

SCHEDULE 1

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS OF GOOD AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION THAT APPLY IN RELATION TO LAND SET ASIDE FROM PRODUCTION

PART A

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR LAND SET ASIDE FROM PRODUCTION

Management options for land set aside from production

1.—(1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (4), in respect of each field or part of a field which is set aside from production in a particular calendar year, a farmer shall, during that year, comply with the conditions applicable to one of the following management options (as set out in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 respectively) –

- (a) the sown green cover option;
- (b) the natural regeneration option; or
- (c) the wild bird cover option.

(2) In 2005, in respect of each part of a field to which regulation 3 applies and which is set aside from production in that year, a farmer may instead comply with the conditions applicable to the under 10 metre strips option (as set out in paragraph 5).

(3) Where in 2006 or any year thereafter a farmer sets aside from production land to which regulation 3 applies, he shall comply with the conditions applicable to the sown green cover option set out in paragraph 2 during that year.

(4) Where a farmer –

- (a) has applied in writing to the Department for permission to manage land set aside from production in accordance with a management plan set out in his application, and
- (b) has obtained the written consent of the Department to the plan,

the farmer shall manage the land in accordance with that management plan instead of complying with the conditions set out in the following paragraphs of this Schedule that would otherwise be applicable.

(5) For the purposes of this Schedule –

“the current green cover season” means the green cover season during the current year;

“the current year” means the year referred to in sub-paragraph (1);

“the current set-aside period” means the set-aside period during the current year;

“the following year” means the calendar year immediately following the current year;

“the previous year” means the calendar year immediately preceding the current year;

“a relevant mixture of seed” means a mixture of seed of crops of different types –

- (a) which is not a mixture only of different types of cereal seed or of different types of brassica seed;
- (b) which is not a mixture only of one type of crop and legumes seed, a mixture only of cereals and legumes seed, or a mixture only of brassicas and legumes seed; and
- (c) the crops from which it would not be practicable to harvest separately; and

“seed of a relevant kind” means –

- (a) grass seed;

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- (b) a mixture of grass seed and the seed of native broad-leaved plants not commonly used for agricultural production (which mixture shall not contain more than 50 per cent by weight of legume seed);
 - (c) mustard seed; or
 - (d) phacelia seed.
- (6) In paragraphs 2(1)(b), 3(1)(b), 4(1)(c) and 5(1)(b), “the relevant period” in relation to a field or part of a field (as the case may be) set aside from production means –
- (a) where the farmer does not intend to set aside the field or part of a field (as the case may be) from production in the following year or intends to set it aside for a non-food purpose in the following year, the current green cover season; and
 - (b) where the farmer intends to set aside the field or part of a field (as the case may be) from production in the following year (but does not intend to set it aside for a non-food purpose), the current set-aside period.

The sown green cover option

2.—(1) In respect of each field or part of a field to be managed in accordance with the sown green cover option, a farmer shall –

- (a) subject to sub-paragraph (2) and paragraph 7, establish a green cover by the start of the current green cover season by sowing seed of a relevant kind;
 - (b) subject to paragraphs 8, 12 and 13, maintain the green cover thereafter until the end of the relevant period; and
 - (c) cut or destroy the green cover in accordance with paragraph 6.
- (2) The requirement to establish a green cover in accordance with sub-paragraph (1)(a) shall not apply –
- (a) in 2005, where –
 - (i) the field or part of a field was set aside in 2004 pursuant to Article 6 of Council Regulation 1251/1999 and was managed during that year in accordance with the grassland option set out in paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Arable Area Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997(1); and
 - (ii) the green cover established in accordance with the requirements of that option has been maintained until the beginning of the current green cover season; and
 - (b) in 2006 and in each year thereafter, where –
 - (i) the field or part of a field was set aside in the previous year and was managed during that year in accordance with the sown green cover option; and
 - (ii) the green cover established in accordance with the requirements of that option has been maintained until the beginning of the current green cover season in the year in question.

The natural regeneration option

3.—(1) In each field or part of a field to be managed in accordance with the natural regeneration option, a farmer shall –

- (a) subject to sub-paragraph (2) and paragraph 7, establish a green cover by the start of the current green cover season by allowing natural regeneration following the last crop produced in that field or part of a field in the previous year;

(1) S.R. 1997 No. 477, to which there are amendments not relevant to these Regulations

- (b) subject to paragraphs 8, 12 and 13, maintain the green cover thereafter until the end of the relevant period; and
 - (c) cut or destroy the green cover in accordance with paragraph 6.
- (2) The requirement to establish a green cover in accordance with sub-paragraph (1)(a) shall not apply –
- (a) in 2005, where –
 - (i) the field or part of a field was set aside in 2004 pursuant to Article 6 of Council Regulation 1251/1999 and was managed during that year in accordance with the natural regeneration option set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 to the Arable Area Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997; and
 - (ii) the green cover established in accordance with the requirements of that option has been maintained until the beginning of the current green cover season; and
 - (b) in 2006 and in each year thereafter, where –
 - (i) the field or part of a field was set aside in the previous year and was managed during that year in accordance with the natural regeneration option; and
 - (ii) the green cover established in accordance with the requirements of that option has been maintained until the beginning of the current green cover season in the year in question.

