



## Welcome to the Farming Advice Service (FAS) newsletter

*Thank you for continuing to subscribe to our monthly newsletter.*

*We hope you find the content useful and we welcome any feedback or suggestions on topics you would like to see covered in future editions.*

### Contact us

**FAS technical advice line:** 03000 200 301

[advice@farmingadvice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.org.uk)

[farmingadvice.org.uk](http://farmingadvice.org.uk)

You can view a text-only version of the July Newsletter by [clicking this link](#).



**July 2024 – Issue 101**

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## Key dates to be aware of...

- 1 August** If you have notified the Rural Payments Agency, you will be able to **cut or trim hedgerows** throughout August to sow oilseed rape or temporary grassland in the same August. New hedgerow management rules came into force in May 2024. [GOV.UK](#)
- 1 August** This is the start of the **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 shallow or sandy soils**, except where crops will be sown on or before 15 September. [GOV.UK](#)
- 31 August** New hedgerow management rules came into force in May 2024. As part of this, the [hedgerow management rules on cutting and trimming](#) announced that hedgerows covered by the rules must not be cut or trimmed until after **31 August 2024**.
- 2 September** If you missed the deadline for submitting your 2024 [Countryside Stewardship](#) or [Environmental Stewardship claim](#) without reduction (15 May 2024), you can still submit a claim until **11.59pm on Wednesday 2 September 2024**, with a **25% reduction** for claims submitted after 2 July 2024.

## In case you missed them...

- 1 July** As part of the new hedgerow management rules that came into force in May 2024, the [hedgerow management rules on buffer strips](#) will apply from **1 July 2024**.

*For more details about the information provided in the key dates table, visit the [Rules for Farmers and Land Managers](#) and the relevant pages of [GOV.UK](#).*

## Upcoming grant deadlines

- 18 September** The eligibility checker for the [Laying Hen Housing for Health and Welfare grant \(round 1\)](#) will close at midnight (11:59) on 18 September 2024.
- 30 September** The deadline for invited applicants to submit their **slurry store location and design assessment form** for the [Slurry Infrastructure grant round 2](#) is midnight (11:59) on 30 September 2024.

## In case you missed them...

**From 3 January the following grants opened for applications:**

- [Capital Grants 2024](#)
- [Higher Tier Capital Grants 2024](#)
- [Protection and Infrastructure Grants 2024](#)
- [Woodland Management Plan \(WMP\) Grants 2024](#)
- [Woodland Tree Health \(WTH\) Grants 2024](#)
- [Implementation Plan Grant \(PA1\) or Feasibility Study Grant \(PA2\)](#)

**Farming  
Advice Service**

# How can we help you?

## Free and confidential advice

The FAS is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). We provide **free, confidential advice** to help farmers and land managers in England understand and meet the legal requirements in English law around certain farming activities to protect people, livestock and the environment. We update the farming sector on relevant government farming policy that is applicable in England and on the actions that can be taken to help farmers comply with the relevant regulations. Our newsletter also provides articles on topics that are complementary to Farming Regulation, such as practices that benefit the wider environment and wellbeing support.

[Our website](#) hosts our previous newsletters, as well as technical articles and webinars that cover various topics in more detail.

## Contacting the advice line

Farmers requiring telephone advice can contact the **FAS technical advice line on 03000 200 301**, Monday to Friday, between **08:30** and **17:00**. The Rural Services Helpline provides a single number for all **FAS, Rural Payments Agency (RPA), Animal and Plant Health Agency, Natural England** and **forestry** enquiries.

You can also email enquiries to [advice@farmingadvice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.org.uk). Our helpline team aims to respond to all telephone and email enquiries within one working day.

The advice given to individual farmers is **confidential** – we do not disclose any personal or individual information or data obtained during advisory activities.

