



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority





Looking to the Future: *Results Based Agri-Environment Payment Schemes (RBAPS)*

Results Based Agri-Env Payment Schemes (RBAPS)





- A pure RBAPS approach has no management prescriptions
- Uses “results criteria” to gauge the quality and condition of a habitat
- Payment rate is linked to outcomes, not management actions
- How the outcomes are achieved – and level of ambition – is up to the land manager
- Challenging because they are based on a high level of trust, understanding & liaison between the agreement holders and public authorities


 The conservation performance payment scheme for lynx (*Lynx lynx*) and wolverine (*Gulo gulo*). Operating since 2000 and ongoing.

 The Golden Eagle scheme (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Operating since 1998 and ongoing.


 Meadow Bird Agreements, operated between 2000 and 2006.

 Conservation and enhancement of species-rich grasslands in Brandenburg. Trialled in 2008 and ongoing.


 BurrenLIFE farming for conservation programme. Operating since 2010 and ongoing.

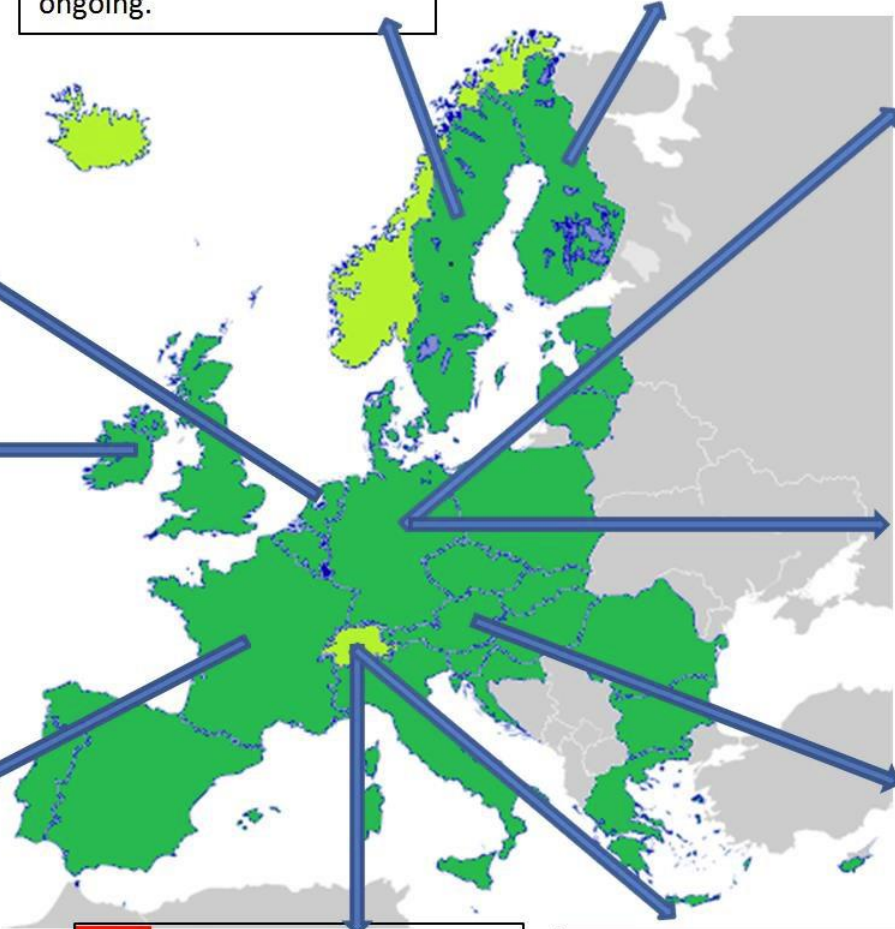
 Species rich grassland scheme in Baden-Württemberg - MEKA programme B4. Operating from 2000 and ongoing.

 Species rich grassland programme (Flowering Meadows Scheme). Operating since 2006 and ongoing.

 Merit Based Income from Sustainable Land Management in Mountain Farming. Pilot project.

 Preservation and enhancement of species rich grassland (Ecological Compensation Areas). Operating since 2001 and ongoing.

 To improve the floristic diversity of meadows and pastures and their structural diversity in the Canton Solothurn. Operating since 1995 and ongoing.



The RBAPS pilot in England



Testing RBAPS on 4 objectives in 2 contrasting situations:

- **Upland grassland – Wensleydale, North Yorkshire (with YNDPA)**
 - Habitat for breeding waders (153ha)
 - Species rich hay meadow (35ha)
 - **Arable – Norfolk & Suffolk, Eastern England**
 - Winter bird food (25ha)
 - Pollen & nectar mix (17ha)
- 3 year pilot from January 2016
 - 34 x 2yr agreements



Aims of the RBAPS pilot



- ✓ assess the environmental performance of habitats under RBAPS agreements
- ✓ compare the RBAPS approach to control sites within the pilot boundary
- ✓ test accuracy of farmer self-assessment of results
- ✓ test cost effectiveness of RBAPS approach
- ✓ explore agreement holder and stakeholder attitudes to RBAPS



Developing results criteria & methodology



Key attributes:

- ✓ representative of what we want/don't want to see
- ✓ easy to identify
- ✓ easy to survey
- ✓ present for a significant period (not transitory/short-lived)
- ✓ within farmer's control
- ✓ sensitive to management change

Positive and negative indicators give farmers a clear message on the type of management necessary to improve the score and payment

Assessment methodology must be representative of the habitat, repeatable and not subjective. Need time to develop and test.

Species rich hay meadow



Total meadow score calculated from:

1. Diagonal transect survey before haycut
- +
2. Overall assessment of damaging activities

Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Total points	40 -79 points	80-119 points	120-159 points	160-199 points	200+ points
Grant £/ha	112	186	260	334	371



Habitat for breeding waders



Total score for field calculated from individual assessments on:

- vegetation height
- cover of rush
- extent and quality of wet features
- extent of any damage to the sward

Observations on species present and their number **do not** count towards score



Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Total points	<9 points	10-19 points	20 – 29 points	30 – 39 points	40 points
Grant £/ha	35	69	104	139	174



Habitat for breeding waders - example scoring



Sward structure

Mixed sward height where between 25 - 75% of the field is short and the rest varied, grass tussocks frequently seen	10
Over 75% long. Short swards confined to very small parts of fields (eg gateways, sup feed sites only) Tussocks indistinguishable from other tall vegetation	5
Over 75% short with little variation in height. Tussocks rare or absent	5
No difference in height – either all short, or all long with no variation	1

Rush cover

10 – 30% cover, well scattered with local areas of dense rush	10
30 - 50% rush cover, large areas of dense rush and tall vegetation	5
Over 50% rush cover	1
Less than 10% rush cover	1

Early conclusions

For the **farmers**:

- Flexibility is highly valued
- Big sense of ownership & control
- Far better understanding of the ask
- Freedom outweighs risk of low/no payment (?)
- Taps into pride and competitiveness (“I want top marks”)
- Know the relative value of their site

For the **delivery organisation**:

- Shift from paperwork to fieldwork
- Easier to verify?
- More cost effective?



Looking to the future... can it be mainstreamed?



- Controls – what will they be in a post EU climate?
- Is a payment by results approach suitable for all habitats?
- How to tier payments?
- How to prevent decline?
- Designated sites?
- Scaling up – many fields, objectives, assessments...
- Landscape scale delivery

