



Basis for AMA Quality Seal products

- BREAD AND BAKED GOODS**
- GROUND AND SHELLED PRODUCTS**
- OTHER ARABLE CROP PRODUCTS**

For participants with the indication of the region of origin Austria



AMA QUALITY SEAL GUIDELINE

ARABLE CROPS

2026 version

**Production regulations
for agricultural production of arable crops**

2026 AMENDMENT

Changes in the text are highlighted in yellow.

LEGAL NOTICE



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FOREWORD

DEAR FARMER,

Soil is the basis for all life on our planet. It is a habitat for plants, animals and many micro-organisms. Soil cleans rainwater, filters and degrades pollutants, stores carbon and contributes to temperature harmonisation. The preservation of such ecosystem functions is more important than ever in these times of rapid climate change and perpetual soil consumption. The supply of high-quality food and feedstuff products can only be ensured in the long term if soil fertility, resilience to climate change, biodiversity and the soil's many productive functions can be maintained and improved in the best possible way.




The 'Arable Crops' AMA Quality Seal Guideline therefore purposely pursues a broad programme in order to spread awareness and gain the support of as many farmers as possible in the context of **good arable farming practice** and the need for further **greening measures**, for instance through participation in an environmental programme such as 'ÖPUL'. Ultimately, it is the arable crops with higher standards or laudable attributes which have to assert themselves in the market. For this reason, AMA-Marketing is gradually expanding its AMA Quality Seal programme and information dissemination along the entire value chain in order to highlight the necessary chain responsibility and ultimately give the consumer the final say. The programme mainly begins with cereals and products derived from it, such as bread and baked goods in particular. The clear focus of the Guideline is intended to ensure feasibility, broad penetration and thus sustainability along the value chain.

The Guideline was developed together with agricultural representatives and other associated representatives and adopted by the provisional expert panel. Participation in the 'Arable Crops' AMA Quality Seal Guideline is possible in accordance with the requirements for all producers (domestic and foreign). These requirements go beyond legislative requirements and provide guidance for the correct implementation of the required traceability of foodstuffs.

The '2026 version' of this Guideline is valid from **xx.xx.2026**. If you have any questions about this Guideline, please do not hesitate to contact us. We also welcome any suggestions for further improvements and practical implementation.

Sincerely,


Martin Greß
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGES	Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety
AGS	AMA Quality Seal
AMA	Agrarmarkt Austria (EU-accredited paying agency)
AMA Marketing	Agrarmarkt Austria Marketing GesmbH (system operator/licensor)
BML	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Regions and Water Management
BGBI	Federal Law Gazette
EN	European standard
EU	European Union
SMR	Statutory Management Requirements
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
GAEC	Good Agricultural and Ecological Conditions
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
FR	Food retailer
MFA	Multiple application of Agrarmarkt Austria
N	Nitrogen
NAPV	Nitrate Action Programme Regulation
NEC Directive	Directive (EU) 2016/2284 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants
P ₂ O ₅	Phosphorus/phosphate (phosphorus pentoxide)
PPP	Plant protection products
ÖPUL	Austrian programme for the promotion of ecological, extensive and sustainable agriculture

DEFINITIONS

Arable (land, areas)	Land used for the agricultural cultivation of cultivated agricultural plants (arable crops and arable feed crops) or fallow land available for the agricultural cultivation of arable crops.
Arable crops	Edible or other economically viable products of agricultural crops grown on arable land.
Permanent and special crops	Crops that are not included in the annual crop rotation, which remain on the land and which are created by means of high-quality planting material according to a regular system and are cultivated in such a way that they serve the production of high-quality harvests and deliver recurring yields. These include fruit crops and hops, including vineyards, tree nurseries and short-rotation coppice (energy wood) as well as pussy willow production.
Self-checks	Checks to be carried out and documented by farmers themselves at critical points on the holding (e.g. plant protection). These can also be carried out by other companies on behalf of farmers.
Producer	A person (individual) or a company legally responsible for the production and sale of arable crops of the agricultural holding. In some cases this Guideline also uses the terms 'farmer' and 'agricultural holding' for this purpose.
External checks	Checks carried out not by farmers themselves, but by a neutral, independent and accredited control body approved by AMA-Marketing.
Cereals	Collective term for various sweet grasses (botanical name: Poaceae), which produce edible grains such as wheat, barley, oats or rye.
Grassland	Areas used either naturally (self-seeding) or with sowing for the cultivation of grass or other herbaceous feed and which have not been part of the crop rotation of the holding for at least five years, regardless of whether the land is used as livestock or hay meadows.
Combined audit	A check in which two or more quality standards are checked at the same time.
Agricultural holding (hereinafter holding)	Any independent local and organisational-technical unit for the production of plants or for the keeping of farmed animals with an economic objective. The infrastructure and areas necessary for management (e.g. parcels of land) are part of the agricultural holding.
Licensees	All those who have entered into a contract with AMA-Marketing for the marketing of AMA Quality Seal products. With the license agreement, they receive the right of use (licence) to use the protected 'AMA Quality Seal' word and image trade mark.
Milling grains	Grains for milling purposes, including quality and premium wheat. Colloquially often referred to as 'bread grains'.
System	AMA-Marketing acts as a system operator by offering a specification (system)

operator for operators related to cereals and other arable crops. As the licensor, AMA-Marketing also grants the right to use the AMA Quality Seal.

SYMBOLS

In the policy, some text passages with symbols are highlighted separately. These symbols are explained as follows.



Attention/caution: This item has particular importance in the AMA Quality Seal Guideline. Licensees must strictly observe the stipulations mentioned therein.



Under the AMA Quality Seal Guidelines, licensees must keep records. To this end, a reference to the note or to the documentation is published.



This indicates useful additional information.



The text always refers to a website.



This point describes the objective(s) of an action.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

QUALITY AND ORIGIN

Agricultural production has a significant impact on the quality and image of foodstuffs. The high quality requirements of consumers, especially in terms of naturalness and origin, are to be achieved in the best possible way. These requirements must be taken into account in the orientation of the production sector and in the further development of the Guideline.

Even if compliance with legal requirements must be ensured by all manufacturers and regardless of the AMA Quality Seal programme, individual legal requirements are expressly stated in the Guideline as production requirements. As explicit guideline requirements, they are also part of the AMA Quality Seal checks, which contributes to ensuring the quality of the products.

SUSTAINABILITY AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Consumers expect food to be produced sustainably. The AMA Quality Seal Guidelines apply the following principles:

- integration of all production and marketing stages in decision-making and further development processes;
- regional solutions which are adapted to the location and are resource-efficient;
- ensuring long-term economic sustainability through cooperative partnerships in the form of strategic alliances and/or contractual agreements;
- high level of consumer protection in terms of food safety and traceability of origin;
- further development of the Guideline on the basis of evaluations and scientific findings.

FURTHER EDUCATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

Further education and participation in technical training are basic requirements for responsible production (agricultural practices), and incentivise innovation and further development.

Responsibility for compliance with the requirements of this Guideline, for complete and correct documentation, and for regular self-check measures (e.g. routine field checks) lies with farmers. The AMA Quality Seal criteria are geared towards the requirements for good agricultural practices. Farmers must ensure that the AMA Quality Seal requirements are met in addition to the legally applicable provisions.

TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY

In order to strengthen consumer confidence in agricultural production and its products, transparency and traceability as well as active communication of information must be ensured.

A GENERAL REQUIREMENTS






1. Scope

This Guideline describes a voluntary quality assurance system for the agricultural production of arable crops such as cereals, oilseeds and legumes. This Guideline lays down requirements for participating holdings.

This Guideline provides the basis for integrated (incremental) quality assurance systems. This will ensure continuous quality assurance and control at every stage in the production chain.

An example of this is the value chain of milling grains and cereal products.

Stages of the value chain

	Stage	Programme
1	 Arable farm holding (agricultural producer's holding)	AMA Quality Seal Guideline 'Arable crops'
2	 Agricultural trade	AMA Quality Seal Guideline 'Agricultural trade and mills'
3	 Mills	
4	 Bakeries, flour/grain processors, Manufacturers of baking mixes	AMA Quality Seal Guideline 'Bread and baked goods, dough products and other cereal products'
5	 FR or other sales offices	

If a food product is offered as part of an AMA Quality Seal programme (e.g. bread and baked goods), all stages of the value chain must be integrated and their working and processing steps must be carried out in the mentioned region. As an indication of origin, a region (e.g. a country, a homogeneous area across countries or states, such as the Pannonian Basin or the European Union) or an overarching designation (e.g. Europe) can be used.

