on Greening rules 2016, see;

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-basic-payment-scheme-bps-rules-for-2016>

Again it will be necessary for farmers to undertake their greening calculations to ensure they comply with the scheme requirements. Please contact us if you need clarification or guidance on Greening (EFAs & crop diversification rules) for the autumn drilling period. The full BPS rules and guidance will be published in February 2016 and will explain which farmers can apply for the Basic Payment Scheme in 2016 and what all the rules of the scheme are.

Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)

The application window for Mid Tier applications has just closed for the 1st January 2016 agreement start date. Our experience to date is that the eligibility requirement for pure grassland farms is particularly challenging, but the bonus is the availability of boundary capital grant funding. Meeting the eligibility requirements for arable and mixed farms is far easier to achieve.

During 2016 the scheme will operate on a 3 tier basis; Higher Tier (broadly similar to HLS), Mid Tier (broadly similar to ELS) and a Capital and Planning Grants Tier. Key dates in 2016 are thought to be similar to 2015 for expiring ELS or HLS agreement holders, or those considering CSS for the first time. At present, these are;

February 2016 (tbc) for stand alone capital grants. There is a £5k maximum limit for this.

- 15th July for Expressions of Interest submission. **Higher Tier only.**
- 30th September; deadline for Mid Tier & Higher Tier applications.

The scheme will be competitive at all levels, with all applications scored and ranked on a national basis. The majority of agreements will run for 5 years, with the applications judged against regional targeting statements. Payment rates are good for arable options in particular, eg. Winter bird food £640/ha and flower rich margins and plots £539 / ha.

If your ELS / HLS agreement is due to expire in 2016, please contact us to discuss your options under the new scheme.

Cross compliance breaches

National figures for 2014 non compliances are not yet publically available from the RPA. Local experience has suggested that the following Cross Compliance rules are most likely to cause issues in the event of an inspection;

- **GAEC 1**; buffer strips along watercourses. The most common non-compliance here is 'mission creep' of cultivations and sprays onto the buffer strips. In addition, the new requirement to produce and keep a map of the holding showing: all surface waters, springs, wells and boreholes and land within 10 metres of them.
- **GAECs 4, 5 & 6**; soils. The most likely non-compliances here are if erosion is found to be over a single area greater than 1ha, or caused by livestock trampling along a continuous length of 20m x 2m along a watercourse.
- **SMR 1**; NVZs. The most common non compliances surround record keeping and manures storage & spreading.
- **SMR 7**; Cattle identification and registration. Lost tags and movement details.

Updated 2016 Cross Compliance guidance is due in late November but no major changes are expected from the 2015 rules. Our Cross Compliance Service will help you to comply with all of the requirements including your NVZ records; contact us for further information.

Autumn event

Under our contract to deliver the Campaign for the Farmed Environment in Staffordshire, we are running a joint event with Warwickshire CFE on managing maize lead by John Morgan of the Maize Growers Association. Is it possible to achieve: Early maize harvest? Cover crops? Healthy soil structure? and what action is needed to meet soil Cross Compliance requirements.

Nov 20th 10.45am - 2.30pm Managing Maize.

Meeting at the Rose Inn, Baxterley, Atherstone. CV9 2LE.

The event is free and lunch will be provided. Contact us for further details and to book a place.



Whitegrove Trophy Farm Conservation Winners 2015

Congratulations to BJ Dale & Co Ltd. of the Bagot's Park Estate, winners of our annual farm conservation competition; the Whitegrove Trophy.



WHITEGROVE TROPHY *(Farm Conservation Competition)*



**2016
ENTRY FORM**

Kindly Sponsored by:
**STAFFORDSHIRE & BIRMINGHAM
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY**

Sponsored by the Staffordshire and Birmingham Agricultural Society, the trophy is awarded to the farmer who has done most to encourage conservation alongside productive agriculture. The judge was particularly impressed with the well grown wildbird mixes and managed field margins. Please contact us if you would like to enter the 2016 competition.

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