

The logo for Farming Advice Service, featuring the words "Farming" and "Advice Service" stacked vertically in a green, serif font, enclosed within a white speech bubble shape that points downwards.

Farming
Advice Service

Welcome to the Farming Advice Service newsletter

Thank you for continuing to subscribe to our monthly newsletter. We hope you find the content useful 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

farmingadvice.org.uk

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Key dates

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

1 February	For any land located in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), from this date 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 if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity restrictions for applying these manures. This is also subject to compliance with the Farming Rules for Water and there is agronomic justification. (SMR* 1)
8 February	FAS webinar: Future support schemes (15:30-16:30). Delivered by Jonathan Baker (Deputy Director of the Future Farming and Countryside Programme team at Defra) and Alice De Soer (Director/adviser at Rural Response Ltd). They will provide an update on the offers available to farmers and answer your questions. Please click here to register for the event.
16 February	FAS webinar: Steps to reduce ammonia emissions on farms (19:00-20:00). John Morgan of Creedy Associates is a specialist in the practical use of organic manures within agriculture. In this webinar he will provide an overview of ammonia emissions in agriculture and offer practical information and suggestions on how farmers can reduce their ammonia emissions on farms. Please click here to register for the event.
23 February	FAS webinar: Livestock movements and identification (10:00-11:00). Ian Cairns is a sheep farmer and independent adviser with more than 10 years' experience in delivering events and advice on livestock movements and identification. Ian will cover the requirements for livestock movements and ID and make reference to inspection failings, highlighting the common areas of non-compliance and what to do to avoid these. Please click here to register for the event.
28 February	For any land located in an NVZ, this date is the end for quantity restrictions for applying organic manures with a high, readily available nitrogen content. This is subject to compliance with the Farming Rules for Water and there is agronomic justification. (SMR 1)

In case you missed them...

1 January	You must have started following the rules in the cross compliance 2022 guide from this date. The Basic Payment Scheme 2022 year started.
1 January	For any land located in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), from this date you could 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 if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity restrictions for applying these manures. This is also subject to compliance with the Farming Rules for Water and there is agronomic justification. (SMR 1)
1 January	For any land located in an NVZ, this was the beginning of the year for assessing the annual amount of livestock manure applied to your land. (SMR 1)
16 January	For any land located in an NYZ, this was the date from which you could apply manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to grassland and tillage land if conditions are suitable. This is subject to compliance with the Farming Rules for Water and there is agronomic justification. (SMR 1)

* SMR = Statutory Management Requirement

For more details about the information provided in the key dates table, please visit the [Guide to cross compliance in England 2022](#) page 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. Our helpline team aims to respond to all telephone and email enquiries within one working day.

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

Have your say on FAS services

FAS would like to hear your views on the services we provide and would be very grateful if you could spare a few moments to **complete this survey**.

Your individual responses to the survey will be anonymous and will not be shared. The findings from this survey will be used to understand how the service is being used and how to make sure the service is meeting your needs.



Updates from the Future Farming blog and industry announcements

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

- On 14 January, [Defra announced an extension](#) for farmers to apply for free business advice as part of the Future Farming Resilience Fund.
- Details of Defra's [review of the Countryside Stewardship payment rates were recently published on GOV.UK](#). These rates apply to all Countryside Stewardship agreements from 1 January 2022.
- The [full announcement on Local Nature Recovery](#), including what Defra will pay for – proposed payment rates will follow later in the year – eligibility and timings.
- The [full announcement on Landscape Recovery](#), including eligibility and information on the project development phase and project implementation phase. Note: Defra will not be publishing proposed payment rates for Landscape Recovery, but instead will work with projects to negotiate bespoke payment agreements.
- The [full announcement on the Sustainable Farming Incentive](#), including eligibility and the standards which detail what Defra will pay for and payment rates.
- The Environment Secretary George Eustice's speech from the Oxford Farming Conference that details the plans for the new schemes. You can [watch the video](#) or [read the transcript](#).
- On 19 January, Defra opened applications for the Improving Farm Productivity theme of the Farming Transformation Fund. [Read the guidance on how to apply on GOV.UK](#).

