Farming Advice Service

Welcome to the Farming Advice Service newsletter

Thank you for continuing to subscribe to our monthly newsletter. We hope we are providing you with a valuable service, and welcome any feedback or suggestions on topics you would like to see covered in future editions.

Please click here to complete a short survey about the FAS newsletter

Contact us

FAS technical advice line: 03000 200 301

advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk

farmingadviceservice.org.uk

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Key dates

How can FAS help you?

Water abstraction – dry weather management advice

Countryside COP event programme

Future Farming Resilience Fund: what support is on offer?

The new Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) advisory service contractor

Welcoming the public to the countryside and coast survey

Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) closed period reminders

The rules on removing or working on a countryside hedgerow

Silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil (SSAFO) storage

Updates from the Future Farming blog

Sign up to FAS services

Key dates

Below are details of recent and forthcoming key dates that you should be aware of.

1 September	You can cut or trim hedges and trees from this date. (GAEC* 7a and GAEC 7c)
1 September	For any land located in an NVZ, this is the start of the closed period for applying organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland on shallow or sandy soils. (SMR** 1)
1 September	For any land located in an NVZ, this is the start of the closed period for applying manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to tillage land. (SMR 1)
15 September	For any land located in an NVZ, this is the start of the closed period for applying manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to grassland. (SMR 1)
16 September	For any land located in an NVZ, this is the start of the closed period for applying organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (for example, 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 1)
1 October	You can burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land in upland areas from this date. (GAEC 6)
1 October	For any land located in an NVZ, this is the start of the closed period for applying organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to tillage land on soils that are not shallow or sandy. (SMR 1)
15 October	For any land located in an NVZ, this is the start of the closed period for applying organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to grassland on soils that are not shallow or sandy. (SMR 1)

FAS has produced a handy, printable, one-page poster of all the cross compliance dates for 2021, which you can access and download here.

For more details about the information provided in the key dates table, please visit the Guide to cross compliance in England 2021 page of GOV.UK.

* GAEC = Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition
** SMR = Statutory Management Requirement

How can FAS help you?

Free and confidential advice

England's domestic farming legislation requires an advisory system that covers cross compliance, water protection and aspects of pesticide use. In England, this is provided by the Farming Advice Service (FAS).

FAS provides **free**, **confidential** advice on cross compliance requirements, some aspects of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (such as silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil (SSAFO); and waste exemptions) and regulations on the sustainable use of pesticides. The cross compliance rules apply to you if you are a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), Countryside Stewardship or Environmental Stewardship claimant.

FAS updates the farming sector on relevant Government farming policy that is applicable in England and the actions that can be taken to help farmers to be compliant with regulations.

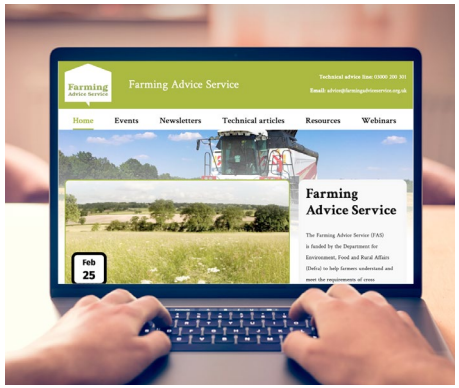
The advice given to individual farmers must be **confidential** – that is, FAS **must not** disclose any personal or individual information, or data it obtains during its advisory activities.

Getting in contact with the advice line

Farmers requiring telephone advice from FAS can contact the **Rural Services Helpline** on **03000 200 301** Monday to Friday between **08:30** and **17:00**. Our helpline is operating as normal and we continue to support farmers.

The Rural Services Helpline provides a single number for all **FAS, Rural Payments Agency, Animal and Plant Health Agency, Natural England and forestry** enquiries. By providing a single point of contact, the Government aims to make it simpler for farmers to access technical guidance on a range of topics, including cross compliance, agricultural payment schemes and animal health inspections.

You can also email enquiries to advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk



Water abstraction: dry weather management advice

As we move into the end of the main irrigation season, this is the ideal time to start thinking about what changes you need to make to your abstraction licence in order to be better prepared for next summer. For example, if you have problems watering and lifting crops during the autumn, you could apply to change the time of year you take water. For more information on how to make longer term changes to your licence, including for drought and dry weather resilience, please visit GOV.UK.

More information on the current water resources situation can be found at GOV.UK while the latest Met Office 3-month forecast can be found here.

