

February 2015 - e-news issue 19

Welcome to the Farming Advice Service newsletter

This is the first Farming Advice Service (FAS) newsletter for 2015; we hope you find it, and subsequent issues, informative. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy New Year.

If you would like to sign-up to receive the FAS newsletter straight to your inbox, please email bookings@farmingadvice.org.uk with 'Register for newsletter' in the subject line. Your details will not be shared with any third parties.

We hope you find the information in this issue helpful. If you have any comments or ideas for topics you'd like us to cover, please let us know.

FAS technical advice line:

Telephone: 0345 345 1302

Email: advice@farmingadvice.org.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/government/groups/farming-advice-service

**Farming
Advice Service**

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The latest information on Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2015

The new Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) has been approved and the Schemes which make it up will soon begin to be rolled out. The GOV.UK CAP reform [collection page](#) provides up-to-date information on CAP 2015, including topics such as greening and Countryside Productivity.

You can sign up to receive email updates from the [CAP reform blog](#).

FAS will be hosting a series of events for farmers and advisers during early 2015. These will focus on greening and

cross compliance changes for 2015 – all events will be advertised on our [events calendar](#) so keep an eye out for forthcoming events in your region.

If you have questions about greening or changes to cross compliance rules for 2015, please contact the FAS advice line on 0345 345 1302 or email advice@farmingadvice.org.uk

FAS is a government-funded service, providing **independent and confidential** advice. Further information can be found on our [website](#).

Cross compliance update

In December 2014, you will have received a paper copy of 'The guide to cross compliance in England 2015' through the post. This guidance document outlines the cross compliance rules for 2015 and you should use it to establish which rules are applicable to your holding for this year.

What's new in 2015?

Under the new CAP, some of the cross compliance rules are the same as those in previous years, but some have changed. **All of the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) and most of the Statutory**

Management Requirements (SMRs) have been renumbered. Some GAECs have also been split or merged into other rules.

A summary of the main changes can be found on page 7 of 'The guide to cross compliance in England 2015'.

If you have questions about the cross compliance rules for 2015, please contact the FAS advice line on 0345 345 1302 or email advice@farmingadvice.org.uk

Farming Advice Service in 2015



The Farming Advice Service (FAS) updates the farming sector on relevant EU and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) policy. It not only explains the requirements under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and other EU directives, national legislation and policies, but also their objectives and the actions that help meet compliance. In 2015 FAS will continue to provide free, confidential advice on cross compliance and the greening requirements in the next CAP round and from January we also began to cover some aspects of the Water Framework Directive (such as silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil (SSAFO) and waste exemptions) and the Sustainable Use (of pesticides) Directive.

For further information, please visit our [website](#) or call 0345 345 1302. Please note that the FAS website has a new address - www.gov.uk/government/groups/farming-advice-service

Important changes to soil management requirements

There are new rules for soils that have replaced the previous GAEC 1 (Soil Protection Review). A new set of national minimum standard rules – which are **outcome focused** and require no paperwork – will be used instead. These will mean that more emphasis is put on actually farming the land rather than keeping a paper log. The new rules are:

GAEC 4

Minimum soil cover

You must take all reasonable steps to protect soil by having a minimum soil cover – except where there is an agronomic justification for not doing so or where establishing a cover would conflict with requirements under GAEC 5. Information on acceptable agronomic justifications and soil cover are set out in [‘The guide to cross compliance in England 2015’](#) and the [‘Cross compliance in England: soil protection standards 2015’](#) guidance. Where a suitable agronomic justification that is not listed in the guidance applies, you will need to apply for a derogation from the RPA. The derogation must be granted prior to the undertaking the agronomic justification.

GAEC 5

Minimum land management reflecting site-specific conditions to limit erosion

You must put measures in place to limit soil and bankside erosion caused (for example) by:

- cropping practices and cropping structures;
- livestock management, including outdoor pigs and poultry, causing overgrazing and poaching;
- wind; and
- vehicles, trailers and machinery.

