



oakbank

CREATING THE PERFECT HABITAT

OAKBANK E-NEWS FEBRUARY 2025



STEWARDSHIP REMINDERS

CS/SFI - AB1/CAHL1 (POLLEN & NECTAR / NECTAR FLOWER MIX)

if you haven't done so already you have until 15th March to graze or 30th March to cut your nectar flower plots.

BASIC OVERWINTERED STUBBLES AB2/AHW6

can be returned to the farm rotation from 15th February.

NESTING PLOTS FOR LAPWING AND STONE CURLEW AB5/AHW5

rough cultivated area must be created by 20th March.

WINTER BIRD FOOD AB9/CAHL2

Please leave all winter bird food plots until at least mid-February before flailing off.

UNHARVESTED CEREAL HEADLANDS AB10/AHW9

last year's crop can be destroyed from 15th February and new plots established between Feb and April.

CULTIVATED AREAS FOR ARABLE PLANTS AB11/AHW11

cultivate between Feb and April (or Sept – Nov).

SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING EF23/HF24 & AB12/AHW2

continues through February.

MANAGING FLORISTIC MARGINS

whether in an agreement or not the cutting of floristic plots and margins can be done in February. If you weren't able to cut and remove the cuttings in the autumn, Feb and March are good months to flail as the stems of the plants are woody and shatter rather than forming a green mulch. Ensure soil conditions allow you to travel without cutting up the ground (heavy frost or a week of dry weather) and use a flail rather than rotary mower.

GAME CROPS IN FEBRUARY

bearing in mind February is one of the toughest months for farmland birds please don't flail off all of your game crops as even a narrow strip will provide some foraging area. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR MISCANTHUS. You must leave the miscanthus 'canes' to completely senesce as the energy from the stems is transferred down to the rhizome. We suggest waiting until mid-March before flailing miscanthus and then spray off any weeds with glyphosate at the beginning of April. Also do not try and work the ground until it has dried out considerably or you will destroy the soil structure.

COVER CROPS

If you have an over-winter cover crop, if you haven't done so already, now would be a good time to start planning its destruction. On heavy soils in particular, plants residue can sit and lay wet, taking a long time to break down and potentially cause issues when it comes to drilling your spring crop. If your cover crop is in stewardship, you cannot destroy it any earlier than 6 weeks before your planned drilling date.



BIG FARMLAND BIRD COUNT

a reminder that the BFBC is 7th–23rd Feb <https://www.bfbc.org.uk/>. This month is a particularly good time to listen out for species such as Song Thrush, Dunnock and Robin.

WOODLAND & TREES

TREE & WOODLAND PLANTING

Whilst the winter marches on, there is still plenty of time to plant trees and woodland. The traditional planting season used to be November through to the end of February, using bare root stock, however the increased availability of cell grown trees has changed this planting window. Through the use of cell grown trees (each tree comes with its own 'cell' of compost, including fertiliser, encompassing its root system), it is perfectly acceptable to plant out into mid spring, as long as the weather is suitable. Cells allow for speedier and easier planting than bare root trees, but the main bonus is that the success rate is better, and they are not governed by the growing season, which determines when bare root plants can be lifted out of the ground. If you want further advice and assistance in securing cell grown planting stock and associated tree shelters etc. please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

NEW STARTER

This month we welcome Harold Makant to the Oakbank Team. Harold joins us from Natural England, where he has been Strategic Policy and Land Management Advisor. Harold is incredibly well-respected as a trusted advisor on many farms and estates in the South of England, and brings with him years of experience and contacts, working within government and on farm. He will be based at home in Newbury and will be looking after clients from the Midlands to the South-West.



SHOWS AND EVENTS IN FEBRUARY / MARCH

We are exhibiting at the **Farm Business Resilience conference** on **Thursday 6th February** at The Collaboration Centre, Colworth Science Park, Colworth Road, Sharnbrook, MK44 1ET. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/farm-business-resilience-2025-markets-and-environmental-challenges-tickets-1106483043569>

We are also exhibiting at the **Norfolk Farming Conference** on **Tuesday 11th February** at The Royal Norfolk Show Ground <https://www.rnaa.org.uk/events/norfolk-farming-conference/>

And at the **Lincolnshire Farming Conference** on **Thursday 13th February** at The Lincolnshire Show Ground <https://lincolnshireshowground.co.uk/whats-on/event/lincolnshire-farming-conference-2025-13-02-2025>

In addition, we are running three '**Oakbank Spring Updates**' and all our enews subscribers are welcome to attend. Covering all things SFI and Higher Tier, Woodland opportunities, and seed for the spring.

Join us for breakfast rolls on any of the three dates below.

27th Feb - Essex - The Room in the Rodings

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/oakbank-spring-update-tickets-1219620149699?aff=oddtcreator>

6th March - Suffolk - Stowmarket Golf Club

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1229987237939?aff=oddtcreator>

13th March - Norfolk - Dereham Town Football Club

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1229986415479?aff=oddtcreator>

2025 MAGAZINE AND PRODUCT GUIDE

we will be sending out our magazine later this month. If you have changed your mailing address or would like a copy for someone else, please let us know asap.

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