

Risk maps are not just for NVZs

You should be aware of the new Cross Compliance requirement about needing a risk map, but what does this mean for you? The Farming Advice Service has put together some key questions to help you understand exactly what it is, and how to get started.

What is this new risk map requirement?

A new 'Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition' (GAEC) was introduced in January 2012 for 'no spread zones' (GAEC19), which applies to **ALL** farmers claiming a single payment. GAEC19 is aimed at protecting water courses against pollution caused by agricultural fertiliser run-off.

The full rules for GAEC19 can be found on the [RPA website](#), but a key requirement is the need for a **risk map** for your holding.

The risk map must show:

- all surface waters on your holding and land within 10 metres of them
- all springs, wells and boreholes on your holding, and within 50 metres of the boundary of your holding, and land within 50 metres of them

The map must also be updated with any changes within 3 months from the date of change.

Defra is also encouraging farmers to have 6-meter buffer strips next to vulnerable watercourses. Buffer strips help to trap pollutants such as sediment, nutrients, bacteria and pesticides and prevent them from being washed from field to watercourse.

Further details can be found in Section 6 of the 'Cross Compliance Guidance for Soil Management, 2010 edition', available [here](#).

Do I need another map if I already have an NVZ map?

No. The requirements under this GAEC are similar to those for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (SMR 4), so if are in an NVZ, and you have met the NVZ requirements of having a risk map, then you'll fulfil the requirements for GAEC19 too.

The risk map is likely to be something new only to those farmers in a non-NVZ.

Why is the risk map important to me?

A risk map is a particularly useful tool for monitoring and managing the water supply on your farm, as well as protecting the environment. For example, if you have your own drinking water supply from a well or borehole on your farm, then complying with GAEC19 will help reduce the risk of contamination. Reducing agricultural run-off, as encouraged through good nutrient management, will also help to protect the water quality and biodiversity of farm ponds, lakes and watercourses.

In addition, since the risk map is now a cross compliance requirement, failure to have a risk map at the time of an inspection could result in a single payment reduction. Remember that record keeping is by far the highest cross compliance failure, and inspectors will ask to see your risk map, along with all your other records (across all cross compliance requirements) at the start of the inspection. For a full list of records an inspector will ask to see, see page 77-79 of the 'Guide to Cross Compliance, 2012 edition', also available on the RPA website [here](#).

Remember that GAEC19 also has associated field activities that will be inspected during an inspection.

I now understand that I need a risk map, but where do I start?

There is a lot of guidance available on producing risk maps for NVZs. Annex 1 of the Defra published 'Guidance for Farmers in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones Leaflet 8 (PB12736h)', available [here](#), would be a good starting point to develop your risk map.

The first step is to get a map of your holding. If you don't have a hardcopy map of your holding, you could use free software such as Google Earth or Google Maps to get a satellite image of your holding.

You can also get a map of your holding through the Ordnance Survey. As part of your Single Payment application, you will need to complete a field data sheet. This lists the OS Map Sheet reference number (eg SU1234) and the National Grid field number (eg 1234) – this is all the information you need to provide to the Ordnance Survey for them to send you a custom map of your holding. For more information, contact the Ordnance Survey directly on telephone: 08456 05 05 05. You could also get a land surveyor to map your holding for you.

Once you have your holding map, you can mark all the water bodies on your holding. You need to show:

- all surface waters on your holding and land within 10 metres of them
- all springs, wells and boreholes on your holding, and within 50 metres of the boundary of your holding, and land within 50 metres of them

How do I find out where springs, wells and boreholes are on neighbouring land?

Although there can be some concerns around getting information from neighbours, these requirements already exist and are being adhered to under Statutory Management Requirement 4 (Nitrate Vulnerable Zones).

There is no single way to find this information. OS maps mark significant 'springs' and 'wells', and some information can be found on the Environment Agency (EA) website using the 'What's in your backyard' [maps](#) for groundwater vulnerability zones. The maps do not show abstraction points (wells and boreholes), but they do show zones where groundwater is protected, and this can be used as a flag for whether you should contact your local EA office for further information.

To use the maps, enter your postcode to find your property, and if you can see a Zone 1 area (shaded in red), then zoom into the map as far as you can (usually to a 1:20 000 scale map). If your land falls within this red zone, then you should contact your local EA office and local authority for any known abstractions.