Farming Advice Service

Webinar programme

The Farming Advice Service (FAS) invites you to attend a series of free webinars. Each online event will have a different theme and will run for an hour, including the opportunity to put questions to our expert speakers. If you are not able to make any of the live broadcasts, recordings will be available on the [FAS website](#).

Booking is essential. To reserve your place, please click on the relevant link and complete the booking form. You will need to do this for each session that you wish to attend. BASIS points will be available. You will receive an email with joining instructions. If this does not come through, please check your spam or junk folder.

Future support schemes – what's coming next?

This webinar will be presented by **Jonathan Baker**, Deputy Director of the Future Farming and Countryside Programme team at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and **Alice De Soer**, Director/adviser at Rural Response Ltd. It follows on from the two webinars FAS delivered last year on the Agricultural Transition Plan. The presenters will provide an update on the offers available to farmers and answer questions.



- **Tuesday 8 February, 15:30 to 16:30.**
Please [click here to register for the event](#).

Steps to reduce ammonia emissions on farms

John Morgan of Creedy Associates is a specialist in the practical use of organic manures within agriculture. In this webinar he will provide an overview of ammonia emissions in agriculture and offer practical information and suggestions on how farmers can reduce their ammonia emissions. John says: "Ammonia is a nitrogen gas and retaining this nitrogen, for farm use, via considered storage and application, makes financial as well as environmental sense."



- **Wednesday 16 February, 19:00 to 20:00.**
Please [click here to register for the event](#).

Livestock movements and identification

Ian Cairns is a sheep farmer and independent adviser with more than 10 years' experience in delivering events and advice on livestock movements and identification. This is an area with high non-compliance rates in inspections, and in this webinar Ian will cover the requirements for livestock movements and ID and make reference to inspection failings. He will highlight the common areas on non-compliance and what to do to avoid these.



- **Wednesday 23 February, 10:00 to 11:00.**
Please [click here to register for the event](#).

Update on the environmental land management schemes

The environmental land management schemes consist of the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery. On 6 January, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced more information on Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery. In this article we provide a summary of the schemes and links to further information.

Sustainable Farming Incentive

This focuses on making agricultural activities more sustainable. It will pay for actions that can be taken across the whole farmed landscape in order to have the most impact. This includes reducing inorganic fertiliser and pesticide use, taking care of soils and improving farmland biodiversity, water quality, air quality and carbon sequestration.

The application window will open this year, it will be timed to minimise disruption with BPS claims and to allow people to make choices alongside other schemes such as Countryside Stewardship. You can [read the full announcement on the Sustainable Farming Incentive on GOV.UK](#).

Local Nature Recovery

This scheme will be the successor to Countryside Stewardship and is planned to be rolled out by the end of 2024. It will pay for locally targeted actions that aim to benefit nature in the farmed landscape and the wider countryside. This could

include managing and creating habitats and adding trees to fields or hedgerows.

This scheme will provide a range of options (much like Countryside Stewardship), so that farmers can choose the right combination for their setting and preferences. It will complement the Sustainable Farming Incentive and farmers will be able to enter into both schemes, provided the actions are compatible and Defra is not paying for the same actions twice.

Defra will publish more details on the full list of options later this year, alongside more details on scheme rules and proposed payment rates. You can [read the full announcement on Local Nature Recovery on GOV.UK](#).

Landscape Recovery

This will pay landowners or managers who want to take a more radical and large-scale approach to producing environmental and climate outcomes through land use change and habitat and ecosystem restoration. Landscape

Recovery is open to any individuals or groups who want to come together to deliver large (500-5000ha) scale projects.

Defra is planning to open applications for Landscape Recovery pilot projects in at least 2 rounds over the next 2 years. Defra will launch the application process for the first round of up to 15 Landscape Recovery pilot projects soon. You can [read the full announcement on Landscape Recovery on GOV.UK](#).