For example, if the red-white-red AMA Quality Seal with the regional designation 'Austria' is used, the product must have been grown, harvested, stored, prepared and processed in Austria.

SCOPE

Figure 1: Stages of the value chain and scopes for milling grains

Arable crops marketed under the AMA Quality Seal must have been grown and harvested in the region indicated on the AMA Quality Seal. The associated production sites and facilities must also be located in the specified region.

Only arable crops grown and harvested by the participating agricultural holding may be marketed under this Guideline.

In principle, all arable crops produced fall within the scope of the Guideline, irrespective of whether the arable crops produced are ultimately used for feedstuff or food products or as industrial raw materials. This excludes only the permanent and special crops (incl. wine) and the agricultural product categories of fruit, vegetables and table potatoes.



Due to the international recognition of GlobalG.A.P., the agricultural product categories of fruit, vegetables and table potatoes are regulated in a separate AMA Quality Seal Guideline on 'fruits, vegetables, table potatoes'. As a result of the recognition, this Guideline is also referred to as '**AMAG.A.P.**'.

The 'Arable Crops' AMA Quality Seal Guideline includes requirements for

- holding management (e.g. defining crop rotation or multi-annual greening measures);
- crop management (e.g. protection against erosion of arable land by special cultivation methods); and
- storage on the agricultural holding (e.g. stock protection).

2. Responsibility

Responsibility for compliance with the applicable legal provisions as well as the AMA Quality Seal requirements under this Guideline lies with farmers. In particular, this concerns responsible good agricultural practices and regular self-check measures, including correct and complete documentation.

3. Participation conditions

In order to comply with the requirements set out in the provisions, the conclusion of a producer contract with AMA-Marketing is necessary **once only**. Further information can be found on the website www.amainfo.at.

3.1 Registration for Participation in the 'Arable Crops' AMA Quality Seal Guideline

Farmers can register for the production of arable crops under the 'Arable Crops' AMA Quality Seal Guideline between 1 January and 15 April of each year at the latest. Registration only occurs once. Annual registration is not required. Leaving the contract is possible at any time subject to a notice period.

4. Delivery authorisation and labelling



Delivery within the scope of the AMA Quality Seal programme may always take place only after receipt of the written delivery authorisation from AMA-Marketing. In addition, it is included in the list of all holdings authorised to deliver. The delivery authorisation is reissued every year.

AMA Quality Seal for arable crops must always be clearly marked on all accompanying documents (e.g. delivery notes, invoices) if arable crops are to be marketed as such. The labelling obligation for accompanying commercial documents ensures that the AMA Quality Seal goods can be clearly matched with the corresponding accompanying documents at any time.



The reference to compliance with the 'Arable Crops' AMA Quality Seal Guideline is composed of 'AMA' and the respective country of origin (e.g. 'AT' for Austria).

For Austria, the labelling therefore reads as follows: 'AMA-AT'

5. Amendment of the Guideline

Changes to the Guidelines may be made only following a decision by the expert panel. Decisions of the expert panel affecting the content of the Guideline shall apply as part of the AMA Quality Seal Guideline. These shall be complied with and implemented by the participants from the date of entry into force of this decision.

Changes will be communicated to participants in writing and announced on the AMA-Marketing website. These decisions will be periodically incorporated into the Guideline and published with a new version after official approval.

5.1 Temporary transitional provisions

In justified individual cases, AMA-Marketing may, in compliance with a standardised procedure, grant temporary transitional provisions deviating from individual requirements of the 'Arable Crops' AMA Quality Seal Guideline. In such cases, the spirit and purpose of the Guideline shall also be observed in all material respects.

5.2 Recognition of equivalent programmes/requirements

In the context of a quality programme approved by AMA-Marketing, the AMA Quality Seal may also be granted in cases where, although the individual criteria of the submitted programme are not identical to the specific Guidelines, the quality of the product is at least equivalent to that safeguarded by the requirements of the specific Guidelines and the relevant consumer quality requirements are fulfilled is nevertheless ensured through other measures.

6. Checks

6.1 Self-check

Compliance with the requirements of this Guideline shall be checked regularly by the agricultural holdings themselves. Persons working on the holding must be properly trained to ensure implementation in accordance with the Guideline.



A self-check shall be carried out and documented by agricultural holdings.



The self-check carried out may be documented in writing (recommendation: self-check checklist of AMA-Marketing) or electronically.

6.2 External check

A check of the conditions described in chapters B to E is carried out in Austria by the following measures¹:

- satellite-based area monitoring by Agrarmarkt Austria;
- administrative checks by Agrarmarkt Austria;
- on-the-spot checks by Agrarmarkt Austria based on sample selection;
- complementary risk-based and event-related on-the-spot checks under the AMA Quality Seal programme by approved AMA-Marketing control bodies according to sample selection;

complementary risk-based and event-related **on-the-spot checks** based on sample selection by approved control bodies of AMA-Marketing. The costs of the checks are borne directly by the farmers. The focus of the checks is on compliance with the requirements of this AMA Quality Seal Guideline. The inspection body must be given the opportunity to view the entire production process and all records and documentation. The inspection body shall draw up a report about the check. The reporting person shall be given the opportunity to sign the report during the on-the-spot check and to add comments. Farmers will receive a carbon copy or duplicate of the report. This can also be sent electronically to the farmer.

6.3 Corrective measures - follow-up

In the event of discrepancies detected, the corrective measures to be taken by the holding shall also be recorded in the check report. Any deviations shall be corrected promptly, and in all cases within the indicated timeframe. During any required follow-ups, the inspection body shall primarily verify implementation of the measures to correct past deviations. The costs of the follow-up check are to be borne by the farmers.

¹ In other Member States as well as in third countries, checks must be carried out by a control body authorised by AMA-Marketing. In the case of holdings not participating in the ÖPUL funding programme, checks are also carried out by the control bodies approved by AMA-Marketing.

7. Documentation – traceability

All documents demonstrating compliance with this Guideline shall be kept for at least three years from the end of the year in which they were drawn up. If legal provisions or a special provision of the AMA Quality Seal Guideline indicate a longer time frame, this shall be observed. Documents shall be filled in and stored in a way that guarantees seamless traceability and clear identifiability at all times.

The purchase of all commercial input used (e.g. seeds, fertilisers, plant protection products) must be traceable at all times on the basis of receipts and records.

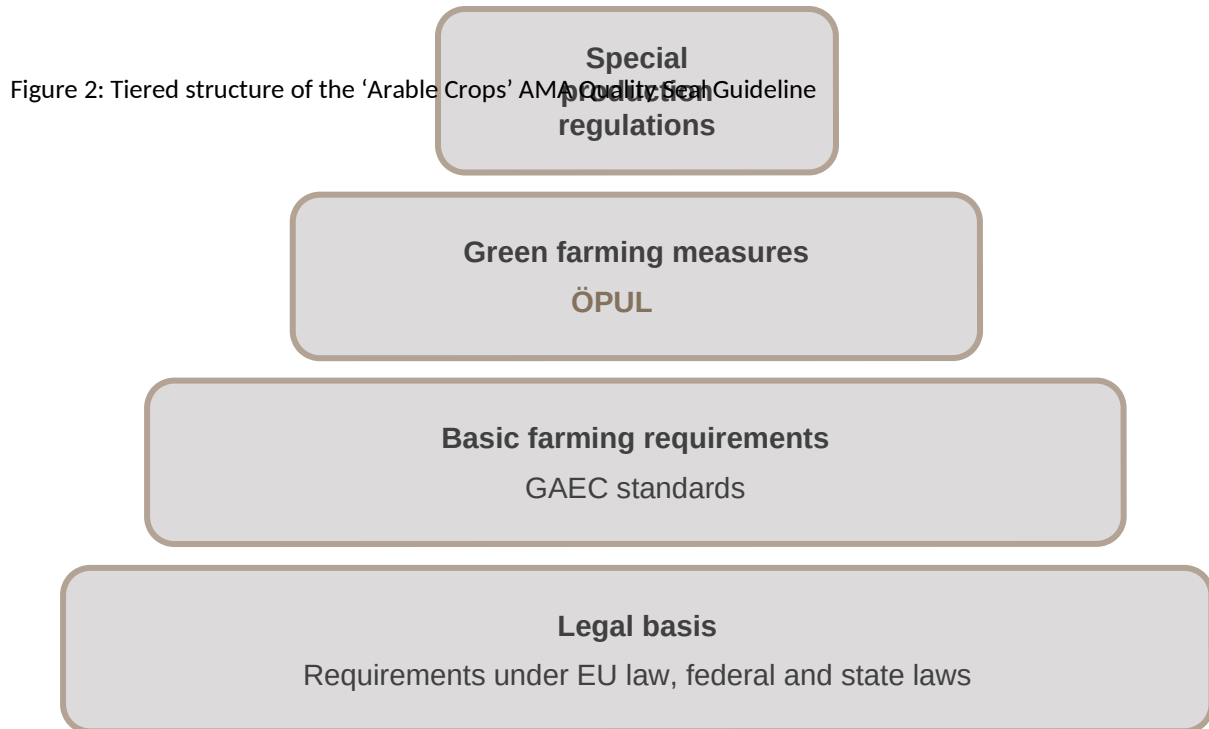
The required documentation need not be on paper: it may also be in electronic form.