Where compaction may cause soil erosion, you must, where appropriate, cultivate post-harvest land and late harvested crops using primary cultivation methods such as ploughing. Alternative primary cultivation methods are included in [‘Cross compliance in England: soil protection standards 2015’](#).

A reduction in your agricultural payments could occur where erosion is over a single area greater than 1 hectare (this is a continuous area and can include land that crosses permanent boundary features, meaning that the erosion is not necessarily within one field) or along a continuous stretch of more than

20 metres long and 2 metres wide of a watercourse. Examples of appropriate measures to limit soil erosion are available in the [‘Cross compliance: soil protection standards guidance’](#).

GAEC 6

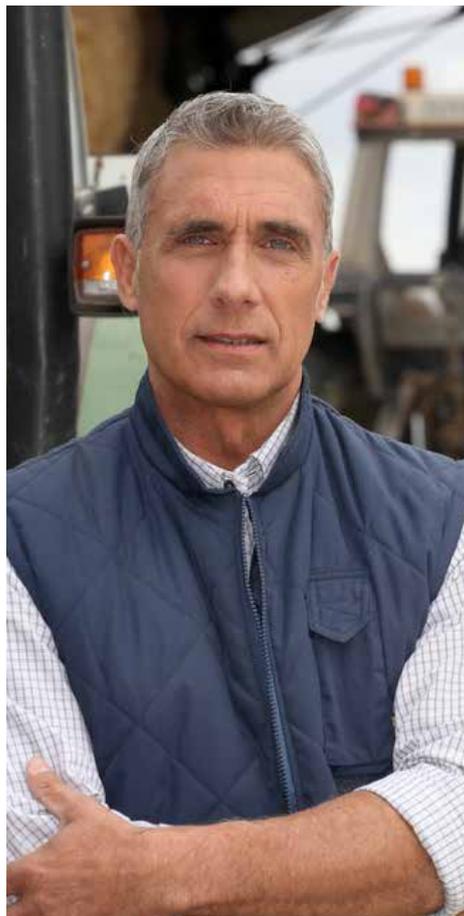
Maintenance of soil organic matter level

You must:

- not burn crop stubble, except for plant health reasons. Where burning is needed for plant health reasons, it must comply with the Crop Residues (Burning) Regulations (1993) (Regulations 4 (b) and 5);
- comply with the Heather and Grass Burning Regulations (2007) (Regulations 5(2) and 6(1)(a)); and
- comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (England) (No 2) Regulations (2006) (Regulations 4, 9, 26 and 28) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations (1999) (Regulations 4(1) and 22). Do not plough, cultivate or intensify species-rich and semi-natural habitats so as to conserve organic matter and carbon levels in soils. An environmental impact assessment (EIA) may be required if the land has not been cultivated within 15 years or if it is semi-natural.

If you require further advice regarding soil management on your farm, please contact FAS on 0345 345 1302 or email advice@farmingadvice.org.uk





Basic Payment Scheme – what you should do now

If you have not already signed up, you should register on the rural payments online system (<https://www.gov.uk/rural-payments>).

There are a number of implementation phases that need to be followed as the online system is updated. It will not be possible for you to complete the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim form until April. However, your application will start to be 'built' from the moment you register, so we would recommend signing up early to ensure that there is no delay in your application.

During February

You can log in to check that your personal, business and land details are correct and begin entering some land information. You are also able to give permission for an agent to act on your behalf.

March

From March, you will be able to confirm entitlements and eligibility and make changes to your land.

April

From April, you will be able to make your BPS claim.

If you have any problems or questions about completing your registration, or if you have not previously claimed payments from the RPA, please contact the RPA Customer Service Centre on 0345 603 7777 and select option 1.

