

## DEFRA Sustainable Farming Incentive *Arable and Horticultural Soils Standard (England)*

**Applications:** To be rolling applications and opened in June 2022.

**Eligible:** Arable, field vegetables, horticultural. If your application includes SSSI land, you will need consent from Natural England. Land eligible for Basic Payments and over 5ha. Areas of peat soils greater than 20% soil organic matter to a depth of 40cm or more.

**Ineligible:** Arable Land cover that does NOT consist of: permanent crops (only perennial crops), other (non-agricultural) – Drain/Ditch/Dyke on a boundary, and other (non-agricultural) – Track – natural surface.

Introductory	Intermediate	Advanced
£22/ha pa.	£40/ha pa.	
<p><b>Action 1: Carry out a soil assessment and produce a soil management plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use the soil management plan to identify ways to improve soil health.</li> <li>● To help improve data on the national state of soils, some information will have to be provided to Defra including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ basic information from your soil assessment,</li> <li>○ soil organic matter test results.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Produce the plan in the first year of agreement and review it annually, adding any new soil analysis you undertake.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 1: Same as introductory</b></p>	<p><i>To be rolled out in 2023 onwards</i></p>
<p><b>Action 2: Test soil organic matter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure all land entered into the Standard is tested for soil organic matter (SOM) within the last 5 years - needs to be completed within the first year of SFI being entered into.</li> <li>● Keep record of your SOM tests and provide them when Defra asks for them.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 2: Same as introductory</b></p>	
<p><b>Action 3: Add soil organic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Take measures to improve soil health by adding to the organic content of soil on all land parcels entered into the Standard over the course of the 3-year agreement.</li> <li>● Measures taken on every land parcel in the standard at least once during the 3-year agreement (such as part of crop rotations).</li> </ul> <p>Adding organic matter to soil may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ apply organic matter or manure,</li> <li>○ use green manures, catch crops or cover crops,</li> <li>○ chopping and leaving (or incorporating) straw,</li> <li>○ introducing grass or herbal leys into an arable rotation,</li> <li>○ including legume species or legume rich mixes in rotations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 3: Same as introductory</b></p>	<p><i>Expected to include no-tillage techniques.</i></p>
<p><b>Action 4: Winter cover</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure at least 70% of the total land entered into the standard has green cover over the winter months. No land at high risk of erosion or runoff should be left bare over the winter months.</li> </ul> <p>Ways green cover can be achieved include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ autumn-sown crops,</li> <li>○ establishing a quick-growing cover crop,</li> <li>○ or leaving weedy stubbles in place over winter.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Permissible to destroy the cover crop before the end of February to establish an early sown spring crop where ground conditions allow, but can be no more than 6 weeks before establishment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 4: Winter cover</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure at least 50% of the total land entered into the standard has green cover over the winter months. No land at high risk of erosion or runoff should be left bare over the winter months.</li> <li>● Ensure at least 20% of additional land entered into the standard has a multi-species cover crop. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multi-species cover crops are a mix of brassicas, legumes, grasses and cereals, grown together on the same area of land. You can choose the plant types and the proportion of each plant type that works for your farm.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	