**You can also now speak to our Helpline team through the new online chat function on the [farmingadvice.org.uk](http://farmingadvice.org.uk) website.**

## Watch our webinar recordings and listen to our podcasts

If you missed any of our previous webinar sessions, you can find them on the FAS website, which features the below webinars:

- [Integrated Pest Management with Richard Heady of Heady's Farm](#)
- [Understanding soil biology for soil health and productive agriculture, with Dr Felicity Crotty](#)



You can also listen to previous webinars as podcasts through the [FAS website](#) and Spotify, Audible, and Apple Podcasts



# Ditch maintenance

*With the recent rainfall events across England, land drainage systems and good drainage maintenance are playing an important role on farms.*

## Why are ditches important?

Efficient drainage systems are important for productive farming as they direct flow off farmed land and into watercourses. Good drainage maintenance prevents flooding, supports good soil structure and yield and provides valuable habitat for plants and animals.

## Your responsibilities

As a land manager, you have responsibilities for the stretch of watercourse you own, which includes the ditches on your land.

Land managers are encouraged to call the Environment Agency [incident hotline](#) to report any of the following:

- flooding
- blockages which could cause flooding to main rivers
- pollution
- unusual changes in the flow of water
- collapsed or badly damaged banks.

Other responsibilities of owning a watercourse include:

- letting water flow naturally. This may include:
  - Removing blockages if they obstruct or affect a public right of navigation or reduce the flow or cause flooding to other landowners' property
  - Leaving all other trees/branches/shrubs, as they can help prevent flooding by varying the shape and flow of the channel and also reduce erosion

- Keeping any trash screen, weir, mill gate or other structure clear
- preventing pollution (avoid disposal of garden waste or chemicals and remove litter and animal carcasses)
- protecting wildlife (avoid disturbing [birds and their nests](#), [protected plant and animal species](#), and [prevent invasive species](#)).

## Thinking of carrying out work in or around your ditch?

Before carrying out work on ditches, you may need permission from:

- the [Environment Agency](#) if your management of ditches will affect main rivers
- your [lead local flood authority](#) or [internal drainage board](#) if you are not on a main river
- [Historic England](#) before working on or near scheduled monuments.

You may need permission from Natural England:

- on Sites of Special Scientific Interest ([SSSIs](#)) or where changing water levels may affect nearby SSSIs
- for a wildlife licence if your management affects a protected species, such as [water voles](#) or [great crested newts](#), or their habitats.

For more information, please visit the guidance on [owning a watercourse](#).

## Ditch maintenance

### Support through the Sustainable Farming Incentive and Countryside Stewardship

In the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), the action '[WBD2: Manage ditches](#)' aims to produce ditches with:

- varied bankside and aquatic vegetation
- undisturbed wildlife habitat.

For WBD2 you must manage the ditch in a way that can reasonably be expected to achieve this action's aim, including:

- cutting vegetation at the top of the ditch bank in rotation, so you only cut up to half the length of the ditch bank in any one year of this action's three-year duration
- carrying out in-channel management on any section of the ditch no more than once during this action's three-year duration – this includes cleaning out silt or vegetation and cutting back vegetation in the ditch channel.

To minimise the disturbance to wildlife, you must only manage the ditch during the autumn, winter and early spring (usually September to late March).

You must not re-profile or increase the width or depth of the ditch. Further guidance on management activities will be published when the SFI expanded offer applications open.

You cannot do this action on ditches managed by third parties, such as [Internal Drainage Boards](#).

For more information on eligibility, when and how to implement this action, what evidence you must keep and other actions you can do on the same area, please visit the [SFI action page](#).

There are also a number of ditch options available through either [Capital Grants](#) or [Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier](#) capital grants:

- [RP6](#): Installation of piped culverts in ditches (capital item)
- [WN3](#): Ditch, dyke and rhine restoration (capital item)
- [WN4](#): Ditch, dyke and rhine creation (capital item)
- [WT3](#): Management of ditches of high environmental value (management option).

You can apply for a Capital Grant 2024 and Higher Tier Capital Grant 2024 at any time of the year from 3 January 2024.

Applications for Higher Tier agreements are now closed; details of the offer for agreements beginning in 2025 are expected to be released shortly.

