

# Getting the most out of Ecological Focus Areas with



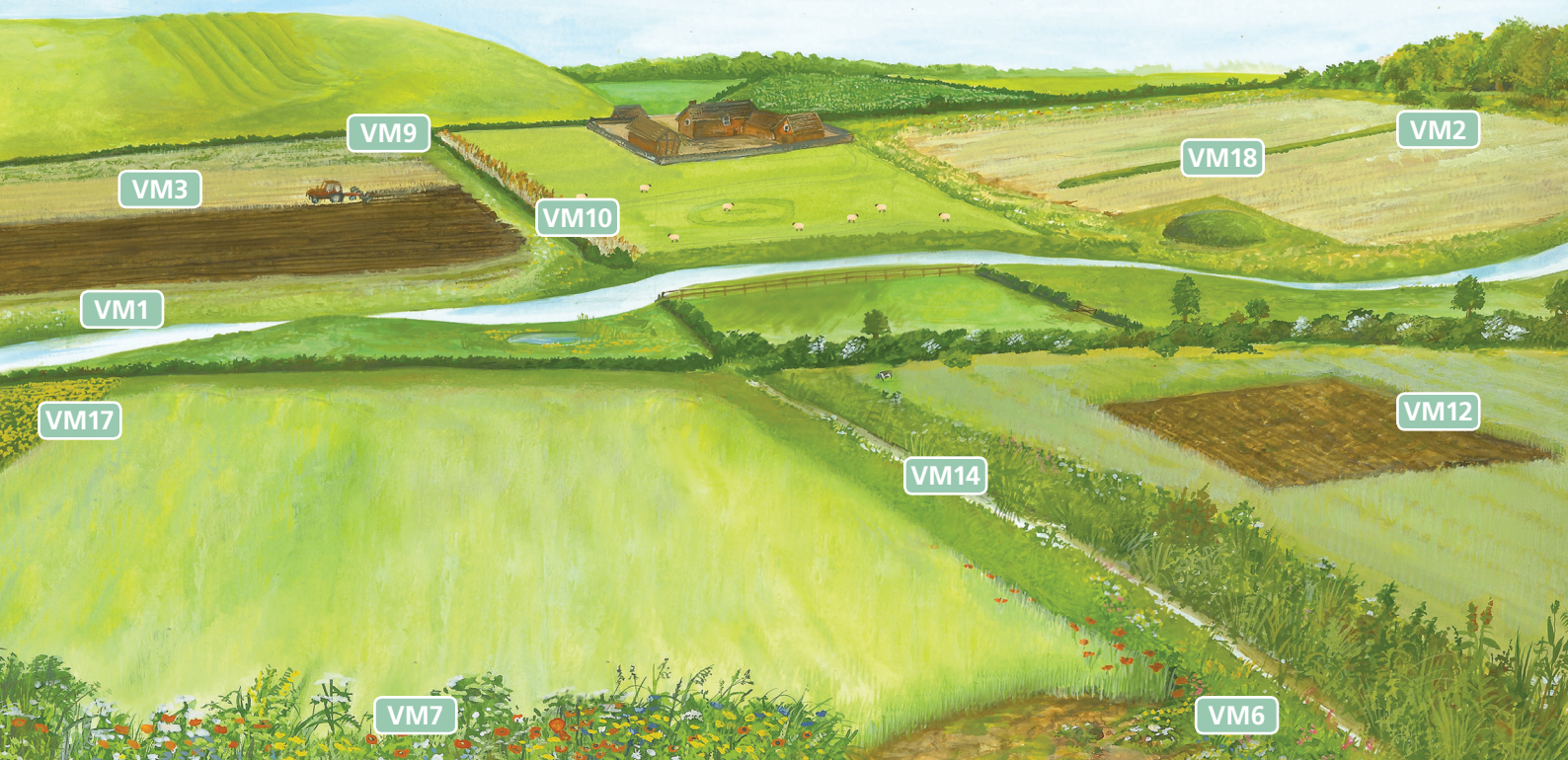
# Voluntary Measures

**CFE Voluntary Measures (VMs) can enhance your EFA fallow land to benefit wildlife and protect water courses.**

Field corners and field margins that are out of production could count towards Greening requirements on your farm as well as benefitting wildlife. Using these areas could also make business sense as such marginal land is likely to cost money and time to make it productive. The wildlife benefit can be maximised by sowing a mix of pollen and nectar flowers or a wild bird seed that will support pollinators and farmland birds.

