

Farming rules for water



Why were more rules introduced?

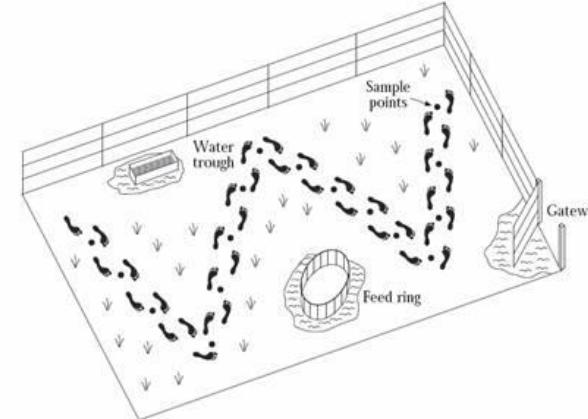
- These rules have been introduced (2018) to:
 - promote good practice in managing fertilisers and manures
 - encourage land managers to take reasonable precautions to prevent diffuse pollution from runoff or soil erosion
 - be outcome focused and non-prescriptive
 - demonstrates environmental responsibility and efficient farming

Fertilisers & organic manures: Rules 1 - 5

Rule (1) – Fertiliser & manure planning

A land manager must ensure that, for each application of organic manure or manufactured fertiliser to agricultural land, the application

- (a) is planned so that it does not –
 - (i) exceed the needs of the soil and crops on that land, or
 - (ii) give rise to a significant risk of agricultural diffuse pollution, and
- (b) takes into account the weather conditions and forecasts for that land at the time of the application.



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Rule 1: Soil testing

Plan each application, taking into account the results of soil testing

- the data can be **no more** than 5 years old **at the time of application**

Soil testing on **cultivated land** needs to include pH of your soil and the levels of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and magnesium (Mg)

- these are the statutory minimum required

Nitrogen levels can be determined by assessing the **soil nitrogen supply (SNS)** rather than a soil test

- through using tools such as RB209, Tried & Tested etc.
- this should ideally be done annually in line with industry best practice



Rule 1: Soil testing on ‘cultivated land’

Soil testing is required on ‘**cultivated agricultural land only**’

In the context of these rules, cultivated agricultural land is deemed as land which has been cultivated (improved) by:

- physical means (including ploughing or sowing) at least once in the previous year, or
- chemical means (including applying organic manure or manufactured fertiliser) at least once in the previous 3 years

Both temporary grassland and permanent pasture are **included** here if they fall under the above definitions.

‘Uncultivated’ (unimproved) grassland **is not included** for soil testing under these rules. This could also include traditional orchards, hay meadows, species rich pasture, moorland, rush pasture etc. where no fertilisers and / or organic manures are spread.

'Organic manure' - definition

- *'Fertiliser that is derived from one or more animal, plant or human sources. This includes, but is not limited to:*
- *livestock manure*
- *slurry*
- *silage effluent*
- *anaerobic digestates and liquors*
- *ash from meat, poultry litter or biomass*
- *bone meal*
- *paper crumble*
- *sewage sludge'*

Rule 2: Storing organic manures

Do not store organic manures:

- within 10m of inland freshwaters or coastal waters
- within 50m of a spring, well or borehole
- where there is significant risk of pollution or runoff entering a watercourse



Significant risk of pollution or runoff

Farmers must take into account any factors which mean there is “significant risk of pollution or runoff”, including but not limited to:

- the slope of the agricultural land, especially if the slope is greater than 12 degrees
- any ground cover
- the proximity to inland fresh waters and coastal waters, and the proximity to wetlands
- the weather conditions and forecasts
- the soil type and condition of the land
- the presence and condition of agricultural land drains



Rule 3: Applying manures or fertilisers

Do not apply manure or fertiliser:

- if the **soil** is **waterlogged, flooded or snow covered**
- if the soil has been **frozen for more than 12 hours in the previous 24 hours**
- If there is **significant risk** of causing agricultural diffuse pollution from the application



Manure application on waterlogged soils

Manure application on snow covered land





High trajectory spreading in the rain

Rule 4: Where not to apply organic manures; Rule 5: Where not to apply fertiliser

Rule 4: Organic manures must not be applied:

- within **10m** of inland freshwaters or coastal waters
- within **50m** of a spring, well or borehole

Rule 5: Manufactured fertiliser must not be applied within **2m** of an inland freshwaters or coastal waters, spring, well or borehole



FAQs -

- Farming rules for water do not impose a ban on the application of any organic manure or manufactured fertiliser.
- The nutrient needs of each farm and field can be different in terms of what is required, and when, to meet crop and soils needs. Anything beyond that, or applications that pose a significant risk of diffuse water pollution are likely to represent breaches of Rules 1-5 of the Farming rules for water.
- When assessing compliance, Environment Agency officers will consider organic manure and manufactured fertiliser applications, and their planning, on a field by field basis.

Worked example: Digestate spreading

Umbilical spreading of a digestate after a pea harvest in late July 2019.

