

December 2012 - Newsletter issue 06

Welcome to the Farming Advice Service newsletter.

This newsletter includes important information regarding changes to Cross Compliance for 2013, information about forthcoming Farming Advice Service (FAS) events and how to sign up for our services.

We hope you find this newsletter helpful.

If you have any comments or ideas for topics you'd like us to cover, please get in touch.

Email:
advice@farmingadvice.org.uk

Telephone:
0845 345 1302

Website:
www.defra.gov.uk/farming-advice

**Farming
Advice Service**

In this issue

Remember to
complete your
Soil Protection
Review by
31 December

Important
changes
to Cross
Compliance
for 2013

Nitrate
derogation
for 2013 –
Defra update

Forthcoming
events

Register
for free
text message
updates

Key dates

Remember to complete your Soil Protection Review by 31 December

Single Payment Scheme (SPS) claimants are required to update their Soil Protection Review (SPR) by 31 December each year. The 'Annual Review' can be completed in Part 3 Farm Soil Plan of the paper version of the [SPR 2010 booklet](#) or you can update the information online by logging into your [SPR online](#). The SPR 2010 booklet covers the years 2010 to 2013, so the annual review can be completed in the 'Annual Review 2012' box on the relevant pages for the farm soil plan. You don't need a new booklet each year, please see pages 16 and 17 for detailed instructions and an example.

The purpose of the SPR is to tackle degradation threats to soil. When soil is lost or damaged through compaction, erosion or loss of organic matter, it becomes less productive. Soil erosion can also have a significant impact on water quality and aquatic ecosystems, contribute to localised flooding from increased runoff, and can cause additional problems such as soil on roads. In addition, the majority of carbon lost from soils by erosion will eventually be released to the atmosphere and contribute to climate change. Selecting and carrying out all appropriate measures to tackle soil-degradation threats will help prevent these problems.

The things you should look out for when deciding whether your SPR has been effective, and when you may require new measures to be adopted, include:

- problems you may have had with soil erosion, compaction and the retention of organic matter in the soil;
- ruts and compaction caused by machinery when the soil was wet, but not waterlogged;

- loss of crop due to compacted soil;
- areas that have standing water;
- erosion caused by water, especially down tramlines;
- soil that has been deposited onto roads or water courses; and
- wind-blown soil that has damaged crops.

As soon as it is practicable, you must also update your SPR during the year if it becomes clear that the measures you chose are not working, if you add additional land to your holding, or if management systems or cropping practices change. If you need to carry out mechanical field operations or use motorised vehicles on land that is waterlogged, you must record all activity in the 'Access to Waterlogged Land Record'. The Waterlogged Land Record is on page 44-46 (Table D) of the SPR 2010 booklet or you can log into your SPR online and update the information. Record the field number, month and year of the activity, reason for access and action taken to remediate once conditions allow. Appropriate action to remediate damage caused by accessing waterlogged soil must be taken as soon as possible within 12 months of the first month of access to the waterlogged field. This action is in addition to any other actions identified in the SPR Farm Soil Plan.

Please note, if you are completing your SPR in the booklet format, you are not required to send this to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), but you must retain it on your holding and have the document available if you are undergoing a Cross Compliance inspection.

If you require any help with completing the SPR, please contact FAS on 0845 345 1302 or email advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk

Environmental Impact Assessment regulations review

Natural England has recently reviewed and released its public guidance on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations 2006. The guidance, which is available on Natural England's [website](#), is aimed at farmers, land managers and land agents. There are two documents – public guidance, which sets out what the regulations are and how they may affect farmers, and a set of frequently asked questions. The guidance has been developed and tested with Natural England's customers in the farming community.

The EIA regulations cover certain types of agricultural works where there would be an increase in agricultural productivity of a semi-natural area or uncultivated land. The latter is defined as land that has not been physically or chemically cultivated (e.g. ploughing, harrowing or had fertiliser applied) in the previous 15 years. Work that you are planning may need to be screened. If there is a significant effect on the environment, then projects may need to be assessed in more detail and receive consent from Natural England before they can go ahead.

The guidance is available at www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/eia/default.aspx and there is a free helpline number if you have any questions – 0800 028 2140.

Forthcoming events

FAS will be organising a programme of events this winter. These will cover topics such as Cross Compliance (including SPR), Nitrogen Vulnerable Zones, livestock identification and movements, nutrient management and water efficiency. The following events are already confirmed.

