

Option Name: Primary treatment of bracken - mechanised or chemical

Option Code: BPT

Option Payment: Year 1: £216.35 per ha

Option Aim(s): To decrease the area of bracken cover on priority habitats in semi-natural sites, therefore enhancing their biodiversity.

Scheme Applicability: Wider – EFS(W) Higher – EFS(H) Group – EFS(G)

This option is made up of: Annual Management requirements NPI (capital items)

This option is: Permanent Rotational

Option Description and Outcome: This non-productive investment (referred to as capital works) Option will reduce the cover of bracken on semi-natural habitats to increase the biodiversity value of the site. Payment for the essential capital works is included in the Option payment rate. Dense bracken frequently results in the loss of priority habitats. Control is by mechanical or chemical means.

Choice of site: 'Primary treatment of bracken - mechanised or chemical' may only be carried out in EFS(H) and EFS(G). The location and area of bracken control, type of control and method of application of herbicide (if applicable, knapsack or quad sprayer or trailed weed wiper) will be detailed in the site specific Remedial Management Plan and Remedial Management Plan map.

Essential capital works: Bracken control is considered as capital works.

Additional optional capital works available for this Option: None

Area Permitted: **Minimum** 0.01 ha **Maximum** Not Applicable*

* DAERA reserves the right to limit a Higher Level agreement value where it considers appropriate to ensure value for money.

Requirements and Controls:

Code	Non-productive investment requirements (capital works)	Control type ¹		
		Admin	CwRS	OTSC
BPT1C	Complete all 'Primary treatment of bracken - mechanised or chemical' as detailed in the site specific Remedial Management Plan in the first year of the EFS(H) or EFS(G) agreement.	✓		✓
BPT2C	Complete the claimed area of 'Primary treatment of bracken - mechanised or chemical' in the field(s) where the works have been approved.	✓		✓
BPT3C	Keep field records as required in the site specific Remedial Management Plan.	✓		✓

¹ The possible control types for each requirement may be:

'Admin' – administrative checks, 'CwRS' – Control with Remote Sensing, 'OTSC' – On-the-Spot Check

Further Advice:

Chemical control

Pesticides may only be applied to the area of 'Primary treatment of bracken - mechanised or chemical' where this is justified as part of the implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Timing of control is important for effective results. To ensure maximum absorption and translocation to the rhizome, bracken should be sprayed when the fronds are fully expanded and bright green and before any die-back occurs. This is usually mid - July to late - August, depending on altitude and season. Rain within 24 hours of spraying will reduce effectiveness.

For further information on the correct way to use pesticides, please refer to the attached link:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/code-practice-using-plant-protection-products>

Mechanical control

Cutting with a flail mower twice during the growing season has proved to be an effective method of control. Rolling is also an effective method of control and should take place at least twice in the growing season as it damages the stems reducing food energy supply for bud development in the following year.

Observe all relevant Health and Safety guidelines when operating machinery, using hand tools and applying chemicals when completing works under his Option.

For further information on Health and Safety guidelines, please check the attached link to the Health and Safety Executive NI:

<http://www.hseni.gov.uk/guidance/industries/agriculture-3-column.htm>

Work should not be carried out when ground conditions are wet in order to minimise damage to the site.

Any noxious weeds which colonise the site following the 'Primary treatment of bracken - mechanised or chemical' must be controlled as required by the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977. This is by cutting between 1st July and 15th March or where justified as part of the implementation of IPM, with an approved herbicide, applied using a spot sprayer only. Noxious weeds are as listed under the Noxious Weeds Order 1977 and include wild oat (*Avena fatua* L.); thistle (*Cirsium vulgare* (Savi) Ten.); *Cirsium arvense* (L. Scop.), dock (*Rumex obtusifolius* L.; *Rumex crispus* L.) and ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea* L.).

It is your responsibility to ensure you comply with the Waste Management Regulations (NI) 2006 and Cross-Compliance requirements.