

7 Farming and Environmental Stewardship



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A key objective of the National Forest Strategy 2004 – 2014 is to encourage diversification of farmland to Forest-related uses, including woodland, biodiversity, recreation and tourism. This is critical to the achievement of the Forest and it provides new environmental and economic opportunities for landowners. This indicator monitors the take-up of agri-environment schemes and the impact of National Forest grant schemes for agricultural diversification.

AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEMES

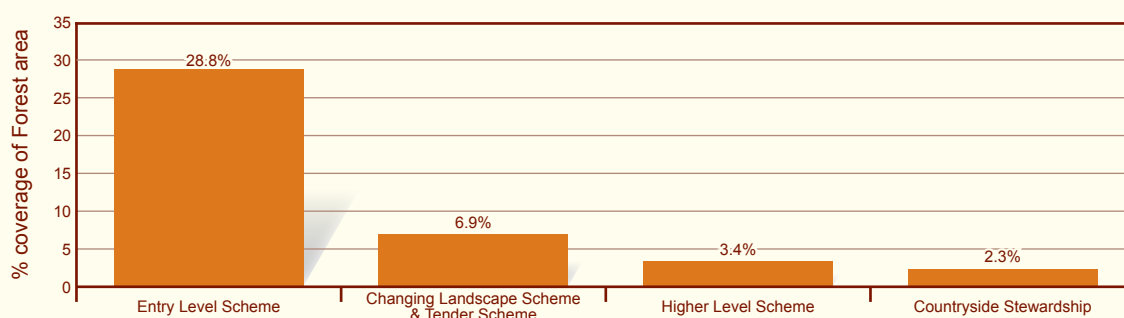
- Improvements in the format of data provided by Natural England have allowed statistics published in the 2007 Sustainable Development report to be revised, providing more accurate figures for the area of Entry Level (ELS) and Higher Level (HLS) Schemes in the Forest.
- Since 2005, 14,499ha of ELS* have been taken up¹, equivalent to 28.8% of the Forest area. This is lower than the current take-up across England (40.6%)², which is to be expected as woodland creation schemes predominate in The National Forest.
- Since 2007 the take-up of HLS* has increased, with significant new schemes at Calke Abbey and St. George's Park. The area covered by HLS is now 1,727ha¹ (3.4% of the Forest area). This is lower than the national average of 5.8% across England².
- In 2010, 1,138ha of land were under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, covering 2.3% of the Forest area. In comparison, Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Area Schemes covered 5.4% of England².

* Figures include the Organic Entry Level Stewardship Scheme (OELS).

NATIONAL FOREST GRANT SCHEMES

- From 1995 to 2010 the National Forest Company and Forestry Commission have supported 204 farm-based Changing Landscapes Schemes (CLS) and former Tender Schemes (TS)³. These have diversified 3,487ha of farmland to Forest-related uses, covering 6.9% of the Forest area.
- 24 new schemes have been developed since 2006.

Land covered by agricultural diversification schemes 2010



* ACTION:

- 1) Continue to work with landowners and partner organisations to achieve Forest-related agricultural diversification, including increased take-up of HLS.
- 2) Monitor activity annually.

DATA SOURCES:

- 1) Defra agri-environment scheme figures [2010].
- 2) Based on Natural England statistics for October 2010.
- 3) NFC annual monitoring [2010].

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