

**ELS MARCH** – NO MORE HEDGE OR DITCH BANK CUTTING. You may still cut 6m grass buffer strips but ONLY if they contain some flowers. **Wild bird seed mixes (EF2)** can now be flailed off and the ground cultivated. **Unfertilised cereal headlands (EF9)** – broad leaf weed control can be carried out until 31<sup>st</sup> March but ONLY with amidosulfuron. Grass weeds can be controlled anytime using only the products list in the handbook. **Unharvested cereal headlands (EF10)** – can now be cut down and returned to the rotation. **Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds (EF13)** – rough cultivated area should be created by 20<sup>th</sup> March. **Low input grassland (EK2 and EK3)** – 31<sup>st</sup> March last opportunity to cut, harrow or roll before the summer. **Supplementary Feeding (EF23)** – you must keep feeding until 31<sup>st</sup> March

**MID-TIER CS MARCH** – NO MORE HEDGE OR DITCH BANK CUTTING. **Nectar flower mix (AB1)** – if you haven't done so already then these must be cut down before 30<sup>th</sup> March (and ideally cuttings removed or shredded). **Nesting plots for lapwing and stone curlew (AB5)** – plot must be cultivated by 20<sup>th</sup> March. **Flower-rich margins and plots (AB8)** - If plant growth is more than 15cm in height before 31 March, cut it (and remove if dense) to achieve a plant height of between 5cm and 10cm. **Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds (AB12)** – you must keep feeding until 30<sup>th</sup> April

**Countryside Stewardship** – key dates:

**Deadline for requesting application packs:**

- 31 March 2020– Higher Tier
- 31 May 2020 – Mid Tier and Wildlife Offers (paper)
- 30 June 2020– Mid Tier (online) Online applicants for wildlife offers do not need to request an application pack.

**Deadline for submitting your application for a 2021 agreement:**

- 1 May 2020 – Hedgerows and Boundaries Grant / Higher Tier
- 31 July 2020 – Mid Tier / Wildlife Offers

**Agreement offers sent out:**

- From July 2020 - Hedgerows and Boundaries
- From November 2020 – Higher Tier, Mid Tier and Wildlife Offers

If you want any assistance with your application please contact the office asap as we have a limited number of agreements that we can handle.



## ELMS

Defra has recently published [Farming for the Future: Policy Progress and Update on GOV.UK](#). This provides detail on the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme and other planned schemes to support productivity, animal health and welfare. It also covers future support for innovation and research and development.

They have also launched the [Environmental Land Management \(ELM\) Policy Discussion Document](#) on the Citizen Space website. This document sets out their initial thinking on the design of the new ELM scheme. **There are key questions in the document on which they would like your views.** Feedback on this document will help shape the new scheme.

Please respond online through the Citizen Space site. If you're part of an organisation then please encourage other members to do the same.

You can also email [elmfeedback@defra.gov.uk](mailto:elmfeedback@defra.gov.uk)

**The discussion is open until the first week of May.**

**Spring Newsletter** – if you haven't received your 2020 Oakbank Magazine (complete with Product Guide) or would like additional copies to give to your friends/colleagues, please let us know!

**Perennial Crops** – check all of your perennial crops this month to see whether they need any inputs/management. If you are not sure what you are looking for please check with us before doing anything drastic! Miscanthus – we are lifting rhizomes at the moment and putting them into cold store. If you are thinking of planting any miscanthus this season, then please get your order in asap. Planting time is not until mid-April but lifting will have been finished by then so we won't be able to lift to order.

**Felling licenses – the basics.** Felling licenses are necessary if you intend to fell more than a handful of trees, therefore find [HERE](#) our guidance note to inform and assist you. Next month guidance is on SSSI's and associated permissions required from Natural England.

**Predicted UK woodland expansion to cost £15bn**

Landowners say grants must double if they are to meet the Prime Minister's ambition of 30 million extra trees planted per annum, read [The Times](#) article here.

**Rising from the ashes**

Lately the future has looked bleak for European ash trees devastated by ash dieback and facing the threat of additional invasive pests. However, the evidence emerging in Norfolk's woodlands, combined with the latest scientific research by the [John Innes Centre](#), suggests a brighter outlook.

**Japanese knotweed - a cure for Lyme disease?!**

Tick-borne Lyme disease infects about 8,000 people a year in Britain. Now research suggests that the invasive knotweed could contain a compound that is more effective than antibiotics at tackling Lyme disease. An [Express](#) article tells you more.

**Ban on sales of wet wood and coal announced**

Recently the Government announced that sales of two of the most polluting fuels – wet wood (green or unseasoned firewood) and house coal – will be phased out from 2021 to 2023. This is to give householders and suppliers time to move to cleaner alternatives such as dry wood and manufactured solid fuels. [The Guardian](#) explains more.

**British Game Alliance:** The BGA is doing sterling work in promoting game sales in the UK and worldwide. It is funded solely by donations from the shooting industry. In case you haven't seen it there is an incredible opportunity to win two days shooting for eight guns on the best drives of eight of the South-West's premier shoots. The prize includes 5\* accommodation and all cartridges. It really is the opportunity of a lifetime! See [www.BGAGreatEight.zaffo.com](http://www.BGAGreatEight.zaffo.com)

**Country Food Trust** – another outstanding charity that has recently served its 500,000<sup>th</sup> game based meal to people in food poverty (see [www.thecountryfoodtrust.org](http://www.thecountryfoodtrust.org)) is hosting the Country Food Trust Raceday at Fakenham Racecourse on Friday 13<sup>TH</sup> March.

*Shoots are invited to bring their vehicles including gun buses, beaters tractor/trailer/wagons to the centre of the course to offer their own hospitality and each shoot is offered 20 free Grandstand & Paddock badges for their shooting staff.*

*All participating shoots can purchase additional badges at £8.00 each (a 50% discount).*

**Applications for free vehicle pass and tickets (including half-price tickets) to be made to:**

Trudi Moulton at Fakenham Racecourse, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 7NY

email: [trudi@fakenhamracecourse.co.uk](mailto:trudi@fakenhamracecourse.co.uk).