



Standards for Beef and Sheep Production

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Introduction

The Farm Wilder approach to beef and sheep production looks to reassert the value of grazing ruminant livestock in harmony with their environment, for the benefit of the animals, farmers, consumers, wildlife and the natural world. It recognises the crucial role of these animals in maintaining and restoring important habitats for wildlife, regenerating soils and providing nutrient dense food for human consumption. In doing so, Farm Wilder provides a trusted means of identifying this produce throughout the supply chain to the point of sale.

Farm Wilder take a collaborative approach to assuring the environmental credentials of its produce, working with farmers and farm consultancy charity The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group to create balanced standards that can be adapted to the management needs of different habitats and farm businesses.

Rare and Endangered Wildlife

All Farm Wilder produce is raised on farms that are managing or actively restoring priority farmland habitats, such as species rich grasslands, wood pasture or wildlife rich heathland, which offer crucial nesting resources for rare and endangered wildlife such as cuckoos and marsh fritillary butterflies. These are habitats which that rely on grazing animals for their conservation; in the past wild ungulates such as bison, aurochs and wild horses would have provided this service, but in the modern agricultural landscape of the UK it is predominately cattle and sheep which fill the role.

As agricultural production has intensified, a polarization of land use often occurs, with more productive land being improved through drainage, cultivation and fertiliser use, while the low productivity of many important habitats has often led to them being abandoned entirely. The result of this abandonment is rapid succession by dominant grass species and woodland, leading to a less diverse habitat overall, and the decline of many rare wildlife species.

Farm Wilder works with conservation organisations to identify these habitats and target species. We then collaborate with the farmers who are managing them to ensure that the habitats are maintained, improved and/or expanded.

100% Pasture Fed

Our standards require that all ruminant livestock sold to Farm Wilder are produced on a 100% pasture fed diet across their entire lifecycle. This means that beef cattle and sheep receive only vegetation that forms their natural diet, predominantly grasses and herbs, and not the grains and other concentrate feeds which increasingly dominate livestock production but come at high cost to the environment, quality of the produce and animal welfare.

To classify what we do and do not consider as pasture, we worked with Farm Wilder partner organisation [Pasture for Life \(PFL\)](#), which has developed a comprehensive approach to certifying 100% pasture fed production. This permits grasses, forbs, legumes, leaf browse from shrubs and trees, and brassicas and wholecrop cereals harvested in the vegetative stage when produced in rotation with grass crops.

Rather than reproducing our own standards to certify farmers as being 100% pasture fed, we use core tenets of Pasture for Life standards and build these into our own audit process. These core principles are as listed in the table below.

Where farmers have additional questions about compliance, they should refer to the Pfl standards directly: <https://www.pastureforlife.org/media/2022/03/PfL-Standards-Version-4.3-Feb-2022.pdf>

Our audit process for 100% pasture-fed requirement takes a risk based approach. Each audit begins with a self-assessment process by the farmer, in which they declare compliance with Pasture for Life standards. This may be followed by an onsite inspection, in which the farm business must provide access to documents, equipment, records or sites that Farm Wilder determines necessary to access.

In exceptional circumstances, Farm Wilder is able to give temporary derogations on specific aspects of the Pasture for Life standards. This is applicable where there is a notable welfare concern, e.g. feeding undernourished pregnant ewes prior to lambing; or where there is a clear environmental argument for using otherwise prohibited feeds; e.g. feeding molasses in an upland context to supplement species rich but energy poor hay.

Farmland Wildlife and Regenerative Grazing

Modern livestock husbandry often manages grassland exclusively for high calorific forage production, which requires heavy supplementation with concentrate feed to make up for the nutritional shortfall from the grass.

By contrast, a pasture fed diet demands that the nutritional balance required by livestock must be met through a diverse range of plant species, including grasses, legumes, herbs and tree fodder. This in turn supports a wealth of environmental benefits; below ground, the deeper rooting plant species provide the soil with the organic carbon and macronutrients that support abundant microbiological life and help combat climate change. Above ground, the plants provide habitat for the invertebrates and pollinators that underpin the food chain, as well as the varied sward structure which provides shelter for foraging birds, small mammals and amphibians.