Digestate ponding along field margin adjacent to a ditch (within 10 metres).

Reported as an odour incident.



Nutrients examples and FAQs



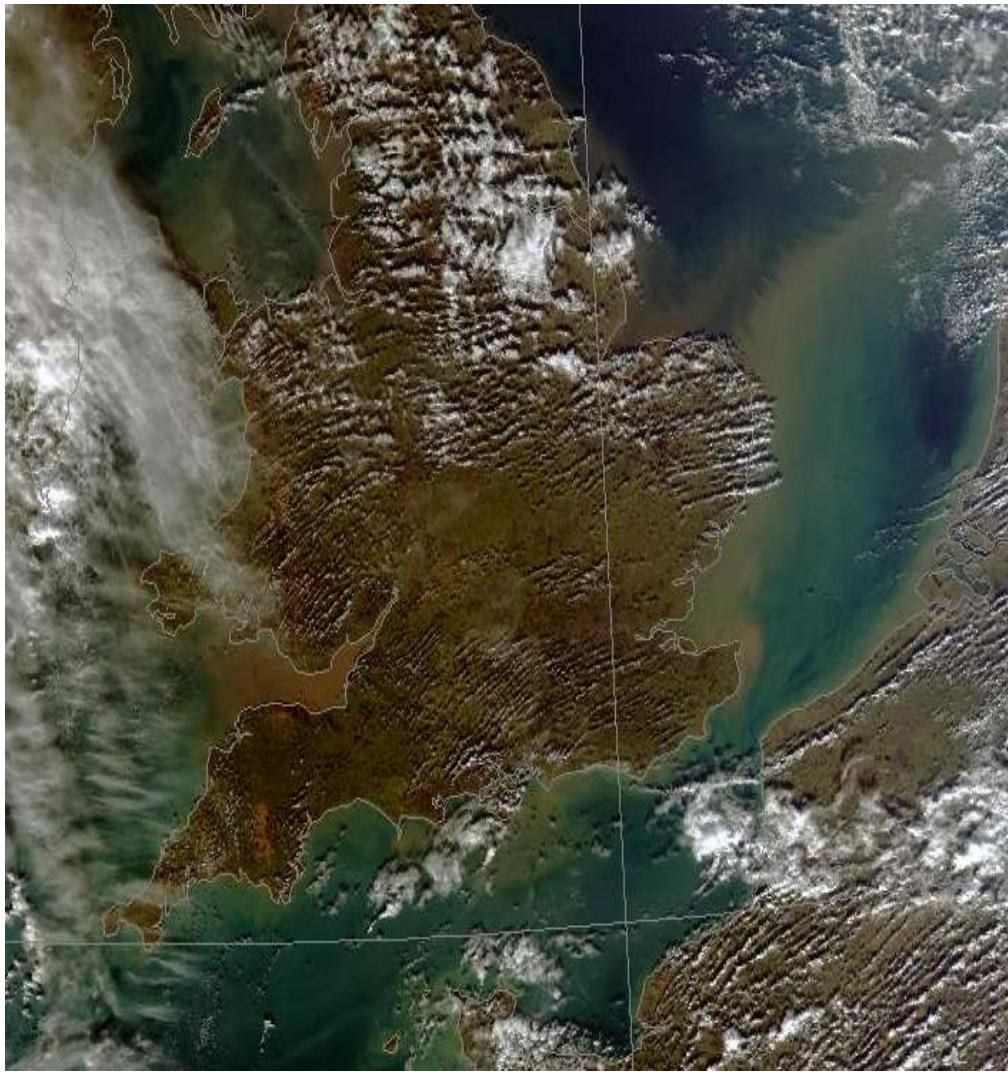
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Other nutrient FAQs

- Cover crops
- Applying organic manures on crops in the winter $\geq 4^{\circ}\text{C}$?



Soil protection: Rules 6 - 8



Rule 6: Soil erosion and runoff

Take all **reasonable precautions** to prevent significant **soil erosion and runoff (over 1 Ha)** from:

- **land management and cultivation practices** (such as seedbeds, tramlines, rows, beds, stubbles (including harvested land with haulm), polytunnels and irrigation)
- **poaching** by livestock





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Rule 7 – Bankside erosion

Land within **5m** of inland freshwaters or coastal waters must be protected from significant soil erosion (including bankside erosion **20m x 2m**) or significant run off by preventing poaching by livestock.



Please note,
livestock in a
watercourse is NOT
a breach, only where
bankside erosion is
caused



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Rule 8: Position of livestock feeders

Livestock feeders must **not** be positioned:

- within **10 metres** of any inland freshwaters or coastal waters
- within **50 metres** of a spring, well or borehole
- where there is **significant risk of pollution** from **poaching around the feeder** entering any inland freshwaters or coastal waters
- Drinking troughs are not included under these rules



A livestock feeder causing significant risk of pollution caused by poaching and run off via gate and road network to a nearby watercourse.



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How the rules will be enforced

Farming rules for water enforcement



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