

Results Based agri-environment Payment Scheme (RBPS) Arable Winter bird food & Pollen & nectar mix

Key facts:

- 13 participants in Norfolk & Suffolk
- No management prescriptions
- Outcomes based payments related to assessment scores
- Farmers receive a higher payment for achieving a higher score and providing better environmental outcomes



Photo: David Whiting, Natural England

Results so far.....

- Environmental performance is higher using a RBPS approach for both winter bird food and pollen & nectar mix
- Self-assessments agreed with Natural England adviser scores in over two-thirds of surveys
- RBPS provides motivation and encourages behavioural change
- Extreme weather did not impact the results as much as farmers feared, but the perceived risk could be a barrier to uptake
- Training and advice were well received
- Strong sense RBPS is fair and rewards knowledge, skills & effort
- Simplified results measures or proxy indicators may not correlate with the desired outcomes – more comprehensive validation is required

Design & Implementation: Conclusions from the English RBPS pilots

- RBPS motivates farmers and provides a value for money safeguard
- Proxy result indicators need extensive field testing and validation
- Use of subjective scoring measures should be limited eg % cover
- Defining a simple habitat condition assessment that satisfies the requirements of multiple target species is challenging
- Defined assessment periods are important so any verification is carried out at a similar time
- Result indicators very sensitive to weather should only be used where management interventions can be applied to influence these characteristics
- Clear safeguards are needed for exceptional weather to mitigate risk