

Section 6 Further Advice and Information

Points of contact

On-line DARD publications

Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water, Air and Soil

Farmland birds information pack

Further advice and information

1. Points of contact

Further information and advice on all aspects of agri-environment schemes can be obtained from the points of contact provided at the back of this explanatory booklet. This booklet is available on-line at www.dardni.gov.uk

2. On-line DARD publications

All publications are available on the DARD website address as follows: www.dardni.gov.uk

Trees - practical advice on all aspects of tree planting as well as giving information on the importance of trees for wildlife.

Field boundaries - information on the rich history and wildlife associated with field boundaries, together with practical information on their management and restoration.

Farm ponds - practical advice on the siting, design and construction of farm ponds.

Heather moorland - information on managing heather as a grazing resource and for wildlife.

3. Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water, Air and Soil

The “Codes” contain practical management advice on how farm wastes such as silage effluent, slurry and manure can be collected, stored and spread with minimum risk to the environment. Guidance on how to prevent pollution from pesticides, sheep dip and fuel oil is also included.

Farmers in receipt of LFACA payments, participating in an agri-environment scheme or in the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) Farm Quality Assurance Scheme for Beef or Lamb must retain copies of the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution.

The “Codes” are available on-line at www.dardni.gov.uk

4. Farmland birds information pack

An information pack about farmland birds has been produced jointly by DARD and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

Information and photographs on full colour, glossy sheets help farmers identify 12 farmland birds and provide useful guidance on how to encourage wild birds to the farm. Information is also provided about rush management and hedgerow care, to help land managers help wildlife.

Copies of the full pack or individual sheets are available from your local DARD office or by telephoning (028) 9052 5041 and these are also available from DARD and RSPB staff at agricultural shows and other events.

Section 7 Appendices

- Tenancy agreement for leased land**
- Definition of habitats**
- List of species-rich grassland indicator plants**
- Scrub control**
- Protective fencing**
- Control of rushes and noxious weeds**
- DARD Office addresses**
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Appendix 1: Tenancy agreement for leased land

For leased land to be included in your agreement you must provide evidence that you have an agreement with the owner of the land. The lease agreement must:

- Provide the names and addresses of the tenant and landowner;
- Give the location and area of the leased land (farm survey number(s) and field numbers will suffice);
- Indicate that the lease is for a minimum of five years, from date of application;
- Indicate that the landowner has been notified by the tenant of his intention to apply for an agri-environment scheme;
- Be signed by both tenant, landowner and an independent witness;
- Must be dated.

Appendix 2: Good Farming Practice definition of habitats

Moorland – areas of bog, dwarf shrub heath and montane habitat.

Wetlands – areas of naturally high water table including fen, marsh, swamp, standing waters, saline lagoons, rivers and streams.

Species-rich grasslands – areas of neutral, acid, wet and calcareous grassland (including limestone pavement). These have a low productive sward. Ryegrass, Timothy and white clover comprise less than 25% of the sward.

Broad-leaved woodland/scrub – areas where vegetation is dominated by broad-leaved trees and shrubs containing less than 15% conifers.

Coastal habitats – areas of maritime cliff and slopes, sand dunes, vegetated shingle, saltmarsh and all areas below high water mark.

Archaeological features – the man-made parts of the environment, which represent the physical effort, aspirations and achievements of all previous generations. They date from the earliest human presence in Ireland to the recent past and are a finite and non-renewable resource. These include megalithic tombs, standing stones, stone circles, cairns, barrows, hillforts, raths, cashels, churches and castles.

Earth science sites – areas of bedrock or surface deposits that provide important evidence for the patterns, processes and dating of geological and biological events from the beginning of the Earth's history to the present day.

Appendix 3: List of species-rich grassland indicator plants

If more than five species are located in an area of one square metre at six out of ten random points in the field area, then the area is classified as species-rich. These will be coded according to the species-rich type they are most indicative of, some may be found in all species-rich grassland types.

W - *wet grassland indicator species*.