The documentation must be made within 30 days of application and can be presented at the request of the control body or can be accessed in the case of electronic documentation.

8. Structure of the Guideline

The following graphic shows the structure of the present 'Arable Crops' AMA Quality Seal Guideline. This constitutes a legal basis for the basic farming requirements, the green farming measures and the special production provisions based on and going beyond the law.



B LEGAL BASIS

1. Compliance with legal provisions

Agricultural holdings participating in this Guideline shall comply with all relevant legal provisions relating to farming and management:

- EU Regulations and Directives (EU Official Journals)
- Federal Laws and Ordinances (Federal Law Gazette)
- Laws and Ordinances of the provinces (Provincial Law Gazette)

A detailed description of the requirements and objectives for Austria are summarized in

- the Agrarmarkt Austria 'Conditionality' information sheet (www.ama.at) and
- on the website of the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture (www.lko.at)



Future changes to the underlying laws, as well as in the executive guidance and fact sheets, shall be taken into account.

The production rules are based on the **Statutory Management Requirements (SMR)** in accordance with Annex III to the CAP Strategic Plan Regulation (EU) 2021/2115.

These are, to a large extent, general legal requirements, which must be observed by all farmers. The most important points and conditions are clearly presented below.

Participating holdings should note that, in addition to nationwide standards and requirements, there are also **state-specific regulations**, such as nature and water protection areas with specific regional requirements, for example concerning plant protection, problematic weeds and fertilisation (e.g. prohibition of sewage slurry delivery), as well as special regulatory protection for certain types of vegetation (legally protected biotopes, habitat types according to the Habitats Directive).



Further provisions for Austria can be found in the information material of the Chambers of Agriculture in the provinces or the district farmers' chambers.

2. Statutory Management Requirements – SMR

All agricultural holdings must comply with the statutory provisions underlying the basic management requirements. These are regulations

- for the protection of the environment and nature;
- for human, animal and plant health.




Figure 3: Schematic representation of Statutory Management Requirements

The essential basic requirements are summarised in eleven SMR items, which in turn are based on eleven EU legal acts (regulation and directives) and are, depending on the requirement, area- or animal-related. The requirements aim to regulate different areas, such as climate protection and adaptation, the protection of natural resources (water, soil and biodiversity), food and feed safety or the sustainable use of pesticides. The SMR requirements for Austria to be complied with are those described in the ‘Conditionality’ information sheet of Agrarmarkt Austria. The following are the seven SMR items that are relevant to farming.

2.1 SMR 1: Water management and irrigation

Irrigation of agricultural land may only take place if the necessary authorisation has been obtained.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of groundwater in quality and quantity
---	---

2.2 SMR 2: Protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates

The requirements for the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates adopted in implementation of the Nitrates Directive 91/676/EEC must be complied with. For production on Austrian land or on land in third countries, this is the Nitrate Action Programme Regulation – NAPV². The NAPV contains, inter alia, provisions on the following points:

² Federal Law Gazette II No 495/2022

- quantitative restriction on the application of nitrogen-containing fertilisers;
- prohibition periods for the application of nitrogen-containing fertilisers;
- provisions on the required storage capacity of manure and the interim storage of manure in the form of field rents;
- specific rules for the application of nitrogen-containing fertilisers, in particular along waters and on slopes;
- full-scale documentation of the use of nitrogen-containing fertilisers;
- further requirements for fertiliser application (e.g. application according to demand in time and quantity, incorporation of manure and slurry on land without soil cover);
- stricter requirements for holdings in areas of NAPV Annex 5.

It is recommended to comply with the Guideline for proper fertilisation in arable farming and grassland in its current version (<https://info.bml.gv.at/service/publikationen/landwirtschaft/richtlinie-fuer-die-sachgerechte-duengung-im-ackerbau-und-gruenland.html>) .



- protection of waters from nitrate inputs originating from agricultural sources;
- reduction of ammonia and greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture.

2.3 SMR 3 and SMR 4: Preservation of wild birds and conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

The requirements adopted (Natura 2000) when implementing the Birds Guideline 2009/147/EC and the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC as well as other requirements relating to farming must be complied with.

The requirements for the following topics are to be observed:

- impairment or removal of landscape features;
- terrain-changing measures (e.g. excavations, deposits, straightenings);
- changes in water balance;
- cultural transformations and changes in use (e.g. biotope areas, grassland breaks, afforestation, etc.);
- other adverse effects on habitats and species.



In Austria, the provinces are responsible for implementing the Birds Guideline and the Habitats Directive. Therefore, differing national legal requirements must be observed.



- preservation of all wild bird species in Europe and their habitats;
- protection of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora;
- preservation and restoration of biodiversity.

2.4 SMR 5: Food and feed safety

In primary production, responsibility for food and feed safety lies with farmers. In addition to primary production, this also includes related processes such as transport, storage and treatment of primary products. Therefore, the following food and feed safety requirements must be observed:

- prevention of food and feed contamination due to hygiene deficiencies, wastes and hazardous substances (e.g. by plant protection products, pests, mineral oils, varnishes);
- taking precautionary measures against pests;
- prevention of transmission of infectious diseases from animals to humans;
- proper use and documentation of biocides;
- documentation of the plant protection products used;
- ensuring the traceability of goods during procurement and sale;



- prevention of adverse effects on human and animal health caused by unsafe food and feed.

2.5 SMR 7 and SMR 8: Market introduction and sustainable use of plant protection products

In the context of the use of plant protection products, the following is to be observed:

- proper use of plant protection products under official authorisation;
- compliance with the provisions of application according to (national) statutory provisions;
- Plant protection products may only be used by persons with appropriate knowledge of national law.
- compliance with proper storage (e.g. prevention of access by unauthorised persons) and disposal;
- keeping records of the plant protection products used;
- requirements for the use of plant protection products in protected areas;
- periodic verification of equipment used;



- ensuring a high level of protection for human, animal and environmental health;
- improvement of agricultural production;
- sustainable use of plant protection products;
- reduction of risks and impacts on human health and the environment through the use of plant protection products.

2.6 Environmental objectives of the Statutory Management Requirements

The Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) relevant to agriculture and their environmental objectives are clearly illustrated in the following figure.

SMR			Landscape and nature conservation	Biodiversity and crop rotation	Soil protection and soil fertility	Groundwater and water protection	Climate mitigation/adaptation	Reduction of PPP use
§	SMR 1	Water management and irrigation				x		
§	SMR 2	Protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates				x	x	
§	SMR 3-4	Bird protection and protection of natural habitats	x	x				
§	SMR 5	Food and feed safety						
§	SMR 7-8	Placing on the market, sustainable use of PPP	x					x

Figure 4: Outline of Statutory Management Requirements and their environmental objectives

3. Requirement to incorporate nitrogen-containing fertilisers into the soil

The requirements laid down in the implementation of the NEC Directive 2016/2284 must be complied with. For Austria, these requirements are set out in the Ammonia Reduction Regulation³. These is briefly described below.

- Manure, slurry, digestate and non-dewatered sewage sludge and poultry manure (including dried chicken manure) shall be incorporated into the soil **on unseeded arable land without delay, but no later than within four hours** after application.
- Facilities or containers for storing liquid manure and liquid digestate with a total capacity of 240 m³ or more must be equipped with a permanently effective, full-surface, and sufficiently resistant cover from 1 January 2028.
- Urea fertiliser may only be applied if a urease inhibitor is added or if it is incorporated immediately, at the latest within four hours.

