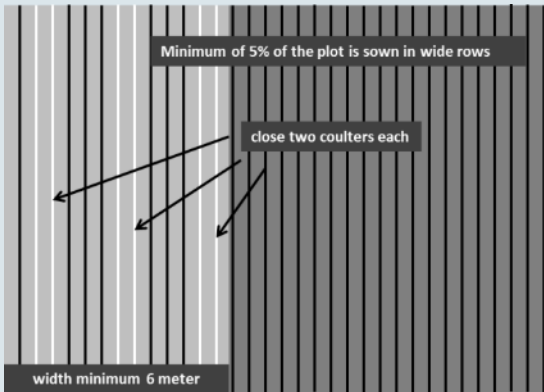






Seeding cereals in wide rows (drill gaps)

Goal	<p>Support of wild herbs in the field</p> <p>Support of food supply and breeding grounds for field birds</p>
Target group	<p>Farmers who grow any kind of arable crop, especially cereal.</p>
Description of the measure	<p>At least 5 % of the cereal plot is sown in a wide row.</p> <p>On this area, two seeding rows remain unseeded, followed by three rows seeded normal. This results in a cereal distance of about 33–39 cm and about 11–13 cm. The area shall be at least 6 m wide and directed in the driving direction. Areas with a minimum width of 20 m or an area-wide implementation of the measure are also possible and biologically particularly valuable.</p> <p>When sowing the wide row, the following should also be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No harrow, as this could destroy the wild herbs on the field and the nests of the field birds. ▪ No catch crop within the wide rows. ▪ Grass herbicides should only be applied until 31th March. ▪ Usages of herbicides for broadleaf weeds should be avoided. ▪ If possible, do not apply N fertilizer. <p>A schematic illustration showing 5 % of the plot is sown in wide rows:</p>  <p>Schematic illustration adapted from a illustration of IP Suisse (Source: www.ipsuisse.ch/CMS/ModanFileHandler.axd?DateiGUID=16668391-cb00-443f-b81f-cfef5af3efc6)</p>
Suitable sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium to good soils with relatively dense crops ▪ Winter cereals
How a good implementation looks like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parts of or the whole plot seeded in wide rows (around 35 cm, followed by 12 cm) ▪ During vegetation period: presence of wild herbs

Effects on biodiversity (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)	 <p>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.</p>
	 <p>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>
	 <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 grow together on fields and developed a “plant community” whereby symbiosis arose, e. g. increase of water availability, improvement of soil by nitrogen bonding.</p> <p>There is evidence that the cereals can achieve a better nutrient uptake when wild herbs are present.</p>
Indicator/key data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of rows with drill gaps ▪ Total size of area (m²) with wide rows
Risk and further recommendations	<p>Problem weeds such as corn thistle (<i>Cirsium arvense</i>), bearbind (<i>Convolvulus spec.</i>) and dock (<i>Rumex spec.</i>) may be combated locally with a backpack sprayer or by hand.</p> <p><u>Please note</u>: in certain cases no wild herbs will appear on the plots even though the farmer has implemented the measure in good quality. This depends on the low seed potential of wild herbs in the soil and/or in the surrounding. However, that wild herbs will not appear on the plot can only be determined after several years of implementation of the measure.</p> <p><u>In case field birds/skylarks shall be specifically promoted</u>:</p> <p>If wild herbs will not establish by their own in the drill gaps, gaps may be sown with a special seed mixture containing wild herbs in November or in February/March in winter cereals or in March in summer cereals. It is also possible to sow in catch crops to provide forage for field birds.</p>
Timeframe (When to start a measure and anticipated time for implementation)	<p>When to start: with the sowing of winter or spring cereal until harvest</p>

Additional special resources/ equipment/ skills needed	None
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maßnahmen der IP-SUISSE zur Förderung der Artenvielfalt im Ackerbau, 2011, www.ipsuisse.ch ▪ www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de ▪ www.franz-projekt.de/massnahmen ▪ "Ackerwildkräuter erhalten und fördern" - Netzwerk Blühende Landschaften www.bluehende-landschaft.de/nbl/nbl.handlungsempfehlungen/nbl.landwirtschaft/ ▪ 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 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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