But healthy ecosystems and abundant farm wildlife demands not just diversity in plant species, but diversity in management too, producing a mosaic of trees, hedges, scrub, rough, tussocky grasses and more tightly grazed swards. To ensure these needs are met across all Farm Wilder farms, we have a range of requirements that farmers must meet in order to sell under the Farm Wilder brand. For example, farmers are required to leave margins in hay and silage fields, enhance hedgerow management for habitat provision, and

manage a proportion of the farm to increase pollen and nectar availability. To eliminate the need for nitrogen fertiliser and ensure botanical diversity in grass swards, we require that all new leys include above a certain amount of nitrogen sinking legumes and flowering herbs.

Farm Regenerative Plan

The Farm Wilder standards are built on the premise that abundant farm wildlife can and should be an integral element of profitable and productive farms, rather than confined to their perimeters. The standards have been developed to reflect this approach, but in some ways are a poor means of addressing the complex and variable realities of farm businesses and the ecosystems they are built upon.

Farm Wilder partners with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West (FWAG SW) to combine the annual farm audit with the development of a Farm Regenerative Plan. The plan template is designed both as a framework for recording compliance with the Farm Wilder Standards, and to support farmers in integrating healthy ecosystems with resilient farm businesses. It should be tailored to the priorities of individual farmers, e.g. identifying relevant funding streams, or advising on animal nutrition and grazing management

Where possible, we recommend that farmers also keep a grazing management plan. This is a useful tool for developing grazing strategies that maximise the use of more productive pastures while conserving priority habitats and reducing traffic on areas at risk of poaching and erosion. It can also help in reducing farm costs through forage budgeting and matching stock numbers to year round forage availability.

Standards for the future

Over the coming years, as the Farm Wilder market grows and agricultural policy changes, these standards will be revisited periodically to ensure that they continue to provide the highest level of assurance for wildlife friendly beef and lamb production.

Understanding Farm Wilder Standards

The standards have been presented in a table form, followed by an annex providing more detail where necessary. The table makes a distinction between the Farm Wilder management and conservation plan requirements in order to reflect the approach described above, in which certain fixed requests are made of farmers while other requirements are tailored to individual farms and managed under the conservation plan. We also include a number of recommendations, which are advised upon as part of the conservation plan.

The standards should be viewed in conjunction with the Farm Wilder Regenerative Plan template.

Where appropriate, temporary derogations may be applied to specific Farm Wilder standards. In exceptional cases, specific standards can be overridden on a farm-by-farm basis. Derogations and exemptions will be recorded in the Farm Regenerative Plan.

		Habitat Management	
		Farm Wilder Requirements	Farm Regenerative Plan
1	Mandatory	<p>Farms must be managing or restoring “Priority habitats” – e.g. calcareous grassland or purple moor grass and rush pasture, as listed in Annex</p> <p>Priority habitats must be assessed for their condition and be managed to maintain or enhance their biodiversity. Details on each category of priority habitat are available in the Annex.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Condition assessment of all semi-natural grasslands, unimproved grasslands and species rich meadows. Criteria detailed in annex, with farmers required to maintain or restore habitat depending on score. - All such grasslands recorded in Farm Regenerative Plan, along with broad habitat type, key indicator species and condition.
2	Mandatory	<p>Farms must develop and annually review a Farm Biodiversity Plan as part of their regenerative farm plan, looking at how wildlife needs are provided for across the farm system throughout the year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farm Biodiversity Plan template can be found in Farm Regenerative Plan template
3	Mandatory	<p>High conservation value habitats and features on the farm, including ponds, hedgerows, in-field trees and natural habitats, must be maintained at a minimum and enhanced where possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farms must produce a farm habitat map as part of the Farm Regenerative Plan that records high conservation value habitats and features. - Where risk of damage to habitats is identified, record in Farm Regenerative Plan.
4	Mandatory	<p>Stocking rates and pasture management should encourage botanical and structural diversity in swards.</p> <p>New leys must include a minimum of 20% legumes and 10% forbs such as yarrow, plantain or chicory.</p> <p>Minimum of 60% of improved grassland needs to be managed with very low input use, set at the level prescribed under CS Mid Tier option GS2: Permanent Grassland with Very Low Inputs</p>	<p>Farm Regenerative Plan should record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pasture/grazing management for diversity. - Composition and timing of new leys - Fertiliser use where applicable - Parcels receiving 7-week break and/or lenient grazing

