

NPWS Farm Plans

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Legal Background

- Quite restricted:
- “Minister shall pay ..an amount equal to the loss suffered”
- “Discontinuance of the use in the 5 years immediately preceding”
- Grant aid lost shall not be taken into account

NPWS Farm Plans

- To be produced in target areas
 - SACs, SPAs, (NHAs) and commonage
- Provide an alternative to REPS
- NPWS farm plans apply to target areas
- Work towards the same environmental goals as REPS
- Compensation will be paid for loss of farming income or to pay for agreed work or to cover outlay costs

NPWS Farm Plans (cont'd)

- **No approval yet for compensation for non-farming restrictions**
- **Commonage farmers not in REPS must join our scheme if they want payment**

Components of NPWS plans

- **Assess private target area**
- **Implementation of Commonage Framework Plans**
- **Implementation of SAC Conservation Plan**
- **Liaison with local NPWS staff**
- **Plan for the future (5 years)**
- **Produced by approved/trained planners - paid for by NPWS**

Steps in plan preparation 1:4

- 1. NPWS approach the farmer; or farmer approaches NPWS**
- 2. NPWS provide farmer with list of approved planners**
- 3. Plan is prepared**
- 4. Draft plan agreed by landowner, planner and NPWS and signed off**

Steps in plan preparation 5:8

5. Plan becomes operational
6. Annual check for compliance by ranger
7. Farmer receives payment
8. End of Plan life (5 years) – assessment

Plan content

- **1. Goal of the plan clearly specified**
- **2: Details of lands**
- **3: Synopsis of conservation plan**
- **4: Current Land-use** (stock numbers, housing, SF, fertilisation, tillage, drain maintenance, turbarry)
- **5: Future Land-use** (application of CP and conservation plan and planner field assessments - ie changes to current farming for 5 years)
- **Misc** (maps, soil tests, forms)
- **Overall - farmer input**

Role of the planners

- Meet with farmer/Liaison with NPWS staff
- Farm survey
- Soil sampling
- Detail current farm enterprises
- Farmyard plan (if in target area)
- Nutrient Management plan
- Detail farm enterprises for conservation
- Discuss changes necessary with farmer and NPWS
- Calculate compensation

Possible Restrictions

- Destocking of target area/farm
- Change pattern of SF/outwintering
- Alterations to animal housing in TAs
- Change in fertiliser appl. in TAs
- Alteration to current turf cutting
- Protection of listed species, habitats or practices
- Fencing (erection of/removal)

Compensation

- No compensation for GAEC compliance
- For destocking (below PPP only)
- For increased hay/straw for housing
- For reseeding/additional fertilisation
- For reduced yields (eg GWF/less fertiliser)
- Fencing/fence maintenance
- For changing farming activity (eg tillage to grass)
- For leasing additional land

Differences from REPS

- Target land only
- Fewer requirements ?
- More opportunity for farmer input
- Farmer time can be costed in

- Often less money
- Incentive element not included

Summary

- **Scheme will evolve as more plans are prepared/scenarios encountered**
- **Opportunity to interface positively with the farming community**
- **Potential conflicts may arise - will have to be addressed and priorities set**
- **Farming community must be an integral part of the process - not just lip service**
- **The coming years will be a challenge - the scheme will have to anticipate and react to changes in market forces/farming economic/farmers expectations etc**
- **Hopefully there will be a balance between biodiversity and social benefits**

Application of CPs and SAC/SPA Conservation Plans

- **Should be delivered through REPS or NPWS plan**
- **Objectives in these plans to be interpreted at farm level**
- **Not just a list of “don’ts” - positive/proactive management**

Further information

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