

**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.*

### Contact us

**FAS technical advice line: 03000 200 301**

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

[farmingadvice.org.uk](http://farmingadvice.org.uk)

Please [click here](#) to complete a short survey about the FAS newsletter

## November 2021 - Issue 69

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# Key dates

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

**28 November** If you hold a summer water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction wholly within the months of April to October), you should submit your water abstraction return for summer 2021 to the Environment Agency by 28 November 2021.

If you hold a two-part tariff agreement, your supplementary charge for summer 2021 will be calculated based on your return and sent to you in early 2022. If you do not submit a return, the supplementary charge will be calculated using the full quantity authorised to be abstracted by your licence. ([GAEC\\* 2](#))

**1 December** The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship 2021 payment windows open. ([BPS 2021](#))

**1 December** If you keep sheep or goats, you must carry out an annual count of the animals on your holding as of 1 December, enter this into your holding register and complete the inventory (online or by post) by 31 December. You will receive a letter in November which tells you what to do ([SMR\\*\\* 8](#))

**31 December** If you keep sheep or goats, this is the deadline to submit your annual count of livestock into your holding register and to the inventory (online or by post). ([SMR 8](#))

**31 December** End of the BPS 2021 scheme year.

## In case you missed it...

**1 November** The burning season for heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium is 1 November to 31 March for land not within an upland area (and 1 October to 15 April for upland areas). ([GAEC 6](#))

\* GAEC = Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition

\*\* SMR = Statutory Management Requirement

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](#) and [Basic Payment Scheme \(BPS\) 2021](#) pages of GOV.UK.

# How can FAS help you?

## Free and confidential advice

The Farming Advice Service (FAS) is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It provides **free, confidential** advice to help farmers in England understand and meet the requirements of cross compliance. These requirements 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 FAS newsletter also provides articles on topics that are complementary to cross compliance, such as practices to benefit the wider environment and wellbeing support.

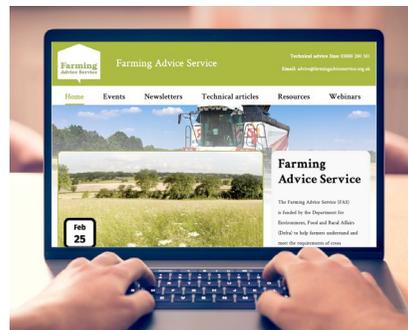
The [FAS website](#) hosts all of the previous FAS newsletters, technical articles and webinars that cover topics in more detail.

## 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**. The Rural Services Helpline provides a single number for all **FAS, Rural Payments Agency, Animal and Plant Health Agency, Natural England and forestry** enquiries.

You can also email enquiries to [advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk). Our helpline team aims to respond to all telephone and email enquiries within one working day.

The advice given to individual farmers is confidential. Therefore, FAS does not disclose any personal or individual information, or data it obtains during its advisory activities.



## Remember to submit your annual sheep and goat inventory

*If you keep sheep or goats, you must carry out an annual count of the animals on your holding as of 1 December, enter this into your holding register, complete the inventory form and submit it online or by post by 31 December. This article provides more information on how to do this.*

Keeping an annual inventory is a requirement in sheep and goat legislation and also a cross compliance requirement under [Statutory Management Requirement \(SMR\) 8: Sheep and goat identification](#). If you do not complete the annual inventory, this is a breach under the cross compliance rules and may increase your chance of being selected for a sheep or goat identification inspection and/or a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) inspection.

Once you have carried out the annual count of your sheep or goats, you must enter the information into the online form [here](#) or complete and return a paper form

by 31 December. The online inventory form will be available from 29 November. If you are completing a paper form, the pre-paid envelope will be addressed to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which records the information on behalf of Defra. For guidance on how to complete the forms, please visit [GOV.UK](#).

You should have received a letter during November from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). If you do not receive correspondence from Defra by 3 December telling you how to complete your inventory, please call the Defra Surveys Team helpline on 03000 600 140 or email [surveys@defra.gov.uk](mailto:surveys@defra.gov.uk).