		<p>25% of low-input improved grassland needs to have either: A minimum of 7 weeks continuous rest period in growing season OR Be grazed lightly during the growing season to maintain a sward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that has an average height of 7cm to 13cm - where at least 20% is shorter than 10cm - where at least 20% is over 10cm tall. Priority should be given to parcels with high botanical diversity and/or ground nesting birds 	
5	Recommended	A grazing management plan should be developed and integrated into biodiversity plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grazing plan to be included in Farm Regenerative Plan
6	Mandatory	A minimum of 4% of the total area of all cutting fields need to be left uncut, either as margins or in awkward field corners. These areas must be excluded from grass or arable reseeds. The areas can be grazed along with the aftermath sward. Where possible, margins should remain in the same locations year after year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Margins recorded in Farm Regenerative Plan. - When choosing locations for margins, priority should be given to fields with ground nesting birds and/or the highest level of botanical diversity. Margins should be placed along watercourses, mature lines of trees or woodland edges wherever possible. - Note: 4% of a parcel equates to a 4m margin along a 200m boundary of a 2ha field.
7	Recommended	Where applicable, field corners and other small areas should be taken out of management to provide rough grassland and/or allow for natural regeneration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas taken out of management should be recorded in Farm Regenerative Plan.

8	Mandatory	In fields with ground nesting birds, care must be taken to minimise disturbance through the nesting and fledging period. Cultivation, topping and conserving forage should be avoided or carried out with caution through this period.	- Fields with ground nesting birds to be recorded in Farm Regenerative Plan, along with cutting schedule. Grazing plan for fields with ground nesting birds should manage cutting regime, stock rotation and/or stocking rate to accommodate breeding birds
9	Mandatory	In meadows with breeding waders, field margins, rough corners and damp hollows must be left uncut to provide shelter and feed for unfledged chicks.	Margins, corners and damp hollows for breeding wader habitat to be recorded in Farm Regenerative Plan
10	Mandatory	Where required, rush cutting must not occur between 15 th March and 15 th July, and ideally be carried out between September and November.	Rush cutting to be recorded in Farm Regenerative Plan
11	Mandatory	Manage hedgerows so there's a range of different heights and widths, with average width and height from base of hedgerow shrubs at least 2m. Maintain existing hedgerow trees, or establish new ones, so there's an average of at least 1 hedgerow tree per 40m. This standard must be met on a minimum of 2500m of hedgerow per 100ha of enclosed farmland.	- Hedgerow management should be recorded in Farm Regenerative Plan
12	Recommended	Lines of mature trees should be given a 4m grass margin either side which is left out of cutting and or reseeded regimes, and receives no fertiliser or herbicides. Fallen deadwood should be left in the margin. Shrub layers underneath lines of trees should be managed so as to encourage bushy growth, either through rotational trimming every 2 or 3 years, or through laying/coppicing on rotation.	- Lines of mature trees and margins to be recorded in Farm Regenerative Plan

13	Mandatory	Livestock must have access to adequate shade and shelter at all times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shade and shelter provision to be recorded in Farm Regenerative Plan - Note: Tall hedgerows, trees and woodland provide shade and shelter
14	Mandatory	Field boundary management operations (including trees, hedges, ditches, walls and grass margins) must be avoided between 1st March and 31st August to prevent damage or disturbance to nesting birds and/or mammals.	
15	Recommended	Farmers should develop an Integrated Pest Management plan for grassland and/or arable cropping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note: SFI support for Integrated Pest Management Plan from 2023: £989/year

