Catch Crops as Ecological Focus Areas
Implementation in Germany

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Implementation of Article 45 (9) of Regulation (EU) No 639/2014

Requirements on crop mixtures used as catch crops

→ The crop mixture must contain at least **two crops** out of a list of admissible crops (in total 91 crops: comprising 9 grasses, 30 N-fixing crops, cruciferae, herbs and flower crops)

→ One crop in the mixture may not exceed **60 % of the seed** in the mixture

→ The seed of grasses may not exceed **60 % of the seed** of the mixture

→ **Period used for sowing**: 16 July to 1 October (cf. cultivation period for crop diversification 1 June – 15 July)
Implementation of Article 45 (9) of Regulation (EU) No 639/2014

Requirements on the cultivation and use of crop mixtures

→ No use of **synthetic plant protection products, mineral N-fertilizers** or **sewage sludge** after the preceding (main) crop in the application year; use of organic manure (solid/liquid) is allowed

→ **Only use** in the application year: grazing with sheep and/or goats

→ Cross Compliance (GAEC 4): Vegetation must be kept **until 15 February** of the following year (option for Länder: earlier date, however 15 January earliest date), mechanical treatment (chopping, rolling, beating) as well as grazing is allowed as from 1 January

→ **After 15 February** no restriction to the use of the vegetation

→ However, the catch crop must be followed by a main crop
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Ecological focus areas declared (1 000 ha):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of ecological focus areas</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Weighting factor</th>
<th>Areas after application of weighting factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land lying fallow</td>
<td>221,8</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>221,8 (32,1 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffer strips, strips along forest edges, field margins</td>
<td>16,5</td>
<td>1,5</td>
<td>24,7 (3,6 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC landscape features and terraces</td>
<td>33,0</td>
<td>1,0 - 2,0</td>
<td>49,6 (7,2 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas cultivated with catch crops and under-seeds</td>
<td>930,2</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>279,0 (40,4 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas with N-fixing crops</td>
<td>161,8</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>113,3 (16,4 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas with short rotation coppice</td>
<td>2,2</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>0,7 (0,1 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afforestration areas</td>
<td>1,9</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>1,9 (0,3 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount of ecological focus areas in Germany</td>
<td>1367,4</td>
<td>0,3 - 2,0</td>
<td>690,9 (100 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Special OTSC Aspects

Control of mixture proportion (only in the frame of on-the-spot checks):

→ Farmers must provide invoices and seed certificates (in case of bought-in seed) and/ or retention samples (in case of own mixtures) or further appropriate evidence of the seed mixtures; check of conformity with national rules
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Special OTSC Aspects

Control of green cover on the field:
→ Verification whether proper green cover is present
→ Verification whether the observed crops are contained in the list of admissible crops
→ Are the results deriving from the verification of the mixture plants indicated by the farmer and the plants being on the field plausible?
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Special Aspects

→ Catch crop cannot become a main crop in the following year: Administrative check of the application data for the following year

→ On-the-spot check of these EFA requires additional control visits in autumn. In this field, remote sensing is not appropriate: high administrative burden

→ On-the-spot checks can only be carried out at a late stage => effect on disbursement of the greening payment

→ In addition, CC control from autumn until February: requires cross reporting
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Special Aspects – Compensation Rule

→ According to the COM, application of the compensation rule for EFA is currently only applicable during OTSC

→ For EFA catch crops, a high amount of area changes is expected; farmers must notify all changes

→ Extension needed for cases, where farmers, for example, notify in July that catch crops are cultivated on another parcel

→ This extension to the rule should be feasible without any additional OTSC. There is no increased risk for the holdings which communicate these changes on their own initiative. Therefore, we hold the view that in such cases, where the farmers informed the national authorities of the area change, no objective reason for additional on-the-spot checks exists.