### Other funding options relevant to ditch maintenance

Further SFI 2024 expanded offer actions which can be introduced to support ditch maintenance:

- [CAHL4](#): 4m to 12m grass buffer strip on arable and horticultural land
- [CIGL3](#): 4m to 12m grass buffer strip on improved grassland
- [BFS1](#): 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land

The above actions refer to buffer strips to prevent pollutants, such as sediments and nutrients, from being carried in surface water runoff, if located next to a watercourse. To implement these SFI actions, the grass strip must buffer an existing landscape feature such as a ditch.

- [BFS6](#): 6m to 12m habitat strip next to water courses

The above action refers to habitat strips next to a watercourse to reduce soil erosion and nutrient loss, increase water infiltration, slow water runoff, provide shade to the watercourse, and habitats for wildlife and act as a link between habitats. Under this action, you must establish and maintain a habitat strip that is at least 6m wide (up to 12m) and that buffers a watercourse such as a ditch.

If you apply for the above SFI actions, you must ensure you can achieve the action's aims whilst carrying out any ditch management under WBD2.



# Trees on farms

## Woodland carbon – new information available

*Trees act as natural ‘carbon sinks’ by absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide through photosynthesis, locking it up in their roots, trunk, branches and leaves.*

Growing a woodland could generate an income from selling carbon units or by ‘growing your own’ units you can help to offset your business’s emissions.

The [Woodland Carbon Code](#) is the quality assurance standard for UK-based woodland creation projects looking to manage carbon. Projects that register and validate with the code before planting can sell carbon units, either on the open market or to the government through the [Woodland Carbon Guarantee](#).

If you are interested in learning the basics of how trees capture carbon or would like more detailed information on how you can make income from selling carbon units, there are new resources available to help answer your questions. These can be found [here](#) on GOV.UK.

### Woodland Carbon Code webinar – recording available now

On 25 July Chris Waterfield, Carbon and Water Advisor at the Forestry Commission, and his team provided a webinar introducing the Woodland Carbon Code and provided helpful information on how to register for the next Woodland Carbon Guarantee auction. A recording of this webinar can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions after viewing the webinar recording, please contact: [info@woodlandcarboncode.org.uk](mailto:info@woodlandcarboncode.org.uk)

## Tree Health Pilot – helping to save our Spruce

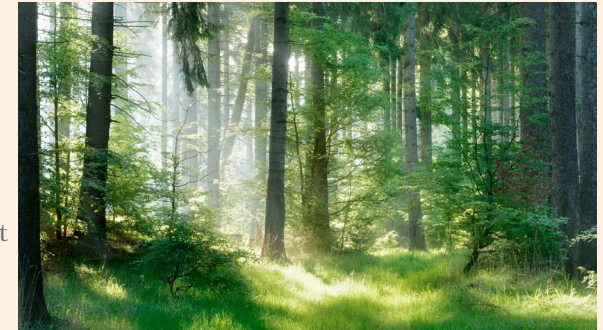
*Active management of woodland through the Tree Health Pilot is helping keep invasive beetles at bay.*

The Tree Health Pilot (THP) pays farmers and land managers for biosecure felling and treatment of diseased or infested trees, and for proactive spruce felling. It also supports restocking and maintaining new trees after pest or disease outbreaks. The scheme is currently open for applications.

The pilot is testing different ways to slow the spread of pests and diseases affecting trees in England.

The THP helped prevent the spread of pests and diseases at Hole Park in Kent. This family-owned estate has a history of growing spruce for the local Christmas tree market. In early 2022, Forestry Commission surveillance identified it as a site susceptible to *Ips typographus*, a spruce bark beetle.

The beetle is a major pest in Europe which can severely damage Britain’s spruce forestry and timber industries. After a successful grant application, the landowner received support for proactively felling the ‘at-risk’ spruce and restocking with a diverse mix of trees.



Find out more about the Tree Health Pilot on [GOV.UK](#).