Soils, Nutrient Management and Carbon			
		Farm Wilder Requirement	Farm Regenerative Plan
1	Mandatory	Farms must develop and annually review a Soil Management Plan as part of their regenerative farm plan. This must consider soil condition and management across main agricultural land use types on the farm and identify monitoring protocols to target high priority sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soil Management Plan template can be found in Farm Regenerative Plan template
2	Mandatory	Soils must be managed to build soil organic matter and microbiology, with management techniques identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management techniques for building soil health to be recorded in soil management plan.

			- Note: examples of management techniques for building soils include holistic or mob grazing, diverse swards, agroforestry, minimum tillage and agroforestry.
3	Mandatory	Pasture and grazing must be managed to minimise risk of compaction, poaching and soil erosion.	- Compaction, poaching and erosion risks to be detailed in Soil Management Plan and amelioration plans identified.
4	Mandatory	Risks caused by farm activities to water quality and flooding must be assessed and ameliorated.	- Risks and mitigation strategies to be considered in FRP
5	Mandatory	Where fodder is imported onto the farm, strategies must be in place to avoid risk of nutrient overloading	- Where risks are identified, a nutrient management assessment should be included in the Farm Regenerative Plan
6	Recommended	Complete a nutrient management assessment and produce a NM review report	- Note: SFI support for Nutrient Management Assessment from 2023: £589/year
7	Mandatory	Farmers should undertake a full farm carbon footprinting assessment and repeat every four years.	- Assessment available on request - Support potentially available through Farm Wilder

100% Pasture Fed			
		Farm Wilder Requirement	Record Keeping
1	Mandatory	Pasture and forage must be the only feed source consumed for the lifecycle of the animal, with the exception of milk consumed by youngstock prior to weaning. Animals must not be fed grain or any other form of feed concentrate.	
2	Mandatory	The following sources of feed are expressly prohibited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grains • Dry harvested grain legumes (e.g. peas, beans, lupins) • Maize and maize silage • Soya • Sunflower and safflower grains and meals • Oilseeds and expeller products • Grain residue or by-products including brewer's grains • Any harvested root crops and root crop products including sugar beet, fodder beet and derived products • Fodder beet, whether harvested or grazed, fresh or processed • Stock feed potatoes, vegetables or fruit • Waste food products such as bread • Urea 	Invoices and/or records must be kept for seed, purchased feed, harvest
3	Mandatory	At all times when conditions allow, animals must be maintained on rotational pastures, permanent pastures, fields of forage crops or on unbroken ground.	

Animal Health and Welfare, and Regulatory Compliance			
		Farm Wilder Requirement	Record Keeping
1	Mandatory	Farms must be certified under a recognised scheme that covers animal health and welfare standards. These include Red Tractor Assurance, Organic (SA or OF&G), Pasture for Life, Leaf Marque	Certification documents must be available for inspection on request
2	Recommended	Farms should work with a vet to prepare a written animal health and welfare plan	Note: Funding is available to carry out health and welfare review via the SFI https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sfi-annual-health-and-welfare-review
3.	Mandatory	Farms must comply with all legal and regulatory requirements with regards to environmental protection, health and safety and animal welfare, and notify Farm Wilder of any current, pending or past breaches or prosecutions that have occurred.	Details of any pending or past prosecutions or breaches of compliance to be recorded.

Annex

Certain habitat features on farms are to be assessed for condition, being graded A, B, or C against a number of criteria and with management requirements dependent on score.

Number of missed/ failed criteria	Condition assessment category	Probable management level
0	A	Maintain
1	B	Maintain or restore
2 or more	C	Restore

Priority Habitats

All farms supplying Farm Wilder must manage or be actively restoring at least one type of exceptional grassland or wood pasture habitat. These habitats must be either recorded under the [UK Biodiversity Action Plan \(BAP\) Priority Habitat Inventory](#), or meet the criteria described for the relevant habitat type as covered below. In the latter case, an up to date survey must be provided listing species types and abundance.

