

Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 637/2008 and Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009

### TITLE III

## **BASIC PAYMENT SCHEME, SINGLE AREA PAYMENT SCHEME AND RELATED PAYMENTS**

### CHAPTER 3

#### *Payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment*

#### *Article 46*

#### **Ecological focus area**

1 Where the arable land of a holding covers more than 15 hectares, the farmer shall ensure that, from 1 January 2015, an area corresponding to at least 5 % of the arable land of the holding that the farmer declared in accordance with point (a) of the first subparagraph of Article 72(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 and, if they are considered to be ecological focus area by the Member State in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article, including the areas mentioned in points (c), (d), (g) and (h) of that paragraph is ecological focus area.

The percentage referred to in the first subparagraph of this paragraph shall be increased from 5 % to 7 % subject to a legislative act of the European Parliament and of the Council in accordance with Article 43(2) TFEU.

By 31 March 2017, the Commission shall present an evaluation report on the implementation of the first subparagraph of this paragraph accompanied, where appropriate, by a proposal for a legislative act as referred to in the second subparagraph.

2 By 1 August 2014, Member States shall decide that one or more of the following are to be considered to be ecological focus area:

- a land lying fallow;
- b terraces;
- c landscape features, including such features adjacent to the arable land of the holding which, by way of derogation from Article 43(1) of this Regulation, may include landscape features that are not included in the eligible area in accordance with point (c) of Article 76(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013;
- d buffer strips, including buffer strips covered by permanent grassland, provided that these are distinct from adjacent eligible agricultural area;
- e hectares of agro-forestry that receive, or have received, support under Article 44 of Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 and/or Article 23 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013;
- f strips of eligible hectares along forest edges;
- g areas with short rotation coppice with no use of mineral fertiliser and/or plant protection products;

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*Status: This is the original version as it was originally adopted in the EU. This legislation may since have been updated - see the latest available (revised) version*

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- h afforested areas referred to in point (b)(ii) of Article 32(2) of this Regulation;
- i areas with catch crops, or green cover established by the planting and germination of seeds, subject to the application of weighting factors referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article;
- j areas with nitrogen-fixing crops.

With the exception of the areas of the holding referred to in points (g) and (h) of the first subparagraph of this paragraph, the ecological focus area shall be located on the arable land of the holding. In the case of areas mentioned in points (c) and (d) of the first subparagraph of this paragraph, the ecological focus area may also be adjacent to the arable land of the holding the farmer declared in accordance with point (a) of the first subparagraph of Article 72(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013.

3 In order to simplify administration and to take account of the characteristics of the types of ecological focus area listed in the first subparagraph of paragraph 2, as well as to facilitate their measurement, Member States may, when calculating the total hectares represented by the ecological focus area of the holding, make use of the conversion and/or weighting factors set out in Annex X. If a Member State decides to consider to be ecological focus area the area under point (i) of the first subparagraph of paragraph 2 or any other area that is subject to a weighting of less than 1, the use of the weighting factors set out in Annex X shall be mandatory.

4 Paragraph 1 shall not apply to holdings:

- a where more than 75 % of the arable land is used for the production of grasses or other herbaceous forage, is land lying fallow, is used for cultivation of leguminous crops, or is subject to a combination of those uses, provided that the arable area not covered by those uses does not exceed 30 hectares;
- b where more than 75 % of the eligible agricultural area is permanent grassland, is used for the production of grasses or other herbaceous forage or for the cultivation of crops under water either for a significant part of the year or for a significant part of the crop cycle, or is subject to a combination of those uses, provided that the arable area not covered by these uses does not exceed 30 hectares.

5 Member States may decide to implement up to half of the percentage points of the ecological focus area referred to in paragraph 1 at regional level in order to obtain adjacent ecological focus areas. Member States shall designate the areas and the obligations of participating farmers or groups of farmers. The aim of the designation of areas and obligations shall be to underpin the implementation of Union policies on the environment, climate and biodiversity.

6 Member States may decide to allow farmers whose holdings are in close proximity to fulfil the obligation referred to in paragraph 1 collectively ("collective implementation"), provided that the ecological focus areas concerned are contiguous. In order to underpin the implementation of Union policies on the environment, climate and biodiversity, Member States may designate the areas on which collective implementation is possible and may impose further obligations upon farmers or groups of farmers participating in such collective implementation.

Each farmer participating in collective implementation shall ensure that at least 50 % of the area subject to the obligation in paragraph 1 is located on the land of his holding and is in accordance with the second subparagraph of paragraph 2. The number of farmers participating in such collective implementation shall not exceed ten.

7 Member States with more than 50 % of their total land surface area covered by forest may decide that paragraph 1 of this Article shall not apply to holdings situated in areas

designated by those Member States as areas facing natural constraints in accordance with point (a) or (b) of Article 32(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, provided that more than 50 % of the land surface area of the unit referred to in the second subparagraph of this paragraph is covered by forest and the ratio of forest land to agricultural land is higher than 3:1.

The area covered by forest and the ratio of forest land to agricultural land shall be assessed on an area level equivalent to the LAU2 level or on the level of another clearly delineated unit which covers a single clear contiguous geographical area having similar agricultural conditions.

8 Member States shall notify the Commission of the decisions referred to in paragraph 2 by 1 August 2014, and of any decisions referred to in paragraphs 3, 5, 6 or 7 by 1 August of the year preceding their application.

9 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 70:

- a laying down further criteria for the types of areas referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article to qualify as ecological focus area;
- b adding other types of areas than those referred to in paragraph 2 that can be taken into account for the purpose of respecting the percentage referred to in paragraph 1;
- c adapting Annex X in order to establish the conversion and weighting factors referred to in paragraph 3 and in order to take into account the criteria and/or types of areas to be defined by the Commission under points (a) and (b) of this paragraph;
- d setting rules for the implementation referred to in paragraphs 5 and 6, including the minimum requirements on such implementation;
- e establishing the framework within which Member States are to define the criteria to be met by holdings in order to be considered to be in close proximity for the purposes of paragraph 6;
- f establishing the methods for determination of the percentage of total land surface area covered by forest and the ratio of forest land to agricultural land referred to in paragraph 7.