Countryside COP event programme

The new Agriculture & Land Use Alliance (ALA) will host the first ever Countryside COP event to showcase and inspire net zero activity in rural communities and agri-food supply chains ahead of COP26 in November.

The week of events, from 11-15 October 2021, will bring together different people, organisations, science, and knowledge to demonstrate all that the industry has achieved so far, and how it can do even more to maximise the contribution of agriculture and land use to a net zero economy. For more information and to see the event programme, please click here.

Future Farming Resilience Fund: what support is on offer?

The Future Farm Resilience Fund is designed to provide tailored business support to farmers and land managers during the early years of the agricultural transition period. In this article, FAS provides information on the type of support available and the contact details for the organisations that will be delivering under the scheme.

The scheme will focus on assisting farmers and land managers to make the right decisions for themselves, their families and their business through effective discussion and planning. The discussions between farmers/land managers and the advice provider are confidential. This phase of the free support is available now, until the end of February 2022, and any farmer or land manager currently in receipt of Direct Payments is eligible to apply. As places are limited and provided on a first-come, first-served basis, FAS would encourage you to engage with organisations delivering advice in your sector/area.

The scheme will signpost the wider support available, including wellbeing. To keep up to date with the details of the scheme, please subscribe to Defra's Future Farming blog and sign up to Defra's e-alerts.

Contact information and the support available from the organisations delivering under the scheme

Organisation and webpage link	Contact information	Coverage	Sector	Types of support and the main focus of the support available
AHDB	FarmBusinessReview@ahdb.org.uk 02475 189300	England	Grazing livestock & cereals	1:1 review using the online AHDB Farm Business Review tool with support from an agricultural consultant and a group feedback meeting. Follow-on options for in-depth 1:1 support on cost control, business planning and carbon management. Focusses on the impact of Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) reductions on your farm, assessing strengths and weaknesses within the business. Using accounts and production data to calculate farm performance, with discussion on priorities and actions to take.
Berrys	will.davies@berrys.uk.com 07469 858749	Shropshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Warwickshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Leicestershire, Derbyshire	Any sector	1:1 business advice including a bespoke business report, followed by a face-to-face meeting to give business confidence for the future. Focusses on providing the business with an understanding of its current performance and how this may be impacted by the agricultural transition. Advice will include a report with financial analysis and follow-up actions, with the opportunity for follow-up sessions to facilitate lasting change.

Contact information and the support available from the organisations delivering under the scheme

Organisation and webpage link	Contact information	Coverage	Sector	Types of support and the main focus of the support available
Brown & Co	defraffr@brown-co.com 01480 598875	Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire, Humber, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bucks, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Essex, Kent, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset	Targeting all farmers and farm types with an emphasis on tenants, older farmers and those under financial pressures	On farm 1:1 support from an experienced farm business consultant who specialises in your sector. You will receive a report on your business including benchmarking and an action plan. Also, farmer-to-farmer sharing through group learning sessions. Focusses on business and social change, bringing skills from other departments in Brown & Co, including land agency and commercial property where required.
Bury Beet Group	jamiegwatkin@btinernet.com 01284 386111	Suffolk and Norfolk	Arable and sugar beet	Farmers will receive a report on their business including benchmarking and an action plan. Focusses on financial resilience planning, improving productivity through greater awareness of the better management of soils, best practice on sugar beet production, improving natural capital and ecosystems, carbon capture and storage, business diversification.
Ceres Rural LLP	sebastian.murray@ceresrural.co.uk george.badger@ceresrural.co.uk 01865 790790	Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk, Kent, Sussex, Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Surrey and Norfolk	Arable	A farm visit with a bespoke farm resilience report to help farmers understand the changes taking place and identify how they need to adapt. Focusses on a review of the whole arable business, including crop production, benchmarking, and environmental/grant opportunities to produce practical recommendations.
Devon County Council	linda.wilson@devon.gov.uk charlotte.molyneux@devon.gov.uk 01392 383000	Devon and Somerset	Any sector	1:1 bespoke support with workshops. Workshops focus on themes such as agricultural transition, exiting the farming industry and environmental schemes. 1:1 bespoke advice includes financial diagnostic and an action plan.
DJM Consulting	helen@theruralbusiness.co.uk 01746714089	Shropshire, West Midlands, South Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire	Any sector	1:1 strategic on-farm meetings this autumn/winter. Focusses on business support through pre-visit analysis of your accounts and Basic Payment reductions; farm visit by a rural business consultant; discussion and production of a tailored strategic action plan, including recommendations.
JH Agri Consultancy	jhadwin@jhagriconsultancy.co.uk 07739 176667	Cumbria, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Northumberland	Livestock	The JH Agri Consultancy offer is solely based on 1:1 support for beef and sheep farms. This is delivered by James Hadwin of JH Agri consultancy, Rhidian Jones of RJ Livestock systems and Ian Cairns of Agri-food technical services.

