

# APPENDIX

To enable alley cropping, change the conditions of the woodland creation grant already in use. This is proposed as the simplest way to amend the current grant system to achieve the desired result; funding the trees for alley cropping. This as opposed to the original proposal for the creation of a new and separate grant.

I am unfamiliar with internal Defra processes, so cannot comment on which would be the more feasible to administer, though logic suggests amending the conditions, as opposed to starting afresh, would require fewer administrative steps.

The proposal takes as given that the panel is familiar with the body of academic evidence showing the public goods agroforestry delivers. It therefore focuses on the administrative changes necessary to facilitate the expansion of alley cropping.

There are two grants that could feasibly adapt their conditions to meet the needs of alley cropping:

1. Countryside Stewardship – Woodland Creation Grant
2. Capital Item - BN5 Hedgerow laying

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## **Woodland Creation Grant**

### **Specific conditions hindering agroforestry:**

From the conditions stated in the Woodland Creation Grant Manual, these are the problems with the existing conditions and the text suggested for change:

#### **1. Rigid demarcation between farming and forestry**

Page 13 - **3.2 Restrictions on agricultural activity in woodland areas**

*Any land subject to a Woodland Creation agreement must not be used for any agricultural activity, including grazing, for a period of at least 5 years following the final capital payment or the period of any maintenance payments – whichever is longer. Once the Woodland Creation agreement starts the land is considered non-agricultural (regardless of when the trees are planted) because this is the point at which land is set aside for non-agricultural use. Agreement holders must submit an RLE1 form to notify the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and register the land as a permanent non-agricultural area with an effective date of 1 January the following year.*

## 2. Ineligibility of nut producing varieties

Page 14 - 3.5.1 Guidelines on planting for biodiversity objectives

*The majority of new woodland should be made up of native species but can include a proportion of non-native or advancing/honorary species as follows:  
up to 20% of the species mix can be non-native  
up to 20% of the native species can be 'advancing' or 'honorary' natives.*

## 3. Minimum stand area

Page 13 - 3.4 Planting area thresholds, open space and tree specifications

Eligibility Threshold	General	Planting as part of measures for water quality or flood prevention. These lower thresholds are only applicable in exceptional and fully justified cases.
Minimum area per application	3 hectares	1 hectare
Minimum block size	0.5 hectares	0.1 hectares
Minimum width	20 metres	10 metres

Alley cropping systems typically plant the tree rows only one tree wide and therefore would not meet the minimum area block size.

### Proposed amendments to prevent this hinderance:

#### 1. Rigid demarcation between farming and forestry

##### **Proposed amendment:**

Allow the land to remain classed as agricultural if the trees were planted in the alley cropping format, defined as

- 1 to 4 tree wide rows planted continuously across arable fields with cereals cropped within the alley.
- The alley measuring between 10-50m wide.
- Minimum length of 10m.

#### 2. Ineligibility of fruit and nut producing varieties

##### **Proposed amendment:**

In the case of alley cropping applicants *only*, the following requirement is exempt:  
for the majority of new woodland should be made up of native species but can include a proportion of non-native or advancing/honorary species as follows:  
up to 20% of the species mix can be non-native

up to 20% of the native species can be 'advancing' or 'honorary' natives.  
Applicants applying to fund alley cropping can choose their preferred variety of fruit and nut tree.

### **3. Minimum stand area**

#### **Proposed amendment:**

Add to the table in section 3.4 the following:

In the case of alley cropping applicants, the minimum block stand area is:

2m wide

10m long.

20m<sup>2</sup>

Minimum spacing of 0.5m

No maximum

### **4 Clarification needed in other grants to ensure compatibility - AB1 Nectar Flower Mix**

Alongside these exact changes to the existing conditions in the Woodland Creation Grant, a clarification in the AB1 Nectar Flower Mix is requested to allow the compatibility of this grant with woodland creation. This will have the added benefit of these tree rows acting as corridors for wildlife and pollinators. It is unclear in the current framework if this would be allowed. RPA Officers and claimants should have such grey areas clarified if these two grants could be used together. This will be helpful as the AB1 Nectar Flower Mix is a way to compensate for the lost acreage during the first three years before the trees bear fruit/nuts.

The management regime, sowing in winter or late autumn and a summer cut in July, is compatible with the management of the nut orchards, as tested at Igtham Mote cobnut orchard this year.

#### **Proposed amendment:**

Include a condition to clarify that this is eligible for use between trees *within* the row.

"Eligible for sowing between trees within the row in an alley cropping system"

## Alternatives:

An alternative to the changes to the woodland creation grant outlined, is an amendment to the BN5 Hedgerow Laying capital item. The amendment proposed is to change the BN5 Hedgerow Laying capital item to allow for varieties used for fruit and nut production.

The conditions are:

*Available for Mid Tier, Higher Tier and hedgerows and boundaries grant*

*Only on planted boundary lines of shrubs that are:*

*over 20m long*

*less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base*

*formed of at least 80% native shrubs*

Proposed amendment:

Applicants applying to fund alley cropping can choose their preferred variety of fruit and nut tree and do not have to meet the following criteria:

*Only on planted boundary lines of shrubs*

*formed of at least 80% native shrubs*

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