Pollinators & biodiversity in CAP SPs

ENRD Pollinators & Biodiversity mini-workshop – Kaley Hart

Kaley Hart, 20 September 2022, Heerenveen

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Key ways the CAP can influence pollinators

- Preserve HNV features including those on “ordinary” farmland
- On cropped land: more fallow, more tolerance of weeds, wildflowers, less (more precise) pesticide and fertiliser, more crop rotation, more permanent ground cover
- Improve economic viability of extensive grazing systems needed to maintain habitat

Pollinator habitats and the CAP

Habitat type	CAP measures	Resources provided
Species-rich grassland	Definition of permanent grassland; AECM grassland management support; non—productive investment for restoration	Extent of grazing/natural succession; timing and style of mowing (flowering, fallow/old grass strips); nutrient load
Hedges, trees, copses	GAEC8 (landscape features), AECM support for management; non—productive investment for restoration	Availability of trees, hedges etc and specific micro-habitats (deadwood etc)
Pollinator borders/fallow/patches on arable and grassland	GAEC 8 (fallow, uncut borders, buffer strips), AECM support	Availability of food (pollen); absence of pesticide and fertiliser
Arable fallow	GAEC 8, ecoscheme, AECM	Flower (food) abundance, nesting sites with no disturbance
Heath and scrubland	Definition of permanent grassland; VCS; AECM support for clearance	Extent of grazing/natural succession
Forests and other wooded land	Investments	Habitat within forests – rides, wetlands, glades; deadwood

Examples of good practice

Training Compulsory training module on wild pollinators for organic farmers receiving support

Advice Brochures or manual for farmers
Demonstration days run by Farm Advisory Service

Innovation Ireland's promoting pollinators on farmland project – farm scoring for pollinator features – keeping existing and adding more (results-based approach)

AECM Results-based schemes which count flower density and species - rather than a set mowing date or management requirements, allowing innovation in location and management of habitats to maximise the right flowering species

Ecoscheme
German ecoscheme for melliferous fallow takes into account length of flowering season and counts sowing as an "agricultural activity" in first year to avoid damage from practices otherwise required as "maintenance"

GAEC8 Pollinator-friendly legumes in the list of N-fixing crops, seed mixes for fallow or strips
no cutting before flowering, no pesticide

..and some things which could be fine-tuned

- More explicit consideration of wild pollinators as a strategic objective with baseline, intervention logic, monitoring
- Making area-based support work on land in transition (encroaching scrub etc) – needing restoration
- How to incentivise multi-annual measures (flowering strips, fallow, temporary grassland with flowering spp) in ecoschemes
- Don’t jump to conclusions. For instance, wild pollinators around organic farms may still benefit from further support, and landscape features protected from removal may also need support for appropriate management
- Detailed scheme design e.g. making sure grassland management AECM is not too similar to normal intensive management; inflexible cutting dates (use results-based approach instead?)

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