You can find more information on your annual sheep and goat inventory, including the link to the online tool, [here](#).

Guidance on registering your holdings, tagging, record keeping, and reporting movements of sheep and goats can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

# Cross compliance in 2022

As with previous years, the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) will run for the full calendar year (1 January to 31 December 2022). Those who are intending to claim payments under BPS for 2022 will be required to comply with the BPS requirements for the entire year.

There are not going to be any changes to the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) and Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs), in 2022. However there are some operational changes that will be implemented:

Area of cross compliance	What's new in 2022?
Inspections	<p>To improve communication with farmers, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will send a letter shortly after an inspection visit confirming the initial results.</p> <p>This will confirm whether the inspection was found to be compliant or non-compliant and give any necessary guidance as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Where the inspection is found to be non-compliant, the letter will give an initial overview of the results and explain what to expect next.</p>
Penalties/reductions	<p>For many farmers, penalties for non-compliance (or reductions for non-compliance for Countryside Stewardship agreements starting on or after 1 January 2021) will be more proportionate.</p> <p>For example, where record keeping is non-compliant under SMR 1 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, this will take account of any possible harm to the environment. The RPA is also making the penalty levels (percentages) more proportionate under SMR 7 Cattle identification and registration and SMR 8 Sheep and goat identification.</p>

The information in this article has been taken from the RPA's November 2021 update booklet [here](#). We recommend reading through this booklet as it includes information on the changes to the BPS, and updates on Countryside Stewardship and other schemes.

For further help with the cross compliance rules, please contact the FAS helpline on 03000 200 301 or email [advice@farmingadvice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.org.uk).

## Nitrate Vulnerable Zone designations and appeals 2021-2024

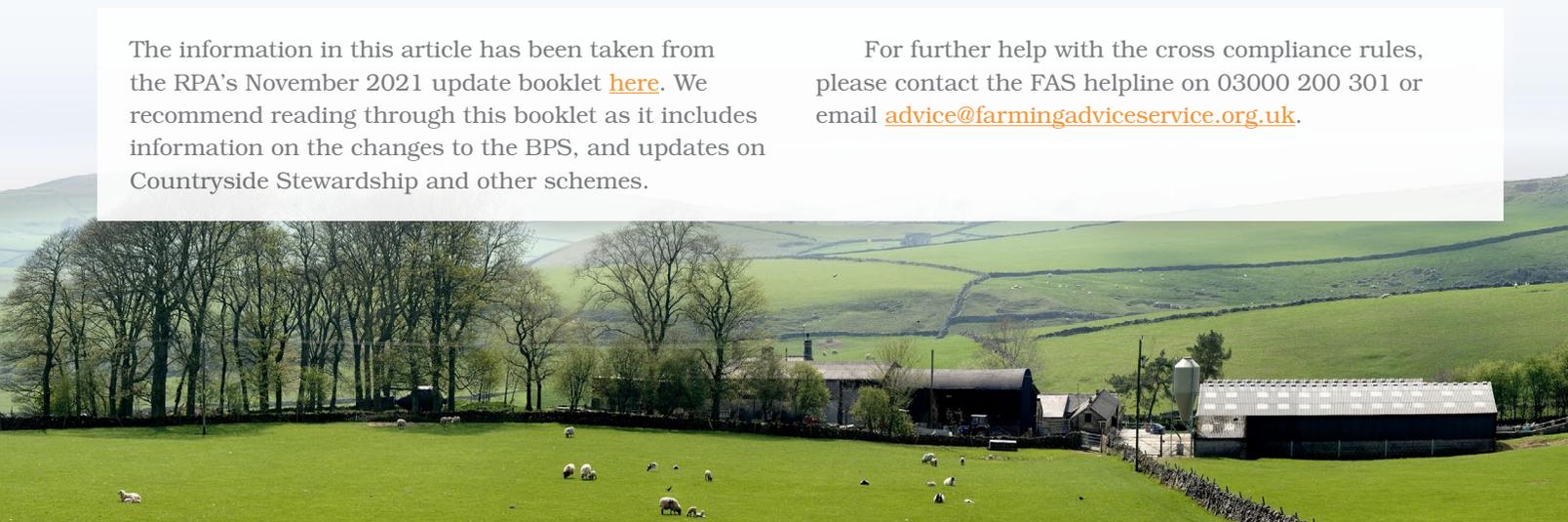
*If you have land that has been designated as being in a [Nitrate Vulnerable Zone for 2021-2024](#), you will receive a letter from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) informing you of your right to appeal against this decision.*