Changes to Statutory Management Requirement (SMR) 7 – cattle identification and registration

From 6 April 2015, subject to Parliamentary approval, if you are a bovine animal keeper in England you will no longer be required to record in your holding register dam identification details for bovine animals moved onto your holding. However, you will still be required to record dam identification information in the holding register for bovine animals born on your holding.

This change is a result of the Government's Red Tape Challenge to reduce the regulatory burden on the farming industry, following a proposal from the National Farmers' Union (NFU).

In autumn last year, Defra ran a 10-week public consultation on the proposal. It received positive feedback and support from industry and other interested parties. As a result, the Cattle Identification Regulations 2007 will be amended to reflect the change.

The removal of the requirement to record dam identification for animals not born on the holding will not affect the ability to trace animals or compromise disease and food safety controls. It simply removes duplication of information that is readily available on the Cattle Tracing System database (CTS). When the birth of a bovine animal is registered with the British Cattle Movement Service, the information is recorded in CTS. This includes the dam information of each bovine animal.

Full details on the change and the consultation process, including a summary of responses, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/bovine-animal-keeper-holding-register-changing-what-needs-to-be-recorded>

Further information on what needs to be recorded in the holding register can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/keep-a-holding-register-for-cattle>

It should be noted that if you are claiming Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) you must adhere to the rules under SMR 7: Cattle identification and registration. Further information can be found in '[The guide to cross compliance in England 2015](#)'.

In November 2014, FAS produced a factsheet called 'Top tips for compliance with cattle identification & registration rules'. The factsheet is based on the most common SMR 7 failures as detailed in the latest RPA inspection results. The factsheet can be downloaded from [here](#).

EIA (Agriculture) regulations

The aim of the EIA (Agriculture) regulations is to protect the environmental importance of uncultivated and semi-natural areas from being damaged by agricultural works. Compliance with the Regulations is covered by the new cross compliance rules under GAEC 6. Failure to adhere to the rules is a breach of BPS. GAEC 6 states that “You must comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (EIA) (2006) (Regulations 4, 9, 26 and 28) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations (1999) (Regulations 4(1) and 22). You can’t plough, cultivate or intensify species-rich and semi-natural habitats so as to keep organic matter and carbon levels in soils”.

To comply with the regulations, permission must be obtained

from Natural England prior to an ‘uncultivated land project’ being started or carried out that affects an area of two or more hectares. An ‘uncultivated land project’ is a project that increases the agricultural productivity uncultivated or a semi-natural area. Land is judged to be uncultivated if, for the last 15 years, it has not been physically cultivated (such as ploughing and sub-surface harrowing) or chemically cultivated (such as applying fertilisers and soil improvers). ‘Semi-natural areas’ include bracken; species-rich hay meadow; fen, marsh and swamp; bog; semi-natural scrub; dwarf shrub heath; wet grassland in coastal and river flood plains; unimproved grassland; and standing water.

If your land falls within the definition above, you will need to contact the Natural England Environmental

Impact Assessment team prior to undertaking work to increase the productivity of the land. The team can be contacted on 0800 028 2140 or eia.England@naturalengland.org.uk.

In some instances, Natural England may consider that a project falling below the EIA thresholds will, none the less, have a significant effect on the environment and an EIA will need to be carried out. In such cases, Natural England has the power to issue a screening notice that removes one or more of the thresholds and requires a screening application to be made.

Owners are reminded that removal of trees and woodland may be a project under the EIA (Forestry) Regulations. Before considering any tree or woodland removal, please contact your local [Forestry Commission office](#).

Strengthened TB testing rules to be extended from 1 January 2015 – reminder

If you are a cattle keeper, you are now considered to be in breach of cross compliance if TB tests that were set for your herd by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) are not carried out by the testing deadline. In January 2014, Defra strengthened the existing cross-compliance process for overdue TB surveillance and check tests. **This approach has resulted in a big reduction in the number of late TB tests. To reinforce the benefits, further TB test types were added to the list on 1 January 2015.**

Breaches will be reported to the RPA by APHA and reductions to payments will be applied from the first day of the test going overdue. The level of reduction will depend on the length

of time the test was overdue before completion. It is important to note that detection will not be reliant on an inspection taking place.

