



# Protecting long-term pastures

Good agriculture and environmental condition 1 (GAEC)- Permanent grassland

The European Union knows how much effort goes into running a farm. That's why support under the CAP comes with clear, practical rules to **help protect your land** and **keep farming sustainable**.

These rules are called **Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs)**, and they only apply if you're receiving CAP support.

In this section, we'll walk you through the first GAEC standard, so you know exactly what's expected and how to meet it.



## What is GAEC 1 about?

Encouraging grassland preservation

Farmers are encouraged under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to **protect permanent grassland areas** that have been maintained for at least five years. This helps support sustainability goals both at the **farm level** and **across the EU**.

Protecting these grasslands:

- Helps **keep landscapes stable** and productive
- Supports **long-term access to CAP payments**
- Reflects shared **responsibility for climate and nature**



# What do you need to do?

## Steps to take on your farm

To align with this good agricultural practice, farmers are expected to:

- **Avoid converting permanent grassland** unless approved by your local authority
- **Maintain the balance of permanent grassland** within 5% of your region's 2018 baseline
- **If too much grassland** is lost across your region, you may be asked to **restore it elsewhere** on your farm

If you're new to farming or to CAP, past land use may not impact you, but future changes will.

## Why is this good practice?

### Research-proven benefits

Maintaining permanent grasslands brings **benefits to both your farm and the environment**. Research has shown that grasslands:

- **Store carbon in soils**, helping reduce emissions
- **Prevent erosion** and improve soil structure
- **Support biodiversity** with stable habitats for plants and animals
- **Improve water retention**, reducing runoff and protecting water quality



## A few things to keep in mind

### Planning and checking local rules

- Guidance and grassland definitions are set nationally, **check local rules** before making changes
- In regions without designated permanent grassland, **this standard may not apply**
- **Being well-informed** supports better long-term decisions for your land.