³ Federal Law Gazette II No 24/2023

C BASIC ARABLE FARMING REQUIREMENTS

1. Good agricultural and environmental conditions - GAEC

The **standards for preserving good agricultural and environmental conditions (GAEC)** Annex III of the CAP Strategic Plans Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 and **Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/587** require compliance in all areas by participating holdings.

A detailed description of the requirements and objectives for Austria is provided

- in the Agrarmarkt Austria 'Conditionality' information sheet (www.ama.at)
- on the website of the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture (www.lko.at) and



Future changes to the underlying laws, as well as to the executive guidance and fact sheets, shall be taken into account.

Participating holdings are obliged to preserve farmed land in good agricultural and ecological condition at all times. This applies in particular to agricultural management in order to preserve the land itself but also the associated natural resources such as soil, water and air/climate in good agricultural and environmental condition. The GAEC standards laid down by the Member States in implementation of the CAP Strategic Plans Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 **and the Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/587** must therefore be complied with.

For production on Austrian land or on land in third countries, these are the following ten standards set out in Annex 2 to the CAP Strategic Plans Application Regulation - GSP-AV.

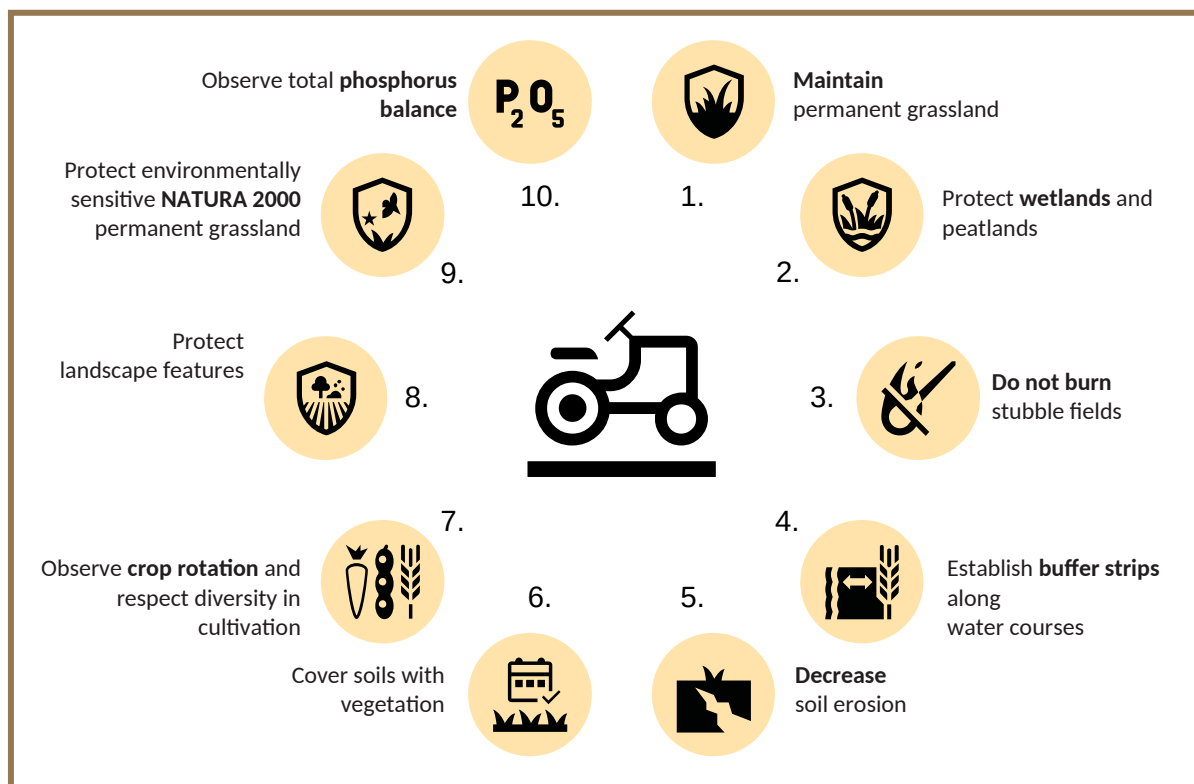



Figure 5: Schematic representation of standards for maintaining good agricultural and ecological condition (GAEC)

Certain GAEC provisions have different relevance depending on the area and associated topography, soil structure and vegetation as well as protected biotopes and habitats.

The GAEC standards to be complied with for Austria are those described in the Conditionality information sheet of Agrarmarkt Austria. These are briefly described below.



It is expressly pointed out that, in Austria, the ‘Conditionality’ information sheet of the AMA as well as the applicable legal bases must always be used for assessment for subsidy/compliance purposes, as they contain all detailed provisions.

1.1 GAEC 1: Maintenance of permanent grassland



Permanent grassland in farmed areas must be preserved as far as possible.

In order to preserve permanent grassland (maximum 5 % decrease), its conversion into arable land is to be avoided.

- An assessment is made compared to both the reference year 2018 and to national (cross-holding) level.

BASIC FARMING REQUIREMENTS



- Avoidance of carbon release
- Erosion prevention
- Protection of soil quality (humus content)
- Preserving the water storage capacity of the soil
- Preserving surface-based ruminant conservation

1.2 GAEC 2: Protection of wetlands and peatlands



Agricultural land designated as peat soils, as well as chernozem soils and alluvial soils with a moist to wet water regime, shall be protected.

- Burning and extracting peat is prohibited
- No new drainage, increases in existing drainage services or land-changing excavations or deposits may be carried out.⁴
- There shall be no ploughing or conversion of permanent grassland in the designated areas.
- No soil inversion deeper than 30 cm may be made.



- Contribution to climate protection through the preservation of carbon content in the soil and its carbon storage capacities
- Protection of habitats

1.3 GAEC 3: Ban on burning stubble fields



Burning straw on stubble fields is prohibited, unless an exception is applicable due to phytosanitary reasons in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Air Pollution Act (Bundesluftreinhaltegesetz), Federal Law Gazette No 137/2002.



- Avoidance of carbon release and preservation of organic matter in soil
- Prevention of air pollution
- Positive impact on humus formation on arable land

1.4 GAEC 4: Establishment of buffer strips along water courses



On agricultural land directly adjacent to water courses (water courses and standing waters), minimum distances must be observed.

⁴ In the case of maintenance or relocation of existing drainage, the previously existing drainage capacity shall be the maximum permitted. Reductions in drainage performance are possible.

- When applying fertilisers and plant protection products, a buffer strip with a minimum width of 3 m must be observed along all bodies of water.
- If pollution by substances causes the water quality to become moderate or poor according to the national water management plan, a permanently vegetated buffer strip at least five metres wide must be established along flowing waters and at least ten metres along standing waters.
- On this 5 or 10 m buffer strip (riparian buffer strip) NO soil cultivation (except for the establishment of the buffer strip), NO application of fertilisers and plant protection products and NO ploughing up of permanent grassland⁵ may be carried out.



- Avoidance of erosion-driven input into water bodies through the establishment of buffer strips
- Contributing to the improvement of the ecological condition of sensitive water bodies
- Preservation and creation of important habitats
- Reduction of the use of fertilisers and plant protection products in sensitive areas

1.5 GAEC 5: Tillage, reducing the risk of soil degradation and erosion



The risk of soil damage must be reduced by refraining from tillage and by using specific management measures, in particular under certain weather conditions and on sloping land.

- On frozen, snow-covered, water-saturated or flooded soils, tillage with agricultural machinery is not permitted.
- For arable land⁶ with a predominant slope of 10 % or more, soil wash-off must be prevented as far as possible by suitable cultivation methods (e.g. contour-strip sowing, cultivation of undersown crop, mulch sowing or direct drilling) or by cultivation across the slope.



- Limit soil erosion to areas at risk of erosion.
- Soil protection

1.6 GAEC 6: Minimum soil cover



The periods of time without vegetation must be reduced to a minimum for arable and permanent crop areas.

⁵ The ground cover may only be changed once every five years.

⁶ Arable land with a field parcel size of at least 0.75 ha

BASIC FARMING REQUIREMENTS

- Arable land not used for agricultural production shall have vegetative cover for the duration of the growing season. The cover must be established⁷ by 15 May at the latest.
- At least 80 % of the arable land must have a minimum soil cover between 1 November and 15 February.⁸ The minimum soil cover is ensured by establishing a crop (a winter crop or intermediate crop), leaving harvest residues or mulching, non-inversion tillage⁹.