Eligible habitat types include:

- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland meadows
- Purple moor-grass and rush pastures
- Upland calcareous grassland
- Lowland heath
- Lowland Fens
- Wood pasture and parkland
- Successional wood pasture
- Lowland habitat for breeding waders
- Habitat for breeding cuckoos

Where habitats are within a Countryside Stewardship or Environmental Stewardship Agreement, habitat must meet the prescriptions of the scheme. Any failure to do so will result in an assessment of the farm's eligibility to supply Farm Wilder.

The below prescriptions for each habitat are taken from the [Higher Level Stewardship FEP Manual](#).

Lowland Calcareous Grassland

- This is species-rich, semi-natural grassland on chalk and limestone in the lowlands and upland fringe, generally below 300 m in altitude.
- This grassland is managed primarily by grazing.
- Typical grasses include blue moor-grass, cock's-foot, common bent, crested hair-grass, downy oat-grass, meadow oat-grass, quaking grass, sheep's fescue, tor-grass, upright brome and yellow oat-grass.
- Typical wildflowers include common bird's-foot-trefoil, common rock-rose, cowslip, eyebright, greater knapweed, lady's bedstraw, milkworts, small scabious and wild thyme.

Condition assessment

1. At least two indicator species are frequent, and three occasional (see table 2 in **Key 2b in [Higher Level Stewardship FEP Manual](#)**).
2. Cover of undesirable species (creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock, common ragwort and common nettle) less than 5%.
3. Cover of wildflowers and sedges throughout the sward (excluding the undesirable species listed above and creeping buttercup and white clover) more than 30%.
4. Cover of bare ground (including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens) should be less than 10%.
5. Cover of invasive trees and shrubs less than 5%.

Lowland Meadows

- Lowland meadows are species-rich, semi-natural grassland on free-draining, neutral soils in the lowlands and upland fringes, including species-rich flood plain grassland.
- They are managed by cutting and/or grazing.
- Typical grasses include: cock's-foot, common bent, crested dog's tail, red fescue, meadow fescue, sweet vernal grass, yellow oatgrass and Yorkshire-fog.
- Typical wildflowers include: common knapweed, common bird's foot- trefoil, common meadow-rue, marsh valerian, meadow vetchling, meadowsweet, narrow-leaved water-dropwort and ragged robin.

Condition assessment

1. Cover of undesirable species (creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock, common ragwort, common nettle, marsh ragwort, cow parsley and bracken) less than 5%.
2. Cover of wildflowers and sedges throughout the sward (excluding the undesirable species listed above and creeping buttercup and white clover) more than 20%.
3. Cover of bare ground (including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens) less than 10%.
4. Cover of invasive trees and shrubs less than 5%, and indicators of water logging (such as large sedges, rushes, reeds) less than 30%.
5. At least two indicator species are frequent and two occasional (see table 4 in **Key 2b of [Higher Level Stewardship FEP Manual](#)**).
6. See also 'General information on condition assessment of grassland BAP habitats' above.

Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture

- This refers to species-rich, semi-natural grassland with abundant purple moor-grass and/or jointed rushes (sharp-flowered rush, jointed rush or blunt-flowered rush) on poorly drained neutral and acidic soils of the lowlands and upland fringe.
- The habitat is often associated with springs, seepage lines and slopes surrounding waterlogged depressions and hollows.
- Purple moor-grass and rush pasture can occur on the upland fringes and above the Moorland Line, but should not be confused with species-poor, rush-dominated flushes and semi-improved pastures (where soft rush is often the most abundant rush), or species-poor, purple moor-grass wet acid grassland, which lacks most of the wildflower indicator species.
- Typical grasses include creeping bent, crested dog's-tail, purple moor-grass, quaking-grass, red fescue, sweet vernal grass, tufted hair-grass, velvet bent and Yorkshire-fog.

