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Welcome to the Farming Advice Service newsletter

Thank you for subscribing to the Farming Advice Service (FAS) newsletter.

If you do not already receive the FAS newsletter straight to your inbox, but would like to, 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 would like us to cover, please let us know.

FAS technical advice line:

Telephone: 03000 200 301

Email: advice@farmingadvice.org.uk

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

**Farming
Advice Service**

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Key dates

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|--------------------|---|
| 1 October | You can burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land in upland areas from this date. (GAEC* 6) |
| 1 October | Start of closed period for applying organic manure with a high, readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to tillage land on soils that are not shallow or sandy. (SMR** 1) |
| 1 October | Ecological Focus Areas (EFA) catch crops must be retained until at least this date. (Basic Payment Scheme (BPS): rules for 2017) |
| 1 October | EFA cover crops must be established by this date (and retained until at least 15 January 2018). (Basic Payment Scheme: rules for 2017) |
| 15 October | Start of closed period for applying organic manure with a high, readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland on soils that are not shallow or sandy. (SMR 1) |
| 31 October | If you hold a summer water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction wholly within the months of April to October), the Environment Agency will make actual abstraction return forms available to you from 31 October. You then have 28 days to send your readings to the Environment Agency. (GAEC 2) |
| 1 November | You can burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land, other than in upland areas, from this date. (GAEC 6) |
| 30 November | If you have a two-part tariff agreement for your water abstraction licence, expect to receive your second part charge after 30 November. (GAEC 2) |
| 1 December | You need to carry out your annual inventory of sheep and goats. (SMR 8) |
| 1 December | BPS 2017 payment window opens. (Basic Payment Scheme: rules for 2017) |
| 31 December | Official end of the BPS 2017 scheme year. (Basic Payment Scheme: rules for 2017) |

* GAEC = Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition

** SMR = Statutory Management Requirements

For more detail on the information provided in the key dates table, please go to the relevant section of [‘The guide to cross compliance in England 2017’](#) and [‘Basic Payment Scheme: rules for 2017’](#).

How can FAS help you?



Free and confidential advice

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) regulations require European Union (EU) Member States to run an advisory system covering cross compliance, greening, water protection and aspects of pesticide use. In England, this is provided by FAS. Under these regulations, the advice given to individual farmers must be **confidential** – that is, FAS **must not** disclose any personal or individual information or data it obtains in the course of its advisory activity.

FAS updates the farming sector on relevant EU and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) policies. It explains the

requirements under and objectives of CAP, EU directives, national legislation and policies; and the actions that can be taken to help meet compliance. FAS provides **free, confidential** advice on cross compliance and the greening requirements, 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.

Getting in contact with the advice line

Farmers requiring telephone advice from FAS can contact the **Rural Services Helpline** on **03000 200 301** Monday to Friday between **8.30am** and **5pm**.

The Rural Services Helpline provides a single number for all **FAS, Rural Payments Agency, Animal and Plant Health Agency, Natural England and Forestry** enquiries. By providing a single point of contact, the Government aims to make it simpler for farmers to access technical guidance on a range of topics, including cross compliance, greening, CAP payments and animal health inspections.

You can also email enquiries to advice@farmingadvice.org.uk.

Greening 2018



On 30 June 2017, the European Commission published changes to the regulations that set out the greening requirements. These changes will be introduced for the 2018 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) year, starting from 1 January 2018.

The most significant change will be a complete ban on the use of plant protection products (PPPs) on the following land types if declared as an Ecological Focus Area (EFA):

- fallow land;

- catch and cover crops;
- nitrogen-fixing crops.

This is a compulsory change to the rules and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will be working with stakeholders to prepare full guidance on the new requirements.

Full details can be viewed on GOV.UK.

FAS will continue to provide updates in the newsletter as more information is made available by Defra and the Rural Payments Agency.



Water abstraction licence reminders

Under [Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition \(GAEC\) 2: Water Abstraction](#), you must have a licence from the Environment Agency to take (abstract) more than 20 cubic metres (4,400 gallons) of water from an inland surface water (such as rivers, streams, lakes or springs) or underground source for spray irrigation in a 24-hour period.

Once you have an abstraction licence, you must comply with its conditions when abstracting water for irrigation purposes.

You do not need a licence if you abstract 20 cubic metres or less in a 24-hour period, provided your abstraction is part of a single operation. If you abstract from the same source at multiple points, the exemption only applies if the combined total of all abstractions is 20 cubic metres or less a day.

Abstractors who hold a time-limited licence that expires on **31 March 2018** must submit an application to replace it (if they still wish to abstract) before **31 December 2017**. Abstractors with time-limited

licences that expire in 2018 will start to receive invitations to apply from September. The Environment Agency has been accepting applications since the summer and encourages abstractors to apply now because of the large number of licences that are expiring.