The wild bird cover option

4.—(1) In each field or part of a field to be managed in accordance with the wild bird cover option, a farmer –

- (a) shall, subject to sub-paragraph (2) and paragraph 7, either –
 - (i) establish a green cover by the start of the current green cover season by allowing natural regeneration following the last crop produced in that field or part of a field in the previous year; or
 - (ii) establish a green cover by the start of the current green cover season by sowing a relevant mixture of seed.
 - (b) shall, where a green cover was established by the start of the current green cover season in accordance with head (a)(i) –
 - (i) maintain that green cover until it is replaced in accordance with subhead (ii); and
 - (ii) replace that green cover by sowing a new green cover comprising a relevant mixture of seed as early as is practicable after the start of the current green cover season and the destruction of the green cover that is to be replaced;
 - (c) shall, subject to paragraphs 8, 12 and 13, maintain the green cover established under head (a)(ii) or (b)(ii) until the end of the relevant period; and
 - (d) shall cut or destroy the cover in accordance with paragraph 6, unless –
 - (i) the field is to be set aside from production in the following year; and
 - (ii) the farmer has not harvested any of the green cover, or permitted any of it to be harvested or grazed, in the current year.
- (2) The requirement to establish a green cover in accordance with sub-paragraph (1)(a) shall not apply –
- (a) in 2005, where –
 - (i) the field or part of a field was set aside in 2004 pursuant to Article 6 of Council Regulation 1251/1999 and was managed during that year in accordance with the wild

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- bird cover option set out in paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 to the Arable Area Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997; and
- (ii) the green cover established in accordance with the requirements of that option has been maintained until the beginning of the current green cover season; and
- (b) in 2006 and in each year thereafter, where –
 - (i) the field or part of a field was set aside in the previous year;
 - (ii) the field or part of a field was managed during that year in accordance with the wild bird cover option; and
 - (iii) the green cover established in accordance with the requirements of that option has been maintained until the beginning of the current green cover season in the year in question.

The under 10 metre strips option

5.—(1) In each part of a field to be managed in accordance with the under 10 metre strips option, a farmer –

- (a) shall, subject to sub-paragraph (2) and paragraph 7, establish a green cover by the start of the current green cover season –
 - (i) by sowing seed of a relevant kind; or
 - (ii) by allowing natural regeneration following the last crop which was produced on the part of a field in question in the previous year;
- (b) shall, subject to paragraphs 8, 12 and 13, maintain the green cover until the end of the relevant period; and
- (c) shall cut the green cover at least once during the current year, except that he may leave uncut a strip of green cover up to 2 metres wide by way of margin bordering any hedgerow, woodland or watercourse.

(2) The requirement to establish a green cover in accordance with sub-paragraph (1)(a) shall not apply in 2005 where –

- (a) the field or part of a field was set aside in 2004 pursuant to Article 6 of Council Regulation 1251/1999 and was managed during that year in accordance with the field margins option set out in paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 to the Arable Area Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997; and
- (b) the green cover established in accordance with the requirements of that option has been maintained until the beginning of the current green cover season.

Cutting or destruction of the green cover

6.—(1) In each field or part of a field to which one of the options mentioned in paragraph 1(1) is applied, a farmer shall either –

- (a) subject to sub-paragraph (2), cut the green cover between 15th July and 15th August during the current set-aside period; or
- (b) destroy the green cover between 15th July and 31st August during the current set-aside period.

(2) A farmer may (where he cuts the green cover in a field or part of a field in accordance with sub-paragraph (1)(a)) –

- (a) leave uncut a strip of green cover up to 2 metres wide by way of margin bordering any hedgerow, woodland or watercourse; and

- (b) in the case of a field which is to be set aside in the following year, leave uncut a further 25% of the area set aside in that field, provided that any area left uncut in accordance with this paragraph which has also been left uncut in the previous two years in accordance with this paragraph (or paragraph 7(2)(b) of Schedule 2 to the Arable Area Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997) is cut in accordance with sub-paragraph (1) in the following year.

Exemptions from the requirement to establish a green cover on set-aside land

7.—(1) In each field or part of a field to which any of the options mentioned in paragraph 1(1) or (2) is applied, a farmer shall by virtue of this provision be treated as exempt from a requirement to establish a green cover by the start of the current green cover season, where he satisfies the Department that for climatic reasons it was not practicable for a green cover to be established by that time, and, where he is treated as exempt, he shall establish a green cover as soon as reasonably possible after the start of the green cover season.

(2) In each field or part of a field to which any of the options mentioned in paragraph 1(1) or (2) is applied, a farmer need not establish a green cover on a strip of land forming part of the land set aside and bordering its edge, of a width up to –

- (a) 1 metre, where the strip of land set aside borders land planted with a crop other than a seed crop;
- (b) 2 metres, where the strip of land set aside borders land planted with a seed crop; or
- (c) 5 metres, in any place where vehicular access to that land from a road or track adjacent to that land may be possible, provided that the strip is ploughed and left as bare fallow.

(3) In sub-paragraph (2), “seed crop” means a crop grown so that the seed of the crop may be harvested and sown to establish a further crop.

Exemptions from the requirement to maintain a green cover on the land set aside from production

8.—(1) In each field or part of a field to which any of the options mentioned in paragraph 1(1) or (2) is applied, a farmer is not required to maintain a green cover on the land set aside from production where that green cover is destroyed following the application of herbicide to the land on or after 15th April in the current year.

(2) In respect of each field or part of a field to which any of the options mentioned in paragraph 1(1) or (2) is applied, a farmer shall by virtue of this provision be treated as exempt from a requirement to maintain a green cover where he satisfies the Department that the green cover which he established failed and he could not reasonably have prevented such failure.

(3) The exemptions mentioned in sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) shall apply until –

- (a) in the case of the exemption in sub-paragraph (1), the commencement of the following green cover season; and
- (b) in the case of the exemption in sub-paragraph (2), the end of the current year.

(4) In each field or part of a field to which any of the options mentioned in paragraph 1(1) or (2) is applied, and in which a farmer has chosen not to establish a green cover on a strip of land pursuant to paragraph 7(2), he need not maintain any green cover which nevertheless subsequently becomes established on that strip.