You must notify APHA as soon as you think you might not meet your TB testing deadline.

This information will be taken into account before the referral to the RPA. To make sure that APHA have all of the relevant information and facts, get in touch with your local APHA office as soon as you have any issues with your TB testing schedule.

The TB test must be started within the testing window (the ‘TT1’ injection date) and completed with the 72 hour period set out in EU legislation. The injection must take

place within the testing window, although the reading of the test (or ‘TT2’ date) can be done after the test deadline - as long as it’s within the 72 hour period.

For contact details of your local APHA office, use the postcode search tool on the [APHA website](#) or call 02920 768 555.

Further information, plus a full list of TB test types that are subject to the zero tolerance approach can be found in the **TB Information Notes 01/15 and 05/12** which you can find here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bovine-tb-information-notes>



Nitrate Vulnerable Zone reminders

Non-spreading conditions and areas

If you have land that is within a nitrate vulnerable zone (NVZ), you must ensure that you are adhering to the rules regarding non-spreading conditions. A brief summary is provided below:

- **You must not** spread organic manure to land that has been waterlogged, flooded, snow covered or frozen for more than 12 hours in the previous 24 hours.
- **You must not** spread organic manures:
 - less than 50 metres from a spring, well or borehole; or
 - within 10 metres of surface water, except on land managed for breeding wader birds or as species-rich semi-natural grassland and under certain circumstances. If you are using precision manure spreading equipment to apply slurry, sewage sludge or anaerobic digestate, you may spread manure 6 metres or more from surface water.
- If you spread organic manures, **you must** prepare a risk map for your farm to show:
 - each field and its area in hectares;
 - all surface waters;
 - any springs, wells or boreholes on the holding or within 50 metres of the holding boundary;
 - areas with sandy or shallow soils;
 - land with a slope of more than

- 12 degrees (1 in 5 or 20%);
- land within 10 metres of surface water and within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole;
- land drains;
- sites suitable for temporary field heaps (if you use this method of storing manure); and
- land that has a low run-off risk (if you intend to spread to this land during the storage period for the purpose of reducing your storage capacity requirement – see Chapter 4).

You must update the risk map within three months of a change in circumstances (e.g. you take on more land, or you install or remove field drains).

Please be aware that even if you are not within an NVZ, there is a requirement to follow the non-spreading rules under GAEC 1 (Establishment of buffer strips along watercourses) if you are spreading organic manure.

More detailed information on preparing your risk map and the non-spreading conditions and areas can be found in chapter 8 of '[Guidance on complying with the rules for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in England for 2013 to 2016](#)'.

All farms in an NVZ must have sufficient slurry storage from autumn 2015

If your land was designated as an NVZ for the first time in 2013, you will need to provide adequate storage for any slurry you produce from the closed period in autumn 2015. You must also comply with the closed period for spreading organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen (N) content. Although the closed period is several months away, advance planning will ensure you are ready for this requirement. See '[Guidance on complying with the rules for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in England for 2013 to 2016](#)' for further advice.

Grassland derogation - returns

If you held an NVZ Grassland Derogation for 2014, you are required to submit field and farm information known as a 'fertilisation account' to the Environment Agency by **30 April 2015**.

You must submit records for the period 1 January to 31 December 2014 that show:

- The total agricultural area of the derogated holding and the area (in hectares) covered by each of the following crops – winter wheat, spring wheat, winter barley, spring barley, winter oilseed rape, sugar beet, potatoes, forage maize, grass and any other crops.

- The number and category of livestock kept on your farm, and the amount of nitrogen and phosphate in the manure they produce. These categories are given in the Defra's '[Guidance on complying with the rules for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in England for 2013 to 2016](#)', Annex 2, Part D, together with standard values for manure nitrogen and phosphate.
- The amount and type of livestock manure imported to or exported from your farm, together with the total amount of nitrogen and phosphate in that manure.
- The weight (tonnes) and nitrogen content of all manufactured nitrogen

fertiliser stocks kept on, imported to or exported from your farm.

