

Fencing - Sheep Wire

Objective

To increase farmers capacity to manage grazing pressures by providing stockproof boundaries.

Background

The lack of investment in field boundaries, particularly internal boundaries, has led to a decrease in the capacity to targeted grazing within a parcel. This can lead to very uneven distributions in grazing pressure, often resulting in overgrazing at entrances, near watering points and in areas of more palatable vegetation. This in turn leads to the over dominance of rushes and brambles in less favoured areas.

Improved fencing permits the adoption of management techniques like conservation or rotational grazing that can deliver sward improvements.

Site Suitability

- This action can only be selected on parcels with an Eligible hectare > 0.
- This action is available on CP parcels only that will be claimed by the participant for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
- This action can only be selected on fields that have a scorecard submitted and is available on any scorecard.
- Fencing in general does not require planning. However, if the proposed new fencing is in a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area (SPA), a National Heritage Area (NHA) a Proposed National Heritage Area (pNHA), or any open upland or coastal (scenic) area that have not been previously fenced or enclosed, then planning permission or a declaration of exemption from the relevant local authority is required. Evidence of planning permission or a declaration of exemption may be requested before approval is issued or at the time of inspection.
- NPI Fencing Sheep Wire is restricted to existing field boundaries to make them stockproof and manage grazing in that way. It is not permitted to use this NPI to divide an existing field into two or more parts. Existing field boundaries may include, watercourses, earth banks, drains, hedgerows, stonewalls, treelines, roadways or a combination of these.
- This action may be selected on Winterage scorecard fields to divide areas with different grazing requirements (subject to planning requirements if applicable).
- Permanent fencing is not appropriate for sub dividing previously unenclosed areas.

Note 20: Where an investment has been grant aided under TAMS or any other National/EU funded Agri-environment or Capital investment Scheme from 01 January 2018, this cannot fulfil part of the requirement for this ACRES NPI action.

The provision of fencing to protect certain NPIs is a requirement of those NPIs. It is not permitted to use the Fencing-Sheep Wire NPI to fulfil a fencing requirement of another NPI action.

It is not permitted to have two separate Fencing NPI actions claimed along the same length unless they are on either side of a roadway, field boundary or watercourse.

Requirements

1. Erect sheep wire fencing which must be stockproof and be undertaken with new permanent stakes and wire.
2. To be eligible for this action, the minimum continuous length to be delivered is 10m.
3. The location and length (metres) must be identified on the LPIS parcel(s) and marked on the map submitted. Each length applied for is only eligible for one NPI payment and once claimed must be retained for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
4. Fencing posts must consist of timber or alternative metal/PVC/concrete posts, it is not permitted to attach electric wire fencing directly to trees.
5. A sheep fence requires sheep mesh topped with a single strand of wire. Each length of wire must be strained tightly between posts. The lowest line of the sheep wire mesh must be 100mm above ground level to allow adequate clearance for wildlife.
6. Where a fence is along any watercourse or drain it must be located at least 1.5 metres back from the top of the bank of the watercourse. The 1.5m set back distance for the fence must be in addition to any mandatory baseline requirements for applicable watercourses on the holding.

Additional Guidance

- On permanent watercourses the CP team may require the fence to be up to 5 m from the top of the bank where this is needed for conservation of Otters or other wildlife.
- Where the fence is near an archaeological monument, use as few fence posts as possible, ensuring that posts are cleanly driven with no requirement for excavation.