What does this mean for Countryside Stewardship?

While the new schemes are rolling out, existing schemes will continue to be available for some time, with the last applications for new Countryside Stewardship agreements in 2023, to start in 2024. Then, from 2025, it will only be possible to enter into new agreements through the new environmental land management schemes.

Key links for more information:

- Defra's blog post [summarising the three environmental land management schemes](#), including timings and information on Countryside Stewardship.
- Defra's blog post summarising [Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery](#).
- The [full announcement on Local Nature Recovery](#), including what Defra will pay for (proposed payment rates will follow later in the year), eligibility and timings.
- The [full announcement on Landscape Recovery](#) including eligibility and information on the project development phase and project implementation phase. Note: Defra will not be publishing proposed payment rates for Landscape Recovery, but instead will work with projects to negotiate bespoke payment agreements.
- The [full announcement on the Sustainable Farming Incentive](#), including eligibility and the standards which detail what Defra will pay for and payment rates.
- The Environment Secretary, George Eustice's speech from the Oxford Farming Conference which details the plans for the new schemes. You can [watch the video](#), or [read the transcript](#).
- Defra's [Farming is Changing booklet](#), which details the detail and timeline for new schemes.





Update on the Farming Investment Fund

On 19 January, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) opened applications for the [Improving Farm Productivity theme](#) that is part of the Farming Transformation Fund (the second strand of the [Farming Investment Fund](#)). This article provides a summary of the announcement with links to more information.

The application process consists of two steps, an [online eligibility checker](#) and a subsequent invitation to apply.

The [online eligibility checker](#) will be open until 16 March 2022, with those who are invited to make full applications having until 14 September 2022 to apply. If planning permission is then required for the project to proceed, this will need to be in place by 31 December 2022.

The theme, worth £25 million in total, is open to farmers, growers and related contractors with the minimum grant of £35,000. The maximum grant available under this theme is £500,000 per applicant.

Grants awarded through Improving Farm Productivity will pay for capital items to improve farm and horticulture productivity through:

- the use of robotic or autonomous equipment and systems to aid crop and livestock production;
- the installation of slurry acidification equipment (to improve nutrient management and reduce ammonia emissions).

If you are interested in applying, please read the [Improving Farm Productivity grant manual](#) to see a full list of items that are eligible for the scheme to help you consider your options.

Please read the latest [blog post](#) and [press release](#) for more information about the Improving Farm Productivity theme.

Here is a quick recap on the Farming Investment Fund:

- The Farming Investment Fund offers funding for equipment, technology and infrastructure that improves farm productivity and benefits the environment.
- This fund provides grants to farmers, foresters and growers (including contractors to these sectors), helping them to focus on more efficient production methods that will reduce resource costs, improve yields and give them a better return. It will also support farmers who want to process and add value to their existing products, create new products or sell their produce directly to consumers.
- The Farming Investment Fund offers funding for smaller investments through The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund and, for larger investments through The Farming Transformation Fund.
- The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund and the first theme of the Farming Transformation Fund, Water Management, launched in November 2021 and the application windows closed earlier this month.



An introduction to agroforestry

Agroforestry is a land use system that combines trees or shrubs with livestock or crop production on the same piece of land. This article provides more detail on the types of agroforestry and the environmental benefits.

Agroforestry can provide a source of income from agricultural (livestock or crops) and tree-generated products (sawlogs, fuelwood, fruit and nuts), making it a great way to get the benefits of more trees on your farm without diminishing your farming income or production. This diversity will also help reduce the risk of fluctuating agricultural markets and help to stimulate and build resilience into your rural business.

What is the Government's view of agroforestry?

