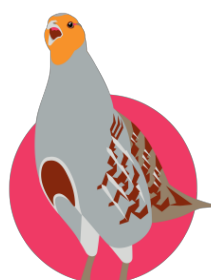


# HOW TO IMPROVE AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEME UPTAKE AND PROVISION

National report Denmark



**Interreg**  
North Sea Region  
**PARTRIDGE**

European Regional Development Fund



EUROPEAN UNION

*This report has been compiled by the PARTRIDGE project; an Interreg North Sea Region project running from mid-2016 to mid-2023, with twelve European partners in six participating countries (Belgium-Flanders, Denmark, England, the Netherlands, Germany-Lower Saxony, and Scotland). For more information about the project please visit [northsearegion.eu/partridge](https://northsearegion.eu/partridge).*

**A key element of PARTRIDGE is the need to improve the existing Agri-Environment Scheme (AES) systems and widen their uptake. As part of the PARTRIDGE project, a large online survey across the North Sea Region was carried out in spring 2021 on farmers' willingness to engage in AES. The survey's target group was arable farmers in areas where arable AES are available. This national report is in addition to the international report and provides more detail on specific outcomes from the Danish respondents.**

## **SURVEY DISSEMINATION**

The survey needed to be altered before its use in Denmark as Denmark does not have the same AE-schemes opportunities as the rest of the PARTRIDGE partner countries. Instead, in the survey, AE-schemes were replaced with "Bee- and wildlife-friendly measures".

In Denmark you could, at the time the survey was carried out, do measures such as beetle banks, bare soil strips, cut grass strips and strips with sown seed mixes or naturally germinated plants and keep your basic payment if the measures were not more than 10 meters wide, there was a minimum of 10 meters between different measures, and the combined area of the measures was not more than 10% of each field. You were allowed to create skylark and lapwing plots and keep your basic payment if they were not bigger than a maximum 100 m<sup>2</sup>. These opportunities have changed since 2023 with the introduction of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP 2023-27).

Questions about administration, economy, and control of AE-schemes were also left out of the Danish survey as they would be potentially confusing for the Danish respondents. At that time, you did not have to report where your measures were and if they were carried out as mentioned above. This has also changed with the new CAP. Before the new CAP, they were considered as part of the crop, but you could not receive a quota of fertilizer on the area with bee and wildlife friendly measures. Questions about payments for lethal predator control were also left out, due to political concerns and as crop and land damage compensation was not implemented in Danish legislation.

Because bee and wildlife friendly measures did not have specific rules concerning dates of sowing and mowing, these questions were also left out. Rules about dates for sowing and mowing were only relevant for environmental focus areas in Denmark.

Sadly, very few Danish farmers answered the survey as it was mainly disseminated through the auspices of the Danish Hunters Association. The Danish Hunters Association was, unsurprisingly more successful at reaching hunters, but the number of responses were fewer than was hoped.

## **AES OPTIONS**

One of the more interesting questions asked in the Danish survey was which additional (AE) measures the Danes would be interested in, if they had the opportunity to take them up. The majority picked a measure that it is not, at present, possible to do in Denmark, a permanent wildflower cover. This was followed in preference by cultivated, uncropped margins for rare arable flora and then by supplementary feeding. The least interesting for the Danish audience were conservation headlands and predation management.

It was a bit surprising that predation management was the least desired measure, but it is very far from the traditional AE measures used in Denmark. It was encouraging that the majority focused on measures that will improve habitats for farmland species and farmland biodiversity.

The reasons why the participating Danes wanted to undertake these measures were also very interesting. Would they do it for all “the right reasons” or for more personal reasons? As expected, the majority were influenced by their shooting interests, which was the main reason they did carry out these measures. But it was closely followed by the wish to help biodiversity. Maybe a bit surprising but very positive, the motivation of “It makes me feel good” also had a high score.

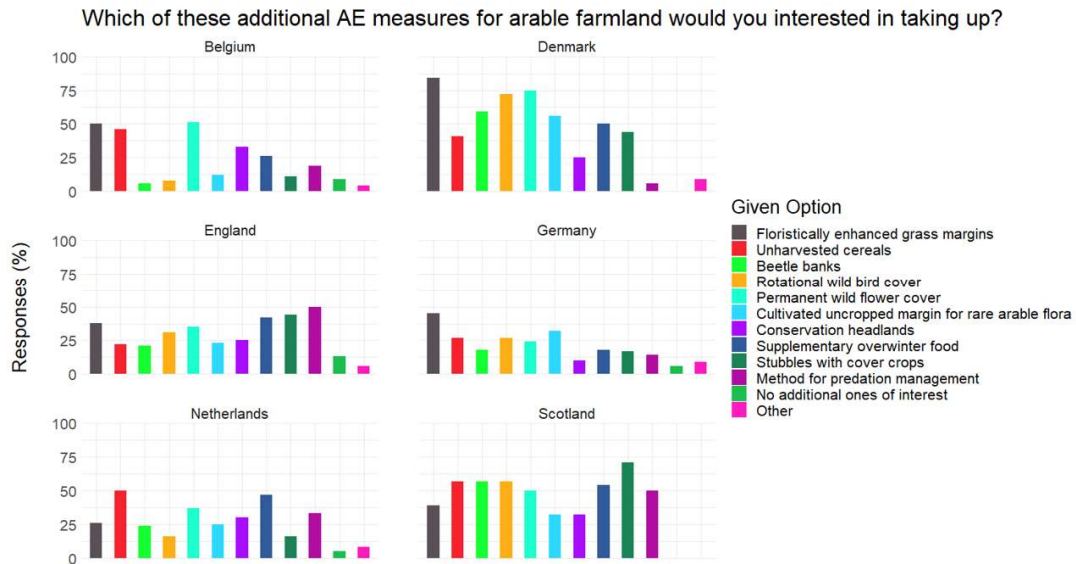
## **ADVICE**

The least favorite reasons for uptake were input from advisors, added value for produce, and that the measures were easy to fit in with their farming. The lack of influence of advisors raises the question of why was this among the least favourite? Was it because advisors did not prioritize measures for farmland species and biodiversity? This is a priority for the Danish Hunter Association, and we have since carried out a “pilot project” in 2022 (following the survey) to offer training for agricultural advisors about the opportunities for measures for farmland biodiversity on arable land.

In another question in the survey the respondents were asked what kind of advice they needed, and the majority answered that they did not consider advice important, while an equal amount of people answered that they did not have an opinion on this matter. This perhaps indicates that many of the respondents considered themselves confident enough to plan their own measures. This will most likely change in 2023, with the new CAP and very different rules. The Danish Hunters Association will continue to identify opportunities to educate advisors about measures that improve farmland biodiversity.

## RESULTS

Please find below some selected results from the survey, with results from respondents in all the PARTRIDGE project countries.



### What kind of advice would you need when entering AE schemes?