Contact information and the support available from the organisations delivering under the scheme

Organisation and webpage link	Contact information	Coverage	Sector	Types of support and the main focus of the support available
Kite Consulting	jennie.moore@kiteconsulting.com 01902 854797	England	Dairy	Introductory webinars, 1:1 farm visits and business analysis via an online portal, farmer group meetings and follow-up virtual meetings. Focusses on individual financial analysis, benchmarking and identifying the financial impact from the loss of BPS. Sharing best practice on options to mitigate the impacts. Creating an action plan to make businesses strong for the future.
Landworkers Alliance	jyoti.fernandes@landworkersalliance.org.uk 07875 849754	England	Horticulture, dairy, small/medium enterprise meat, mixed farming	Webinars for farmers on topics covering all aspects of farm resilience mentoring. 1:1 advice. A farm resilience toolkit. Films of successful case studies. Farm tours. Peer to peer support networks. Focusses on how to adopt agro-ecological farming practices plus short supply chains to build sustainable farming systems and financial farm resilience. Using a framework that integrates sustainable production with environmental land management.
Laurence Gould Partnership	keith@laurencegould.com 07968 412052	Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surry, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Dorset, Wiltshire, Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Berkshire, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Northumberland, Cumbria, Durham	Any sector	Group webinars organised in four locations across England. 1:1 video calls. On-farm visits. Focus on the impact of the reduction of Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), looking at on-farm alternatives to replace and generate additional income.
M B Hodgson & Son Limited	kathryn@nwuauctions.co.uk 01539 566222	Cumbria, North Lancashire, North Yorkshire	Livestock	Detailed meetings on site to establish data, investigate existing agreements and discussions as to the future expectations of the business. Findings will be outlined in a business support and resilience audit report that can be used to deliver direct benefits to the farm business. Focusses on evaluating the financial impacts and how the new schemes and projects will fit your existing business best, helping to build your business resilience through the agricultural transition and beyond.
Natural Enterprise	graham.biss@naturalenterprise.co.uk 01983 296244	Isle of Wight	Any sector	A programme of meetings, seminars, workshops and 1:1 farm appraisals, allowing farmers to engage at different times and levels. Focusses on the provision of sector information and an insight to the barriers to diversification, benchmarking in practice and technology for efficiency and productivity.

Contact information and the support available from the organisations delivering under the scheme

Organisation and webpage link	Contact information	Coverage	Sector	Types of support and the main focus of the support available
NIAB	elizabeth.stockdale@niab.com 07957 966802	Wessex and Cotswolds	Arable	Workshops (in November and February) with some targeted 1:1 visits working with farms to develop detailed case studies. Focusses on working with arable farmers to develop a farm-specific change plan, built from a measured understanding of their challenges, together with workshops to discuss options for changes in practice.
Promar International	sandra.callwood@genusplc.com 07971 118688	England	Dairy, beef and sheep	Tailored 1:1 advice for all farms in the dairy, beef and sheep sectors.
Ricardo-AEA Ltd	ffrf@ricardo.com 01235 753530	England	Any sector	The service provides business with access to 1:1 reviews with a farm business advisor; supporting webinars; online toolbox of resources; and support packages. A professional advisor will work with the business to identify a personalised action plan to help maximise profits, identify risks and achieve goals over the short and long term. The webinars and online resources explain the changes coming with the agricultural transition and provide a toolbox of resources to help businesses through this period of change.
RSK ADAS Limited	resilience@adas.co.uk 03301 755839	England	Any sector	Individual, confidential farm business reviews and advice. Agricultural transition webinars. Business skills development workshops. A review of your farming business to understand the impact of BPS reductions and how this could be mitigated. You will receive a financial analysis, report and action plan to help identify areas that will help improve sustainability.
SRUC	neil.carter@sac.co.uk 07825 781347	England	Any sector	Information webinars: six general update meetings about the transition, and five more specialist meetings looking in more detail at certain topics. 200 1:1 baseline carbon audits (delivered remotely), aimed at businesses looking at carbon for the first time, wanting to find their baseline. Also providing 30 carbon management plan visits (delivered face to face), aimed at businesses with at least two years' worth of carbon audit data already, wanting to look at the next step (such as mitigation measures for the next 5-10 years). Focusses on an update on transition activity, and introduces the subject of carbon to a wider audience. The aim will be to show the role of carbon auditing in a positive light; as a tool to look at business efficiency and demonstrate linkages between good carbon management and farm profitability. Also to show where carbon could fit into future funding schemes.
The Prince's Countryside Fund	project@countrysidefund.org.uk 07551848892	Cumbria, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northumberland, Durham Dales, Peak District, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Lincolnshire, Herefordshire, Cornwall. There will also be a virtual group	Dairy, beef and sheep	One business and one environment focussed group workshop (in-person and online available), plus 1:1 support, access to resources, and up to three further optional workshops (topics chosen by farm participants). The Farm for the Future programme is a package of business and environmental support that will help farms to better understand how the agricultural transition will affect the future of their business. It will be delivered in 11 areas across England by local Farm Support Groups.

