

December 2013 - e-news issue 12

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 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

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

**Farming
Advice Service**

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Changes to Cross Compliance for 2014

You will receive communication during December detailing the changes that will be made to Cross Compliance rules for 2014. If you are a digital customer, you will receive this information electronically (by email). All other customers will receive a copy by post.

Digital customers

If you have communicated with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) via email, you will receive an email providing a link to the 2014 guidance document (in full). The 'What's new for 2014' section will provide a summary of the changes that are being introduced.

Postal customers

If you receive the information by post, it will include a covering letter, a matrix describing where to find a printed version of the latest rules and a 2014 update document. Please note that a full version of the 2014 guidance will not be posted and the only place to obtain the full version will be electronically on the [RPA website](#). It is recommended that you use this version where possible.

If you only have access to hard copies of the document, please ensure that

you retain your 2012 Guide to Cross Compliance (the last full version that was posted to all claimants), along with the updates that were sent in December 2012 and July 2013. The matrix will provide further guidance regarding which documents provide the latest rules and you should refer to this to ensure compliance.

The 2014 update document that will be sent to postal customers will include a list of minor updates, set out in the 'What's new for 2014' section, and replacement pages for those good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC) standards and Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) with major updates. These pages replace the original pages in the 2012 edition of the guidance document and also include updates from 2013.

Where to find Cross Compliance guidance online

The full version of 'The Guide to Cross Compliance in England (2014 edition)' will be available at www.rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance in a range of digital formats, under the heading 'Farmer Guidance'. If you want to make sure that you are reading the

most up-to-date rules, use an online version of the guide. The website also offers useful links to further advice and guidance that you might find useful.

Future communications on Cross Compliance

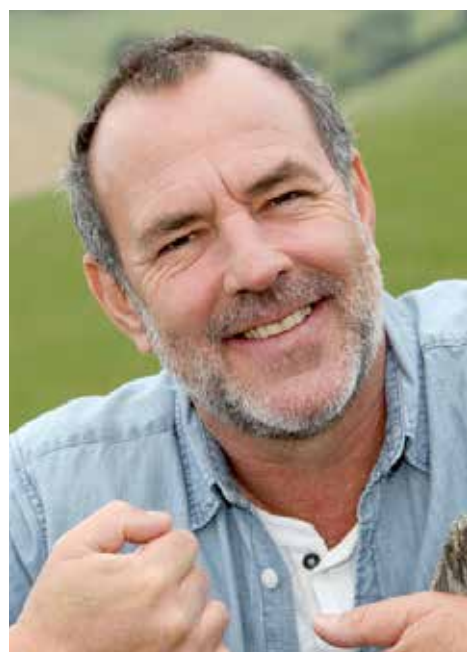
Digital by design is a key priority for Defra as part of the wider Government drive to make information and Government services available and accessible online. RPA offers telephone support to help you register for its online services – simply call 0845 603 7777.

If you have any questions

You can get advice on Cross Compliance rules and how they might apply to you through FAS. Further details can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/farming-advice/cross-compliance or by calling the FAS Helpline on 0845 345 1302.

For anything else, email the RPA (csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk) or call 0845 603 7777.

To view the press release issued by the RPA on 10th December regarding the changes for 2014, please click [here](#).



Soil Protection Review – what you will be required to do in 2014

The SPR process is being reviewed and new arrangements will be implemented from 2015. Therefore, the current requirements will apply into 2014. Given that there will be no space to complete parts of an annual review for 2014 in the current booklet, Defra will be issuing a **continuation sheet** for 2014.

The continuation sheet will be issued along with the 2014 updates for

the Cross Compliance rules. Postal customers will receive a hard copy of the sheet and digital customers will be emailed a link to an online version to print off if they have been completing the SPR in booklet format. **The continuation sheet must be kept with the 2010 booklet for inspection.**

The SPR online service has been updated to include the 2014 annual review information.



Remember to complete your Soil Protection Review for 2013 by 31 December

Single Payment Scheme (SPS) claimants are required to update their 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 2013' box on the relevant pages for the farm soil plan. You do not 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 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 on roads or in watercourses; and
- wind-blown soil that has damaged crops.

Key actions that can be taken:

- Carry out soil tests on fields for acidity and for key nutrients
- Test for soil compaction prior to drilling/planting. Remove compaction where necessary
- Choose a crop rotation to manage risks to soil structure. Manage risks during and after harvesting, especially in relation to watercourses and roads
- Only spread industrial waste to land where you know it will be beneficial to soils and do not use it as a route for disposal
- Consider resurfacing farm tracks to reduce sediment loss and install cross drains to remove excess runoff
- Relocate gateways where runoff and soil erosion is a risk to watercourses, habitats, roads and property
- Consider constructing a wetland or sustainable drainage system to trap sediment

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;
- you add additional land to your holding; or
- 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 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.org.uk.

Joint Industry and Government Slurry Management and Storage Project

Defra published a report (21 November 2013) on the feasibility of introducing flexibility to NVZ closed periods, by tailoring dates to local conditions and taking into account extreme or atypical weather and harvest conditions. The report was the product of a joint government and industry working group, and looked

at the scientific evidence that might support this proposal. However, the working group concluded that the current evidence does not support a flexible closed periods at this stage. Defra will revisit this if the evidence base changes.

The full report can be viewed on the [GOV.UK](http://gov.uk) website.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zone guidance update – November 2013

On 18 November 2013, the NVZ guidance document was updated to reflect the outcome of residual farmers' NVZ appeals since June 2013. It also clarifies sections of the guidance queried by stakeholders since June 2013 and corrects minor typographical errors.

