

Site Visit Assessment Form – FAI farms, Oxfordshire: Hagley Field



Site Name Hagley	Grid Ref SP467099	County Oxfordshire	
Catchment Thames	Ownership FAI farms	Designation None	Size (ha) 1.54
Date 26 th May 2016 May 2018	Meeting with No-one No one 2018	Managed by FAI Farms	
Management and History			
Agri environment agreement			
AG00340415 HK7 (but hasn't come up on our list of AE agreements from NE for some reason).			
Current management			
Hay cutting approximately 1 year in 3, then aftermath grazed, or grazed for a minimum of 6 weeks between May and September.			
Restoration			
Technique used/Dates			
Green hay spread from Pixey in 2013 Planned to graze in 2014 and hay cut 2015.			
Hydrology		Floods regularly, groundwater movement through gravels.	
Flooding regime			
Water management			
Soil-water levels (indicated by auger hole/any other data)			

Historical information	
None known	
Current site interest	Attach excel spreadsheet for botanical data
<p>In 2012, vegetation on Hagley was represented by up to 90% cover of perennial ryegrass <i>Lolium perenne</i> and up to 30% creeping bent grass <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> (Mc Donald, 2012). In 2013-2016, the vegetation changed from the weedy dominated NVC community OV21 <i>Poa annua-Plantago major</i> to the more typical grassland communities MG7, MG9, MG10 and MG11 – all scored just above 51%. This indefinite score and the mixture of apparently different communities can be explained by the early transitory stage of this grassland.</p> <p>The species richness of the quadrats almost doubled over three years: from 5-10 in 2013 up to 9-15 in 2016. The appearance in the sward of such species as ribwort plantain <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>, common knapweed <i>Centaurea nigra</i> and common sedge <i>Carex nigra</i>, looks very promising, however overall dominance of grasses remains, possibly preventing more forbs from establishing. The weedy species, annual meadow grass <i>Poa annua</i>, which dominated on many plots in 2013, was replaced by rough meadow grass <i>Poa trivialis</i> in 2016 showing cover of up to 80%. Another dominant species, perennial ryegrass <i>Lolium perenne</i>, decreased its projected cover from 60% in 2013 down to 20% in 2016, which also reflects a positive trend in the community. Among other encouraging signs on the restoration fields, the slight decrease in Ellenberg scores for fertility reflects some success in decreasing level of nutrients in the soil on Hagley from 6.2 down to 5.84.</p> <p>2018 re-survey Quadrats were not re-surveyed here as the field was grazed in 2018. Instead, a species list was recorded on a walk-through approach. 13 species were recorded in 2013, 19 species in 2016, and 14 in 2018, with an increase in 2018 of creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> and spear thistle <i>C. vulgare</i>.</p>	
Phosphorus levels	21.6 mg/kg ⁻¹ in 2013. Not recorded in 2016
Soil auger photo and findings	None taken
Site manager aspirations/objectives	
A more species-rich meadow as part of the HLS objectives. Also need somewhere to summer graze, hence the rotating hay cut.	
Management recommendations	
An annual hay cut would be better for the species diversity if alternative grazing can be found from April-June. An option might be to cut earlier (June) and then aftermath graze, giving more grazing time later in the year. This is especially important in the early phase of a restoration project when the nutrient removal of the hay cut allows the sward to diversify. Another option would be to graze the	

initial growth in April/early May, then shut up for hay in mid-May and then cut after just 6 weeks, then graze again.

Table 1. Summary of botanical data 2016 from Hagley.

Hagley		
	2013	2016
Ellenberg F (moisture tolerance)	5.1	5.76
Ellenberg N (fertility)	6.2	5.84
Ellenberg R (pH)	6	6.1
Species/quadrat (mean and range /1 m x 1 m)	7.8 (5-10)	12.2 (9-15)
Ratio dicots/monocots	2.5	0.9
NVC (top 2 MAVIS subcommunities)	OV21b OV21	MG10a MG7D

Table 2. Soil properties on the Oxford restoration fields, 2013.

Field	Quadrat	Soil-pH	Total-P, %	Olsen-P, mg/kg PO4-P
Long Field	N719	7.8	0.136	35.1
Long Meadow	N707	7.5	0.125	13.0
The Eye	N713	6.9	0.144	30.0
Hagley	N703	6.5	0.133	21.6