- Protection of soils during the most sensitive times
- Creating favourable conditions for soil life over the winter months
- Prevention of nutrient leaching and soil erosion
- Erosion control

1.7 GAEC 7: Crop diversification and crop rotation



On arable land, a variety of crops should be aimed for, which is why crop diversification and crop rotation must always be carried out.¹⁰

Holdings may choose between the following conditions for compliance with this standard:

- Holdings with more than 10 ha and up to 30 ha of arable land must cultivate at least two different crops on the arable land, with the main crop not covering more than 75 % of the total arable land of the holding.
- Holdings that cultivate more than 30 ha of arable land must grow at least three different crops on that land, with the main crop accounting for no more than 75 % and the two largest crops together accounting for no more than 95 % of the total arable land of the holding.
- An annual change of the main crop shall be ensured on at least 30 % of the arable land. After three years at most, a change in the main cultivated crop on the same arable land¹¹ must occur.



- Increase diversity by including additional crops in the rotation
- Minimising disease and pest pressure
- Improvement of soil fertility
- Improvement and preservation of humus content and soil structure

1.8 GAEC 8: Protection of landscape features and ban on cutting hedges and trees



Biodiversity can be further promoted with non-productive or low-agricultural-productivity areas.

⁷ Natural re-vegetation is also permitted

⁸ Exceptions apply to certain open-field vegetable crops, 'exception crops' and heavy soils; in these cases, the minimum soil cover of 55 % of the arable land must be complied with.

⁹ In the case of a harvest after 1 November, inversion tillage for the establishment of winter crops is permitted.

¹⁰ The GAEC standard applies to holdings with > 10 ha of arable land and less than 75 % of the total arable area consisting of arable forage crops/legumes/fallow land or less than 75 % of the total agricultural area consisting of permanent grassland, the GAEC standard does not apply to organic holdings

¹¹ Perennial crops, perennial legumes, seed maize, fallow land and green forage areas are excluded

- Landscape features such as grassy field margins/embankments/dry stone walls, small field woodlots/groups of trees/groups of shrubs, hedgerows, ponds/pools etc. are to be preserved.
- During the breeding and nesting period (20 February to 31 August), hedgerows and trees shall not be cut or coppiced (except for care cuts for fruit trees).



- Preservation of habitats for animal and plant species
- Reduction of erosion through landscape features
- Reduction of nutrient leaching
- Increase of plant species and variety diversity on agricultural land

1.9 GAEC 9: Ban on ploughing up and converting permanent grassland in NATURA-2000 areas



The environmentally sensitive permanent grassland in NATURA 2000 areas must be preserved and protected.

- The environmentally sensitive permanent grassland in NATURA 2000 areas must not be ploughed up or converted into any other type of use. Alpine pastures and different habitat types in NATURA 2000 areas referred to in Annex I to Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora are considered to be environmentally sensitive permanent grassland.



- Preservation of biodiversity through the protection of habitats and species
- Preserving carbon content in the soil
- Erosion control
- Preservation of soil and water quality

1.10 GAEC 10: Control of diffuse phosphate sources



A proper and site-adapted phosphorus fertilisation must always be carried out.

- The recommendations for suitable P₂O₅ fertilisation of the *Expert Advisory Board for Soil Fertility and Soil Protection*¹² must be followed.
- If, in addition to applications of manure, phosphorus mineral fertiliser is also applied in amounts exceeding 100 kg P₂O₅ per hectare, the need must be demonstrated by means of a soil test (not more than 5 years old) and the application must be documented.

¹² <https://info.bml.gv.at/themen/landwirtschaft/landwirtschaft-in-oesterreich/bodenschutz/bodenschutz-duengung/Bodenschutz.html>

BASIC FARMING REQUIREMENTS



- Protection of water bodies against pollution
- Need-based phosphorus fertilisation

2. Ecological objectives of basic farming requirements

The standards for preserving the good agricultural and ecological condition (GAEC) of agricultural land and its ecological objectives are clearly presented in the following figure.











GAEC		Landscape and nature conservation	Biodiversity and crop rotation	Soil protection and soil fertility	Groundwater and water body protection	Mitigation/adaptation to climate change	Reduction of PPP use
	GAEC 1	Maintain permanent grassland	x		x		x
	GAEC 2	Protect wetlands and peatlands	x		x		x
	GAEC 3	Do not burn stubble fields			x		x
	GAEC 4	Establish buffer strips along water courses				x	x
	GAEC 5	Reduce soil erosion			x		
	GAEC 6	Cover soils with vegetation			x		
	GAEC 7	Observe crop rotation and respect diversity in cultivation	x	x	x		
	GAEC 8	Protect landscape features	x	x	x		
	GAEC 9	Protect environmentally sensitive NATURA 2000 permanent grassland	x	x	x		
	GAEC 10	Observe total phosphorus balance				x	

Figure 6: Schematic representation of basic farming requirements and their ecological objectives

D ARABLE FARMING GREENING MEASURES

The arable farming greening measures pursue the following ecological objectives:

- Landscape and nature conservation
- Biodiversity and crop rotation
- Soil protection and fertility
- Groundwater and water body protection
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Reduction of the use of plant protection products

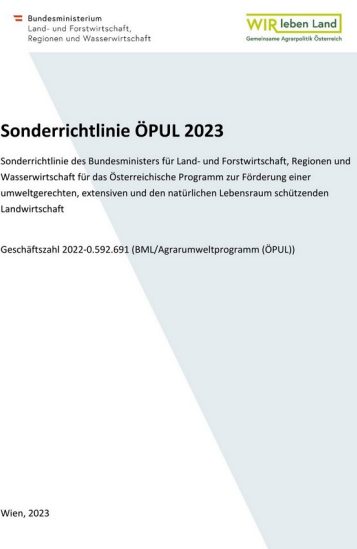
In addition to those under point B Legal basis and those under point C, Basic arable farming requirements the provisions and requirements set out below must comply with the following arable farming greening measures to the extent defined in point 1:

- in the case of production on land in Austria or in third countries, the measures laid down in the exceptional Guideline of the Federal Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Regions and Water Management for the Austrian programme for the promotion of environmentally sound, extensive agriculture that protects natural habitats (ÖPUL 2023);
- in the case of land in other Member States, the arrangements adopted in each Member State to implement the following interventions under Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 : Interventions as part of direct payment schemes for the climate, the environment and animal welfare in accordance with Article 31 (eco-schemes), interventions with respect to environmental, climate-related and other management commitments in accordance with Article 70 (agri-environmental measures) and interventions arising from area-specific disadvantages resulting from mandatory requirements in accordance with Article 72 (Natura 2000/Water Framework Directive).

The main points and requirements of the arable farming greening measures are listed below. More detailed descriptions of the requirements and objectives can be found in

- the 'Special Guideline ÖPUL 2023' including the 'Annexes to the Special Guideline ÖPUL 2023' of the BML (www.bml.gv.at),
- the action-specific information sheets of the (www.ama.at) and
- the website of the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture. (www.lko.at)

Future changes to the underlying Special Guideline ÖPUL 2023 as well as to the implementing guidance and factsheets shall be taken into account.



1. Overview of ÖPUL measures

The ÖPUL measures relevant to arable farming are listed below. Participating holdings must meet **at least three ÖPUL points**, in order to be included in the central supplier register and that the harvested arable crops can subsequently be sold under the 'AMA Quality Seal for Arable Crops'.

The measures distinguish between basic measures and supplementary measures:

- 'Basic measures' are those ÖPUL measures that apply in principle to the holding or designated areas of a holding (e.g. in the context of preventative groundwater protection). **The arable farm holding shall participate in at least one basic measure.** The basic measures may be combined with each other or with supplementary measures to achieve the three ÖPUL points.
- 'Supplementary measures' are those area-based measures for which the holding itself can determine the extent of the participation.

1.1 ÖPUL points

The evaluation of the ÖPUL measures relevant to arable farming with regard to the ecological objectives is presented below.