Get up to date with Cross Compliance in 2013 and ensure your business is competitive

Brendan O'Connor, George Cook and Oliver Lee from FAS are running a series of workshops in Yorkshire and the Humber. Brendan will provide an update on Cross Compliance, focusing on new rules and the main areas of non-compliance. George and Oliver will explore factors influencing the competitiveness of your business, as well as providing an update on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform.

All workshops run from 10am until midday and are repeated from 1pm until 3pm. When booking, please state which session you wish to attend.

Avoid common Cross Compliance failures

Workshop – Wednesday 23 January, 7pm until 9pm, at The Hired Lad, Skirsgill, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0DN.

The workshop will be led by an independent farm advisor and will focus on key areas of common inspection failure including cattle identification and movements, and the SPR requirements. The meeting will also cover GAEC 19 'No Spread Zone' rules which were introduced at the start of 2012.

Farm walk – Thursday 24 January, 10am until 12.45pm, at Yew Tree House Farm, Sinderland Lane, Dunham Massey, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 5SU.

The farm walk will be led by independent farm consultant Joe Winstanley. It will cover the main areas of Cross Compliance failure and the practical management of soils and nutrients. The meeting will also cover the new GAEC 19 'No Spread Zone' rules which were introduced in 2012.

Important changes to Cross Compliance for 2013

Changes to the 2013 Cross Compliance Guidance will be notified to farmers and landowners by post between Christmas and the New Year.

You are recommended to keep these changes with your hard copy of 'The Guide to Cross Compliance in England 2012'.

Date	Venue	Subject focus
Wednesday 9 January	Skipton Auction Mart, Gargrave Road, Skipton BD23 1UD	Upland beef and sheep
Thursday 10 January	Armitage's Pennine Garden Centre, Huddersfield Road, Shelley, Huddersfield HD8 8LF	Beef, sheep and dairy
Wednesday 23 January	Northallerton Rugby Club, Northallerton Road, Northallerton DL6 2PZ	Mixed farming
Thursday 24 January	Reagarth Farm, Nawton Road, Helmsley YO52 5HX	Mixed farming
Tuesday 5 February	Station Hotel, Station Road, Patrington, Hull HU12 0NE	Combinable crops, intensive pig
Wednesday 6 February	Molescroft Grange Farm, Grange Way, Beverley HU17 9FS	Combinable crops
Tuesday 12 February	Selby Livestock Auction Mart, Bawtry Road, Selby YO8 8NB	Mixed farming

Nitrate derogation for 2013 – Defra update

This is an update on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) arrangements to approve individual applications from farmers for the Nitrates Regulation grassland derogation for 2013. The application process is similar to previous years and will start on the 20 December 2012 and end on 31 March 2013.

If you want to apply by telephone or by post you must do so by 28 February. These applications should be made by phoning the Environment Agency (EA)

Application Line on 0845 603 3113 (Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm). If you prefer to apply online, you can do so through the Farming Online website (<https://www.gov.uk/nvz-derogation-application>) between 1 February and 31 March.

The European Commission (EC) has not yet cleared Defra's derogation proposals for 2013. While Defra is very confident that the EC will do so early in the New Year, it cannot guarantee at this stage that it will be able to grant farmers derogation even if they meet the criteria proposed. For the time being, Defra is proceeding on the basis that the substantive requirements will be the same as now. Therefore, Defra is inviting applications

in the expectation that the EC will clear the proposals. Until clearance is received, Defra can only grant administrative approval for 2013 derogations. Following EC clearance, Defra will write to all farmers who have administrative approval to confirm that they have formal approval under the Regulations.

The EA has produced a short briefing note that outlines the approval process, the information farmers will need to apply, the eligibility criteria, the expected conditions and what will happen in the event of the conditions changing. This material will be available on the Defra and EA websites.

If you would like to attend any of the events listed above, please call **0845 345 1302** or email **bookings@farmingadvice.org.uk** to register. Please remember to include the event name, date, session that you wish to attend, your name, company name and contact details.

All of the FAS events are advertised on our [website](#), so please keep an eye on the events page as this will be updated when further events have been organised.



Register for free text message updates

We use text messages to get relevant information to farmers quickly. We send them as a reminder of approaching key dates or in response to current events (e.g. flooding). To register for text message updates, please call 0845 345 1302 or email bookings@farmingadvice.org.uk with 'Register for text updates' in the subject line, and 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 for up-to-the-minute updates on publications, events and industry information.



Receive a regular email version of this newsletter

Please email bookings@farmingadvice.org.uk

Key dates

1 December You need to carry out your annual inventory of sheep. (SMR 8)

31 December All new SPR/annual updates to be completed. (GAEC 1)