

# VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS *(Revised February 2010)*

### 1. Eligibility. To be eligible for the scheme a commoner must:

- 1.1 Hold common rights for the animals that they enter in the scheme.
- 1.2 Actively depasture all their animals that are entered in the scheme, for the full qualifying periods.
- 1.3 Pay Marking Fees for all their animals that are depastured, whether or not they are entered in the Scheme.
- 1.4 Comply with the Verderers byelaws at all times.
- 1.5 Meet the Verderers standards for animal welfare and any additional welfare requirements.
- 1.6 Have a holding that is, on a balance of probabilities, sufficient to maintain the number of animals that they enter in the scheme, along with any other animals that are maintained on and/or from their holding.
- 1.7 Have a valid Equine or Bovine Passport, or an entry in the Verderers' List, for all of their ponies and/or cattle that are depastured – regardless of whether or not they are entered in the Scheme.
- 1.8 Comply with all directives issued by the Verderers.
- 1.9 Maintain reasonable commoning standards and practices at all times (as determined by the Verderers).

### 2. Qualifying Criteria for Animals entered in the Scheme.

2.1 To qualify for entry to the Scheme, ponies cattle and donkeys must be liable for the payment of Marking Fees for at least the period for which they are required to be depastured. Pigs must be old enough to be 'ringed' which, for the purpose of this Scheme, will not be before they are 8 weeks old.

### 3. Minimum Age of Scheme Members.

3.1 Scheme members must be a minimum of 18 years of age on the first day of the Scheme year for which they are applying but, applications, signed on behalf of minors by a parent or guardian, will be accepted on the basis that the person signing the application effectively becomes the Scheme Member. Alternatively, a parent or guardian may claim on their application for animals which are owned by any of their children who were not 18 years old on the first day of that Scheme year – subject to the normal qualifying criteria.

### 4. Qualifying Periods.

4.1 To qualify for the Scheme, animals must be turned out for the following minimum qualifying periods:

Ponies	– 7 months
Donkeys	– 7 months
Cattle	– 4 Months
Pigs	– 40 days – or other period notified when the pannage season is announced (this will be dependent on the number of acorns available) – during the pannage season.

### 5. Limits on the Number of Animals Which Commoners May Enter in the Scheme:

5.1 Commoners who paid Marking Fees in 2004 – may enter any number of animals, up to the totals they depastured and paid Marking Fees on in 2004 – subject to any maximum limit in force (currently 100).

5.2 Commoners who depastured animals and paid Marking Fees in 2005, who did not pay Marking Fees in 2004: may enter up to 13 animals in the Scheme.

5.3 Commoners who did not pay Marking Fees in 2004 and 2005 may enter up to a maximum of 5 animals in the Scheme, but will be required to depasture animals, and pay Marking Fees for 2 years, prior to joining the Scheme (*Note: the Scheme is currently closed to new membership while stock numbers remain above 7,000*).

### 6. Farming Standards.

6.1 Scheme members must abide by DEFRA's standards of Good Farming Practice across the whole of their holding (copies of this are available from DEFRA).

**7. Animal Welfare.**

7.1 Scheme members must meet the Verderers standards for animal welfare, for all their animals, not just those which are entered in the Scheme, at all times.

7.2 Poor, injured, lame or sick animals must be removed from the open Forest as soon as their condition is noted. Such animals must be held in suitable accommodation, or moved to back-up land at the member's expense.

7.3 If directed to remove an animal from the Forest by the Verderers or their agents, this must be done immediately. Any animal which is removed under these circumstances, must not be returned to the Open Forest without the express consent of the Verderers.

*7.4 Members who do not remove animals within 10 days of a request to do so by an Agister, will have their payment reduced by at least an equivalent amount to the payment due for that number of animals. (This is without prejudice to any other action the Verderers may see fit to take under the scheme rules or the byelaws.)*

*7.5 It is not the duty of the Agisters to remove stock for commoners, although they will provide assistance subject to availability and other commitments. Commoners who are able to assist but who simply rely on the Agisters to catch their animals and do not assist when asked to do so, may have their payments reduced at the discretion of the Verderers, depending on the circumstances.*

*7.6 Members must inform an Agister immediately if an animal which has been removed from the Forest subsequently escapes. Owners of animals which are found back on the Forest, which they have not reported to an Agister, will have their payments reduced and may be excluded from the Scheme for one or more years.*

**8. Holding/Back-up Grazing.**

8.1 Scheme members must maintain their interest in their holding, as described in their Scheme application, for at least the period of time that their animals are required to remain depastured on the Forest.

8.2 Scheme members must inform the Scheme manager of any changes to who owns or occupies their holding, or any part of their holding, in writing, within 14 days of the change.

**9. Supplementary Feeding.**

9.1 Scheme members must not provide their animals with supplementary feed on the open Forest, other than in emergency conditions, except where authorised and approved by the Verderers.

**10. Farm Opportunities Record.**

10.1 Scheme members are required to complete a Farm Opportunities Record during the lifetime of the Scheme (assistance with this will be provided free of charge by the New Forest Land Advice Service – if requested). Such records will be confidential and will not be disclosed to any third party.

**11. Changes to the Rules.**

11.1 Scheme members must comply with any changes to these rules which may be introduced from time to time. Changes introduced during a Scheme year will not normally take effect until the following Scheme year, unless application forms have not yet gone out, or if imposed as a result of the requirements of EU or national legislation. In the event of any changes to these rules members will be notified in writing.

**12. Non Compliance.**

12.1 Failure to comply with these rules will result in automatic disqualification from the Scheme, or a lesser penalty at the discretion of the Verderers' Countryside Stewardship Scheme Sub Committee. A member who is disqualified will not receive any payment for that year, but may rejoin the Scheme the following year provided that they are able to satisfy the Verderers of their intention to comply with the rules. A lesser penalty will normally involve the withholding of part of any payment due under the Scheme.

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