	Common name		Common name
	Flowering Plants		Lady's mantle
	Bedstraw, heath	W	Lady's smock
	Bedstraw, lady's	W	Lesser spearwort
W	Bedstraw, marsh		Lousewort, common
	Bilberry	W	Lousewort, marsh
	Birds'-foot-trefoil, common	W	Marsh cinquefoil
W	Birds' foot trefoil, greater	W	Marsh marigold
	Bluebell	W	Marsh pennywort
	Bugle	W	Meadow sweet
	Cat's-ear		Meadow thistle
	Celandine, lesser		Milkwort
	Common twayblade		Orchid species
	Cranberry		Orchid, common spotted
	Crane's bill, species		Orchid, early purple
W	Creeping Jenny		Orchid, heath spotted
	Devil's bit scabious		Ox-eye daisy
	Eyebright		Pignut
	Flax species		Plantain species
W	Forget-me-not, marsh		Primrose
	Harebell		Ragged robin
	Hawkbit species		Red clover
	Knapweed		Sanicle

	Common name		Common name
	Saxifrage		Yarrow
	Self heal	W	Yellow flag
	St. John's wort species		Yellow pimpernel
	Stitchwort, greater		Yellow rattle
	Stitchwort, lesser		
	Thyme species		Grasses
	Tormentil		Crested dog's tail
	Vetch, kidney		Quaking grass
	Vetch, tufted		
	Vetchling, meadow		Sedges and rushes
	Vetchling, bitter		Rush, jointed
W	Violet, marsh		Rush, sharp-flowered
	Violet, species		Rush, hard
W	Water avens		Sedges species
W	Water mint		Woodrush, field
	Wood anemone		Woodrush, heath
	Wood sorrel		

Ineligible weeds which are NOT species-rich indicators

The following list of species are regarded as weeds and do NOT contribute to the list of species (that is, five per square metre) required for grassland to be classified as species-rich.

Creeping buttercup
 Cleavers
 Daisy (except ox-eye/dog daisy)
 Dandelion
 Nettle
 Ragwort
 Soft rush
 Thistle (except meadow thistle)

Appendix 4: Scrub control

Types of scrub

- Blackthorn and whin (European gorse) scrub are valuable wildlife and landscape features, however, they can be invasive.
- Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) is an invasive non-native shrub. Dense shade cast by these plants kills off all ground vegetation and toxic chemicals released by the decomposing leaves prevent other plants from regenerating.
- Spreading blackthorn, whin and rhododendron can damage important wildlife areas such as species-rich grassland, woodland and lowland raised bogs and control may be required.

Scrub cannot be removed without the prior written permission of DARD.

Controlling scrub

- Control of scrub cannot be undertaken between 1 March and 31 August.
- Mechanical grubbing out and removal of scrub is not permitted.
- Burning of scrub is not permitted.

Blackthorn and whin/gorse

- **Blackthorn** - must be controlled by cutting stumps to 10-20cm (4-8 inches) high. Drill holes in the stump surface and fill holes with a solution of ammonium sulphamate (brand name Amcide or Root-Out) or glyphosate. This should be carried out in late autumn/winter. The stumps must not be removed.
- **Whin** - must be controlled by cutting and immediately painting the stump with glyphosate. The stumps must not be removed.

Cut material may only be burnt if it is removed from the wildlife habitat and burnt at a site agreed in writing beforehand by DARD.

Rhododendron

When controlling rhododendron, cutting back to ground level is not recommended as this results in very vigorous regrowth. Control can be by either of the two methods below:

1. Cut the rhododendron to leave 300mm (12 inch) stumps. Use a 12 - 13 mm (½ inch) deep hole for every square inch of the stump's surface. Fill the holes (but not overflowing) with a solution of ammonium sulphate (brand name Amcide or Root-Out).
2. Cut the rhododendron to leave a 300mm (12 inch) stump during the winter months and then spray the regrowth with glyphosate (plus a sticking agent) in May or June.

Ensure at all times when using pesticides that the manufacturer's recommendations are followed and suitable protective clothing is worn.

Appendix 5: Protective fencing

Properly erected fences are required to protect new hedges and hedges that have been laid or coppiced. A fence may also be required to protect newly planted trees. Normally hedge restoration includes fencing on one or both sides of the restored hedge. Where the hedge is fenced on both sides, it is recommended that the fences should be at least 2m apart.