Agroforestry supports several goals in the Government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#) and [Clean Growth Strategy](#) by providing wider ecosystem services, including soil conservation, carbon capture, improved livestock welfare and increased biodiversity and habitat creation.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) understands the challenges involved in agriculture, which is why it is looking at practical, sustainable solutions such as agroforestry that will help to reduce emissions on farms while at the same time allowing farmers to produce food, sequester carbon and provide shade and shelter to their crops or livestock. Defra will encourage and support increased agroforestry through environmental land management schemes, with an indicative date of 2024 for introducing an agroforestry standard to the Sustainable Farming Incentive. In the meantime, there are [woodland creation grants listed on GOV.UK](#), such as the England Woodland Creation Offer that can support a range of woodlands, including shelter belts and riparian buffers with a minimum width of 10 metres.

What types of agroforestry systems are suited to the UK?

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) [suggests four types of agroforestry](#) systems that could help your business and that are compatible with the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) rules:

1. **Silvoarable (trees and crops).** Trees are typically planted in rows with wide spacings and intercropped with a cereal or bioenergy crop.
2. **Silvopasture (trees and livestock).** Trees that are combined with forage grassland and livestock production.
3. **Riparian buffer strips.** Trees that are planted between agricultural land and watercourses such as streams, rivers and lakes to act as buffers to protect water quality.
4. **Windbreak/shelterbelt systems.** Trees that are planted in a linear format on the edge of a field to reduce wind speed, protect crops and livestock and reduce erosion.



What are the benefits of agroforestry for your farm?

Agroforestry has a host of benefits that can help on-farm productivity and generate income:

- Food production through growing fruit and nut trees;
- Timber production (for example, for furniture, building or energy);
- Supports effective nutrient management and integrated pest management;
- Improved animal welfare and productivity by providing shelter, fodder and windbreaks to reduce impact of adverse weather.

In addition to these benefits, agroforestry provides environmental benefits. For example, agroforestry systems can play a key role in mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Agroforestry increases carbon sequestration in the trees and in the soil. The [Committee on Climate Change estimates](#) that 10% of UK farmland planted with agroforestry and hedges could deliver savings of 6 MtCO₂e annually by 2050.



Other environmental benefits of agroforestry include:

- Habitat creation that supports biodiversity, for example pollinators;
- Benefits to soil such as improved soil health, reduction in erosion, surface run-off, leaching, improving resilience to droughts and floods.
- Supporting functions such as oxygen production and nutrient cycling.

As a result, integrating agroforestry on your farm, can lead to a number of benefits for the environment and your business.

More information on agroforestry

- [Agroforestry and the Basic Payment Scheme](#)
- [Soil Association – Agroforestry Handbook](#)
- [Woodland Trust: Agroforestry in England – benefits, barriers and opportunities](#)
- [Organic Research Centre: agroforestry](#)
- [UK Wood Pasture & Parkland Network](#)
- [AFINET – Agroforestry Innovation Networks](#)

Supporting farmers to become resilient

Farming is a unique industry and faces a unique set of challenges. Coronavirus (COVID-19), extreme weather events and the forthcoming changes to agricultural support as a result of the UK leaving the EU have made the past two years particularly difficult. These issues can cause high levels of stress or anxiety for farmers and individuals within the agricultural sector and may result in many farmers and land managers in England needing to adapt their business models and carefully consider options for the future. In this article, FAS provides information on the support available to help build business and personal resilience for members of the farming community.



RABI

The [Royal Agricultural Benevolence Institution](#) (RABI) is a charity providing local support to the farming community across England and Wales. In addition to the practical care and financial support RABI has long been known for, it also provides mental wellbeing support. This support includes a free, anonymous [online mental wellbeing platform accessible through the RABI website](#), as well as free in-person mental health counselling and farming-focused accredited/certified mental health training which launched in January 2022. Support is available via RABI's freephone 24/7 helpline (0800 188 4444) or by emailing help@rabi.org.uk.

In 2021, RABI conducted the [Big Farming Survey](#), which shone a spotlight on the importance of personal resilience and wellbeing. They found that 36% of the farming community are probably or possibly depressed, 58% of women in agriculture experience some form of anxiety, 52% of the farming community have physical health issues causing them pain and discomfort, with 21% struggling to undertake their usual tasks due to poor health.

These are not just statistics; these are real people. RABI is committed to supporting farming people and providing services that help to build resilience.