Letters are being issued until early next year and you can appeal the decision **within 28 days of the date on the letter** if your land (or part of it):

- does not drain into water that has been identified as polluted;
- drains into water that should not be identified as polluted.

If you wish to appeal, please read the following guidance on [how to make an NVZ appeal](#), complete the notice of appeal form and send it to the [first-tier tribunal](#).

To check if your land is located in an NVZ, please use the interactive map [here](#). If you have difficulty checking the map, would like a printed map, or have any questions regarding the letter that you have received, please call the Environment Agency on 03000 203791.



# Storage requirements for solid manure and slurry in an NVZ

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. If any of your land is in a NVZ, then you must comply with the NVZ rules, this is in addition to [Farming Rules for Water](#). You can use the interactive map [here](#) to see whether your land falls within an NVZ. This article provides information on the storage rules for solid manure and slurry in an NVZ. For full detail on the requirements for land in an NVZ, please visit [GOV.UK](#).

## Slurry separation

Slurry is liquid manure produced by livestock (apart from poultry) while in a yard or building. It includes animal bedding, rainwater or washings that drain from areas where animals are kept. Slurry can be separated into liquid and solid parts using methods such as screen separation and press separation. Slurry separation must be carried out on a waterproof base where any liquid that drains can be collected.

After separation, if the solid that remains can be stacked in a heap, then it can be treated as farmyard manure (FYM) and, if not, it is still slurry. If there is leakage from the manure heap, it must be collected and treated as slurry.

## Storing slurry

You must be able to store all of the slurry and poultry manure produced in a yard or building on your holding unless you reduce the volume by sending it off your farm or spread some of it on fields with a [low risk of runoff](#).

The storage period runs from:

- 1 October to 1 April inclusive (6 months) for pigs and poultry;
- 1 October to 1 March inclusive (5 months) for cattle, sheep, goats, deer and horses.

You also need to ensure you have enough storage to account for other liquids entering the store (e.g. rainfall and washings) and wetter-than-average years (1 in 5). The [Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board \(AHDB\) slurry wizard](#) can be used to convert average rainfall into wetter-than-average years and to compare your existing storage capacity with the capacity you need.

## Storing solid manure

Solid manure, including poultry manure and animal bedding that contains manure must be stored in the following ways:

- a container;
- on a waterproof base that enables runoff to be collected and stored;
- in a roofed building;
- in a temporary field heap.

## Requirements for temporary field heaps

If your land is in an NVZ, there are certain rules you must follow when choosing the location of and constructing a temporary field heap.

You must:

- Ensure field heaps are positioned at least 10 metres from any surface water (such as a river, pond or ditch) or land drain. They should be at least 30 metres away if the land slopes at 12 degrees or more (if you are not sure about the angle, you can download an app to your phone that can help measure this).
- Make sure the location of the field heap is not liable to being waterlogged or flooded.
- Position heaps at least 50 metres from a spring, well or borehole.
- Move the heaps at least every 12 months and leave a 2-year gap before returning to the same site.
- Keep a record of the location of field heap sites and the dates they were used.
- When creating a [risk map](#), record all of the low-risk areas that are suitable for a temporary field heap.

There are also rules regarding the temporary field heaps themselves. They must:

- be made from manure that is solid enough to be stacked in a freestanding heap;
- prevent free drainage from within the heap;
- be covered with a waterproof material if they contain poultry manure without bedding or litter;
- take up as little surface area as possible, while still supporting the weight of the heap.

## Silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil (SSAFO) storage requirements

If you construct new storage for slurry, reconstruct part of a storage facility or enlarge your current store, you must follow the SSAFO rules, which you can read more about on [GOV.UK](#).

For further help with the NVZ requirements, please contact the FAS helpline on 03000 200 301 or email [advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk).



# Farming Rules for Water: Rule 2 – storing organic manures

Since 2 April 2018, all farmers in England have had to comply with rules aimed at protecting water quality. These rules introduce an approach to regulating farm practices that, in time, might be rolled out to reduce other environmental impacts beyond water quality. There are eight rules (five about managing fertilisers and manures, and three on managing soil). This article covers Rule 2.

Rule 2 is based on the [storage of organic manures](#). It states that organic manures must not be stored on land:

- within 10 metres of inland freshwaters or coastal waters;
- within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole;
- where there is significant risk of pollution entering inland freshwaters or coastal waters.

It is important that you consider risk factors for runoff when deciding where to store manure on your land. When assessing pollution risks, you must take into account the risks of runoff and soil erosion from these factors:

- angle of slopes – in particular, if the angle is greater than 12 degrees (you can download an app to your phone to help measure this);
- amount of groundwater;
- distance to inland freshwaters, coastal waters, wetlands, springs, wells or boreholes;
- soil type and condition;
- presence and condition of land drains.

For further help with the Farming Rules for Water requirements, please contact the FAS helpline on 03000 200 301 or email [advice@farmingadvice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.org.uk).

## Water abstraction – dry weather management advice

*Following a wet October and the start of the winter storage abstraction season, farmers should be able to start refilling reservoirs in many catchments, subject to their licence conditions.*

For more information on how to make longer term changes to your licence to meet your business needs, including for drought and dry weather resilience, please visit [GOV.UK](#). The Environment Agency is experiencing a large backlog of abstraction licence applications, so it is encouraging applicants to apply as early as possible. If you are concerned about the timing on determination of a licence to help qualify for the Farming Investment Fund (e.g. for funding a reservoir), please make sure you clearly mark on the application form or covering letter that the application relates to the grant. The Environment Agency will then be in touch to discuss timescales.

You might also find it useful to see the Met Office's 3-monthly forecast [here](#), which is updated towards the end of each month.

# Avian influenza (bird flu) update

*The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has announced that there have been multiple findings of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in wild birds at sites across Great Britain and at premises in England, Wales, and Scotland. As the situation is rapidly changing, this article provides links to pages where you can find the most recent updates.*

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has said that avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds and the risk to the general public's health is very low. The Food Standards Agency has said that on the basis of the current scientific evidence, avian influenza poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

On 3 November 2021, the Chief Veterinary Officers from England, Scotland and Wales declared an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) across the whole of Great Britain to mitigate the risk of the disease spreading among poultry and captive birds. This means all bird keepers (whether they have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) are legally required to take a range of biosecurity precautions. Further details of the measures that apply in the AIPZ can be found in the [AIPZ declaration](#).

[Biosecurity guidance](#) and a [biosecurity self-assessment checklist](#) have been published by Defra to assist all bird keepers in instigating and maintaining good biosecurity which, together with further updates on the latest avian influenza situation, can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

Keepers can check where disease control zones are located and if they are in a zone on the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) [interactive map](#). Bird keepers must remain alert for any signs of disease, report suspected disease immediately and ensure they are maintaining good biosecurity on their premises. If you suspect any type of avian influenza in poultry or captive birds, you must report it immediately by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301. If you find dead wild waterfowl (such as swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds (such as gulls or birds of prey), you should report details to the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77).

Defra encourages all keepers to [register their poultry](#), even if only kept as pets, so the APHA can contact you during an outbreak. This is a legal requirement if you have 50 or more birds. The APHA also has a service that notifies subscribers if there is an outbreak of animal disease in Great Britain. To subscribe to disease alerts via text or email, please [click here](#).