You can submit your records electronically by email to regaware@environment-agency.gov.uk or by post to: Regulation Awareness Team, National Customer Contact Centre, The Environment Agency, Quadrant 2, Parkway Business Park, Sheffield, S9 4WF.

Grassland derogation – soil monitoring

If you hold a grassland derogation you must carry out soil monitoring for phosphorus (soil P) at least every four years, for at least every five hectares of your holding. Results from previous

soil sampling can be used provided they are less than four years old and covers the same cropping regime and soil characteristics. If you do not have previous results for soil P then you must make sure you have sampled at least 75% of the agricultural area of your holding within 12 months of your first derogation being granted, and the remaining 25% within 12 months of your second derogation being granted.

Guidance on sampling for Soil P can be found on page 225 of [The Fertiliser Manual](#) (RB209).



Hedgerow and tree cutting rules

Hedgerows

You should be aware that the closed period for cutting or trimming hedgerows has now been **extended by one month**. This means that you are not permitted to cut or trim a hedgerow between **1 March and 31 August** (inclusive), unless:

- it overhangs a highway, road or footpath over which there is a public or private right of way or it obstructs the passage of, or is a danger to, vehicles, pedestrians or horse riders;
- it is dead, diseased, damaged or insecurely rooted and, because of its condition, it or part of it, is likely to cause danger by falling on to a highway, road or footpath;
- it obstructs the view of drivers or the light from a public lamp;
- it is to carry out hedge-laying or coppicing during the period 1 March to 30 April (inclusive);
- it is to trim a newly laid hedgerow by hand, within 6 months of it being laid; or

- you have received written permission from the Secretary of State for the Environment to cut or trim during the month of August for the purposes of sowing oil seed rape or temporary grassland during the same August.

Further guidance regarding hedgerow management can be found under GAEC 7a: Boundaries in '[The guide to cross compliance in England 2015](#)'.

Trees

From 2015, a no-cutting period between **1 March and 31 August** (inclusive) will also apply to trees. The rule relates to individual trees or small copses only, so it does not apply to woodland (which is defined as areas over 0.5 hectares, at least 20 metres wide, with trees that are capable of achieving a minimum of 5 metres in height and where the crown cover is more than 20%), unless that woodland area is in receipt of payments under BPS, in which case the no-cutting period will apply.

GAEC 7c:

'[The guide to cross compliance in England 2015](#)' states that you are not permitted to cut or trim a tree on your farm between 1 March and 31 August (inclusive) each year, except where the tree:

- overhangs a highway, any other road or footpath, so endangering or obstructing vehicles, pedestrians or horse riders;
- obstructs or interferes with the view of drivers of vehicles or the light from a public lamp;
- is dead, diseased, damaged or insecurely rooted, and is a risk to human safety;
- is in an orchard, or
- the Secretary of State has given written permission to do so to enhance the environment, improve public or agricultural access, or for reasons relating to livestock or crop production.

Please call **0345 345 1302** or email bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk to book your place at the FAS events listed below. Please remember to include the event name, date, session that you wish to attend, your name, company name and contact details.

FAS will be running an events programme during 2015, which will cover most regions. The events will be advertised on our website, so please keep an eye on the [events calendar](#).

Forthcoming FAS events

CAP 2015 update for farm advisers – CAP implementation and the impacts for farm businesses.

FAS invites you to attend a FREE adviser update on CAP implementation 2015.

