

High cut in clover grass

Goal	Establishment of additional foraging- and breeding habitat
Target group	Any farmer who grows clover grass
Description of the measure	<p>In cultivation of legume-grass-mixtures, clover or Lucerne in a crop rotation of 1–5 years. Composition is not defined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High cut of clover grass on at least 14 cm, if possible on the whole area. Please always consider the adjustments on the different mowing devices. On bumpy terrain, the effective space between soil and mower may differ from meter to meter. For ground nesting birds, however, it is inevitable to mow everywhere on at least 14cm height in order to not destroy the nesting sites. High cut already with early mowing in May. As less management as possible.
Suitable sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole farming area Bigger plots with mediate soils <p><u>Please note:</u> Very productive soils with dense and tall populations are poorly suited as breeding habitats for field birds. It is therefore not worth the high cut from a nature conservation point of view, while on poor soils a higher cut is not worthwhile from an agricultural point of view.</p>
How a good implementation looks like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area with high cut should have a minimal height of 14 cm. (implementation will only be possible to verify at certain time)
Effects on biodiversity (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)	 <p>Clover grass sites are a favorable breeding habitat for field birds such as skylark or corn bunting. Additional measures to increase the breeding success are advisable (e.g. distance to vertical structures...)</p> <p>Because of the high cut less nesting sites get destroyed</p> <p>In case of high cut already early in the year field birds are able to start earlier with the second breed</p>
	 <p>Support for insects: Lucerne and red clover are valuable nectar plants for bees, bumblebees and butterflies. Grasshoppers and other insects benefit from improved reproduction success in perennial clover grass due to missing tillage</p> <p>Insects such as grasshoppers are protected from dehydration after mowing</p>
	 <p>High cut in clover grass provides young hare with refuge</p>

Other positive effects/benefit for the farmer	This measure is included in the agri-environmental scheme of the EU and may be subsidized. For further information check the regional funding programs of the country.
Indicator/key data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of area where clover grass is cut high in relation to the total area cultivated with clover grass.
Risk and further recommendations	<p>Time of mowing determines the dominance of certain species: Red clover, e.g., becomes dominant in case of cut during flowering.</p> <p>To save insects during mowing, it is advisable to mow before 9 am or after 6 pm.</p>
Timeframe (When to start a measure and anticipated time for implementation)	When to start: with first mowing
Additional special resources/equipment/skills needed	None
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de NABU, Fact Sheets – Feldvögel, Kulturfolger der Landwirtschaft Vögel der Agrarlandschaft, NABU 2004 Stiftung Rheinische Kulturlandschaft, DBU: Abschlussbericht Maßnahmen- und Artensteckbriefe zur Förderung der Vielfalt typischer Arten und Lebensräume der Agrarlandschaften, 2018

Further information: [Knowledge Pool](#)

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for advisors of standard organisations and companies and was developed within the project LIFE Food & Biodiversity (Biodiversity in Standards and Labels of for the Food Industry). The main objective of the project is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and sourcing requirements in the food industry by helping standard organisations to integrate efficient biodiversity criteria into their schemes and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include comprehensive biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.

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