The new Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) advisory service contractor

A new TB Advisory Service (TBAS) provider is delivering on-farm visits and telephone advice to farmers in England about how to protect their herds/flocks from bovine TB. This article provides more information on the services they provide.

The previous TBAS, which ran from 2017 until earlier this year, was restricted to providing biosecurity advice to cattle farmers in the High Risk and Edge Areas of England. The service was part of the Countryside Productivity scheme funded by the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). The scheme was administered by the Rural Payments Agency using EU funding.

The new TBAS will be similar to the previous one, but with some key differences. The overall aim of the service is still to work with farmers to reduce the incidence and severity of TB breakdowns in England, supporting delivery of the Government's strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free status for England. This will be achieved by providing tailored one-to-one on-farm and telephone advice on biosecurity, to improve resilience to bTB in infected herds/flocks and to protect uninfected herds/flocks from infection with bTB. Advice will also cover how to reduce bTB risk from movements of cattle and farmed non-bovine animals, as well as specific advice on trading options for TB-restricted farms.

Unlike the previous TBAS, the new service has been extended to the whole of England. The new TBAS will also provide advice to keepers of cattle and farmed non-bovine animals (South American camelids, goats, deer, pigs, sheep); previously only cattle keepers could access the service.

Trained veterinary advisors will carry out a farm walk with the keeper to assess biosecurity and make recommendations to improve the herd/flock's resilience to bTB. Where appropriate, a badger survey of the farm will be completed. Following the initial visit, the keeper will receive a TBAS report with practical and affordable recommendations to improve biosecurity. The keeper will be encouraged to share the report with their private vet and implement the recommendations. A follow-up visit will be completed 6-9 months after the initial visit to check progress with implementation of the recommendations and provide further advice.

For further details see tbas.org.uk

Welcoming the public to the countryside and coast survey

Natural England have launched a survey aimed at landowners and land managers in England and Wales to collect information about how they welcome the public into parts of the countryside and coast that they are responsible for. Natural England will use this information to help develop guidance for landowners and land managers. The closing date for the survey is **midday on 13 October** and the link to complete the survey is here.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) closed period reminders

In this article, FAS provides reminders on the closed periods for spreading organic manure and manufactured fertiliser in an NVZ.

There are established closed periods for NVZs that apply to certain types of organic manure (those with more than 30% readily available nitrogen, such as poultry manure and liquid organic manure) and manufactured fertilisers. If any of your land is located within an NVZ, you must not spread during the dates shown in Table 1 and Table 2 (all dates inclusive).

Table 1: Closed periods for organic manure

	Grassland	Tillage land
Sandy or shallow soils	1 September to 31 December	1 August to 31 December
All other soils	15 October to 31 January	1 October to 31 January

Table 2: Closed periods for manufactured fertiliser

Grassland	Tillage land
15 September to 15 January	1 September to 15 January

There are some exceptions to the rules for the closed periods. For more information, please visit GOV.UK.

Please remember that regardless of the NVZ closed periods, the Farming Rules for Water require all farmers (whether they have land located in an NVZ or not) to plan applications of organic manures or manufactured fertilisers. This is so applications do not exceed the needs of the soil or crop, or give rise to a significant risk of diffuse pollution.

If you have any questions or require further support, please contact the FAS helpline (03000 200 301) or email advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk.

