

BLL herb rich grassland, rewetting and fertilising

Herb rich grassland

Herb rich grassland is a source of food (insects and organisms that live in the soil) for farmland birds and also forms a habitat (shelter) for their chicks. The BLL criteria for Dairy cattle therefore include this type of grassland. In all cases, limited application of fertiliser for the surface area of herb-rich grassland and a rest period from 1 April to 15 June during which no tillage is permitted applies. This is important to allow young birds enough time to grow and learn to fly.

Rewetting-rich grassland

Rewetting is important for the food supply for meadow birds in particular and to create the right extent of structure in herb-rich grasslands. Rewetting and herb-rich grassland are linked for this reason. Rewetting of herb-rich grassland must take place on farms in low-lying NL between 15 February and 15 June. This is not obligatory for farms located in high-lying NL.

Fertilising

How does fertilising affect meadow bird management? Four aspects are important for meadow birds:

1. The level of fertilising determines how herb-rich the plot is. If a high level of fertiliser is applied, the grass (ryegrass) will outcompete the majority of the herbs. If a low level of fertiliser is applied, herbs and other grasses have more opportunity to establish and grow. This ensures structure-rich and diverse vegetation and a greater supply of food for the chicks.
2. The moment of application, in addition to the type of fertiliser, affects the length of the grass during the period when the chicks are young. The earlier in the season a (large) volume of fertiliser is applied, the taller the grass during the period when the chicks are young. Tall grass makes movement difficult for the chicks, which means they waste a lot of energy. This restricts growth and reduces their chance of survival.
3. The type of fertiliser (slurry, artificial fertiliser or solid fertiliser) affects the availability of food and nesting material.
4. The acidity has a very significant influence on the food supply (number of earthworms).

Fact sheets

See the website of the Dutch Society for the Protection of Birds (VBN) for more information (fact sheets) about:

[Kruidenrijk grasland](#)

[Weidevogels & vernatting](#)

[Bemesting & bodemkwaliteit](#)

[Weidevogels & beweiding](#)

[Weidevogels & later maaien](#)