EFAs must be on arable land and, to count as an EFA feature, a buffer strip must have a minimum width of one metre and a cross compliance buffer can count as an EFA. If an existing grass strip is wider than the cross compliance strip, consider counting the first metre as an EFA buffer strip and the extra area as EFA fallow land. This must meet the rules for EFAs and cross-compliance, as well as any existing stewardship management requirements. You should always consult the EFA rules which can be found at [www.gov.uk/cap-reform](http://www.gov.uk/cap-reform). Retaining existing buffer strips alongside rivers and ponds will protect water quality and count towards EFA requirement.

See over for the in-field CFE VMs that can be included on fallow EFA and can benefit wildlife or help to protect watercourses.



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Correct at time of LAMMA (January 2015)

Voluntary Measure	Benefit Wildlife	Protect Water Courses	TOP TIP	Business Benefit
<b>VM1: Grass strips next to a watercourse or pond</b>		✓	<p>Install at least 6m widths to protect watercourses on your farm.</p> <p>Avoid driving on these strips as this could increase compaction</p>	<p>Prevents spray drift into watercourses</p> <p>Reducing the risk of pollution to water can reduce the need for regulation</p> <p>Perennial grass cover prevents annual weeds from building up</p>
<b>VM2: In-field grass strips to avoid erosion</b>		✓	<p>Install at least 3m widths.</p> <p>Avoid driving on strips as this could increase compaction</p>	<p>Avoids erosion, and keeps soil in the field</p>
<b>VM6: Wildflower mix</b>	✓		<p>Establish these strips next to your hedgerows, this will give access to cut hedges during the winter months and provide fantastic wildlife benefit throughout the year.</p>	<p>Helps support pollinators to benefit crops, and also encourages aphid predators</p> <p>Could help improve yield and the quality of crops</p>
<b>VM7: Pollen &amp; nectar mix</b>	✓		<p>Sow a mix with at least four nectar-rich plant species</p> <p>Cut all of area once a year and part of area twice</p>	<p>Helps support pollinators to benefit crops, and also encourages aphid predators</p> <p>Improves soil condition</p>
<b>VM8: Legume &amp; herb rich temporary grass</b>	✓		<p>There is no need to apply fertiliser, as the legumes will fix nitrogen to feed the sward</p>	<p>Helps support pollinators to benefit crops, and also encourages aphid predators</p> <p>Improves soil condition</p>
<b>VM9: Ryegrass seeds for birds</b>	✓		<p>Leave unmanaged from July to March</p>	
<b>VM10: Wild bird seed mix and maize free game strips</b>	✓		<p>Blocks or strips should be at least 6m wide</p>	<p>These areas could be used as part of game cover for shoots</p>
<b>VM12: Lapwing plot</b>	✓		<p>Keep well away from hedges</p>	<p>Can help with Blackgrass control</p>
<b>VM14: Cultivated margins</b>	✓		<p>Select lighter soils and areas known to have rare arable weeds</p> <p>Avoid watercourses and areas with pernicious weeds, e.g. ragwort, bromes, blackgrass</p> <p>Cultivate to 15cm in autumn or spring</p>	<p>Helps support pollinators to benefit crops, and also encourages aphid predators</p>
<b>VM17: Field corners</b>	✓	✓	<p>By taking difficult parts of fields out of cultivation the rest of the field can be easier to manage</p>	<p>These areas are probably the least productive or most difficult to access on the farm. Using them as EFA areas means effort can be focussed on profitable land</p>
<b>VM18: Beetle banks</b>	✓	✓	<p>The bank should be a ridge about 2m wide</p>	<p>Helps ground beetle populations that eat slugs and aphids</p> <p>Can help to reduce the impact of soil erosion on sloping fields and therefore help with the requirements of cross compliance</p>

Also consider effective management of hedgerows (including any hedgerow EFA) to benefit pollinators and other farm wildlife. For more details on hedgerow management see [www.cfeonline.org.uk/cap-greening](http://www.cfeonline.org.uk/cap-greening)

All these VMs could be used on EFA fallow land. Fallow land is arable land, including temporary grassland, that has no crop production or grazing on it. This land must be maintained in a state suitable for grazing or cultivation. To be counted toward EFA it must be in place for the whole of the fallow period (1 January to 30 June) and have a minimum width of two metres, a minimum area of 0.01ha and have no crops planted or sown on it during this period. Sowing of wild bird mixes or nectar sources is allowed in the fallow period providing it is an unharvestable mix. Fallow land can be placed adjacent to EFA buffer strips. Grass can be sown on fallow land during the fallow period as long as no agricultural production is carried out.

You should always consult the EFA rules which can be found at [www.gov.uk/cap-reform](http://www.gov.uk/cap-reform) as the rules may have changed since the publication of this leaflet