Basic measures (with 3 points) where participation in a measure is sufficient:

- Environmentally sound and biodiversity-promoting management
- Organic farming
- Organic farming – Subunit for the arable farming sector

Basic measures (with 2 points) for which at least one additional measure (basic or supplementary) is required:

- Preventative groundwater protection – whole holding (when participating with at least 90 % of the arable area)
- Greening of arable land – Evergreen system
- Greening of arable land – Intermediate crops (if at least 25 % of the arable area is greened)

Basic measures (with 1 point) for which further measures (basic or supplementary) are required:

- Preventative groundwater protection – Partial area (for participation with less than 90 % of the arable area)
- Greening of arable land – Intermediate crops (if at least 10 % of the arable area is greened)

The following supplementary measures (with 1 point each) are available:

- Arable erosion control – Mulch sowing/direct drilling
- Arable erosion control – Undersown crop
- Arable erosion control – Cross-ridges in potato fields
- Ground-level application of liquid manure (minimum 100 m³/year)
- Nature conservation – Arable farming
- Results-oriented management – Arable farming
- Water Framework Directive – Agriculture
- Non-productive arable land
- Agroforestry strips

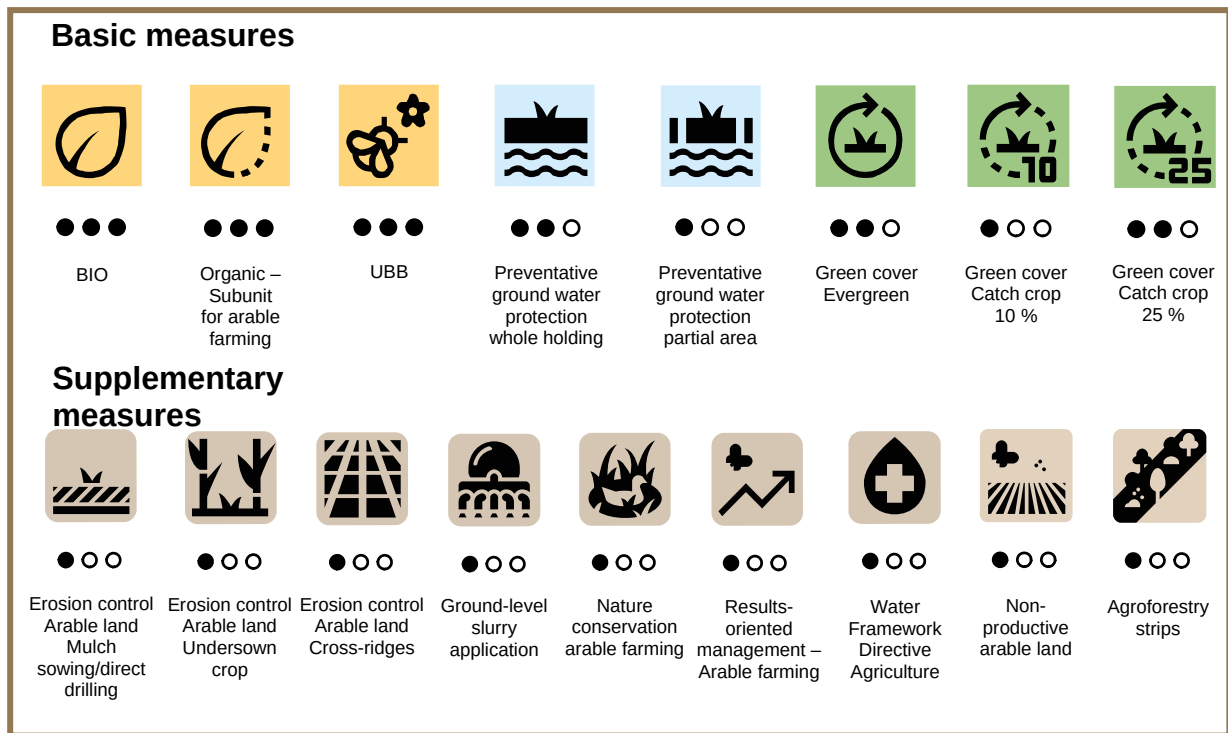


Figure 7: Point overview of the selected ÖPUL measures relevant to arable farming

The point evaluation for the individual ÖPUL measures is only relevant for the present AMA Quality Seal Guideline and not for the payments under ÖPUL.

1.2 Participants from other Member States

For participating holdings in other Member States complying with green farming measures in accordance with Articles 31, 70 and 72 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, the ÖPUL Points scheme with the necessary amendments (*mutatis mutandis*) shall be applied.

2. Basic measures

At least one basic measure must be selected.

2.1 Organic farming – BIO

The provisions of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 (EU Organic Regulation) must be complied with.

➤ Preservation of grassland area

During the contract period, a maximum of 1 hectare of grassland may be converted into arable or special crops. Area swaps within the holding are permitted, but not between different holdings.

➤ **Crop diversification on arable land**

If the holding's arable land occupies more than 5 ha, a maximum of **75 % cereals and maize** is admissible and **no crop may account for more than 55 % of the arable land** (except arable feed).

➤ **Establishment of biodiversity areas on arable land**

On an arable land area of more than 2 ha: **at least 7 % of the holding's arable land** must be used for the establishment of biodiversity areas. Holdings up to and including 10 ha of arable land can also meet the obligation by establishing additional biodiversity areas on grassland.

➤ **Establishment of biodiversity areas on grassland**

Holdings with a mowed grassland area of more than 2 hectares shall establish biodiversity areas on at least 7 % of the area.

➤ **Continuous training obligation on biodiversity and organic farming**

Holding managers have to complete subject-specific courses on biodiversity-related topics totalling 3 hours and on organic farming totalling 5 hours by the end of 2025.



- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in agricultural production and rural areas
- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Qualitative preservation and improvement of soil/fertility condition
- Preservation of the cultural landscape and biodiversity
- Ensuring genetic diversity in agriculture and forestry

2.1.1 Organic farming – organic subunit for arable farming

As part of the ÖPUL measure for organic farming, under certain conditions it is possible to participate in the 'Organic farming' measure with only part of the agricultural holding. The ÖPUL measure 'Organic farming' is based, inter alia, on Regulation (EU) 2018/848.



The 3 points under this Guideline may be credited only if the organic subunit covers the 'arable farming' crop category.

For the organic subunit, the requirements and objectives of the 'Organic farming' ÖPUL measure apply.

2.2 Environmentally sound and biodiversity-promoting management (UBB)

Analogous to the organic area, conventional farming with a positive environmental impact is also being strengthened.



➤ **Maintaining grassland area**

During the contract period, a maximum of 1 hectare of grassland may be converted into arable or special crops. Area swaps within the holding are permitted, but not between different holdings.

➤ **Crop diversification on arable land**

If the holding's arable land occupies more than 5 ha, a maximum of **75 % cereals and maize** is admissible and **no crop may account for more than 55 % of the arable land** (except arable feed).

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Holding managers have to complete subject-specific courses on biodiversity-related topics totalling 3 hours by the end of 2025.



- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Qualitative preservation and improvement of soil/fertility condition
- Preservation of the cultural landscape and biodiversity
- Ensuring genetic diversity in agriculture and forestry

2.3 Preventative groundwater protection – Whole holding

If more than 90 % of the arable land of an agricultural holding is located in defined areas and is participating in this measure, the holding will receive 2 ÖPUL points.

This must be combined with the 'greening – catch crop' or 'greening – evergreen' measure.

The following conditions must be complied with:

- Holding-level and field parcel-related records under the Nitrates Action Programme Regulation shall be kept.
- In the case of nitrogen surpluses from preceding crops, appropriate conditions shall be taken into account depending on the amounts in question.
- Holding managers must complete subject-specific courses totalling 10 hours by the end of 2026.
- By the end of 2026, soil samples must be taken and analysed for each 5 ha of arable land.



- The use of certain plant protection products is not permitted for sorghum, maize, oilseed rape, soy and sugar beet.



- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in agricultural production and rural areas
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Qualitative preservation and improvement of soil/fertility condition
- Preservation of the cultural landscape and biodiversity

2.4 Preventative groundwater protection - Partial area

If less than 90 % of the arable land of an agricultural holding is located in defined areas and is participating in this measure, the holding will receive 1 ÖPUL point. For the partial area participating in this measure, the requirements and objectives of the ÖPUL measure 'Preventative groundwater protection - Whole holding' apply.



2.5 Greening - Evergreen

- At least 85 % of the arable land must be covered in vegetative cover at all times of the year (subject to certain conditions).
- Field parcel-related records of specific management dates (main crop harvest, establishment and termination of cover crops, establishment of subsequent crops) must be kept on an ongoing basis.
- For the cultivation of cover crops, the conditions of this measure shall be respected.



- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Increasing resilience and adaptation to climate change
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Qualitative preservation and improvement of soil/fertility condition

2.6 Green cover - cover crops 10 %

If at least 10 % of the arable land is involved in this measure, the holding shall receive an ÖPUL point.



The following conditions must be complied with:

- Cover crop greening (between two main crops) or companion sowing/undersown crop shall be established in accordance with the variant applied for.
- A mineral N fertilisation, the use of plant protection products and soil cultivation may not occur from the time of the establishment of the greening until the end of the greening period.



- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Increasing resilience and adaptation to climate change
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Qualitative preservation and improvement of soil/fertility condition

2.7 Green cover – cover crops 25 %

If at least 25 % of the arable land is involved in this measure, the holding shall receive two ÖPUL points.

The conditions listed under 2.6 must be observed.



- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Increasing resilience and adaptation to climate change
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Qualitative preservation and improvement of soil/fertility condition

3. Supplementary measures

In addition to the basic measures, the following supplementary measures can be chosen, each corresponding to one ÖPUL point.

3.1 Arable land erosion control – Mulch sowing/direct drilling, undersowing, cross-ridges in potato fields

The holding receives one ÖPUL point for each measure (mulch sowing/direct drilling, undersowing, cross-ridges in potato fields). If both mulch sowing and direct drilling are implemented by a holding, the holding will receive only one ÖPUL point.



In the case of mulch sowing and direct drilling (including strip-till), the 'greening – cover crops' or 'greening – evergreen' measures must also be applied.



The following conditions must be complied with:

- Erosion-prone crops are grown by means of mulch sowing, direct drilling or sowing using a strip-till procedure following greening crops. ● ○ ○
- When growing potatoes, soil dams (at intervals of max. 2 m) are formed in the furrows between the planting ridges (excluding wheel tracks) to prevent water erosion.
- On identified erosion entry paths, the establishment of vegetated runoff pathways is carried out. ● ○ ○
- In the case of broad beans, pumpkin, soy and sunflower, an undersown crop is established.



- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Increasing resilience and adaptation to climate change
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Qualitative preservation and improvement of soil/fertility condition

3.2 Ground-level application of liquid manure

If this measure is participated in, at least 100 m³ of liquid manure must be applied close to the ground. The holding will receive one ÖPUL point for this.



The following conditions must be complied with:

- Liquid farmyard manures, including biogas manure, shall be applied to arable ● ○ ○ or grassland areas of the holding with equipment that applies the fertiliser directly onto or into the soil (trailing hose, trailing shoe or injection method).
- The quantity applied, the type of liquid farmyard manure as well as the time of application and the application method shall be documented on a field parcel-related basis.



- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in agricultural production and rural areas
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Reduction of air pollutants from agriculture

3.3 Nature conservation - Arable farming

In consultation with the national government's Nature Conservation Department, ecologically valuable areas are provided with specific requirements (e.g. for the protection of ground-nesting birds).

If this measure is participated in with arable farmland, the holding will receive one ÖPUL point.



The following conditions shall be complied with on the land:

- The defined management measures (e.g. decommissioning of land, restriction of management measures) on the land according to the project confirmation must be complied with.
- At least one use/maintenance every 2 years
- No mechanical debris, terrain corrections, deposits, residue, new drainage and no storage of silo bales etc.



- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Preservation, conservation and restoration of species of high conservation value
- Increasing the consideration of site-specific aspects in order to achieve biodiversity objectives

3.4 Results-oriented management - Arable farming

In consultation with the project-authorising body, ecologically valuable areas are selected and given specific objectives (e.g. at least 20 different plant species, ripening of plant seeds as winter feed for birds).

If this measure is participated in with arable farmland, the holding will receive one ÖPUL point.



The following conditions shall be complied with on the land applied for:

- At least one use/maintenance every 2 years
- The indicators set at the start of the measures must be met
- The indicators must be continuously monitored and recorded in a predefined database
- Holding managers must attend at least one regional networking meeting by the end of 2026.





- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Preservation, conservation and restoration of species of high conservation value
- Increasing the consideration of site-specific aspects in order to achieve biodiversity objectives

3.5 Water Framework Directive – Agriculture

In order to protect groundwater, certain areas in Styria are subject to additional management requirements. If this measure is participated in with arable farmland, the holding will receive one ÖPUL point.



The following conditions must be met according to the groundwater protection program Graz to Bad Radkersburg 2018¹³:



- Maximum permitted nitrogen fertiliser quantities
- Permitted periods for the application of nitrogen-containing fertilisers
- Record-keeping obligations



- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection

¹³ Provincial Law Gazette No 24/2018


3.6 Non-productive arable land

If this measure is participated in with at least 2 % of the arable land, the holding will receive one ÖPUL point.

The following conditions must be complied with:

- A ban on fertilisers and plant protection products applies to non-productive arable land.
- The cut grass must not be removed from the area or used; grazing is not permitted.





- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Increasing resilience and adaptation to climate change
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Qualitative preservation and improvement of soil/fertility condition
- Preservation of the cultural landscape and biodiversity
- Ensuring genetic diversity in agriculture and forestry


3.7 Agroforestry strips

If this measure is participated in with at least 1 % of the arable land, the holding will receive one ÖPUL point.

Agroforestry strips are newly planted strips of trees and shrubs directly adjacent to arable land, established from 2020 onwards, which meet the following requirements:

- Average width of at least 2 metres to a maximum of 10 metres
- At least 10 and at most 25 trees per 100 running metres
- Maximum tree spacing of 15 metres
- No special crops according to GSP-AV and no trees or shrubs from the negative list
- No application of fertilisers and plant protection products.





- Optimisation of agricultural and forestry carbon storage
- Increasing resilience and adaptation to climate change
- Improvement of surface and groundwater protection
- Qualitative preservation and improvement of soil/fertility condition
- Preservation of the cultural landscape and biodiversity

4. Ecological objectives of green farming measures

The ÖPUL measures relevant to arable farming and their ecological objectives are clearly presented in the following figure.















ÖPUL measures	Landscape and nature conservation	Biodiversity and crop rotation	Soil protection and soil fertility	Groundwater and water body protection	Climate change mitigation and adaptation	Reduction of PPP use
 Environmentally sound, biodiversity-promoting management	X	X	X	X	X	X
 Organic management	X	X	X	X	X	X
 Greening of arable land - Evergreen system		X	X	X	X	X
 Greening of arable land - Cover crop cultivation		X	X	X	X	X
 Preventative groundwater protection - Field			X	X		X
 Arable erosion control - Mulch sowing/direct drilling		X	X	X	X	
 Arable erosion control - Undersown crop		X	X	X	X	X
 Arable erosion control - Cross-ridges in potato fields			X	X		
 Ground-level application of liquid farmyard manure				X	X	
 Nature conservation	X	X	X	X	X	X
 Results-oriented management	X	X	X	X	X	X
 Water Framework Directive - Agriculture			X	X		
 Non-productive arable land	X	X	X	X	X	X
 Agroforestry strips	X	X	X	X	X	X

Figure 8: Outline of green farming measures and their ecological objectives

E SPECIAL PRODUCTION REGULATIONS

1. Genetic engineering

No products may be used on these areas that, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 and Regulation (EC) No 1830/2003, are required to be labelled as genetically modified.

The use of genetically modified seed and planting material is not permitted.



When selecting varieties, seed and planting material, suitability with regard to the location, susceptibility to disease, intended use and customer requirements must be taken into account.

2. Sewage sludge/composted sewage sludge

The application of sewage sludge to areas under this AMA Quality Seal guideline is prohibited. Until the end of 2028, sewage sludge may be applied to land in Austria if it is **quality sludge compost** or sewage sludge that meets the requirements of quality sludge compost according to the Compost Ordinance¹⁴.

Until the end of 2028, the application of sewage sludge to land in other Member States shall be subject to the sewage sludge application requirements of those Member States.

Regardless of the above requirements, application is in any case prohibited from cultivation to harvesting the crop.



Laws and regulations concerning the application and application amounts of sewage sludge or composted sewage sludge shall be complied with. In Austria, the province-specific regulations must be observed.

3. Plant protection

3.1 Integrated plant protection

Good phytosanitary practice includes taking the principles of integrated plant protection (prevention, containment, defence) and the protection of the environment into account. Good plant protection practice is used to maintain health and quality assurance of plants and plant products. Integrated plant protection is the careful consideration of all available plant protection methods and the subsequent integration of appropriate measures to counter the development of populations of harmful organisms and to keep the use of plant protection products and other defence and control methods at an economically and environmentally acceptable level and which reduces or minimises risks to human health and the environment.

¹⁴ Federal Law Gazette II No 292/2001

3.2 Desiccation ban

The use of desiccants (e.g. glyphosate-containing plant protection products) for the purpose of accelerating ripening and harvest preparation is prohibited.