The EA will respond to direct requests for information on the location of any licensed abstractions within 50 metres of the requesters land. However, the majority of wells and private boreholes will be unknown to the EA as they are deregulated - only abstractions of more than 20 cubic metres (m³) per day are regulated, and therefore known to the EA. Local authorities can also be of help, since they may know of abstraction points that are used for drinking water.

However, you know your farm better than anyone else, and a quick visual inspection, as well as a chat with your neighbours, is likely to be the quickest, and best way to find the information. You should know about any water features on your own land, and 50 metres is not a great distance from a fence or hedge – you could most likely see springs and wells on neighbours land, or just ask them!

I now have an OS map, and I know where water features are located, but how do I measure and mark the required distances of these to create my risk map?

You need to take the scale of the map into account.

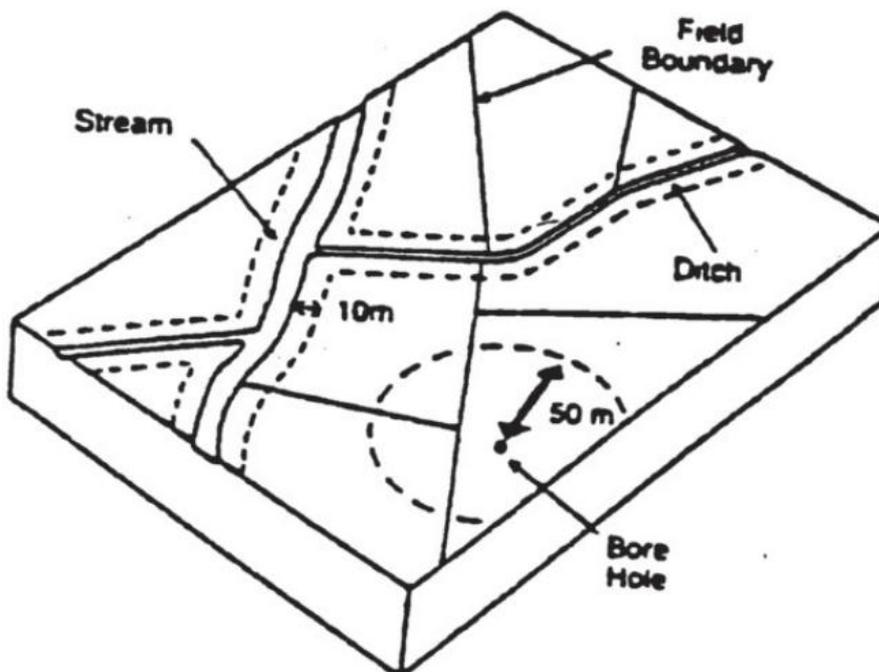
For 1:2500 scale map:

- 1 centimetre on the map is equal to 2 500 centimetres – or 25 metres – on the ground
- 1 grid square on the map is equal to 1 hectare on the ground
- 1 side of a grid square on the map is equal to 100 metres on the ground
- 4 mm on the map is equal to 10 meters on the ground
- 2 centimetres on the map is equal to 50 meters on the ground

For a 1:10000 scale map:

- 1 centimetre on the map is equal to 10 000 centimetres - or 100 meters - on the ground
- 1 grid square on the map is equal to 100 hectares on the ground
- 1 side of a grid square on the map is equal to 1,000 metres on the ground
- 1mm on the map is equal to 10 meters on the ground
- 5 millimetres on the map is equal to 50 meters on the ground

An example of a marked-up map is shown below:



So I've made my map, but what does it tell me and how can it help me?

Your risk map can now help you to manage the water supply on your farm and protect it from contamination since it tells where very clearly where all your on farm water bodies are located.

For further information on this, or any other farm related query, contact the Farming Advice Service.



The Farming Advice Service provides free integrated advice to help you improve the economic and environmental performance of your farm.

Please contact us as detailed below:

- **Email:** advice@farmingadvice.org.uk
- **Telephone:** 0845 345 1302
- **Website:** www.defra.gov.uk/farming-advice
- **Register for FAS text message updates:** bookings@farmingadvice.org.uk