

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

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

**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 m<sup>2</sup>, including grasses, and/or less than 10% cover of wildflowers and sedges, excluding white clover, creeping buttercup, docks, thistles and ragwort). Land that is eligible for Basic Payments and over 5ha.

**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
£28/ha pa.	£58/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>If an analysis for some or all land has not been done yet, it will need to be done for this land within the first year of the SFI agreement.</li> <li>Use the soil management plan to identify ways to improve the health of soil. Produce the plan in the first year of agreement and review it annually, adding in any new soil analysis undertaken.</li> </ul>	<b>Action 1: Same as introductory</b>	<i>To be rolled out in 2023 onwards</i>
<p><b>Action 2: Test soil organic matter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all land entered into the Standard has been tested for soil organic matter (SOM) within the last 5 years - if land parcels have not been tested already, this needs to be completed within the first year of SFI being entered into.</li> <li>The results are to inform soil management practices and will be collected by Defra to monitor addition of organic matter.</li> <li>You must keep a record of your SOM tests and provide them when Defra asks for them.</li> </ul>	<b>Action 2: Same as introductory</b>	
<p><b>Action 3: Minimise bare ground over winter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure no more than 5% of the total land entered into the Standard is left bare (or becomes bare) over the winter months.</li> <li>No land at high risk of erosion or runoff should be left bare over the winter months, from the start of December till the end of February.</li> </ul> <p>Methods to ensure this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early establishment of re-seeds,</li> <li>preventing livestock poaching wet ground,</li> <li>sensitive management of supplementary livestock feeding.</li> </ul>	<b>Action 3: Same as introductory</b>	
	<p><b>Action 4: Establish or maintain herbal leys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You must establish and maintain herbal leys with a mixture of grasses, legumes, herbs and wildflowers on at least 15% of the land entered into this level of the standard. You can maintain an existing herbal ley to meet this.</li> </ul>	

(latest update [30th March 2022](#))