3.3 Problematic weeds



All farmed areas, including biodiversity areas, as well as arable and water margins, must be checked regularly for the presence of problematic weeds (e.g. thorn apple, ambrosia/ragweed, henbane, giant hogweed, corn cockle) and neophytes (non-native plants). Further dissemination should be prevented as far as possible in the course of land management land. No separate documentation is required.



Laws and regulations relating to problematic weeds (e.g. Burgenland Ragweed Control Act (Burgenländisches Ragweed-Gesetz)) must be observed.

It should be noted that there may be unwanted transmissions of toxic substances (e.g. tropane alkaloids in thorn apples) during harvest. Since some plants are toxic and can cause 'skin burns' in combination with UV rays (phototoxic reactions), special precautions should be taken when controlling them.

4. Harvest, transport and storage

Care must be taken to ensure that there is no negative impact on the crop during harvest, transport or storage.

All harvesting vehicles, transport containers and storage spaces used must be suitable for the respective purpose. Employees must demonstrably be trained on the hygiene requirements relevant to them in the handling of arable crops.

4.1 Transport

When transporting AMA Quality Seal arable crops, special care should be taken to ensure that no contamination with undesirable substances occurs. The transport containers must be empty, clean and dry before filling.

4.2 Storage

- In order to protect the crop, facilities must be in place to adequately protect it from adverse weather conditions.
- The crop must be brought into a condition suitable for storage according to the storage period (e.g. by appropriate drying, cleaning and ventilation measures).
- During direct drying, care should be taken to ensure that the amount of undesirable substances (e.g. dioxin, dioxin-like PCBs, PAHs) in the AMA Quality Seal arable crops is not increased beyond the limit values.
- Storage spaces must be designed in such a way as to avoid contamination with physical components (glass fragments of lighting fixtures, wood chips, etc.).
- Lubricants that come into contact with AMA Quality Seal arable crops must be food grade. Contamination with non-food-grade lubricants or hydraulic oils must be prevented.



Storage checks must be carried out and documented at regular intervals. During storage checks, particular attention must be paid to humidity, temperature control, pest infestation, mould formation, obstructions and dirt. The documentation excludes interim storage in the course of harvesting.

- It must be ensured that only authorised persons have access to all facilities.
- Activities of third-party companies shall not lead to an adverse effect on food and feed safety. The area concerned must be inspected upon completion of the activity.

4.2.1 Cleaning



In order to ensure operational hygiene, walls, floors and other surfaces of the storage facilities, including intake pits and conveying equipment, must be cleaned regularly. Detergents used must be adapted to the intended use. This cleaning work, including the means used, shall be documented.

- In order to avoid confusion, cleaning agents must be stored in clearly marked containers in specially marked locations.

4.2.2 Pest monitoring and control

Pest infestation is to be prevented as far as possible by appropriate measures. Shelter opportunities for insects and rodents indoors and outdoors must be avoided. Waste must be disposed of immediately or stored in a sealed manner.



During self-checks, pest monitoring (e.g. bait boxes, pest traps) must be established in the storage premises of the harvested material, which quickly detects hazards and enables timely pest control. Important cornerstones are the site plan, the resources used and the infestation analysis. In case of pest infestation, the corrective measures taken must be documented.

5. Separate storage



AMA Quality Seal arable crops must always be stored separately from other arable crops (not AMA-QS or of other origin) and be identifiable as such. Holdings operating internationally must ensure a strict and comprehensible separation of the crop by origin (country of harvest). Mixing of different origins must be ruled out.

For all harvest measures, the harvest date or the time period of the harvest as well as the harvest quantity must be documented in terms of origin and field parcel. The origin of the harvested material must be noted on all documentation accompanying the batch/lot from storage intake to removal from storage. All data necessary for identification and traceability are the holding's responsibility.

F ANNEX

1. Expert Panel on the Arable Crops Guideline

1.1. Powers

The expert panel established under the 'Arable Crops' Guideline is responsible for the preparation, amendment and approval of this Guideline, for technical interpretations such as the sanctions catalogue and the handling of complaints against sanctions imposed.

1.2. Expert panel meetings

The expert panel meets when necessary, but at least once a year. The meetings are not public.

1.3. Participants

As long as no cross-stage quality programme such as bread and baked goods has been developed and implemented, and there are no participants involved in the 'Arable Crops' agricultural guideline, the provisional expert panel is composed of the 'Agriculture' working group and the head of quality management of AMA-Marketing.

Later, if the entire value chain is involved, the expert panel will be expanded with participants from the agricultural trade, processing and distribution as well as from the food retail trade.

1.4. Procedure

AMA-Marketing shall invite the participants, specifying the points on the agenda and who will chair the meeting. Each of the participants, if unable to attend, takes care of the posting of an informed representative. If necessary, the expert panel may enlist additional experts. They shall not have voting rights.

1.5. Decision-making

For decision-making, the consent of a simple majority is required.

1.6. Appeal period

In the event of sanctions being imposed, agricultural holdings may, within a period of 14 days from the date of their notification, contact this expert panel by submitting a reasoned written objection to the AMA-Marketing request for referral to the expert panel.

1.7. Extraordinary meeting

AMA-Marketing will inform the representatives of the objection and invite them to take a decision. The expert panel will only convene an extraordinary meeting if:

- a) a specific situation arises for the first time or
- b) deviation from the sanctions catalogue appears necessary or
- c) an amendment to the Guideline has been proposed.

Otherwise, decisions will be routinely taken by means of a circulation procedure.

1.8. No suspensive effect

In the event of convening the expert panel, the appellants have a right to be heard, but no voting rights. The appeal does not have any suspensive effect.

2. Selection of relevant legal provisions

For the sake of clarity, only the most important legal provisions have been selected and listed in their latest applicable versions. The list does not claim to be exhaustive or correct and is only provided for the information of participants.

Note: The legal provisions referred to in the Guideline refer to the current version.

2.1 Legal basis of the Statutory Management Requirements (SMR)

- **SMR 1: Water management and irrigation**
 - *Directive 2000/60/EC, OJ L 327/1 (Water Framework Directive)*
 - *Water Law Act 1959 – WRG 1959, Federal Law Gazette No 215/1959*
- **SMR 2: Protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates (nitrate action programme)**
 - *Directive 91/676/EEC, OJ L 375/1*
 - *Nitrates Action Programme Regulation – NAPV*
 - *Guideline on proper fertilisation in farming and grassland, 8th edition*
 - *Federal Law Gazette II No 495/2022*
- **SMR 3: Conservation of wild birds**
 - *Directive 2009/147/EC, OJ L 20/7*
 - *Laws and Regulations of the provinces*
- **SMR 4: Conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and Flora**
 - *Directive 92/43/EEC, OJ L 206/7*
 - *Laws and Regulations of the provinces*
- **SMR 5: Food and feed hygiene**
 - *Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, OJ L 31/1 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety*
 - *Food Safety and Consumer Protection Act (LMSVG), Federal Law Gazette I No 13/2006*
 - *Guidelines for the application of Articles 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 on general food law*
 - *Guidelines on traceability in agriculture by the Austrian Codex Commission of September 2004*
 - *Regulation (EC) 852/2004, OJ L 139/1 on the hygiene of foodstuffs*
 - *Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, OJ L 139/55 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin*
 - *Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, OJ L 31/1 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law*
 - *Regulation (EC) No 183/2005, OJ L 35/1 laying down requirements for feed hygiene*
 - *Animal Feed Act 1999, Federal Law Gazette I No 139/1999*
 - *Animal Feed Regulation 2010, Federal Law Gazette II No 316/2010*

- *Animal Flour Act, Federal Law Gazette I No 143/2000 in conjunction with the Animal Flour Act Adaptation Regulation*
- *BSE-Agriculture Regulation 2004, Federal Law Gazette II No 258/2004 in conjunction with Regulation (EU) 2021/1372*
- **SMR 7 and SMR 8: Market introduction and sustainable use of plant protection products**
 - *Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides, OJ L 309/71*
 - *Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market, OJ L 309/1*
 - *Plant Protection Products Act 2011, Federal Law Gazette I No 10/2011*
 - *Plant Protection Products Regulation 2011, Federal Law Gazette II No 233/2011*
 - *Waste Management Act 2002 – AWG 2002, Federal Law Gazette I No 102/2002*
 - *Laws and Regulations of the provinces*

The legal provisions are available online at www.ris.bka.gv.at and the AMA-Marketing Guidelines and information sheets are available at www.amainfo.at.

2.2 Legal bases for basic arable farming requirements (GAEC)

- *Annex III to the CAP Strategic Plans Regulation (EU) 2021/2115*
- *Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/587*