In conjunction with the revised guidance, Defra has produced a file of user-friendly blank tables from the guidance. The file allows you to use the tables you need, and for some tables avoids printing text surrounding them in the NVZ guidance.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones – grassland derogation reminder

The application period to apply for the grassland derogation in 2014 will close on 31 December 2013. Further details, including a link to the online application form for the 2014 derogation, can be found on the [GOV.UK website](http://gov.uk).

Please note, derogation applications can only be made [online](http://gov.uk) or via the Environment Agency derogation helpline number (0845 603 3113).

There will be no provision for paper / postal applications for the grassland derogation for 2014.

They can be printed after their completion onscreen or before for manuscript completion as preferred. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nitrate-vulnerable-zones-in-england-guidance-on-complying-with-the-rules-for-2013-to-2016> to view the updated guidance and tables.

Slurry storage requirements – how are your plans coming along?

If your land was designated for the first time as being within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) during 2013, you will have to comply with the storage requirements by autumn 2015. This means that you should have sufficient facilities to store all slurry produced on the holding and all poultry manure produced in a yard or building during the storage periods. The storage periods are 1 October to 1 April (six months) in the case of pigs and poultry and 1 October to 1 March (five months) in the case of other livestock.

In addition to the slurry, the storage facilities must also have the capacity to store rainfall that is expected during the closed period and any washwater (or other liquids) that may enter the store during this time.

Chapter 10 of '[Guidance on complying with the rules for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in England for 2013 to 2016](#)' provides instructions on how to calculate the amount of

capacity required, including rainfall data. You may also wish to use a computer software package such as [PLANET](#), which will do the calculations for you.

Please note if you build a new facility or substantially enlarge/reconstruct an existing store, then you must notify the Environment Agency at least 14 days before starting the work. This is a requirement under The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations (SSAFO), which set the construction standards for manure storage in England.

It is advisable to start planning for this as soon as possible to ensure that you are compliant by 2015.

If you would like to speak to an independent adviser regarding your slurry storage facilities and complying with the regulations, please contact FAS on 0845 345 1302 or email (advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk).

Forthcoming FAS events

Nutrient management and SPR workshops

The aim of the workshops is to prepare a nutrient management plan and complete the SPR to meet the requirements of an RPA Cross Compliance inspection. **Brendan O'Connor** and **Derek Knight** from FAS will be running the workshops.

Workshops will take place from between **10.00am and 12.30pm**.

For farmers outside an NVZ, there will be events at the following venues in January 2014.

Date	Venue
Wednesday 15 January 2014	The Buck Hotel, Reeth, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL11 6SW
Thursday 16 January 2014	Dales Countryside Museum, Station Yard, Burtsett Road, Hawes, North Yorkshire, DL8 3NT
Friday 17 January 2014	Skipton Auction Mart, Gargrave Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 1UD
Tuesday 21 January 2014	Todmorden Cricket Club, Burnley Road, Todmorden, West Yorkshire, OL14 7BS
Wednesday 22 January 2014	Durker Roods Hotel, Meltham, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire, HD9 4JA
Monday 27 January 2014	The Friends Meeting House, High Street, Great Ayton, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, TS9 6BJ
Tuesday 28 January 2014	Sneaton Castle, Sneaton Castle Centre, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO21 3QN

Places are limited so please book now to avoid disappointment.

Green Futures 2014

The events will cover:

- **Cross Compliance for 2014** including NVZ's and avoiding common failures – Farming Advice Service
- **Practical advice on soil and farm management** to avoid water pollution & aid compliance with the Water Framework Directive – The Allerton Trust
- **Stewardship schemes going forward**, including transitional arrangements for 2014 & 2015 & future environmental schemes – Natural England
- **Local issues** such as CSF & water quality – CSF & Water Companies

Date	Venue	Time
Monday 3 February 2014	Elsham Golf Club, Barton Road, Elsham, Brigg, North Lincolnshire, DN20 0LS	11.00am
Tuesday 4 February 2014	Swan Rural Enterprise Centre, The Old Barn, Pury Hill Farm, Alderton Road, Paulerspury, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 7LS	2.00pm
Thursday 6 February 2014	Louth Golf Club, Crowtree Lane, Louth, Lincolnshire, LN11 9LJ	11.00am
Monday 10 February 2014	Newark Showground, Lincoln Road, Winthorpe, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG24 2NY	2.00pm
Tuesday 11 February 2014	Bluebell Inn, Tissington Gates, Tissington, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 1NH	7.30pm
Wednesday 12 February 2014	Market Harborough Conservative Club, The Lilacs, 6 Fairfield Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9QQ	7.30pm
Monday 24 February 2014	Springfields Exhibition Centre, Camel Gate, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 6ET	7.30pm

Places are limited so please book now to avoid disappointment.

Please call **0845 345 1302** or email bookings@farmingadvice.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 2014, 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.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.



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Key dates

1 December	You need to carry out your annual inventory of sheep. (SMR 8)
31 December	All new Soil Protection Reviews/annual updates to be completed. (GAEC 1)
31 December	Close of NVZ derogation application period for a 2014 derogation.
1 January	You must start implementing your Soil Protection Review if you completed one for the first time in the previous year, or start to implement any changes that you identified previously. (GAEC 1)
1 January	Beginning of the year for assessing the annual amount of livestock manure applied to your land. (SMR 4)
1 January	You can apply organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland and tillage land on shallow or sandy soils from this date if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity restrictions for application of these manures. (SMR 4)
16 January	You can apply manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to grassland and tillage land from this date if conditions are suitable. (SMR 4)
1 February	You can apply organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland and tillage land on all soil types from this date if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity restrictions for application of these manures. (SMR 4)