

# Maximise grant income or return to the plough

With Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) schemes coming to an end and grain prices rising, it's crystal clear that anyone with land should switch back into full-scale cereal production – or is it?

Not necessarily, explains CLM's Anthony Weston, whose experience in the complex area of environmental stewardship grants is unrivalled.

"For some people, yes, a move back into crop production would be profitable. For others, one of the new environmental stewardship schemes could still offer them more grant income than they would earn by going back to the plough.

"The truth is that every farm and every situation is different. At CLM we look closely at the individual situation facing each of our clients in order to come up with

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their most profitable option – which could be completely different to the best option for the farm just down the road."

## Head-start



Sharon Iles

CLM has a ten-year head start on environmental grant assessment work of all kinds, and increased that advantage still further with the arrival in 2005 of Mr Weston, who joined from DEFRA.

"It's not just big schemes where we can help to maximise grant income," he explained. "Small farmers who really don't have time for the paperwork also come to us for advice. We can

sort out the detail, make sure they are getting all the grant they are entitled to and help them stay within the rules."

Helping small farmers with paperwork is also part of another CLM team member's responsibilities. The company has always looked after farm management and administration for a wide range of clients, but Sharon Iles has been brought in specifically to strengthen that aspect of the work.

Sharon's role includes turning clients' accounts from raw data – sometimes little more than an old shoe box full of receipts and bills – into a state where an accountant can quickly and easily prepare a fully-fledged set of accounts. It's another weight off the mind of farmers who would rather be out in the field doing the 'day job.'

CLM, which offers new clients a free initial visit, already works across Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Dorset, Essex and London, where they look after the 1,000 acres of Wimbledon Common.