The rules on removing or working on a countryside hedgerow

A countryside hedgerow is a boundary line of bushes that can include trees. This article covers some of the rules that apply if you want to remove or work on a hedgerow that fall under The Hedgerows Regulations 1997. In addition to this, some of these rules are cross compliance requirements under Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) 7a: Boundaries.

Before starting work on a countryside hedgerow, you must check if it is protected as this would mean you cannot remove it. The full criteria of a protected hedgerow is on GOV.UK – these apply to the length, location and 'importance'.

Apply to remove a countryside hedgerow

You can only remove a hedgerow if it is less than 30 years old, you're the owner, tenant or manager of the hedgerow, or you're a utility company that is eligible to remove it.

You should discuss your proposal to remove a hedgerow with the local planning authority (LPA) first, to make sure it is legal to do so. You'll need to provide plans relating to the hedgerow you want to remove – the local authority will explain what is needed. The LPA is one of the following:

- the local authority;
- the National Park Authority for land within a national park boundary;
- the Broads Authority in the Norfolk Broads;
- the Council of the Isles of Scilly for land on the Isles of Scilly.

After it has acknowledged your request, the LPA has 42 days to respond to your written notice to remove a hedgerow. If you do not agree with the LPA's decision, you can appeal it, but this must be done within 28 days of the date on the LPA decision letter. For more information, please visit GOV.UK.

Check if you can work on a hedgerow

Before starting work on a hedgerow, you must check whether there are any restrictions in place. These include:

- **Nesting birds.** The closed period for cutting or trimming hedges and the main nesting and breeding season (1 March to 31 August) has now passed. But please note, leaving hedge trimming until later in the year helps to provide more food and protection for birds and wildlife.
- **Tree protection and licensing.** Before carrying out work on hedgerow trees, you must check if you need a felling licence. The LPA will tell you if there is a tree preservation order in place, or if it is in a conservation area.
- **Restrictions for schemes.** If you are claiming under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) you must follow the rules for hedgerows in GAEC 7a: Boundaries. If you have an Environmental Stewardship or Countryside Stewardship agreement, you must check your agreement handbook for the restrictions.

If you have any questions or require further support, please contact the FAS helpline (03000 200 301) or email advice@farmingadviceservice.org.uk.

Silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil (SSAFO) storage

If you are thinking of building a new silage clamp, slurry tank or lagoon, or substantially altering an existing store, you need to tell the Environment Agency at least two weeks before you start construction. You also need to provide information about the structure you are planning to build and where it will be located. Guidance on GOV.UK sets out the information you will be asked to provide. Environment Agency staff will be happy to discuss your proposals at an early stage of planning and can give you advice about construction requirements and location if needed. Please also consult the Environment Agency if you are unsure how much storage you'll need.

You should also check if local authority planning permission is needed. You can contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 or send an email to enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

CIRIA has published 'Livestock manure and silage storage infrastructure for agriculture'. This gives practical advice on planning and building storage infrastructure and is available free from CIRIA's website.

The slurry investment scheme is due to launch in 2022, this will help farmers to invest in new slurry stores that exceed current regulatory requirements. It will also help farmers meet future regulatory standards to be introduced as part of the Clean Air Strategy.

Updates from the Future Farming blog

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) regularly adds updates to the Future Farming blog on GOV.UK. In this article, FAS provides links to some of the recent posts.

- Janet Hughes is the Programme Director for the Future Farming and Countryside Programme (FFCP) and recently took part in a Q&A session about the Sustainable Farming Incentive, answering questions from farmers. The video for part 1 is available to watch here and part 2 is available here.
- The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme will fund projects on land in or near a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England. This video on the Future Farming blog gives some ideas of what projects you could do on your farm.
- Defra provides an insight to the approach to testing and trialling new schemes and services that you can read here.

Separate to the Future Farming blog, Defra has recently announced that the sixth round of the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund will open for applications in December 2021. The £2.5 million fund encourages collaboration and knowledge-sharing amongst the farming community. To apply, groups must submit plans showing how they will work together and share knowledge to protect and enhance their local environment, in line with their local Countryside Stewardship priorities. You can read more about the announcement here.

Sign up to FAS services

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Subscribe to the free FAS Newsletter

If you don't already receive the FREE monthly FAS newsletter, please email bookings@farmingadviceservice.org.uk with **'Register for newsletter'** in the subject line. Alternatively, please visit farmingadviceservice.org.uk and enter your email address into the newsletter sign up box.

In line with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018, FAS has updated its privacy policy to explain how your data is kept safe. To view the policy, please visit www.farmingadviceservice.org.uk/events/privacy/