

## Increasing cultivation of spring crops

### Goal

Support of field birds

### Short description of the measure

Increasing share of spring cereals, legumes, corn and other species in the crop rotation on 20 % of arable land as a minimum.

Examples for spring crops:



Spring barley (*Hordeum vulgare*)

### Quality elements of soundly implemented biodiversity measures

### Effects on biodiversity

(ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)



Spring crops are valuable sites for **field birds** as sky larks. As the growth height is still low in May (in temperate region) and in April (in Mediterranean region), sites are light and provide breeding habitat for a longer period than winter crops do.

### Other positive effects/benefit for the farmer

Because of the late sowing date, labor peaks are avoided.

Easier and cheaper management, as, e.g., fertilization can be applied only two times a year as crops are “short-living”.

In general: Farming practices based on more than one pillar and extended crop rotation may secure farmers from yield losses due to extreme weather events and pests. It furthermore protects soils from erosion, keeps or even increases soil fertility and enhances the soil food web (bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms).

Cereal species and wild herbs are used to grow together on fields and develop a “plant community” whereby mutual interactions arise, resulting in an increase on water availability, improvement of soil by nitrogen bonding and, enhancement of the soil food web.

	There are hints that the cereals can achieve a better nutrient intake when wild herbs and/or legume companion crops (e.g. clover, medick) are present.
Indicator/key data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area cultivated with spring crops (ha)</li> </ul>
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="http://www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de">www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de</a></li> <li><a href="http://www.franz-projekt.de/massnahmen">www.franz-projekt.de/massnahmen</a></li> <li>Information sheet "Ackerwildkräuter erhalten und fördern" - Netzwerk Blühende Landschaften <a href="http://www.bluehende-landschaft.de/nbl/nbl.handlungsempfehlungen/nbl.landwirtschaft/index.html">www.bluehende-landschaft.de/nbl/nbl.handlungsempfehlungen/nbl.landwirtschaft/index.html</a></li> <li>NABU, Fact Sheets – Feldvögel, Kulturfolger der Landwirtschaft</li> <li>Vögel der Agrarlandschaft, NABU 2004</li> </ul>

## Further information: [Knowledge Pool](#)

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for product and quality managers of 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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