RABI
helping farming people

The Farming Community Network

The [Farming Community Network](#) (FCN) is a voluntary organisation and charity that supports farmers and families within the farming community through difficult times. It provides pastoral and practical support for those seeking help for personal or business reasons, including financial difficulties, animal disease, mental health and family disputes. The organisation has more than 400 volunteers across England and Wales, many of whom have an agricultural background or close links to farming, so they understand first-hand the issues that farmers face on a daily basis.

The charity runs a helpline that you can call to discuss issues about your farm, business, family or health. Volunteers listen, empathise and can connect you with other forms of support available. This is freely available from 7am to 11pm every day. The helpline number is 03000 111 999.

The FCN also runs the [FarmWell](#) platform. This is a separate website that offers extremely practical information on business and personal resilience. It collates the wealth of information available on the internet in one place, making it easier for farmers who are not 'tech savvy' to find what they need.

FCN
THE FARMING
COMMUNITY
NETWORK

Supporting farmers to become resilient



National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) and Rural+

Being part of the farming community as a young person can be especially difficult. Stressors include lack of transport as well as social isolation from friends and neighbours. To combat this, the [National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs](#) (NFYFC) has launched [Rural+](#), which offers guidance on recognising and understanding stress and anxiety, often the first step towards improvements.

NFYFC has created an [online training module called Rural+ Curve](#), which is delivered by other farmers and gives guidance on how to manage your mental health. Online support can be particularly useful if you live in an isolated area or COVID-19 restrictions mean you can't travel, but face to face contact is important. [Read more information on Rural+ Curve and watch videos from those delivering the training.](#)

There are more than 580 Young Farmers' Clubs across the country for young farmers and people who enjoy rural life. [Read more on how to become a member.](#)



You Are Not Alone

[You Are Not Alone](#) (YANA) is a service specifically for those involved in farming or rural businesses who are affected by stress or depression. Telephone (0300 323 0400) and email (helpline@yanahelp.org) helplines are offered. The website can help you make a plan of action for yourself or get advice on how to help someone you know who is struggling with depression or anxiety.

YANA offers specific help for those involved with farming or other rural businesses in Norfolk, Suffolk and Worcestershire. This includes funding up to six counselling sessions. Please call the YANA helpline for more information.



The Prince's Countryside Fund national directory of farm and rural support groups

In 2020, YANA handed over the management of the directory of national and regional rural support organisations to the Prince's Countryside Fund. This directory of national and regional rural support organisations will help to signpost the sources of help and advice for those who need assistance with the challenges of rural work and life.

[Read or download the directory.](#)



Future Farming Resilience Fund

The [Future Farming Resilience Fund](#) (FFRF) will help improve the resilience of your business. It is being funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and is designed to provide tailored business support to farmers and land managers during the early years of the agricultural transition period.

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. Defra has recently extended the current phase of the support. The end date varies between organisations providing advice and [can be checked on GOV.UK](#). Free support is available to any farmer or land manager currently in receipt of Direct Payments. The final phase of the project is being finalised but is expected to launch later in 2022 and run until March 2025.

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](#). 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](#).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in agriculture

What you are required to do to comply with the EIA (Agriculture) regulations is covered by cross compliance rules under Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) 6: Maintenance of soil organic matter. They are also standalone regulations. In this article, FAS provides an overview of EIA with links to further information.

The [EIA \(Agriculture\) Regulations 2017 \(as amended\)](#) protect rural land in England, which is semi-natural or uncultivated, from changes in agricultural activities to increase productivity that might cause damage, and/or physically restructuring a holding, for example by changing field boundaries, or adding, removing or redistributing earth or other materials.

Semi-natural land includes [priority habitats](#), [priority species](#), heritage or archaeological features, or protected landscapes. It's usually land that has not been intensively farmed, such as unimproved grassland or lowland heath.

Uncultivated land is land that has not been cultivated in the past 15 years by physical means (e.g. ploughing or an activity that breaks the soil surface) or chemical means (e.g. adding fertiliser or soil improvers).

