

## 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. This includes agreements that started on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. Please see the link below for the correct land use codes:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-payments-land-use-codes-2022>

Furthermore, all capital works must be carried out and claimed for by the end of your second year in the scheme.

## Stewardship News

**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 20<sup>th</sup> April.

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



**Mid-Tier CS APRIL – Nesting plots for lapwing & stone curlew (AB5)** – if natural regen covers more than 70% of the plot then you can spray off before the end of April to restore bare ground.

**Unharvested cereal headland (AB10) and Harvested low input cereal (AB14)** – needs to be established by the end of April.

**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 30<sup>th</sup> April.

**Stock record reminder:** if your agreement has options that have prescriptions relating to grazing management then you need to keep livestock records:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-livestock-record-keeping>

**Important note re hedges:** Under CS you cannot do any hedgerow restoration work i.e. coppicing or laying, after the end of March.

**Fertiliser** – with fertiliser prices going through the roof, there will be a temptation to reduce the fertiliser input on game covers and stewardship mixes. Please remember that without adequate fertiliser the crops will not deliver what is required. If your P and K indices are adequate then you could get away with a P/K ‘holiday’ this year, but nitrogen is essential for most of our seed-bearing crops to perform. Defra is obviously aware of the seriousness of the fertiliser shortage and has recently published some support measures: <https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/2022/03/30/fertiliser-updates-and-support/>

**Bird flu** – the bird flu situation in France is so serious that it now looks unlikely that the UK will be releasing many redleg partridges this year and the numbers of pheasants released are also likely to be reduced. If you know you are not going to release any redlegs this year then you will understandably be thinking about saving money on seed and fertiliser on game covers. Whatever you do, do not be tempted to leave the ground bare for a year as it will be horrible to work next year as well as being subject to erosion and leaching of nutrients. Instead consider planting with a fertility building mix which will protect the soil structure and improve soil fertility for next year’s crop. If you choose the right mix, you can keep it mown to control weeds.

## Woodland & Trees

Wanting to plant trees this coming winter? Time is now critical for getting your proposed plans onto paper and into an English Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) Grant Application! The application process takes at least 6 months through to approval and planting stock and materials are going to be in high demand due to the significantly more generous grants available. Call us NOW to discuss the opportunities under the new EWCO.



**“Plant a Tree for the Jubilee” - The Queens Green Canopy** – leading on from the above prompt for planning woodland creation now for this coming winter, many people are planting trees and woodlands this year to celebrate Her Majesty’s 70 years of service. Why not be a part of it yourself with your own woodland creation? [www.queensgreencanopy.org](http://www.queensgreencanopy.org)

## Making Space for Nature – to Benefit Water

If you are interested in discovering more about how planting trees can help to improve water quality and provide natural flood management on your land, then the Forestry Commission (FC) have recently published this fresh [blog post](#) - available here.