

August 2013 - e-news issue 10

# Welcome to the Farming Advice Service newsletter

*If you would like to sign-up to receive the Farming Advice Service (FAS) newsletter straight to your inbox, please email [bookings@farmingadvice.org.uk](mailto: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: 0845 345 1302

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

Website: [www.defra.gov.uk/farming-advice](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farming-advice)

**Farming  
Advice Service**

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## In this issue

Cutting farm costs by improving water efficiency

Cross Compliance and game management

Water Framework Directive – consultation update

Cross Compliance and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Sign-up to FAS services

Key dates

# Cutting farm costs by improving water efficiency

Following such a wet period during 2012, it may be difficult to consider water as a resource under stress. However, during the early months of 2012, UK water reserves were severely depleted. In many catchments, not just in the south and east, there was little or no water available for abstraction during dry periods. Predictions indicate that the extremes experienced in 2012 are likely to become more common in the future due to climate change. FAS has written an [article](#) to highlight areas where you can reduce the vulnerability of your business to such extremes of weather and your exposure to the increasing cost of water.

You may also wish to use the Environment Agency's [Climate Ready Support Service](#), which provides you

with the opportunity to access more detailed information about how climate change will impact the UK/your sector, and resources to help you assess how your business may be affected a changing climate.

LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) have developed the 'Simply Sustainable Water' publication and video to provide advice on managing water quality and use on your land. Please visit the [LEAF website](#) for more information.

If you would like to speak to an independent adviser, free of charge, about improving water efficiency on your farm, please contact the FAS technical helpline on 0845 345 1302 or email [advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk)

## Cross Compliance and Environmental Impact Assessment

The following article discusses the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) rules and their relationship with Cross Compliance. The aim of the EIA rules is to take into account the environmental importance of uncultivated land and semi-natural areas, and the impact of forestry-related projects. Failing to comply with the rules will constitute a breach of Cross Compliance (GAEC 5).

The rules state that you should not begin or carry out an 'uncultivated land project', which affects an area of two or more hectares<sup>1</sup>, unless you have obtained permission from Natural England. An uncultivated land project is a project that aims to increase the productivity for

agriculture of uncultivated land or a semi-natural area.

Land that has not been cultivated in the last 15 years, involving either physical cultivation such as ploughing and sub-surface harrowing or chemical cultivation such as application of fertilisers, is classed as 'uncultivated land'. '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

## Cross Compliance and game management

A recent article in the sporting press suggested that plastic shotgun cartridge wads found on land subject to cross compliance rules, might result in the application of a reduction to the Single Payment Scheme and Rural Development payments claimed by the land owner / occupier. This article was misleading and has caused considerable concern. As a result, FAS has written an [article](#) to explain those aspects of Cross Compliance associated with shoots and game management of which SPS claimants and RD beneficiaries need to be aware.

If you have questions regarding any aspect of the Cross Compliance rules, please contact the FAS helpline on 0845 345 1302 or email [advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk)

undertaking work to increase the productivity of the land. The team can be contacted on 0800 028 2140 or [eia.England@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:eia.England@naturalengland.org.uk)

Similarly, you should not begin or carry out any afforestation on agricultural land or any deforestation project on existing woodland, regardless of area, unless you have obtained permission from the Forestry Commission. For details of your local Forestry Commission office call the Forestry Commission helpline on 0117 372 1070 or visit the website at [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

Further information can be located under GAEC 5 in [The Guide to Cross Compliance 2013](#).

<sup>1</sup> In some instances Natural England may consider that a project which falls below the EIA thresholds will none the less have a significant effect on the environment and should therefore be subject to EIA. In such cases Natural England have the power to issue a screening notice that removes one or more of the thresholds and requires a screening application to be made.

# Water Framework Directive (WFD) – consultation update

## The Challenges and Choices consultation:

How do you think the water environment should be protected and improved for the benefit of communities, businesses and wildlife?

