

**CAP Reform – Cross Compliance  
Public Consultation Response Form**



Vice Chair Farm Woodland Forum  
Natural Environment Research Council  
Polaris House  
Swindon  
Wiltshire SN2 SQB  
26/6/04

Mr David de Borja,  
Cross Compliance Consultation,  
Area 5C,  
9 Millbank,  
C/O Nobel House,  
7 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR.

Dear Sirs

**CAP REFORM: CROSS COMPLIANCE CONSULTATION England**

The Farm Woodland Forum is a UK organisation representing a membership active in research, education, consultancy and working within government agencies associated with land management issues. We have responded to the CAP-GEAC consultation in Scotland, and take this opportunity to respond to the English questions. The contents of this response were debated at our annual General Meeting in Penrith yesterday. Thus the response is a few days late, but we considered it beneficial to gain a consensus of our membership prior to submission.

Because the submission is slightly late we have confined our comments to 4 questions

Yours faithfully

Gerry Lawson

Vice Chair, Farm Woodland Forum

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<b>Date of Consultation</b>	29 March 2004	<b>Date by which comments are required</b>	20 June 2004
<b>Name:</b>	GJ Lawson (Vice Chair Farm Woodland Forum)	<b>Address:</b>	NERC, International Group Polaris House, Swindon, Wiltshire

Seq	Paragraph/ Question	Comment
<u>1.</u>	<b>Qu.3- What are the main GAEC soil-related issues you encounter and would like to see covered in the guidance? Do you have any comments on the possible soil measures in Annex A?</b>	Should mention that trees have potential to a) reduce water and wind erosion of soils; b) enrich organic matter content of light soils; c) serve as nitrate filters in riparian buffers.
<u>2.</u>	<b>Qu.8- How do you think cross compliance should operate alongside agri-environment schemes, and revised good practice guidance to protect moorland habitats?</b>	Basic Agroforestry should be eligible for SP, but where system is modified for environmental benefit (e.g. use of herb rich grasses in tree strips) agri-environmental schemes are appropriate to compensate yield losses.
<u>3.</u>	<b>Qu.18- Does the proposed approach to protect permanent pasture balance environmental and agricultural requirements? Is it a workable system?</b>	Both long-established and recently planted agroforestry areas serve to protect permanent pasture and should therefore be recognised as a GAEC even if not established with FC Grants (particularly since such Grants no longer support pro-rata reduced payments for wide-spaced planting of species other than poplar).

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4.	<p><b>Qu.19- Do you have views on this approach, or suggestions for simple practicable measures that can be applied universally across England? Do you have any suggestions for a workable definition of land that is not wholly in agricultural production?</b></p>	<p>Regulation 1782/03 indicates that areas of 'woodland' should be excluded from the area of the farm eligible for SP. We are aware that EU Guidance Document (AGRI/2254/2003) recommends that 'woodland' is defined with a minimum threshold of ' 50 stems per ha'. The specific wording is 'areas of trees - particularly trees with a potential use only for wood production - inside an agricultural parcel with density of more than 50 trees/ha should, as a general rule, be considered as ineligible. Exceptions may be envisaged for tree classes of <b>mixed-cropping</b> such as orchards and for ecological/ environmental reasons. Eventual exceptions must be defined beforehand by the member states'.</p> <p>This limit is arbitrary, and could lead to widespread removal of trees in grazed or cropped areas if further clarification is not provided. There are internationally accepted definitions of 'forest' or 'forest land' used by the UN-ECE/FAO and the UNFCCC which use threshold values of crown cover, tree height at maturity, minimum area and bounding areas. However 'woodland' as used in EU Regulation (1782/03) is less well defined, and we accept that it is necessary to find an objective definition of which is easily measured and recorded by farmers in their IACS returns.</p> <p>Our Recommendations are as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'Mixed-cropping' is an imprecise term which usually refers to herbaceous mixtures – it should be replaced by in AGRI/2254/2003 by 'agroforestry'.</li> <li>2. 50 trees per ha is an acceptable lower threshold for 'woodland' for the purposes of 1782/03, but should be clarified to read “<b>farm woodland’ is a parcel with continuing agricultural production and between 50 and 200 trees/ha measuring more than 15cm diameter at breast height’</b>. Full SP would be payable in parcels with less than 50 trees. Between 50 and 400 trees the SP would be proportionately reduced to zero. Beyond 400 trees/ha the plot could be termed 'dense woodland'.</li> <li>3. The definition of GAEC should include the phrase 'agroforestry' or 'farming with trees', in either their silvo-arable or silvopastoral forms, is recognised as a good agricultural and environmental practice'.</li> </ol> <p>We feel that Recommendation 2 is 'proportionate, accountable, consistent, transparent and targeted': it allows spot checks to be made without need for monitoring of pasture production or animal numbers. We draw attention to Regulation 796/2004 Article 8: '<i>A parcel that contains trees shall be considered an agricultural parcel for the purposes of the area-related aid schemes provided that the agricultural activities... can be carried out in a similar way as on parcels without trees in the same area</i>'. With 50 trees/ha (&gt;15cm dbh) we have no evidence of a significant decline in agricultural production. Whereas 400 trees (&gt;15cm dbh), even when heavily pruned, will be at the limit for viable pasture yield, and past that for crop yields We also draw attention to the website of the SAFE project which considers silvoarable practices throughout Europe (<a href="http://www.montpellier.inra.fr/safe/">www.montpellier.inra.fr/safe/</a>)</p>

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