

SOIL ASSOCIATION ORGANIC STANDARDS

APRIL 2005

4.5 Environmental management and conservation

4.5.1

Your management should develop a healthy and productive farm that encourages a balanced and varied farm ecosystem which coexists with natural systems.

4.5.2

You should:

- apply high standards of conservation management throughout your holding to conserve and enhance:
 - i. landscape features
 - ii. habitats, and
 - iii. wild plant and animal species
- co-operate with statutory and voluntary conservation agencies in surveying, recording and managing the wildlife and conservation features of the farm
- carry out creative conservation projects, but without damaging existing sites of conservation value, and
- create wildlife corridors to link habitats, for example making continuous semi-natural habitats containing hedgerows, field margins and verges.

Note – to do this you should be willing to consult appropriate conservation bodies.

4.5.3

You must:

- meet the terms of all legal and statutory requirements regarding the wider environment at all times, and
- maintain public rights of way.

4.5.4

You must not, without our permission or the permission of the relevant statutory conservation agency:

- plough, cultivate, re-seed or drain any area of your holding that the County Wildlife Trust or County Environment Records Centre has identified as 'regionally or locally important wildlife sites', or
- carry out any operations that damage or are likely to damage any designated or candidate statutory 'recognised sites' on your holding.

We will refuse your application for certification if you have knowingly done this within the five years before your application.

The following explains recognised sites.

Statutory recognised sites

These have legal restrictions on site management:

- internationally important wildlife site
- special protection area (EU birds directive)
- special area of conservation (EU habitats directive)
- RAMSAR site (convention on wetlands of international importance)
- nationally important wildlife site
- site of special scientific interest (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)
- nationally important archaeological site*
- scheduled ancient monument (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979).*

Bodies that designate and monitor the sites are:

- English Nature
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Scottish National Heritage
- *English Heritage
- *Welsh Historic Monuments, and
- *Historic Scotland.

Non-statutory recognised sites

Regionally or locally important wildlife sites (these may be called wildlife site, site of nature conservation importance or site of importance for nature conservation). These have no legal restrictions on site management.

The bodies that designate and monitor the sites are the Local Wildlife Trusts (office addresses can be obtained from The Wildlife Trusts, The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark NG24 1WT. T 01636 677711).

4.5.5

You must not:

- clear vegetation by burning
- burn straw, cereal waste or stubble.