



A Guide to Good Practice

# Agri-environment Schemes

On Upland and Moorland  
Commons

## Summary



The Federation of Yorkshire Commoners and Moorland Graziers aims:

1. To be a representative voice to support and protect the commons
2. To support better collaboration amongst commoners
3. To ensure that hill farming on common land is a worthwhile and viable activity
4. To promote positive management of the environment by commoners
5. To improve public understanding of the commons
6. To these ends, to engage with all interested parties to put forward the case of the commoners in a vigorous and constructive manner.

The Federation has prepared a series of 'Guides to Good Practice' which are intended to help commoners to deal with selected key issues. The Guides aim to share experience from different commons and to help commoners understand how others approach key issues.

Guides to Good Practice have been prepared for the following issues:

Vegetation Management

Management Planning

Agri-environment Schemes

Marketing

Each 'Guide to Good Practice' generally consists of a 2 page summary together with the main guide.

It is intended that the Guides will be updated on a regular basis, as new information is gathered and new policies or advice are introduced. Please contact the administrator of the Federation with any comments or suggestions.

The other Guides are available from:

Miss M Gibson, Administrator, Federation of Yorkshire Commoners and Moorland Graziers, 2 Woodland Dell, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7 6NJ

**This is the summary of a guide which is intended as a useful source of advice and information for members of the Federation of Yorkshire Commoners and Moorland Graziers, and others, who are considering entering into an Environmental Stewardship agreement and hopes to assist the decision making process.**

- 1.Environmental Stewardship was introduced in 2005 and replaces the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS), Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) scheme and Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES).**

There are two levels of Environmental Stewardship: Entry and Higher level (see below). The schemes hope to secure widespread environmental benefits and promise to be more accessible and flexible than the former Agri-Environment schemes.

- 2.The Entry Level Scheme (ELS) and the Organic Entry Level Scheme (OELS) are whole farm schemes open to all farmers and land managers.**

Acceptance will be guaranteed providing you can meet the scheme requirements. The ELS aims to encourage large numbers of farmers to deliver simple but effective environmental management.

- 3.The Higher Level Scheme (HLS) aims to deliver significant environmental benefits in high priority situations and areas.**

The HLS is discretionary and concentrates on the more complex types of management where land managers need advice and support and where agreements need to be tailored to local circumstances.

**4. Environmental Stewardship may offer commoners and graziers a chance to increase their economic viability.**

The Entry Level Scheme is based on a simple scale of points = pounds, whereas under the Higher Level Scheme payments are made according to the measures undertaken.

ELS / OELS measures include management of moorland and rough grazing and stone wall protection and maintenance. HLS measures include maintenance of moorland, restoration of moorland, maintenance of rough grazing for birds and seasonal livestock exclusion. There are also capital payments for e.g. wall restoration and grip blocking

**5. Explore the options available under Environmental Stewardship and the funds available.**

Get in touch with your Rural Development Service advisor to determine what options are available for your particular common and what the payments will be.

**6. Decide on the most practical and profitable options.**

In deciding which options to agree to you should decide if the changes that need to be made fit in with your long term plans and are likely to benefit you financially. For example, some options may require the off-wintering of sheep- in which case sufficient off-wintering must be available. You should also consider if you think the payments are worthwhile in terms of workload.

**7. There are many issues to discuss including how payments are going to be divided amongst commoners and others with rights to the land.**

Payments for graziers will usually be divided according to the number of rights. However, there may be Commoners who do not use their Common Rights and turn sheep out onto the moor. Non-graziers should be included in negotiations as it is preferable to have all owners of rights signing up to the agreement. Other issues include collaboration with neighbouring commons.

**8. Allow plenty of time for negotiations and discussions.**

The process of discussing and resolving all the issues surrounding Environmental Stewardship, submitting your application and having it accepted can be time consuming. Being flexible, and involving your Rural Development Service Advisor from the outset will allow negotiations to proceed at a quicker pace.

**9. The Federation of Commoners and Moorland Graziers can advise on how to proceed and arrange to bring people together for discussions.**

The Federation is there to help in discussions with your fellow commoners and graziers and your Rural Development Service Advisor.

The full guide is available from: The Administrator, Federation of Yorkshire Commoners and Moorland Graziers, 2 Woodland Dell, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7 6NJ.