

News story: New Farming Rules for Water

From 2 April 2018 [new rules for all farmers in England](#) will be introduced to help protect water quality, by standardising good farm practices that many are already performing and offering a new approach to regulation.

In essence the rules require farmers to:

- keep soil on the land;
- match nutrients to crop, and soil needs, and
- keep livestock fertilisers and manures out of the water.

The Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

These new rules are a win-win for farmers and the environment. They will help improve water quality, set a level playing field for all farmers, help businesses save money from better resource efficiency and improve their resilience.

Our ambition is to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it and these new rules will help us deliver our plans for a Green Brexit along with a better future for farming business.

Farmers and land managers will be able to determine what approach is best for their land, through methods such as deciding when it is safe to spread fertilisers.

The farming rules for water were drawn up with farming and environment stakeholders to recognise and build on the good progress that a great many farmers have made in trying to tackle pollution.

There are eight rules, five about managing fertilisers and manures and three on managing soils.

The fertiliser rules require farmers to test their soils, then plan and apply their fertiliser or manure to improve soil nutrient levels and meet crop needs. They include minimum storage and spreading distances from water bodies.

They also require the farmer to assess weather and soil conditions to reduce the risk of runoff and soil erosion.

The remaining rules require farmers to manage livestock by protecting land within five metres of water and reducing livestock poaching.

In addition to these rules, farmers are encouraged to incorporate organic fertilisers into the soil within 12 hours of spreading to significantly

reduce ammonia pollution.

Farming rules for water are part of a whole package of measures to help farmers and land managers look after the environment. The government is also investing £400 million through Countryside Stewardship which supports farmers in creating or restoring precious habitats and a £12 million farm ammonia reduction grant has incentivised farmers to tackle agricultural emissions.

The new rules will not only benefit farming businesses: clean water helps tourism, fishing and shellfish businesses to thrive, reduces the cost of treatment and protects biodiversity.

The Environment Agency will roll out the rules through an advice led approach, working with farmers to meet the requirements before enforcement action is taken.

Consultation outcome: Environment Agency charge proposals from April 2018

Updated: Navigation consultation response document published.

The proposals include changes to the way we charge for:

- regimes within the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016
- radioactive substances regulation nuclear and non-nuclear permits
- marine licences
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013
- Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015
- European Union Emissions Trading System
- definition of waste services
- planning advice

We also want your views on parts of our abstraction licensing amendments and longer term changes to the way we charge for navigation.

We invite comments from:

- charge-payers
- trade associations
- government, businesses and other regulators
- non-government organisations
- individuals
- community groups

- other interested parties
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Policy paper: Farming rules for water from April 2018

Updated: More detail has been added, in both documents, on the soil testing rule in relation to Nitrogen levels.

This publication sets out the new 'farming rules for water' we will be introducing from 2 April 2018 for all farmers in England. We have published a simple overview factsheet, together with full details of the rules.

The rules will require good farming practice, so that farmers manage their land both to avoid water pollution and to benefit their business. They provide a step by step checklist to make sure that fertilisers are spread to meet crop and soil needs. Other rules safeguard water quality by requiring farmers to judge when it is best to apply fertilisers, where to store manures and how to avoid pollution from soil erosion.

We consulted on the proposed rules in 2015 and have separately published a [summary of the responses we received](#).

National Statistics: Northern Ireland local authority collected municipal waste management statistics annual report 2016/17

This report presents information on the quantities of local authority collected municipal waste managed in Northern Ireland. It provides information on the quantities and rates of local authority collected waste arisings, sent for preparing for reuse, for dry recycling, composting, energy recovery and sent to landfill. Some of these measurements are key performance indicators. These are used to assess progress towards achieving waste strategy targets and where appropriate this is highlighted in the tables and charts.

Students at top of their game for St Andrew's Day

Pheasant on the menu during national celebration.