

WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT POLICY



1. General statement

It is our policy to continue to adopt the principles of Integrated Farm Management (IFM) to increase biodiversity levels and mitigate the effects of agricultural production on the environment and landscape.

Habitats and species identified on the holding will be maintained and enhanced to benefit both biodiversity and the local landscape.

The policy has been formed following a detailed audit of the holdings farmed by S&A Produce and provides a base-line of environmental features. The Landscape & Nature Conservation & Enhancement Plan sets out a five year action plan showing where work will be/ has been carried out.

All staff will be expected to abide by the following procedures and co-operate with management in the execution of this Policy.

2. Objectives

- To maintain and increase current populations of both Herefordshire and national Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species currently on the holding and encourage additional BAP species in the local area on to the farm (where appropriate).
- Maintain and increase populations of farmland birds in particular linnet, snipe and song thrush by providing year round feeding and breeding habitat, aiming for provision on a minimum of 3% of the farmed area.
- Increase floristic habitat for pollinators by establishing nectar and wild flower mixture plots around the holding, together with appropriate management of existing flower-rich habitats including hedgerows, field margins, woodland and semi-improved grassland. Additionally provide nesting/ overwintering habitat for pollinators through provision of tussocky grass margins and field corners.
- Maintain and enhance natural linear features, particularly hedgerows and watercourses which link habitats, to provide a wildlife corridor for species such as bats to move across the landscape.
- Ensure legally protected species that occur on the holding including great crested newts, badgers, bats & nesting birds are fully considered in any future developments and measures are taken to maintain and increase populations.
- Meet all regulatory and legislative requirements including those that pertain to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

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- Protect adjacent important habitats, in particular the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) by preventing run-off of nutrients/soils/pesticides by continuing to adopt best practice that pertain to the protection and enhancement of water and soil during in-field operations.
- Maximise fertiliser and pesticide efficiency, ensuring that only as much as necessary and as little as possible is applied.
- Maintain features of the local agricultural landscape typical of the 'Herefordshire Lowlands' and 'South Herefordshire and Over Severn' Landscape Character Areas, in particular hedgerow and hedgerow trees.
- Investigate applying for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme once the existing Entry Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme agreement expires in 2018.
- Conserve features of historical interest on the farm which include the water meadow channels in the grass field at Brierley Court Farm.
- Maintain the Public Rights of Way on the holding to enable the local community and general public to access and enjoy the local countryside.
- Communicate to all farm staff what key species and habitats exist on the holding and what they can do to maintain and enhance them (e.g. avoiding driving on field margins to prevent disturbance to nesting bird species).
- Encourage staff to record and monitor wildlife on the holding to help evaluate the success of habitat management and enhancement works.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Vogels', written over a horizontal line.

Roger Vogels
Director of Soft Fruit Growing