# RABI launches Big Farming Survey results

*Described as a 'wake-up call' for the farming sector, the results from the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI) Big Farming Survey have revealed a stark picture of mental health and wellbeing in the farming community. In response, RABI is developing targeted services to help create a better future for farmers.*



At an event in Birmingham in October, RABI's Big Farming Survey results revealed that, despite the farming community facing significant mental and physical health challenges, 59% remain optimistic about the future of their farm businesses.

Launched in January 2021, in partnership with rural researchers at the University of Exeter, the survey received over 15,000 responses from farmers across England and Wales. It is the largest research project of its kind, helping RABI to build a comprehensive picture of the pressures and impacts that the agricultural community is facing – from personal and business perspectives.

In response to the findings, RABI has outlined five core themes informed by the hardest-hitting statistics:

1. 36% of the farming community are probably or possibly depressed.
2. Over one-half of women (58%) experience mild, moderate or severe anxiety.
3. An average of six factors cause stress across the farming community. The most commonly reported sources of stress are regulation, compliance and inspection, coronavirus (COVID-19), bad/unpredictable weather and loss of subsidies/future trade deals.

4. Over half (52%) of the farming community experience pain and discomfort, one in four have mobility problems and 21% have problems in undertaking usual tasks due to health issues.
5. 59% of respondents believe their business is viable over the next 5 years.



RABI corporate partnership manager, Suzy Deeley, highlights some of the positive outtakes within the data.

'This survey of a generation has revealed that, despite the many challenges facing our community, farming people continue to be incredibly resilient and this is something we should focus on. We know that farming people want to be heard, listened to and part of the solution to the challenges raised in the report. RABI will continue to work with our community to design services and establish practical tools that support farming people to move forwards positively.'

In response to the Big Farming Survey research, RABI will soon be launching pilots of three new support schemes. These include accredited, bespoke farming mental health first aid training; access to in-person mental health support; and further trials of RABI's Community Pillars initiative.

'There is a huge amount of work going on behind the scenes at RABI to initiate a targeted and appropriate response in partnership with key partner organisations, and we look forward to being able to share more on these developments soon. The introduction of the pilot schemes will be in addition to the long-standing, traditional support services that RABI is so well known for, and to complement the online wellbeing platform, @well, that we launched last year', Ms Deeley adds.

To find out how you can get involved in shaping farming support services, please email [partnerships@rabi.org.uk](mailto:partnerships@rabi.org.uk)

For farmer-focused, confidential advice and support, please visit [rabi.org.uk/kooth](https://www.rabi.org.uk/kooth) or call RABI's 24/7 freephone helpline on 0800 188 4444.



# Updates from the Future Farming blog and industry announcements

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) regularly adds updates to the [Future Farming blog](#). In this article, FAS provides links to some of the recent posts and to other recent industry announcements.

- Defra provided an update on progress on the Sustainable Farming Incentive pilot [here](#), including the results of the application process, what was learnt and what will happen next.

- On 16 November, Defra announced the launch of the Farming Investment Fund. This £27 million fund will provide grants to farmers, growers and foresters so they can invest in equipment, technology and infrastructure that will help improve productivity and the environment. More information is available [here](#).
- The Farming Innovation Programme is a new fund to support farmers, growers, foresters and other businesses to embrace innovative ways to maximise productivity and drive sustainability. It is open for applications and more information can be found [here](#).

- Defra will be providing more information on its environmental land management schemes shortly, including information on the Sustainable Farming Incentive, which launches next year. Information will be posted on the [Future Farming blog](#), so remember to sign up to receive updates.
- Defra and the Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, are seeking your views on proposals for a reformed Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) with the aim of delivering greater accountability and value for money for farmers across the UK. The consultation launched on 17 November and can be found [here](#).

## Industry announcements

- On 28 October, the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2021 entitlement rates were announced [here](#).
- Earlier in November, the Environment Act was passed in UK law. This legislation aims to protect and enhance our environment. You can read a summary about it [here](#). The full detail of the legislation is available [here](#).

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Alternatively, please email [bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto:bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk) with 'Register for newsletter' in the subject line.

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.farmingadvice.service.org.uk/events/privacy/](https://www.farmingadvice.service.org.uk/events/privacy/)