

Seeding cereals in wide rows (drill gaps)

Goal

Support of wild herbs in the field
Support of food supply and breeding grounds for field birds

At least 5 % of the cereal plot is sown in a wide row.



Wide rows:

Sowing distances of 33 – 39 cm followed by rows of 11 – 13cm distance.

Pic. 1: Picture is showing an example of wide rows at the beginning of the growth stage of the crop.

Short description of the measure

To promote growth of wild herbs, the farmer has to consider the following points in addition:





- No harrow, as this could destroy the wild herbs on the field and the nests of the field birds.
- No catch crop within the wide rows
- Grass herbicides should only be applied before March
- Usages of herbicides for broadleaf weeds should be avoided
- If possible, no N fertilizer application



Pic. 2: Picture is showing a wide row with presents of wild herbs.

In certain cases, no wild herbs will appear on the plots even though the farmer has implemented the measure in good quality. This depends on the low seed potential of wild herbs in the soil and/or in the surrounding. However, that wild herbs will not appear on the plot can only be determined after several years of implementation of the measure.

In this case gaps may be sown with a special seed mixture containing wild herbs or sow in catch crops to provide forage for field birds.

Quality elements of soundly implemented biodiversity measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parts of or the whole plot seeded in wide rows (around 35cm, followed by 12cm) During vegetation period: presence of wild herbs
Effects on biodiversity (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)	 <p>Promotion of light demanding wild herbs (rare species are more common in winter crops): They have more light and less competition in the part of the area without sowing and can develop better there.</p>
	 <p>Promotion of the field birds: they avoid high growing and dense cultures. For breeding, they need light cereal stands with low height of vegetation. If wild field herbs will settle within the drill gaps then the birds will find food and can build their nests under the herbs.</p>
	 <p>Through a wider range of flowering plants, more insects will be present.</p>
	 <p>Promotion of hare: it likes to eat herbs and finds protection within the drill gaps.</p>
Other positive effects/benefit for the farmer	<p>Cereal species and wild herbs are used to grow together on fields and developed a “plant community” whereby symbiosis arose, e.g. increase of water availability, improvement of soil by nitrogen bonding.</p> <p>There is evidence that the cereals can achieve a better nutrient uptake when wild herbs are present.</p>
Indicator/key data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of rows with drill gaps Total size of area (m²) with wide rows
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maßnahmen der IP-SUISSE zur Förderung der Artenvielfalt im Ackerbau, 2011; www.ipsuisse.ch www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de www.franz-projekt.de/massnahmen ”Ackerwildkräuter erhalten und fördern” - Netzwerk Blühende Landschaften www.bluehende-landschaft.de/nbl/nbl.handlungsempfehlungen/nbl.landwirtschaft/ www.lwl-bw.de/pb/,Lde/Startseite/Unsere+Themen/Ackerwildkrautaecker BUND Naturschutz in Bayern e.V. – Ackerwildkräuter fördern – Infos und Tipps für die landwirtschaftliche Praxis BfN-Skript 351 – Ackerwildkrautschutz – Eine Bibliographie www.schutzaecker.de Stiftung Rheinische Kulturlandschaft, DBU: Abschlussbericht Maßnahmen- und Artensteckbriefe zur Förderung der Vielfalt typischer Arten und Lebensräume der Agrarlandschaften, 2018

Further information: [Knowledge Pool](#)

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for product and quality managers of companies and was developed within the project LIFE Food & Biodiversity (Biodiversity in Standards and Labels of for the Food Industry). The main objective of the project is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and sourcing requirements in the food industry by helping standard organisations to integrate efficient biodiversity criteria into their schemes and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include comprehensive biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.

Editor: LIFE Food & Biodiversity; Lake Constance Foundation

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