For further information about applying for or renewing a water abstraction licence, please visit GOV.UK or call the Environment Agency Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506.



Public rights of way requirements

Many farmers have land with a public right of way (PROW). These fall into the following categories:

- footpaths;
- bridleways;
- restricted byways;
- byways open to all traffic (BOATs).

If you own agricultural land with a PROW, there are several rules you need to be aware of. Below are a few of the key rules you need to comply with:

- keeping a PROW clear of obstructions;
- maintaining or replacing structures;
- restrictions on agriculture;

- reinstating a ploughed cross-field PROW.

Full guidance is available on GOV.UK

To view an article on PROWs that FAS published in the August 2017 newsletter to explain the rules, please click [here](#).



Annual sheep and goat inventory

You should receive your sheep and goat annual inventory forms in the post along with a pre-paid envelope or via email from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) at the end of November. **Please ensure you return your inventory to Defra by 31 December.** Failure to do this may increase your risk of a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) inspection.

Further guidance on completing your inventory is available on GOV.UK.

In addition, you should also have included your annual inventory total as at 1 December in your [holding register](#) (section 7 if you use the Defra paper register). This is a requirement of cross compliance rule [Statutory Management Requirement 8: Sheep and goat identification](#). The holding register document should be retained on your holding and will be reviewed at an inspection.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) reminders



NVZ: Back to basics

FAS has produced a technical article called 'NVZ: Back to basics', which provides a simple guide to the NVZ requirements. This can be downloaded for free from the [FAS website](#).

NVZ derogation 2018

Farmers can apply up to 170kg per hectare of nitrogen in livestock manure on their holding in a designated NVZ in each calendar year. This includes manure deposited directly by grazing livestock and what you spread. This limit is the loading limit and applies as an average across your holding. The grassland derogation is a specific approval farmers can apply for if they wish to apply additional nitrogen from livestock manure on their land if they are in a NVZ. The derogation increases the 170kg per hectare per year limit to 250kg nitrogen per hectare per year for grazing livestock manure only.

The application period for the 2018 grassland derogation is from Monday 2 October to Friday 29 December 2017 inclusive.

To apply for a grassland derogation you will need to phone the Environment Agency National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506 between 8:00am and 6:00pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

If you were granted a derogation for 2017, you must reapply if you want a derogation for 2018.

To make your application, you will need to provide the following information for the 2018 calendar year:

- your farm name, address and County Parish Holding (CPH) number;

- the expected agricultural area and grassland area of your farm in hectares on 1 January 2018;
- the expected amount of manure nitrogen produced by grazing livestock kept on your farm during the year in kilograms of nitrogen (kgN);
- the amount of manure nitrogen produced by grazing livestock you intend to bring onto or send off your farm during the year (kgN);
- the total amount of manure nitrogen produced by grazing livestock on your farm during the year (kgN);
- the amount of manure nitrogen produced by non-grazing livestock on your farm during the year (kgN);
- the amount of manure nitrogen produced by non-grazing livestock you intend to bring onto or send off your farm during the year (kgN);
- the total amount of manure nitrogen produced by non-grazing livestock on your farm during the year (kgN).

It is anticipated that a derogation, if granted, will last until the end of 2018. It is possible the European Commission, which has control over the use of derogations, may require it to end earlier. If so, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will endeavour to give you as much notice as possible.

For further information, please see the [Grassland derogations for livestock manure in nitrate vulnerable zones](#) section on GOV.UK.

Nutrient Management Guide (RB209) has been updated

In May 2017, The Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) launched a revised edition of 'The

Nutrient Management Guide (RB209)'. The latest version of RB209 provides recommendations for a broad range of crops. All changes from previous versions are based on a comprehensive review of trials data produced by a consortium of research scientists. All recommendations were reviewed by a partnership of organisations including farmers and growers.

The most obvious change is that the guide is now published as seven separate sections rather than one combined document:

1. Principles of nutrient management and fertiliser use;
2. Organic materials;
3. Grass and forage crops;
4. Arable crops (including sugar beet, peas and beans);
5. Potatoes;
6. Vegetables and bulbs;
7. Fruit, vines and hops.

Each section has undergone a significant revision with information and recommendations updated to reflect changes in farming practices and crop varieties.

You can obtain this essential guide to crop nutrient management free of charge from AHDB by:

- downloading navigable PDFs at www.ahdb.org.uk/rb209;
- downloading an app for Apple® devices from the App Store® (search for AHDB);
- ordering copies from AHDB by emailing cereals.publications@ahdb.org.uk;
- picking up free copies at selected AHDB events.

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