# Trees on farms

## Felling trees on your farm – what you need to know

*Tree felling is a legally controlled activity in England, including on farmland. You will need a felling licence from the Forestry Commission to fell (cut down, coppice or destroy) trees unless an exemption applies.*

### When do I need a tree felling licence?

The Forestry Commission's [‘Tree felling – getting permission’](#) booklet explains when you need a licence.

It is an offence to fell trees without a licence where one would have been required. If there's no felling licence or other valid permission in place, or if the wrong trees are felled, anyone involved (including owners, agents, contractors and timber merchants) could be prosecuted.

### Do trees in hedgerows need a tree felling licence?

Yes.

While trees growing in hedgerows are considered part of the hedgerow (meaning they are subject to the [hedgerow regulations](#)), it is important to remember **they are also subject to the tree felling rules** and so will require a felling licence unless an exemption applies.

This year saw the publication of the new Hedgerow Regulations. You can find out more about these regulations [here](#). Trees outside woodland, in fields, along roadsides and riverbanks all count and you may need a licence to cut them down.

### But when is a tree not a tree?

To explain what the Forestry Commission (FC) mean by the term ‘tree’ in relation to the law, they have published a [definitions document](#). If trees on your farm meet the FC definition, they will be subject to the tree felling rules.

### How do I apply for a felling licence?

The FC have an online felling licence application service: [Apply online for a felling licence](#), which is entirely free to use.

If you have any questions about tree felling, or managing trees and woodland on your farm, you can contact [your local Forestry Commission Woodland Officer](#) for advice.

For more information, please visit: [Rules for farmers and land managers](#).



# How Catchment Sensitive Farming and the Environment Agency work in partnership to support farmers

*Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) advisers work with the Environment Agency (EA) to support farmers. CSF can help farm businesses make confident decisions in certain areas, such as soil and nutrient management, slurry and manure management, farm infrastructure and machinery set-up, and signpost farmers to Government schemes and grants, such as the Slurry Infrastructure Grant and the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund.*

When the EA visit farms to check compliance with regulations they aim to work with farmers to achieve compliance and protect the environment where possible. If appropriate, they can refer the farm to CSF advisers for further independent advice and support.

## **Case study: how a Cornish beef and dairy farm benefitted from working with their local CSF adviser**

The farm described is located near to a Cornish Estuary, which houses dairy and beef cattle and grows a variety of crops. An EA officer visited the farm and identified some issues, including:

- only four weeks of slurry storage, meaning that there could be a pollution risk resulting from slurry spreading in the winter
- additional issues with the main slurry store, including ineffective drainage leading to slurry run-off along an adjacent track, with a high risk that this could contribute to river pollution in the nearby watercourse
- inadequate concreting on the main farmyard.

The EA officer described the services that CSF could provide, and the farmer agreed that his details could be shared with CSF. Following this, a CSF adviser contacted the farm and offered free and confidential advice, with the following results:

- a one-to-one farm visit, which included a farm walk to get a better understanding of the possible solutions to the issues, and drawing up a proposal with options for the farmer to consider
- funding for a specialist adviser to visit the farm to further advise on slurry management to reduce nutrient loss and pollution
- signposting to available funding to assist with the costs of upgrades, such as the Slurry Infrastructure Grant and the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund, which gave the farmer confidence to completely rebuild three silage clamps
- constructing roofing over the farm's slurry stores
- proposing new housing for the farm's dairy cows to improve productivity and slurry management.

## **Delivering results for the farm and the environment**

The CSF advice delivered the following results for the farm and the environment:

- The plan for a new slurry storage system (also agreed with the EA) enabled the farm to construct an earth-banked slurry lagoon, which increased slurry storage capacity and ensured that spreading was for soil and crop need and not just when the stores were full, thus supporting compliance with the Farming Rules for Water.
- Covering the stores reduced the volume of water that entered the slurry pit (which was diverted into clean water drains) and increased the capacity of the stores to hold slurry.
- The new housing units provided the dairy cows with more space and comfort, and less stress, which could potentially result in higher productivity and better feed conversion, as well as lower overall ammonia emissions.
- The resurfacing of the yard made it cleaner and reduced the risk of pollution from cow manure entering the water course that runs close to the lower fields.

