

INTRODUCTION

Most of the remaining native woodland in Wales is found on traditional farm holdings. Many sites have an abundance of interesting wildlife often alongside important archaeological remains. In the past these woodlands were managed to produce timber, firewood, charcoal and tanbark but in recent times the cycle of management was interrupted and traditional skills lost.

The recent introduction of the Single Payment Scheme has raised questions about the effects of woodlands and woodland management on the Single Farm Payment. This leaflet seeks to answer some of these questions.

WOODLANDS AND THE SINGLE PAYMENT SCHEME

Land that has generated an entitlement to the Single Payment – as it was used as forage area for CAP subsidy schemes in the reference years, but is now subject to stock exclusion under a scheme such as Tir Gofal - will be able to be used to claim the Single Payment.

Such land will have to be managed in accordance with the SPS rules and be kept in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC), also it must be possible to return its use to grazing within one year. To help clarify - land classified under the Tir Gofal prescriptions shown in Table 1 should attract the Single Payment in all but the most exceptional of circumstances.



Fig 1: New Woodland

TABLE 1: Tir Gofal Prescriptions

woodland ungrazed (1A)	rough grass margins (28)
new woodlands (37)	wildlife cover crops (30)
uncropped fallow margins (29)	new reedbeds (39)
new heathlands (41)	new saltmarsh (42)
streamside corridors (38)	

Areas of previously grazed woodland can be left ungrazed to allow young trees and other woodland plants to establish themselves. Often this will be accompanied by some active management of the woodland, such as thinning of the tree canopy to allow more light to reach the woodland floor. The construction of fences and gates and some thinning work may be eligible for grant aid under the Better Woodlands for Wales Scheme administered by Forestry Commission Wales.

In time it may be appropriate to reintroduce a level of grazing, depending on the owner's aspirations and how quickly the re-growth occurs. Many grazed woodlands were last felled during the 1940s and have re-grown as single-aged stands. In this condition they have very limited value either for shelter or as habitat for wildlife and game. These woodlands can be cold, draughty places but with the correct management they soon change and it isn't long before wildlife moves in to take advantage of the new environment.

Small areas of new planting for stock shelter or for wildlife will not compromise the Single Payment Scheme eligibility rules. Many farmers may opt for new plantings on streamside sites where the exclusion of stock from each side of the stream prevents bank erosion and also reduces contact with neighbouring stock.

Larger areas of woodland which are in the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme cannot be used in support of a claim for standard entitlement to the Single Payment. However, there are different rules for these areas if used to support set-aside entitlements, which are set out in the Welsh Assembly Government's *Set-aside under the Single Payment Scheme 2006 Explanatory Guide for Wales*.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

Woodlands which are in active management are constantly regenerating from coppice growth and seedlings. This provides a dynamic environment which enables a wide variety of plants and animals to thrive and an ideal habitat for game birds. With careful selections at the start of the process it also improves and develops the quality of the timber crop and hence its value. A network of well-managed woodlands on a farm can also enhance the capital value of the holding which can be an incentive for new broadleaf planting.

Help is available through Better Woodlands For Wales (FC) and through Tir Gofal. For further information, visit the CALU website www.calu.bangor.ac.uk, telephone 01248 680 450 or e-mail calu@bangor.ac.uk.



Fig 2: Oak woodland in Wales