Date	Venues
Friday 6 March	YFC Centre , Hawford, WR3 7SG
Monday 9 March	Elm Farm Conference Venue , The Organic Research Centre, Hamstead Marshall, nr Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 0HR
Wednesday 11 March	Junction 36 Rural Auction Centre , Crooklands, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7FP
Friday 13 March	Peterborough Arena , Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 6XE

Time	Topic	Speaker
9.00am	Registration , tea and coffee will be available.	
9.30am	Chairman's introduction.	Regional Coordinator, FAS
9.40am	Cross Compliance Changes for 2015 with a focus on the soil management requirements.	Simon Draper, FAS
10.20am	Livestock identification and movements: with a focus on common non-compliances.	Ian Cairns, FAS
11.00am	Break- Tea, Coffee and Cake available.	
11.20pm	Policy update on Basic Payment Scheme (Active farmer, Entitlements and Greening).	Simon Lunniss, RPA
12.05	Update on Rural Payment Service (Registration and the latest functionality).	Roger Davies, RPA
12.50	Retaining land in environmental management and adding value to EFAs.	Regional Team, CFE
1.00pm	Water Quality, the SSAFO Regulations.	Environment Agency
1.30pm	Conference ends.	

Booking is essential. Please book early as we expect high demand for these meetings. BASIS points will be available.

North West – Managing soils in a changing climate workshop

(The Farming Advice Service in partnership with the Climate Ready Support Service)

Friday 27 February at J36 Rural Auction Centre, Crooklands, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7FP. The sessions will be **10.00am to 12.30pm** and repeated in the afternoon from **1.30pm to 4.00pm**. Please state when booking which session you would prefer.

The event will focus on the recent changes to Cross Compliance and the new soil management requirements. We will also look at the impacts of extreme weather on soils and how farm businesses can manage these risks to remain competitive and compliant.

The event, delivered by independent farm advisers, will cover:

- Introduction to climate change looking at scenarios and impacts on businesses;
- Extreme weather impacts on soils and actions to reduce damage;

- Changes to Cross Compliance & the new soils management requirements;
- Identifying actions to protect your soil and remain compliant.

BASIS CPD points are available for attendees.

Places are limited, so please **book now** to avoid disappointment.

South East – CAP 2015 implementation workshops

The following topics will be covered:

- Changes to cross compliance for 2015, including the new soil management requirements;
- Greening, the rules and land management; and
- Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

Date	Time	Venue
Monday 2 March	1.30 to 4.00pm (session added due to popular demand)	Sparsholt College , Sparsholt, Winchester, Hampshire, SO21 2NF
Wednesday 11 March	10.00am to 12.30pm	The Churns , Upton Estate Office, Upton, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX15 6HU
Tuesday 17 March	10.00am to 12.30pm	South of England Showground , Selsfield Road, Ardingly, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6TL

BASIS CPD points are available for attendees.

South East – Sheep identification and Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) workshops

Thursday 12 March at Plumpton College, Ditchling Road, Plumpton, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 3AE.

Wednesday 18 March at Vale Training Services Ltd, Marsh Hill Farm, Marsh, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8ST.

You can choose to attend one or both the sessions, please state your preference when booking.

Times	Sessions
10.00am to 12.30pm (9.45am arrival for a prompt start)	SMR 8- Sheep identification and registration
1.30pm to 4.00pm (1.15pm arrival for a prompt start)	SMR 1- NVZs

The workshop will be run by an independent adviser. High numbers of breaches of NVZ and sheep identifications and movements were identified by the RPA during the 2013

inspections. Non-compliant farms on average incur a 4-5% deduction to their payments.

BASIS CPD points are available for attendees.

North West – Getting to grips with NVZs workshops

Friday 6 March at NFU Regional Offices, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 9TL.

Monday 9 March at The Granary, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 8DP.

The workshops will take place **10.00am to 12.30pm**. Tea and coffee will be served from 9.45am.

The workshop will be led by an independent farm advisor and will cover:

- Farm & field limits;
- Manure storage rules, closed periods & rules regarding spreading techniques;
- Nitrogen planning & record keeping rules;
- Nmax;
- Risk maps & non-spreading areas;

Not sure if your farm or any of the land is within an NVZ? Visit: <http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby>

BASIS CPD points are available for attendees.