**Conclusion:** By working in partnership with regulators and independent advisors, the farm made changes that benefited its business and the environment. The benefits delivered on this farm are also reflected in national feedback: 83% of farmers say they are satisfied with their one-to-one advice from CSF advisers.

### **Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) overview**

CSF is led by Natural England in partnership with Defra, the Environment Agency, and the Forestry Commission. It works with farmers, communities and organisations across England to improve the quality of water, air and soils, and to reduce flood risk. For more information, please visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).



# Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Agriculture) regulations: getting permission to make changes to your land

Natural England has published more guidance and made improvements to the way that landowners in England get [permission to make changes to uncultivated, semi-natural and rural land](#).

## What are the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Agriculture) regulations?

These regulations protect land in England from damage caused by changes to the way land is managed, such as increasing agricultural productivity, changing field boundaries, or moving, removing or adding materials. They apply to anyone who wants to change the use of uncultivated, semi-natural or rural land.

## What land is protected by the EIA (Agriculture) regulations?

The types of land protected from damage caused by increasing agricultural productivity are:

- **uncultivated land** – land that has not been cultivated in the past 15 years by physical means (for example ploughing or an activity that breaks the soil surface) or by chemical means (for example adding organic or inorganic fertiliser or soil improvers)
- **semi-natural land** – including priority habitats, heritage or archaeological features, and protected landscapes.

The type of land protected from restructuring is:

- **rural land** – land used for agriculture and traditional uses.

## What changes have been made to the EIA (Agriculture) regulations?

Firstly, in your application, you need to include copies of all the consultations that you have undertaken requesting advice on the environmental impact of your proposed project. If you do not include copies of the consultation responses within your application, Natural England will request these from you and it will take longer to issue your screening decision.

Secondly, the 'Apply for a screening decision' guidance and 'EIA 1' & 'EIA1a' application forms have been improved to highlight the sections of the application form that require you to provide additional information and to remind you to include these, which will help to avoid any unnecessary delays in processing your application.

If you have existing EIA forms saved to your device, discard these and use the new forms.

## What about land in Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes, such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI)?

Your land management practices may change when entering or leaving an environmental land management scheme, such as Environmental Stewardship and SFI. If you propose to change the use of uncultivated, semi-natural or rural land, please check [when you need permission](#) to do so.

## Need more support?

If you need more information, please contact Natural England:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Agriculture) Unit
- Email [eia.england@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:eia.england@naturalengland.org.uk)
- Freephone 0800 028 2140.

# Environment Agency urges farmers to start preparations for winter slurry storage



*The Environment Agency (EA) is urging farmers to start their preparations now for winter slurry storage and to contact them if they have any concerns.*

Wet weather throughout the year has already put pressures on farms' slurry storage. If this continues, it is important to have enough storage and a robust back-up plan in place.

Many farmers have reported concerns around managing volumes as the increased rainfall meant that they were both accumulating more slurry and unable to spread it on their fields.

Even those who put preparations in place last year still face storage issues, which is why the EA is stepping up to support farmers through another potentially difficult winter season.

The EA's [Winter Ready campaign](#) will support farmers across the country facing slurry storage issues. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your [local EA Officer](#) or call the EA's National Customer Contact Centre hotline on 03708 506 506.

Some steps and solutions to tackle slurry storage issues:

- Ensure you have adequate storage to see you through winter without the need to spread. The EA recommends having six months of storage to help comply with the requirements of the Farming Rules for Water to spread only according to crop and soil need.
- Cover slurry storage tanks, lagoons and pits and use the summer months to fix draining and clear guttering to ensure separation of clean and dirty water, meaning less rainwater mixes with slurry to increase its volume.
- Refrain from taking sludge, digestate or other materials if you don't have an immediate need for them. Even if you are contracted to take these materials, all producers have a responsibility to ensure bi-products and waste are properly disposed of.