- Typical wildflowers include bog asphodel, bugle, common meadow-rue, greater bird's-foot-trefoil, marsh cinquefoil, marsh valerian, meadow thistle, meadowsweet and water mint.

Condition assessment

1. Pastures should be grazed with cattle or ponies to create an uneven patchwork of vegetation, broadly between 8 and 25cm.
2. At least two indicator species are frequent and two occasional (see table 5 in **Key 2b** of [Higher Level Stewardship FEP Manual](#)).
3. Cover of undesirable species (creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock, common ragwort, common nettle, cow parsley, marsh thistle and marsh ragwort) less than 10%.
4. Cover of large sedge species less than 30%, and cover of large grasses such as tufted hair-grass and reeds, less than 20%.
5. Cover of invasive trees and shrubs less than **20%**.
6. Cover of non-jointed rushes (soft, hard and compact) less than 50%.

Upland calcareous grassland

- This grassland is generally species-rich, semi-natural grassland, usually dominated by fine-leaved grasses, on calcareous soils over Carboniferous limestone in upland areas.
- It is managed primarily by grazing.
- It often occurs in parts of large-scale enclosures with other less species-rich grassland types.
- Typical grasses include blue moor-grass, common bent, crested hair-grass, meadow oat-grass, red fescue, sheep's fescue, sweet vernal grass and quaking-grass.
- Typical wildflowers include common bird's-foot-trefoil, common rock-rose, eyebrights, fairy flax, harebell, horseshoe vetch and wild thyme.

Condition assessment

1. At least one indicator species is frequent and three are occasional (see table 6 in **Key 2b** of [Higher Level Stewardship FEP Manual](#)).
2. Cover of bare ground (including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens) less than 10%.
3. Cover of undesirable species (creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock, common ragwort, common nettle and false oat-grass) less than 10%.
4. Cover of wildflowers and sedges throughout the sward (excluding the undesirable species listed above and creeping buttercup and white clover) more than 20%.
5. Cover of herbs indicative of nutrient enrichment (daisy and creeping buttercup) less than 25%.

Lowland Heath

- Lowland heath includes dry heath, dune heath, wet heath and valley mire communities, usually below an altitude of 250 m and outside any area included in both the Severely Disadvantaged Area and Moorland Line, on acidic soils and shallow peat.
- It typically comprises heathers, gorses, fine grasses, wildflowers and lichens in a complex mosaic.
- There is usually at least 25% cover of heathers and other dwarf shrubs.

Condition assessment

1. Cover of dwarf shrubs should be between 25% and 95%, with at least two species frequent.
2. There should be a range of age classes of heather present, with cover of young (pioneer stage) heather between 10% and 15% and cover of old (late-mature/degenerate stages) between 10% and 30% .
3. Cover of undesirable species (bracken, injurious weeds and invasive non-native plants) should be less than 10%.

Lowland Fens

- The soil under fens is waterlogged, with the water table close to or above the surface for most of the year.
- They are found on flood plains, on the fringes of open water, in valleys, in basin-like depressions, and also around springs and flushes.
- They differ from blanket bogs and lowland raised bogs in that they are fed by ground water and surface water in addition to direct rainfall.
- Fens encompass a wide range of wetland plant communities on both peat and mineral soils, but typically you should find some of the following species: Bogbean Marsh pennywort, Bog-mosses, Marsh valerian, Branched bur-reed, Meadowsweet, Cottongrass, Purple-loosestrife, Common butterwort, Ragged robin, Common skullcap, Reed canary-grass, Common reed, Reedmace, Common valerian, Reed sweet-grass, Gypsywort, Sedges, Hemp-agrimony, Water forget-me-not, Lesser spearwort, Water horsetail, Marsh arrowgrass, Water mint, Marsh/fen bedstraw, Wild angelica, Marsh cinquefoil, Yellow flag, Marsh-marigold, Yellow loosestrife
- Fen often occurs in association with other semi-natural habitats, especially lowland raised bog, wet woodland, wet grassland (including purple moor-grass and rush pasture), lowland heath and open water.

