

DEFRA Sustainable Farming Incentive *Improved Grassland Soils Standard* (England)

Eligible: All grassland that meets the definition of improved grassland (the sward composition should include at least 2 of the following: more than 30% cover of rye-grasses and white clover, up to 8 species per m², including grasses, and/or less than 10% cover of wildflowers and sedges, excluding white clover, creeping buttercup, docks, thistles and ragwort). **Ineligible:** Sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) and areas of peat soils greater than 20% soil organic matter to a depth of 40cm or more.

Introductory	Intermediate	Advanced
£26/ha pa.	£44/ha pa.	£70/ha pa.
<p>Carry out a soil assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first year, across all land, assess: soil texture, drainage, slope, connectivity to a waterbody or sensitive habitat. • Record, keep observations, review every 2 years. • Every year, on at least 20% of the land, assess: soil structure, biological indicators (e.g. earthworm count), analyse soil organic matter. 	<p>Carry out a soil assessment.</p>	<p>Carry out a soil assessment.</p>
<p>Improve soil structure by alleviating compaction. Measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grassland aeration, • sub-soiling, • additions of organic matter, • natural soil recovery through resting the field. 	<p>Improve soil structure by alleviating compaction.</p>	<p>Improve soil structure by alleviating compaction. Take measures to alleviate soil compaction identified in the soil assessment and Soil Management Plan.</p>
<p>Add or retain a mix of legumes, herbs and grasses (5% area).</p>	<p>Add or retain a mix of legumes, herbs and grasses (10% area).</p>	<p>Add or retain a mix of legumes, herbs and grasses (15% area).</p>
<p>Maintain permanent grassland on land at risk of erosion or surface run-off (5% area). Only re-seed by direct drilling or over-sowing.</p> <p>Targeted at land at the highest risk of erosion or surface runoff identified in the soil assessment.</p>	<p>Maintain permanent grassland on land at risk of erosion or surface run-off (10% area).</p> <p>Targeted at land at risk of erosion or surface runoff identified in the soil assessment.</p>	<p>Maintain permanent grassland on land at risk of erosion or surface run-off (15% area).</p> <p>Targeted at land at risk of erosion and surface runoff identified in the soil assessment.</p>
<p>Manage stocking density on grassland at risk of erosion or surface run-off (5% area). Reduce stocking density or remove livestock when soils are wet.</p> <p>Targeted at land at the highest risk of erosion or surface runoff identified in the soil assessment.</p>	<p>Manage stocking density on grassland at risk of erosion or surface run-off (10% area).</p> <p>Targeted at land at risk of erosion or surface runoff identified in the soil assessment.</p>	<p>Manage stocking density on grassland at risk of erosion or surface run-off (15% area).</p> <p>Targeted at land at risk of erosion and surface runoff identified in the soil assessment.</p>
		<p>Create a soil management plan. Produce this in the first year of your agreement to identify and action priorities to improve soil structure, soil carbon storage and soil biology and avoid and alleviate soil compaction. This should build on the soil assessments and include soil respiration or microorganism assessments. You must review the plan every 2 years.</p>

(latest update [6th August 2021](#))