Hedge restoration, whether by planting, coppicing or laying, must follow the line and contours of the original field boundary. **Mechanical aids such as diggers or excavators must not be used to straighten, level or remove existing field boundaries or habitats.**

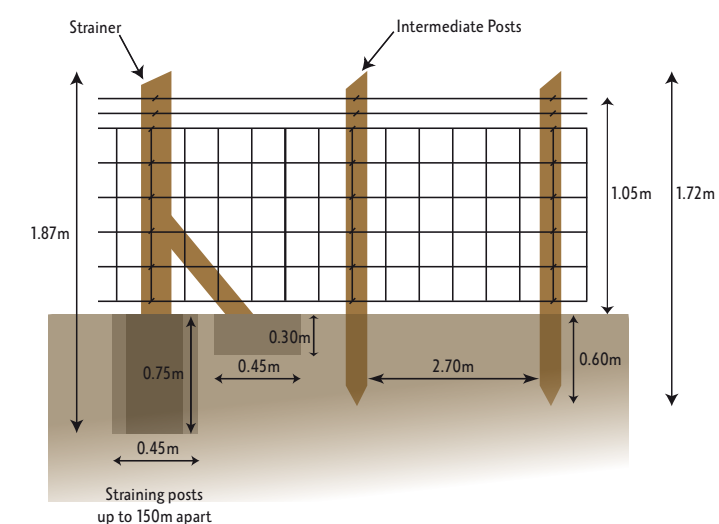
Normally a woven wire (sheep) fence with two strands of barbed wire is the minimum requirement for all types of fencing, which must be completed to at least BS 1722 standards (see summary of specifications below). Any alternative form of fencing must be agreed in advance and specified in written approval.

Summary of the standards required

1. The overall height of the fence shall be not less than 1.05m high from the ground level to the top wire.
2. Straining posts shall be equivalent in strength and durability to 125mm top diameter round timber OR 125mm by 125mm sawn timber and at least 2.17m long when not set in concrete and at least 1.87m long when set in concrete.
3. Straining posts shall be set at centres not exceeding 150m or at each change in direction or gradient.
4. Holes for straining posts shall be excavated with vertical sides and the soil shall be thoroughly rammed back around the post in 150mm layers. If the post is set in concrete, holes shall be 450 x 450 mm on plan or 450 mm diameter and 750 mm deep; otherwise they shall be not less than 1050 mm deep.
5. The top end of the strut shall fit into a notch in the straining post and the bottom end shall be set in a hole at least 450 mm deep x 300 x 450 mm and bear against a suitable base plate. Struts shall be set at 45 degrees to the straining post. Struts shall be equivalent in strength and durability to 65mm top diameter round timber OR 75mm by 75mm sawn timber and at least 2.17m long when not set in concrete and at least 1.87m long when set in concrete.

6. Intermediate posts shall be equivalent in strength and durability to 65mm top diameter round timber OR 75mm by 75mm sawn timber and at least 1.72m long and set at centres not exceeding 2.7m.
7. If cleft (split) posts are used, these must be of sufficient size to contain a circle of at least 65mm diameter on top, for example, a half-round post must be at least 130mm on the flat side.
8. All posts shall be free of bark.
9. Both line wire and woven wire shall be galvanised and comply with BS 4102. Line wire shall normally be 2.5mm mild steel 2 ply barbed wire. The wire shall be properly strained and fastened to the posts with galvanised staples. To allow for future adjustments and to prevent damage to the galvanising, staples shall be driven in obliquely but not fully home.
10. Unless otherwise specified on your approval, fencing of field boundary restoration must be woven wire plus two strands of barbed wire (regardless of the presence or absence of sheep). Specifications for the woven wire are C8/80/30 for cattle, horses and sheep or C8/80/15 for lambs, with two strands of barbed wire to BS 4102. Use of green-coated wire is optional. Both strands of barbed wire may be above or one strand may be above with one strand below the woven (sheep) wire.
11. If rabbits and hares are a problem in the vicinity the fence must be proofed against them. Proofing against rabbits and hares must be carried out with galvanised wire netting. The netting must be not less than 1.05m wide and have mesh no larger than 31mm. The top edge of the netting must be fixed not less than 0.75m in height. The netting must be fastened to the fencing, and the bottom edge of the fencing should be buried in the ground 150mm and then turned outward 150mm and anchored. All gates in protective fences must also be proofed.

Woven (sheep) wire and 2 strands of wire (not to scale)



Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)

Note: Written consent must be obtained from Environment and Heritage Service (EHS), Department of Environment (DOE) before any works are carried out within an ASSI or along an ASSI boundary. It is the responsibility of the agreement holder to obtain this consent. The EHS contact telephone number for further information is (028) 9054 6595.

