

Government Rules Relaxed to Allow Farmers to cut or graze diverse Environmental Margins & Mixtures in face of the current drought conditions



Last week, Defra set out more support for farmers to help them deal with the impacts of the exceptionally dry weather. Rules have been relaxed to allow farmers to cut or graze areas of land set aside in their Countryside Stewardship or Environmental Stewardship schemes to help ease shortages of bedding, fodder, grazing or forage crops for livestock, in ways that limit environmental impact. A full list of the easements has been published by the Rural Payment Agency (RPA) and includes steps, such as allowing 'buffer strips' and field corners to be cut early.

These mixes are predominantly diverse, multi-species mixes of plants which have defied the drought thanks to their deep-rooted nature. We have had many customers reporting that their herbal leys and GS4 mixtures (which they've always been able to graze) are the only green forage left on their farms. As we often say, the 'proof is in the pudding' and this is yet more evidence that shows that diversity means resilience.

Guidance for farmers in hot and dry weather has also been made available to inform farmers how to record the adjustments they have made. The changes came into effect from 17th August and last until the end of 2022

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