Condition assessment

1. The water level and its management should result in either surface water, or the ground being wet enough for a 6-inch nail to be easily pushed in throughout the year.
2. Cover of undesirable species (common nettle, docks, creeping/ spear thistles, common ragwort and Indian (Himalayan) balsam) should be less than 10%.
3. Cover of scrub should be less than 10%.
4. Cover of bare ground should be less than 10%.
5. No more than 25% of the fen area should have a continuous cover of litter (ie dead vegetation).

Wood pasture

(The below definition differs from the HLS FEP definition in a number of important ways. Habitat registered in the Priority Habitat Inventory as Wood Pasture and Parkland will only be considered as such by Farm Wilder if the below conditions are met.)

- Wood pasture is a vegetation structure rather than a particular plant community.
- This structure consists of large, open-grown native trees at various densities alongside younger trees and saplings, in a matrix of grazed grassland, heathland and/or woodland floras.

- The habitat is grazed by sheep, ponies and/or cattle, with an uneven sward present throughout the year.
- The grassland is classified as permanent pasture or in reversion to permanent pasture.

Condition assessment criteria

1. There should be evidence of natural regeneration with young native trees and saplings present.
2. The balance between the trees, scrub and grassland should be typical of wood pasture in the local area.
3. There should be minimal bare earth and minimal evidence of poaching by livestock.
4. Standing and fallen dead trees of over 20 centimetres diameter are present, where they do not create a risk to health and safety.
5. There should be structural diversity in the sward, with areas of tussocky grass, herbs and shrubs.

Habitat for Breeding Waders

- This feature will normally occur on open fields (normally greater than 2 ha) in coastal and flood plain grazing marshes where water levels are maintained at high levels through the spring and early summer.
- At least one of the following wading bird species regularly breeds or nests in the field: curlew, redshank, snipe, lapwing and oystercatcher.

Condition assessment

1. Cover of rushes should be less than 40% and on the remainder the cover of grass or sedge tussocks should be between 5% and 60%. (A tussock is a single plant or a clump of plants at least 15 cm wide that is more than 3 cm taller than the surrounding vegetation.)
2. The average sward height during April and May should be between 5 cm and 15 cm, unless the land has been shut for hay. (The sward should consist of patches of taller and shorter vegetation.)
3. The ground is wet between March and May (so that either: water lies continually on the surface of more than 5% of the field; or a 6-inch nail can easily be pushed into the ground on more than 10% of the field).

Habitat for Breeding Cuckoos

- This feature is usually found in open wood pasture or on the moorland fringe where scattered trees are found in unenclosed rough grass and heather moorland.
- Records of breeding cuckoos within the last five years within the last five years must be available.

Condition assessment criteria

1. Pastures should be grazed to create an uneven patchwork of vegetation, with a sward height of between 10 and 40cm through the April, May and June.
2. On moorland, there should be a mosaic of grassland and heath dominated by purple moor grass, cotton grasses and fescues, heather and boggy areas
3. Trees should be retained and protected, with efforts made to allow saplings to reach maturity. Where possible, and where tree cover is limited, new broadleaved trees should be introduced, with species matched to those native to the environment.

4. No signs of burning of 'sensitive areas'. Sensitive areas comprise: thin soils (less than 5 cm deep); steep slopes (greater than a gradient of one in two); pools, wet hollows, hags and erosion gullies; areas close to watercourses (within 5 m); areas with noticeably uneven structure at a small scale (c.1 m or less, particularly very old heather stands); and severely wind-clipped vegetation (usually forming a mat less than 10 cm thick).
5. There should be a range of age classes of heather present, with cover of young (pioneer stage) heather between 10% and 15% and cover of old (late-mature/degenerate stages) between 10% and 30% .

