

ISH2 Plant Residues for Soil Health

Why is this good for water quality?

The aim

Direct drilling into green manure improves the soil ecosystem, reduces soil erosion, maintains and enhances soil carbon sequestration, and helps to conserve soil moisture. As the green manure decomposes, it releases nutrients which can reduce the need for synthetic fertilisers. Direct drilling also helps to reduce movement of the soil thereby reducing soil compaction. Collectively, this option reduces erosion and run off to nearby water sources.

Why is this good for my farm?

Direct drilling reduces labour and machinery costs. It also promotes soil stability, fertility and porosity, and can help to control weeds in some situations, reducing reliance on both fertilisers and pesticide products in the long term. Reducing the need for the addition of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides supports a more cost-effective and resilient crop production.

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Payment Rate: £150/ha/yr

Managing crop residue involves several practices, including: incorporating crop residue, leaving crop residue on the soil surface, and using crop residue as mulch or sowing drilling directly into green manures.

Specification

- Establish crops by drilling into green manures or significant crop residues retained after harvest, you should not remove more than 1/3 of crop residue as part of this option.
- The green manure must be a mixture with proven soil health properties
- The crop residue must be managed in a way to minimise chemical usage or negative impacts
- Terminate green manures by rolling, crimping, or using herbicides. In pesticide priority catchments herbicides cannot be used for termination.
- Direct drill the following crop into the green manure or crop residue using an appropriate method and equipment.
- Direct drilling into green manure works best in relatively clean, weed-free stubble and can be challenging in dry, hard soils.
- Rotational option, annual payment for an area that can be moved each year.
- Applicants are encouraged to indicate the likely hectarage of the option for subsequent years to aid in the assessment of your application. If possible, hectarages should be broadly consistent between years
- Significant changes in the area of the option from that applied for in year 1 are not guaranteed funding and should be first be discussed with your Agricultural advisor.
- Applicants are expected to complete the action in a way that could be reasonably expected to achieve the actions aim.

Evidence to apply

- Maps detailing the proposed locations
- Images to show the green manure that will be drilled into
- Seed mix evidence for the green manure being drilled into

Evidence to claim

- Evidence of termination method used
- Images to show emerging crop from green manure