North West – CAP 2015 and cross compliance update workshop

Tuesday 10 March at The Hired lad, Agricultural Hall, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0DN. The workshop will be run as an evening session from 7.00pm to 9.15pm.

The workshop, run by independent farming advisors, will cover the following:

CAP Reform/Greening:

- CAP update and implementation;
- greening rules – crop diversification & Ecological Focus Areas (EFA); and
- the impacts for farm businesses, utilising example scenarios.

Cross Compliance rules:

- Changes from 1st Jan. 2015, including the new soil management requirements.

BASIS CPD points are available for attendees.

South West – CAP 2015 and cross compliance update workshop

Wednesday 18 March at the Waie Inn, Zeal Monachorum, Crediton, Devon, EX17 6DF. The event will commence at **7.00pm** and run for approximately two hours.

The workshop will be delivered by Ross Cherrington from the Farming Advice Service and will provide the latest information on:

- Cross Compliance in 2015; covering the changes to cross compliance including the new soils management rules; and
- Greening: including Crop Diversification, Permanent Grassland and Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs)

BASIS CPD points are available for attendees.



**Register for free text message updates**

We use text messages to get relevant information to farmers quickly. We send reminders of approaching key dates or updates in response to current events (e.g. flooding). To register for FREE text message updates, please call 0345 345 1302 or email bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk with 'Register for text updates' in the subject line. Don't forget to include your name and mobile phone number in the message. Your details will not be shared with third parties.

**Get the latest updates by following FAS on Twitter**

FAS has joined Twitter. Follow us on [@DefraFAS](https://twitter.com/DefraFAS) for up-to-the-minute updates on publications, events and industry information.

**Subscribe to the free FAS Newsletter**

To receive further copies of the FREE bimonthly FAS newsletter, please call 0345 345 1302 or email bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk with 'Register for newsletter' in the subject line

Key dates

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- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1 January | You must start following the new cross compliance rules from this date. This date is also officially the start of the BPS. |
| <hr/> | |
| 1 January | You can apply organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland and tillage land on shallow or sandy soils from this date if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity restrictions for application of these manures. (SMR 1) |
| <hr/> | |
| 1 January | Beginning of the year for assessing the annual amount of livestock manure applied to your land. (SMR 1) |
| <hr/> | |
| 16 January | You can apply manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to grassland and tillage land from this date if conditions are suitable. (SMR 1) |
| <hr/> | |
| 1 February | You can apply organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland and tillage land on all soil types from this date if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity restrictions for application of these manures. (SMR 1) |
| <hr/> | |
| 28 February | End of the quantity restrictions for application of organic manures with a high readily available nitrogen content. (SMR 1) |
| <hr/> | |
| 1 March | You must not cut hedgerows or trees from this date, but you can carry out hedge laying and coppicing from 1 March until 30 April. Orchards are not included in the ban. (GAEC 7A and 7C) |
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| 1 March | You must not cast up traditional hedgebanks from this date. (GAEC 7A) |
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| 31 March | If you hold a water abstraction licence, expect to receive your annual bill (or first part charge if you hold a two-part tariff agreement) for the forthcoming financial year from 31 March. (GAEC 2) |
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| 1 April | You must not burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land, other than in upland areas, from this date. (GAEC 6) |
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| 1 April | If you hold a winter or all-year-round water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction outside the period April to October), the Environment Agency will make actual abstraction return forms available to you from 1 April. You then have 28 days to send your readings to the Environment Agency. (GAEC 2) |
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| 16 April | You must not burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium in upland areas from this date. (GAEC 6) |
| <hr/> | |
| 30 April | You must have recorded the number of 'specified' livestock kept on your farm during the previous calendar year and calculated the amount of nitrogen they produced. You must also record the number and type of livestock in a building or hardstanding during the previous storage period. (SMR 1) |