

Oakbank E-News April 2021

ELS APRIL – Buffer strips and Field Corners (EC24, EE1-3, EE9, EF1, EJ5 and EJ9) to which wild flowers have been added (EE12) can still be cut this month if excess vegetation threatens to suppress the flowers, providing no birds are nesting in the flower-rich area.

Cereal headlands for birds (EF9) and Unharvested cereal headlands (EF10) – no more broadleaf weed control allowed.

Supplementary feeding for farmland birds (EF23) – winter feeding period now finished. Given the cold weather you may want to keep feeding, particularly to help turtle doves which will shortly be arriving after a long journey from Africa.

Undersown spring cereals (EG1) – the cereal crop must be established by 20th April.

Low input (EK2) and very low input grassland (EK3) – DO NOT cut, harrow or roll until 31st May (EK2) OR 30th June (EK3).



AB8 Floristic Margin

Mid-Tier CS APRIL – Nectar Flower Mix (AB1) – 50% of each plot should be cut between 15th April and 31st May.

Nesting plots for lapwing & stone curlew (AB5) – if natural regen covers more than 70% of the plot by the end of April you are allowed to spray off to restore bare ground.

Unharvested cereal headland (AB10) and Harvested low input cereal (AB14) – needs to be established by the end of April (you can use any cereal except maize so millet, barley, triticale are all acceptable for these options).

Cultivated plots for arable plants (AB11) – spring plots must be cultivated by the end of April.

Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds (AB12) – must continue feeding until 30th April.

Wet grassland for breeding waders (GS9,GS11) – don't forget to shut up sluices or other water structures to retain water in scrapes and pools.

Miscanthus – If you would like to order any rhizomes please let us know asap as we will be stopping lifting shortly.

Fertiliser – please remember to put all of your phosphate and potash and at least 50% of your Nitrogen in the seedbed before drilling. The remainder of the Nitrogen to be applied early post-emergence.

BPS and CS Claims

Please remember that you have to claim your CS payment each year as per your BPS and that means declaring where your CS options are located on an annual basis using the correct land use codes. Please see the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-payments-land-use-codes-2021>

Furthermore, all capital works must be carried out and claimed for by the end of your second year in the scheme. **Important note re hedges:** Under CS you cannot do any hedgerow restoration work i.e. coppicing or laying, after the end of March.

The Sustainable Farming Incentive

Defra wants to attract several hundred farmers to take part in the first phase of piloting the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme. If you are interested in being a pilot farm, please use the link below to register your interest by 11th April. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-pilot-launch-overview>

Regenerative Agriculture

If you have any areas left unplanted this spring / summer, please don't leave them bare! Our extensive experience last summer showed just how much benefit can be derived by having living roots in the soil through the long daylight hours. If you have fallow areas of land, or perhaps you are looking at covers for after harvest, then please give us a call.

Another success story has been Companion Crops for Oilseed Rape, with some excellent crops now coming onto flower across the country. Observations and testing have shown a number of advantages from using the companions, but the proof of the concept will take time to develop fully – Watch this space!



Woodland

Considering New Woodland Creation? “The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the next best time is now” – *Popular Chinese Proverb*. The current tree planting season is coming to a close. If you are considering planting new woods next season (winter 2021/22) and wish to apply for grant funding, then now is the time to speak to us, as the planning and lead time can take up to 6 months through Countryside Stewardship. Even more importantly, the last 2 seasons have seen huge increases in demand for tree planting stock nationally, and some clients have not been able to source all their requirements. Next season, predicted supplies are already being stretched as HS2, National Forest Strategies and large national forestry management companies and charities reserve huge numbers of stock for this coming winter. Our woodland grant guidance note is available [HERE](#).

Increasing public activity and tree risks

As the UK comes out of lock down, commercial facilities reopen and people begin to visit places further afield, it is important to remember land and tree ownership responsibilities. If you have trees that could cause harm in the event of failure, then you should have a defensible system in place to demonstrate your legal duty of care. See [HERE](#) our brief guide and give us a call to find out more.

Grey Squirrels are considered to be No.1 threat to UK broadleaf woods

Grey Squirrels were rated the number one threat to our broadleaf woodlands according to the results of a survey of nearly 800 Royal Forestry Society (RFS) woodland owners, land managers and others. Whilst it is good news that many understand the damage squirrels do to our trees, it does come as a surprise that they are considered worse than diseases such as Ash Dieback. Read the RFS blog post [here](#), which links to the main RFS report.

Carbon jargon explained

[Wood for Good](#), the UK timber industry's wood promotion campaign, has developed a useful table simply explaining the most common terms used in modern carbon-speak.

Woollen tree shelters?

NexGen, a UK company making biodegradable tree tubes out of British wool, and thus helping our wool markets, was runner-up in the [Wool Innovation Prize](#) competition. We are trialling a number of these tubes as of this planting season and we will let you know how they fair over the next few months and years. (See attached photos to accompany this).



Pfizer and Valneva Lyme Disease Vaccine Advances

Two pharmaceutical companies in France have commenced the second phase of their study to [develop a vaccine](#) for this awful, tick-borne disease.

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