## **Environment Agency Deputy Director for Agriculture Nicola Riley said:**

*"We know the profound impact that wet weather can have on farmers and their slurry storage. It is important that we help farmers to get ready ahead of time by supplying guidance and practical solutions. That's why we are urging farmers to start their preparations now, with the Environment Agency on hand to help farmers find the right solutions that work for them."*

Defra has already offered a Slurry Infrastructure Grant, which is designed to help farmers improve or expand slurry storage capacity and improve the use of organic nutrients on their farm.

Other support includes a range of capital items available through [Countryside Stewardship Capital Grants](#) that can support farmers to reduce the

amount of slurry generated on their farm. This includes slurry store covers, roofing, concrete yards and drainage systems. A [Catchment Sensitive Farming](#) advisor can visit farms and provide advice on how these can best be utilised.

If you have any concerns or questions about adequate slurry storage for the winter, contact your local EA Officer, call the EA's National Customer Contact Centre hotline on 03708 506 506 or email [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk).

The EA recommends using the online [Slurry Wizard Tool](#) to help farmers with calculations.

You can read more about the campaign [here](#).

# Updates from the Farming blog and industry announcements

Defra regularly updates the [Farming blog](#). Please [subscribe to the blog](#) to ensure that you receive all the latest news.

## Defra comments on the National Audit Office report on the Farming and Countryside Programme

The [National Audit Office \(NAO\) published a report](#) on Defra's Farming and Countryside Programme on Tuesday 23 July.

Commenting on the NAO report on Defra's Farming and Countryside Programme, Farming Minister Daniel Zeichner MP said:

*“Confidence amongst farmers has been at record lows. Farmers have been struggling with extreme weather events like flooding and sudden huge rises in input costs, been undermined by damaging trade deals, and rocked by the chop and change of farming schemes.*

*“The new Government will restore stability and confidence amongst farmers. That is why we will not be over-turning the appletart – we are fully committed to ELMs. We will optimise schemes and grants in an orderly way, ensuring they produce the right outcomes for all farmers, while delivering food security and nature recovery in a just and equitable way.*

*“The Government will ensure that our schemes work for those farmers who have been too often ignored – including small, grassland, upland and tenanted farms.*

*“Government will go further by introducing a new deal for farmers to boost Britain's food security, restore nature and support rural economic growth. We will protect farmers from being undercut in trade deals, make the supply chain work more fairly, protect from shock rises in bills by switching on GB Energy and use the government's purchasing power to back British produce.”*

**Background:** The expanded SFI offer remains open and farmers who want to apply can [contact the RPA to express their interest](#). Defra will confirm next steps in the rollout of SFI and other ELM schemes shortly.

## Defra Ministers attend Farms and Shows in July

*At this year's Great Yorkshire Show Defra Ministers, Secretary of State Steve Reed and Minister Daniel Zeichner, toured the showground, meeting with farmers and stakeholders such as the NFU and CLA to set out the Government's new deal for farmers.*

After the Great Yorkshire Show, Minister Zeichner met with farmers in Devon during a visit to a Sustainable Farming Incentive pilot farm to better understand the challenges farmers are facing.



## Updates from the Farming blog and industry announcements

### **Hedgerow management rules: cutting and trimming – RPA reminder for exemptions when sowing oilseed rape or temporary grass in August**

*The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024 came into force on 23 May 2024. These introduced baseline hedgerow management practices covering cutting and trimming, and buffer strips.*

Full details can be found on GOV.UK:

- [Hedgerow management rules: cutting and trimming](#)
- [Hedgerow management rules: buffer strips](#)

Last month FAS provided an article with guidance on [cutting and trimming exemptions when sowing oilseed rape or temporary grassland](#). This is a reminder that you only need to notify RPA of your intention to cut or trim a hedgerow in August to sow oilseed rape or temporary grassland during the same August.