When to get permission to change the use of rural land

Natural England must decide if your proposal to change the use of semi-natural or uncultivated rural land or the restructuring of a holding is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. You must [apply for this decision](#), known as an 'EIA screening decision', before you change the use of rural land including:

- increasing productivity of land for agriculture.
- restoring semi-natural grassland or semi-natural heathland.
- restructuring rural land holdings.

[Please visit GOV.UK for more details.](#)

Applying for a screening decision

An Environmental Screening Report template compiled by Natural England is [available on GOV.UK](#). This will guide you through your application, ensuring that you have included the appropriate information, and accompanies the application form.

There is also a standardised consultation letter to issue to relevant consultees for your application, developed in conjunction with the relevant archaeological consultees and Local Environmental Record Centres. Finally, Natural England also provides a checklist and written guidance that can be used to ensure all the required information has been provided. Complete applications speed up the decision process as they are less likely to be rejected.

These documents and additional advice can be obtained from the EIA team at Natural England. They can be contacted on 0800 028 2140 or eia.england@naturalengland.org.uk.

Grassland derogations in 2022

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has confirmed that grassland derogations for livestock manure in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) will be offered in England in 2022.

Applications can be made from 1 February to 28 February by contacting the Environment Agency. Defra recognise this is a short application window and as such late applications will be considered on a case by case basis. Farmers are urged to contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) as soon as possible prior to the 28 February to guarantee that their derogation application will be processed.

The Environment Agency will be contacting those farmers, via email and/or telephone, who have expressed an interest in applying for a grassland derogation to make them aware of this information.

Applications should be made on the basis of the [Check for Drinking Water Safeguard Zones and NVZs map](#). The relevant GOV.UK pages will also be updated in due course. For more information on grassland derogations for livestock manure in NVZs, please visit [GOV.UK](#)



Water abstraction reminders

This article provides links to the latest river flow data and an overview on reviewing and managing your abstraction licence.

River flows, refilling reservoirs and irrigation prospects

The latest information on river flows at sites that the Environment Agency monitors can be found on [GOV.UK](#). When river flows are normal or higher, please take every possible opportunity to top up winter storage reservoirs ready for the start of the irrigation season.

The Environment Agency will be releasing its initial irrigation prospects at the end of February, which will be published on the [FAS Technical Articles page](#).

Reviewing your abstraction licence needs

Farmers should review their abstraction licence needs over the winter to be ready for the summer. 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 webpage contains contact details if you have any questions regarding your abstraction licence.

Please take every possible opportunity to refill winter storage reservoirs over the remaining winter abstraction period. The Environment Agency is currently 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 a water resources funding grant (e.g. 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.

Managing your water abstraction licence online

Since the introduction of the Water Resources Licensing Service in 2018, the Environment Agency has seen a significant increase in the submission of online abstraction returns. Submitting returns online is easier for abstractors and more environmentally friendly, it also allows abstractors (or their agents) to view their licence information. [Find out how to register for the service on GOV.UK](#), The Environment Agency has been working behind the scenes to maintain this feature and is looking at ways to get more returns in ahead of the 28-day deadline, particularly for abstractors with two-part tariff arrangements so that they can benefit from reduced charges.

The Environment Agency is also preparing to email water abstraction alerts to abstractors from March 2022. These more timely alerts will help many abstractors make better use of water when it is available and improve protection of water rights and the environment when it is not. Not all abstractors will receive email alerts from March, but they are an important step in helping abstractors to adapt to river and groundwater levels as the climate changes. We will provide more information on the water abstraction alerts in the spring.

Sign up to FAS services



Get the latest updates by following FAS on Twitter

Follow us on [@DefraFAS](https://twitter.com/DefraFAS) for up-to-the-minute updates on publications, events and industry information.



Subscribe to the free FAS Newsletter

If you don't already receive the FREE monthly FAS newsletter, please visit farmingadvice.service.org.uk and enter your email address into the newsletter sign up box.

Alternatively, please email 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/