Appendix 6: Control of rushes and noxious weeds

Rush tussocks provide nesting sites for waders such as lapwing and curlew, and small birds such as meadow pipit. Rushes also provide cover for the Irish hare. A small amount of rush is thus acceptable, but too much is undesirable and must be controlled.

Rush control

- Rush control must be carried out when rushes cover more than a third of a field.
- When carrying out rush control ensure that at least 10% of the rushes in the field are left uncut.
- The following table gives details of the permitted methods of rush control, and the control of noxious weeds, for land under agri-environment agreement:

	Improved grassland/ arable	Unimproved grassland	Breeding wader habitats	Species-rich grassland
Overall application of herbicide	Yes	No	No	No
Weed wiper application of herbicide	Yes	Yes	No*	No*
Rush control by cutting	Anytime	Preferably between 15 July and 15 March only	Between 15 July and 15 March only	Between 15 July and 15 March only
Control of noxious weeds in grassland (creeping thistle, docks and ragwort)	Cutting, overall herbicide, weed wipe or spot spray	Cutting, weed wipe or spot spray only	Cutting or spot spray only	Cutting or spot spray only

Notes: * On breeding wader or species-rich grassland sites, if ground conditions do not permit rush cutting, contact DARD Countryside Management Branch (CMB) for further advice. Prior written approval must be obtained from CMB before any alternative method of rush control is used on these sites.

Management of Rushes

- For heavy infestations of rush, a second cut at least a month later may reduce the vigour of the plant. Cut as close as possible to ground level to give the best control.
- If rush cover becomes very sparse then reduce the intensity of cutting, for example, cut opposite halves of the field each year or cut all on alternate years.
- Cut rushes should ideally be removed by baling, raking or burning. Where this is not possible graze with cattle immediately after cutting to help break up the mat of cut rush.
- Herbicides must not be applied within 1m of all field boundaries.
- The cost of rush control is included in your annual payment, and failure to carry out rush control may result in a breach of your agreement.

Appendix 7: DARD Office addresses

Department of Agriculture and
Rural Development
Kilpatrick House
38-54 High Street
BALLYMENA
Co Antrim
BT43 6DT
Tel: (028) 2566 2800

Department of Agriculture and
Rural Development
Inishkeen House
Killyhevlin
ENNISKILLEN
Co Fermanagh
BT74 4EJ
Tel: (028) 6632 5004

Department of Agriculture and
Rural Development
2 Newry Road
ARMAGH
BT60 1EN
Tel: (028) 3751 5600

Department of Agriculture and
Rural Development
Crown Buildings
Artillery Road
COLERAINE
Co Derry / Londonderry
BT52 2AJ
Tel: (028) 7034 1111

Department of Agriculture and
Rural Development
Rathkeltair House
Market Street
DOWNPATRICK
Co Down
BT30 6LZ
Tel: (028) 4461 2211

Department of Agriculture and
Rural Development
Sperrin House
Sedan Avenue
OMAGH
Co Tyrone
BT79 7AQ
Tel: (028) 8225 3409

Department of Agriculture and
Rural Development
Grants and Subsidies (Payments)
Branch
Orchard House
Foyle Street
DERRY / LONDONDERRY
BT48 6AT
Tel: (028) 7131 9900

Appendix 8:**Countryside Management Branch Office addresses****Co Antrim**

Kilpatrick House
38 / 54 High Street,
BALLYMENA
BT43 6DT
Tel. (028) 2566 2800
Fax (028) 2566 2838

Co Armagh

2 Newry Road
ARMAGH
BT60 1EN
Tel (028) 3751 5659
Fax (028) 3751 5611

Co Down

2b Portaferry Road
NEWTOWNARDS
BT23 3NT
Tel (028) 9181 3570
Fax (028) 9182 2106

Headquarters

Annexe D
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SB
Tel (028) 9052 0922
Fax (028) 9052 0924
Email: cmbenquiries@dardni.gov.uk

Co Fermanagh

Inishkeen House
Killyhevlin
ENNISKILLEN
BT74 4EJ
Tel (028) 6632 5004
Fax (028) 6634 3000

Co Derry/Londonderry

31 Station Road,
MAGHERAFELT,
BT45 5DN
Tel. (028) 7930 2112
Fax (028) 7930 2067

Co Tyrone

Sperrin House
Sedan Avenue
OMAGH
BT79 7AQ
Tel (028) 8225 3410
Fax (028) 8225 3409