To notify RPA, you can either email or write to them. Please ensure you include the following details in your notification.

- the crop to be sown
- all relevant land parcel numbers
- using the subject heading ‘Hedgerow management cutting and trimming rules notification’ on emails and letters when notifying.

Unlike under cross compliance, this is a notification process only. RPA will therefore not be individually granting any exemption or permission to cut or trim a hedgerow and you will only receive a standard acknowledgment of your notification.

You do not therefore need to wait for written permission before carrying out any work.

If you have already submitted any request to RPA to cut or trim in August to sow oilseed rape or temporary grassland, and you have received an acknowledgement, you will have met the need to notify RPA. For email notifications, this will be the automated RPA acknowledgement. This applies even if you have requested a cross compliance derogation and the RPA will accept this as a notification under the new rules.



## Updates from the Farming blog and industry announcements

### **Bluetongue: Free testing for livestock moving from high-risk areas and guidance for agricultural shows in England**

#### **Free bluetongue testing for livestock moving from high-risk areas**

There has been a recent increase in confirmed BTV-3 cases in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium, with some animals showing severe clinical signs. While there are no live cases of bluetongue virus and no evidence that there is circulating bluetongue virus in England, it is crucial that livestock keepers in Great Britain are prepared for the possibility of cases being confirmed here.

Free bluetongue testing for ruminants (such as cattle, sheep, deer and goats) or camelids (such as alpacas and llamas) is available for livestock keepers who plan to:

- move them out of the high-risk counties to live
- sell them at a market within a high-risk county where there will be buyers from outside the high-risk counties.

This free and voluntary bluetongue testing is available to keepers in the high-risk areas of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent and East Sussex, in advance of any zones being declared.

Keepers in these counties are currently at the highest risk of BTV-3 from infected midges blown over from the continent, where the disease is present. Free testing will help livestock keepers manage the risks of bluetongue, given that BTV-3 does not present clinical signs in all animals.

Livestock keepers should apply for free testing at least 10 working days before the planned movement or market date. The vet should sample animals five working days before the move or market date to allow time to receive the results.

[Read more](#) about how free bluetongue testing works.

To book a test for your animals, contact Farmcare by telephone on 0800 612 5289, or email: [admin@ukfarmcare.com](mailto:admin@ukfarmcare.com).

#### **Bluetongue update: guidance for agricultural shows in England**

On 21 June 2024, Defra published new [bluetongue guidance for agricultural shows and events](#) taking place in England. This applies to movements of ruminants and camelids, which are susceptible to bluetongue virus. Non-susceptible animals may attend shows as normal.

Risks of introduction of bluetongue are higher in the south and south-east of England. Keepers should consider these risks before taking susceptible stock to shows in [high-risk counties](#).

Where a show takes place inside a control zone, the movement of susceptible animals onto the showground must be licensed. Susceptible animals may be licensed to attend shows in the same control zone. Susceptible animals will not be licensed to enter control zones to attend shows.

Shows operating in high-risk counties are advised to implement midge control measures where practical. Shows should not accept animals showing clinical signs of any disease and suspicion of notifiable disease must be [reported to the Animal & Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#).

Show organisers should also review their [contingency plan](#) and make sure exhibitors are aware of the requirements for attending the show or event. Contact the [Defra Rural Services Helpline](#) with any queries.



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## Stay up to date with us



### Get the latest updates by following us on X (formerly Twitter)

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



### Subscribe to our free monthly newsletter

If you don't already receive our monthly FAS newsletter, please visit [farmingadvice.org.uk](https://farmingadvice.org.uk) and enter your email address into the newsletter sign-up box.

Alternatively, please email [bookings@farmingadvice.org.uk](mailto:bookings@farmingadvice.org.uk) with **'Register for newsletter'** in the subject line.

In line with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018, FAS has updated its privacy policy to explain how your data is kept safe.

To view the policy, please visit [www.farmingadvice.org.uk/events/privacy/](https://www.farmingadvice.org.uk/events/privacy/).