

**ELS AUGUST – 6m buffer strips (EE3 and EE9)** – if you have included some wild flowers in your buffer strips (EE12) you may now cut the whole 6m strip and remove the cuttings.

**Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds (EF13)** – from 1<sup>st</sup> August these can be returned to the normal rotation. If they are sited in an area which could produce a drive or a holding area then you could establish a catch crop asap.

**Extended over-winter stubbles (EF22)** – from 1<sup>st</sup> August these can be sprayed off with glyphosate and can return to normal farm management from 15<sup>th</sup> August.

**Winter cover crops (EJ13)** - Drill or broadcast a quick growing cover crop mix by 15th September.

**Management of rush pastures (EK4)** – up to a third of the area of rushes in each field can now be cut.

**Legume and herb-rich swards (EK21)** – as long as the field has been shut up for at least three weeks, you can now cut or graze these.

**CSS OPTIONS AUGUST – Nectar flower mix (AB1)** – if not already done so, establish mix by 30<sup>th</sup> August.



**Nesting plots for lapwings and stone curlew (AB5)** – from 1<sup>st</sup> August they can be sprayed off, cultivated and sown with mustard/turnips to provide extra partridge holding cover.

**Enhanced overwinter stubble (AB6)** – return to normal farm rotation from 1<sup>st</sup> August.

**Flower-rich margins and plots (AB8)** – cut (and remove if dense) or graze 90% of the area between 15<sup>th</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> October to leave a plant height of between 10cm and 20cm - leave 10% of the area uncut or ungrazed. If you are establishing an AB8 mix for the first time we strongly suggest sowing before the middle of September although the rules say before 15<sup>th</sup> October.

**Two-year sown legume fallow (AB15)** – establish mix as soon as possible after harvest and before 7<sup>th</sup> September.

**Autumn sown bumblebird mix (AB16)** - establish mix as soon as possible after harvest and before 7<sup>th</sup> September.

**Legume and herb-rich swards (GS4)** – as long as the sward has been shut up / rested for at least five weeks, you can now cut or graze this.

**Winter cover crop (SW6)** – establish a quick growing cover crop by 15th September

### **Countryside Stewardship: extension to capital agreements**

Due to Covid, Defra has offered a one-year extension on capital claims for all agreements that started after 1 April 2018 or in 2019 for:

- Hedgerows and Boundaries grant
- Woodland creation, Woodland tree health, Woodland management plan,
- PA1, PA2 and PA3
- Water capital grants
- Historic Buildings Restoration grants
- 

**Corn Buntings** – if you are lucky enough to have corn buntings on your farm, think about double drilling a strip of cereal through the middle of one of your fields to create attractive and safe nesting habitat for them next summer.

### **NEW TEAM MEMBER**

We are delighted to welcome Ethan Powell to our Stewardship team. Ethan graduated from Harper Adams this year with a degree in Agriculture with Crop Management. He has a strong conservation pedigree – his Uncle is Graham Denny whose farm is renowned for the number of breeding turtle doves that return each year – as well as work experience in both plant breeding and agronomy. His focus will be stewardship and regenerative agriculture.



**Oakbank Cover and Companion Crops** - We are developing a good reputation for our experience in this area and we would be pleased to help you with any projects this year. Perhaps you are looking for ways to beat Flea Beetle and successfully establish Oilseed Rape, or simply look at ways of improving your soils. Please call the office for any assistance.



## WOODLAND

### Ash Dieback Special

**What are the basics on ash dieback?** Our quick guidance [HERE](#) explains what you need to know.

### Your Tree Risk Management and Ash dieback

Landowners have a statutory duty of care to ensure that every asset, including the trees located on their land, is unlikely to cause harm. The primary means of managing the risk from trees is the implementation of a regime that evaluates and inspects certain trees on a regular basis to determine their safety. Ash dieback has significantly increased the risk posed by ash trees as it makes them unstable, brittle and unpredictable. See this [VIDEO](#) footage showing diseased ash behavior on felling from the Forestry Contracting Association, and this second one demonstrating how the disease changes the structure of the wood, making it far more [BRITTLE](#) and therefore dangerous.

### Dealing with Diseased Ash Trees and Operator Safety

As a result of the change in wood structure and therefore structural integrity, dealing with diseased and dying ash trees needs to be taken very seriously. The disease weakens the trees natural immune system and allows the Honey fungus (*Armillaria mellea*) to attack. This results in many trees having a high proportion of deadwood in the crown and having no significant fibre strength at felling height makes it far more hazardous for manual felling by chainsaw. See our operator safety guidance note [HERE](#) and don't hesitate to call for more advice or assistance.



**Ash showing significant signs of dieback – note healthy ash tree behind.**

A new guide for tree owners on ash dieback has been published by the Tree Council, available [HERE](#).

**Oakbank Guidance on Tree Risk Strategies**

For more help and advice, give us a call to discuss developing a proactive and proportionate tree risk strategy tailored to your tree stock. Our guidance on Tree Risk Management is available [HERE](#).

**Other News.....**

**Covid-19 struck tree nurseries**

It is estimated around 100 million trees are produced for woodland creation and restocking across the UK each year. Nurseries have been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, and £500,000 has been made available by Defra, from the Natural Carbon Fund budget, to assist nursery recovery, to ensure enough planting stock will be available.

**Ticks, still ticking along....**

Tick season was traditionally March / April and September / October; however, it is now not uncommon to find them about your person or on pets, particularly dogs any time of the year, particularly high summer. Tick bite prevention and correct removal is crucial to avoid Lyme disease. [Lyme disease uk](#) website has some very simple but useful tips.