

## 10.4 Undersown Cereals

**Definition:** undersown cereals are spring cereals, established after 15<sup>th</sup> February, which are undersown with a grass and clover ley mixture containing at least 10% clover by weight.

**Aim:** to increase the diversity of habitats and species within farming systems and provide additional habitat for a range of farmland birds, invertebrates and plants.

**Biodiversity objectives:** this option contributes to the NI Biodiversity Action Plan targets for the Irish hare, Chough, Lapwing and Yellowhammer. The NI Priority Species - Skylark, Reed bunting and Tree sparrow – will also benefit.

### Management requirements

- Must not be sited on land used to fulfil set aside requirements.
- The cereal crop must not be established before 15 February.
- The cereal seed rate must be at least 100 kg/ha.
- The cereal crop must not be harvested for 14 weeks after sowing and not before 1<sup>st</sup> August.
- The crop must be undersown with a grass and clover ley mixture containing at least 10% clover by weight. The ley must be retained until at least 15<sup>th</sup> July the following year after the crop is harvested.
- Only herbicides approved for use on cereals undersown with grass and clover may be used.
- Fertilisers, organic manures and lime applications are permitted to meet crop requirements.
- No cultivation or rolling is permitted following establishment.
- The application of insecticides, molluscicides or nematicides is not permitted.

## **Further advice**

If lapwing normally nest in your fields, establish the crop preferably before 20 April, and complete all establishment operations within 10 days. This should allow lapwing to nest successfully.

To ensure a successful reseed select an early cereal variety with a short stiff straw and sow at approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the normal seed rate. This will reduce competition with the grass and reduce lodging risk.

Herbicides, fungicides and growth regulators are permitted. However, ensure that products used are approved for use on newly sown grass and clover mixtures.

The undersown cereals option may be carried out on whole crop cereals.

Management plans are provided for  
participants in the  
**Environmentally Sensitive Areas and  
Countryside Management Schemes**