Have your say on the issues affecting the water environment and how you think these issues should be tackled.

You can find the Challenges and Choices consultation at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33252.aspx](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33252.aspx)

Under the Water Framework Directive, the Environment Agency is developing second-cycle planning of the River Basin Management Plans that will cover the period 2015 to 2021. These Plans will describe what businesses, water users and other organisations will need to do to protect and improve the water environment.

'Challenges and Choices' reviews and discusses the latest information and data that the Environment Agency has on the significant issues affecting the water environment at a local, river basin district and national level. You can provide your views on a specific issue, such as pollution or river flows, or you can provide views on your local water environment or for England as a whole.

To ensure the River Basin Management Plans properly consider all aspects of the environment, the Environment Agency is carrying out a strategic environmental assessment of each plan and there is also a consultation on how the task is to be approached. This consultation runs alongside each river basin district 'Challenges and Choices' consultation.

The formal closing date for responses to the Challenges and Choices consultation is 22 December 2013. However, if you can send them in earlier than this, it would be very helpful.



## How to respond

### Online:

It would be preferable if you could comment online as this will help the Environment Agency to gather and summarise responses quickly and accurately. You can enter your comments without registering and your answers may be displayed on the website. Your name and other information will not be displayed. For further information and to respond online, please go to the Environment Agency [website](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk).

### By email:

There is a Word response form available for each river basin district and England. You can use this to either formulate your response before you submit it online or you can send it by email using the address provided in the response form.

### By post:

For a hard copy of the documents and response form please contact the Environment Agency National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506 (Mon-Fri, 8am - 6pm) or email [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk) quoting the name of the consultation.

### At a meeting:

The Environment Agency will be holding events around the country. For further information, please contact the National Customer Contact Centre.

## FAS events

### Come and get an update on Cross Compliance, The Common Agricultural Policy reforms and the updated Farm Waste Exemptions

The Farming Advice Service (FAS) in conjunction with the Environment Agency invite farmers to free farm workshops in the South West East:

**Monday 2 September at Potterne Village Hall, Mill Road, Potterne, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 5ND**

**Tuesday 3 September at North Perrott Cricket Club, The Cricket Ground, Willis Lane, North Perrott, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 7SN**

The workshops will take place at **10.00am - 12.30pm** and will be repeated at **1.30pm - 4.00pm**. Please state when booking which session you would prefer to attend.

Topics covered:

- Cross compliance, including how to avoid common failures and an update on this year's NVZ changes - *John Morgan, FAS.*
- CAP reform, an over view of the proposed new system post 2014 - *Joe Scarratt, FAS.*
- Agricultural waste exemptions guidance on how to register your waste activities before the 30th September 2013 deadline - *Julian Wardlaw, Environment Agency.*

Please call **0845 345 1302** or email [bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto:bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk) to book your place at the FAS events listed above. 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 the autumn/winter, which will cover most regions. The events will be advertised on our website, so please keep an eye on the [events page](#).



#### 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 0845 345 1302 or email [bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto: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

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## Key dates

<b>1 September</b>	Start of closed period for applying organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (e.g. slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland on shallow or sandy soils. (SMR 4)
<b>1 September</b>	Start of closed period for applying manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to tillage land. (SMR 4)
<b>15 September</b>	Start of closed period for applying manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to grassland. (SMR 4)
<b>16 September</b>	Start of closed period for applying organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (e.g. slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to tillage land on shallow or sandy soils that have been sown with crops on or before 15 September. (SMR 4)
<b>1 October</b>	You can burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land in upland areas from this date. (GAEC 10)
<b>1 October</b>	Start of closed period for applying organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (e.g. slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to tillage land on soils that are not shallow or sandy. (SMR 4)
<b>15 October</b>	Start of closed period for applying organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (e.g. slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland on soils that are not shallow or sandy. (SMR 4)
<b>31 October</b>	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 18)