

How to manage your Culm

- Extensive cattle grazing is best - stocking rates can vary from year to year to take into account seasonal growth and ground conditions.
- Aim for an uneven sward at the end of the grazing season, between 10-30cm (4-12 inches).
- The normal grazing season is from 1 May until the end of September.
- During some years land may be 'rested', with very low stocking rates allowing flowering plants to set seed.
- Only burn (swale) on average one third of each site or field in any one year (see also Advice note 6 - Swaling).
- Only cut scrub as necessary from part of a site each year (see also Advice note 3 - Scrub management).
- Supplements should only be fed to cattle on improved land away from watercourses to avoid damaging your wet grassland areas.
- Do not apply fertilizer (inorganic or manure).
- Do not carry out any further drainage activity. Light ditch management may be required where existing ditches have become heavily silted.



Legislation

- To avoid disturbing nesting birds scrub should be cleared outside of the breeding season – 1 March - 31 August (see Advice note 3 – Scrub management).
- The 'Heather and Grass Burning Code (2007)' – swaling is permitted between 1 November and 31 March in lowland areas – including most of the Culm area (see Advice note 6 – Swaling).
- Certain recommendations included in this leaflet may not be permitted under ELS or HLS agreements. Contact your Natural England advisor if required.

Sources of funding

- Culm grasslands can attract support from both Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship schemes (administered by Natural England, www.naturalengland.org.uk).
- The Working Wetlands Small Grant Award may be able to support Culm grassland restoration works, particularly on small sites where HLS is not available. Contact the Working Wetlands team for more details.

Sources of information

- Working Wetlands: tel 01409 221823 or email working.wetlands@devonwildlifetrust.org
- Natural England: for general enquiries about Stewardship options for your land: tel 0300 060 1118 or email iss.bristol@naturalengland.org.uk
- Well-managed Culm grasslands can be visited at Devon Wildlife Trust's Dunsdon and Volehouse Moor nature reserves, www.devonwildlifetrust.org

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The health of Culm grasslands and their wildlife relies on the continuation of livestock farming.

Without appropriate cattle or pony grazing, all Culm grasslands rapidly lose environmental condition, and can in time be lost entirely.

Culm which is managed well is not only important for wildlife, it also improves water quality in rivers by acting as a filter, removing silt and nutrients. It also acts as a sponge absorbing excessive water during periods of high rainfall, and slowly releasing it during times of drought.

Over-managed Culm grassland



In profile



Well-managed Culm grassland



Under-managed Culm grassland

