

Light fields – low seed densities

Goal

Support of wild herbs in the field
Support of food supply and breeding grounds for field birds

Short description of the measure

Sowing densities shall be reduced to 50–60 % of the conventional densities on at least one plot by one or two working width (5–6 m). Also possible and biologically particularly valuable is a larger implementation of the measure in terms of area. From an implementation width of 20m or an area-wide implementation of the measure sowing densities may only be reduced to 70-80% in order to prevent severe yield losses.



Pic. 1: Lower crop density in comparison to the rest of the plot

To promote growth of wild herbs, the farmer has to consider the following points in addition:

- No harrowing on the target area, as this could destroy the wild herbs on the field and the nests of the field birds
- No catch crop
- Grass herbicides should only be applied before March
- Usages of herbicides for broadleaf weeds should be avoided
- If possible, no N fertilizer application.

Quality elements of soundly implemented biodiversity measures

- Visually noticeable lower crop density in comparison to the rest of the plot
- During summer: presence of wild herbs

Effects on biodiversity

(ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)



Promotion of **light demanding wild herbs** (rare species are more common in winter crops): They have more light and less competition in the part of the area without sowing and can develop better there.



Promotion of the **field birds**: they avoid high growing and dense cultures. For breeding, they need light cereal stands with low height of vegetation. If wild field herbs will settle within the drill gaps then the birds will find food and can build their nests under the herbs.

	 <p>Through a wider range of flowering plants, more insects will be present.</p>
	 <p>Promotion of hare: it likes to eat herbs and finds protection within the drill gaps.</p>
Other positive effects/benefit for the farmer	<p>Cereal species and wild herbs are used to grown together on fields and developed a “plant community” whereby mutual interactions arose, e.g. increase of water availability, improvement of soil by nitrogen bonding.</p> <p>There are hints that the cereals can achieve a better nutrient intake when wild herbs are present.</p>
Indicator/key data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Total size of area (ha) with low seed densities ▪ Frequency (every year, two years etc.)
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de ▪ www.franz-projekt.de/massnahmen ▪ Information sheet “Ackerwildkräuter erhalten und fördern” - Netzwerk Blühende Landschaften www.bluehende-landschaft.de/nbl/nbl.handlungsempfehlungen/nbl.landwirtschaft/index.html ▪ www.lwl-bw.de/pb/Lde/Startseite/Unsere+Themen/Ackerwildkrautaecker ▪ BUND Naturschutz in Bayern e.V. – Ackerwildkräuter fördern – Infos und Tipps für die landwirtschaftliche Praxis ▪ BfN-Skript 351 – Ackerwildkrautschutz – Eine Bibliographie - ▪ www.schutzaecker.de ▪ 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 product and quality manager 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 [Lake Constance Foundation](#) companies and retailers to include comprehensive biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.

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