Fallow land

Description of the measure

Fallow land is land that is temporarily left without cultivation. It differs in the duration and vegetation of the fallow land, so it can be either rotational fallow land (annual) or perennial fallow land, which is either sown or left to self-vegetate. Fallow land provides space for site-adapted plant and animal species (e.g. wild herbs, beneficial insects, field birds and mammals).

Implementation

- Self-vegetating fallow land is particularly preferable in poor locations (development of rare wild herbs and high species diversity)
- Sowing of site-typical, diverse seed mixtures on high-quality growth sites
- Rotational fallow: at least one year until the end of winter
- Perennial fallow land: desirable, as species and structural diversity increase with age
- Biodiversity increases with the size of the fallow land
- Self-planting directly on stubble fields, if possible after seedbed preparation

Maintenance

- Mowing or mulching max. once a year (in the case of perennial fallow land not from April to June), adaptation of cultivation to target species if possible (please observe the requirements if you are receiving funding!)
- Possibly cupping incision
- If possible, no cultivation from late summer to the end of winter

Effects on biodiversity

Species-rich, site-adapted vegetation provides food, hibernation and reproduction opportunities and protection for (endangered) insects, birds and even mammals such as hares and hamsters. Well-distributed fallow land serves to support the biotope network.

Further positive effects

The absence of fertilization and cultivation indirectly reduces fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions (N_2O, CO^2).

Further recommendations

The different approaches work best in combination. For example, it is advantageous to combine rotational fallow and perennial fallow, as they appeal to different insect and bird species and promote different plant species.

It is particularly advantageous if the fallow areas are established adjacent to extensively farmed areas, as the increased insect population on such adjacent areas favours the colonization of the fallow area.

Fallow land is a good solution for poorly located, difficult-to-cultivate or low-yielding sites. Sun-exposed areas should be preferred.

For further reading: *https://www.nabu.de/natur-und-landschaft/landnutzung/landwirtschaft/artenvielfalt/vogelsterben/10366.html* • *2022-07-DNR-Background-Basement-Unavoidable-Retreats.pdf*

Sources: *Van Buskirk, Josh & Willi, Yvonne. (2004). Enhancement of Farmland Biodiversity within Set-Aside Land. Conservation Biology. 18. 987 - 994. 10.1111/j.1523-1739.2004.00359.x.*
Becker, N., Muchow, T. & Schmelzer, M. (2019). AgrarNatur-Ratgeber – Arten erkennen – Maßnahmen umsetzen – Vielfalt bewahren (Hrsg. Stiftung Rheinische Kulturlandschaft), Bonn, 220 S.