Other Key Habitat Features

Hedgerows

Broad condition assessment for farm hedgerows, excluding those that have been planted, laid or coppiced within the last five years. Hedges should be assessed broadly and as a whole, rather than individually, and a description of the character of hedges provided, including details on species categories and hedgerow structure. Length of hedge that have been laid or coppiced in preceding 12 months should be recorded.

Condition assessment criteria

1. Height: At least 80% of hedgerows must meet a minimum threshold of 2m in height. Assess the height of the woody component of the hedgerow from the base of the stems to the top of the shoots of the woody species. This should be assessed along the whole length of the hedgerow and the most common height used. Gaps are not included, nor are hedgerow trees. Where a bank is present, the height of the bank must be excluded.
2. Width: At least 80% of hedgerows must roughly meet a minimum threshold of 1.5 m in width. Assess the width of the woody component between the shoot tips at the widest point. This should be assessed along the whole length of the hedgerow and the most common width used. Gaps are not included.
3. Gappiness: Assess the horizontal gappiness of the woody component. Gaps are defined as either complete breaks in the woody canopy of the hedgerow, or open spaces of more than one metre diameter between the bank and the canopy on trimmed hedgerows. No more than a total of 10% of the hedgerow lengths across the farm should be occupied by gaps and no one 'complete' gap should be greater than 5 m wide (this excludes access points and gates).

Ponds

Condition assessment criteria

1. There should be no obvious sign of pollution or of inappropriate quality of the water supply.
2. There should be an absence of damaging non-native plant or animal species. (Damaging plants include water fern, Australian swamp stonecrop, parrot's feather, floating pennywort and Japanese knotweed (on the bank). Damaging animals include non-native crayfish, reptiles and amphibians.)
3. The pond should not be stocked with fish or support damaging numbers of wildfowl.
4. It should experience only natural fluctuations in water levels.
5. Trees and scrub on southern bank should be controlled to allow sunlight to reach the pond

Woodland

Woodlands include areas of ancient woodland, mixed woodland, native semi-natural woodlands, shelter belts and new plantations of broadleaf trees.

Condition assessment criteria

1. The woodland must be free from damage by stock.
2. There should be no evidence of machinery damage or other mismanagement

Recommended:

1. Woodland should be managed to maintain a diverse height and age structure
2. Standing and fallen dead trees of over 20 centimetres diameter should be present, where they do not create a risk to health and safety.

Upland heath and rough grassland

Condition assessment criteria

1. Pastures should be grazed with cattle alone or cattle and sheep to create an uneven mosaic of grass, heather and bogs.
2. Trees should be retained and protected, with efforts made to allow saplings to reach maturity. Where possible, and where tree cover is limited, new broadleaved trees should be introduced, with species matched to those native to the environment.
3. No signs of burning of 'sensitive areas'. Sensitive areas comprise: thin soils (less than 5 cm deep); steep slopes (greater than a gradient of one in two); pools, wet hollows, hags and erosion gullies; areas close to watercourses (within 5 m); areas with noticeably uneven structure at a small scale (c.1 m or less, particularly very old heather stands); and severely wind-clipped vegetation (usually forming a mat less than 10 cm thick).
4. In areas of dry heath in a burning rotation (that is, excluding sensitive areas and other no-burn or unburnt areas), a range of age classes of heather present, with the proportion of young (pioneer stage) heather between 10% and 50% and of old (late-mature/degenerate stage) heather at least 10% (see Figure 6).
5. No more than 33% of heather shoots should be grazed (when assessed between February and April), or flowering heather plants are at least frequent in autumn.

Wet grassland of conservation importance

Condition assessment criteria

1. Pastures should be grazed with cattle or ponies to create an uneven patchwork of vegetation, broadly between 8 and 25cm.
2. Cover of undesirable species (creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock, common nettle, cow parsley, marsh thistle) less than 10%.
3. Cover of large sedge species less than 30%, and cover of large grasses such as tufted hair-grass and reeds, less than 20%.
4. Cover of invasive trees and shrubs less than **25%**.
5. Cover of non-jointed rushes (soft, hard and compact) less than 50%.