



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



March 2022 – Issue 73

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Key dates

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

31 March	If you hold a water abstraction licence, expect to receive your annual bill (or first part-charge if you hold a two-part tariff agreement) for the forthcoming financial year. (GAEC* 2)
1 April	You must not burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land, other than in upland areas, from this date. (GAEC 6)
1 April	If you hold a winter or all-year-round water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction outside the period April to October), the Environment Agency will make actual abstraction return forms available to you from 1 April. You then have 28 days to send your readings to the Environment Agency. (GAEC 2)
16 April	You must not burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium in upland areas from this date. The burning season is from 1 October to 15 April for upland areas and from 1 November to 31 March for land not within an upland area. (GAEC 6)
30 April	For any land located in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), you must have recorded the number of 'specified' livestock kept on your farm during the previous calendar year and calculated the amount of nitrogen they produced by this date. You must also record the number and type of livestock in a building or hardstanding during the previous storage period. (SMR** 1)
1 May	You must not carry out hedge or tree coppicing or hedge laying from this date. (GAEC 7a and GAEC 7c)
16 May	The deadline for Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2022 applications without penalty is midnight on 16 May (including young and new farmer applications). This is also the deadline to transfer entitlements and to have the land at your disposal. (GOV.UK)
16 May	The deadline for Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship revenue claims without penalty is midnight on 16 May. This is also the deadline to transfer entitlements and to have the land at your disposal. (GOV.UK)

In case you missed them...

28 February	For any land located in an NVZ, this date was 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)
1 March	You could not cut or trim hedges or trees from this date, but you can carry out hedge and tree coppicing and hedge laying until 30 April. Fruit and nut trees in orchards, or trees acting as windbreaks in orchards, vineyards, hop yards or hop gardens, are not included in the ban. (GAEC 7a and GAEC 7c)
15 March	Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2022 application window opened. (BPS 2022)
15 March	Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship annual revenue claims opened. (GOV.UK)

* GAEC = Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition

** 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](#) and [Rural Payments Agency key dates 2022](#) pages of GOV.UK.

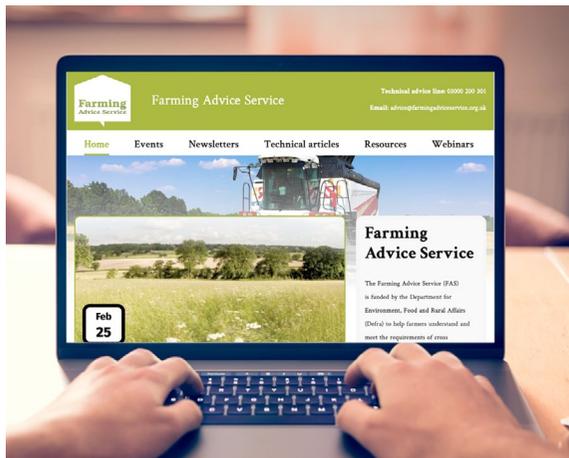
How can we help you?

Free and confidential advice

The Farming Advice Service (FAS) is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). We provide **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.

We update 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. Our newsletter also provides articles on topics that are complementary to cross compliance, such as practices to benefit the wider environment and wellbeing support.

[Our website](#) hosts our previous newsletters, technical articles and webinars that cover topics in more detail.



Getting in contact with the advice line

Farmers requiring telephone advice 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.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**; we do not disclose any personal or individual information, or data obtained during advisory activities.

Have your say on FAS services

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

Your individual responses will be anonymous and will not be shared. The findings from the survey will be used to assess the quality of the service and ensure it is meeting your needs.

Farming Advice Service

Watch our webinar recordings and listen to our podcasts

In case you missed our webinar sessions in January and February, you can watch the recordings by clicking on the links below:

- [Cross compliance update for 2022](#)
- [Future support schemes](#)
- [Steps to reduce ammonia emissions on farms](#)
- [Livestock movements and identification](#)

We have also recorded podcasts where we interviewed expert speakers on a range of topics and you can listen to these by clicking on the links below:

- [Cross compliance with Andrew Wells](#)
- [Supporting farmers through resilience with Suzy Deeley](#)
- [Reducing ammonia emissions on farm with John Morgan](#)
- [Livestock movements and identification with Ian Cairns](#)

Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2022 applications

You can apply for BPS 2022 until midnight on Monday 16 May. This includes young and new farmer applications. You are encouraged to apply as soon as possible to give you enough time. You can still submit an application until midnight on Friday 10 June, but penalties will apply for any submitted after 16 May.

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) published the [BPS rules for 2022 on 15 March on GOV.UK](#). This provides information on what you need to complete your application.

Here are some top tips from the RPA to make the BPS application process as smooth as possible:

- 1 Check all personal details in the [Rural Payments service](#) now to ensure they are correct and up to date.
- 2 Make sure that you check your land and the entitlements that are held against the business claiming BPS are correct. Pay particular attention to any previously leased in entitlements to ensure they are in the right control for 2022.

- 3 If you apply online, check the 'Apply less BPS area' screens to make sure that any changes to activated areas have been captured.
- 4 Remember to ensure supporting documents are posted (or emailed where allowed) to arrive at RPA in good time (put your Single Business Identifier (SBI) on every page), having also retained a copy of what is sent:
 - Continuation sheets/hemp labels
 - Young farmer payment
 - Any paper RLE1 form and supporting maps
- 5 And, most importantly, apply for BPS 2022 as soon as possible. This gives you and the RPA more time to deal with any problems or issues that may arise and will ultimately avoid any subsequent difficulties with payments.

The [Rural Payments Agency blog](#) includes news and updates on the Rural Payments system, and on rural grants and payments including the Basic Payment Scheme and Rural Development Programme schemes. You can [subscribe to the RPA blog here](#).

The RPA has also recently launched the first in a [new podcast](#) series that will offer support and guidance to farmers, landowners and rural communities navigating agricultural transition. Listen on [Apple](#) and [Spotify](#) or through [Buzzsprout](#). If you would like RPA to cover a particular topic with its subject experts, email External.Affairs@rpa.gov.uk.



Provide your insight on practices to reduce ammonia emissions

If you are a farmer, land manager or contractor who uses slurry or manure, [we invite you to take part in this survey](#) which explores the benefits and challenges to farmers of adopting practices that reduce ammonia emissions on farms. The survey is anonymous, and you are not required to provide any identifying information unless you choose to do so.

The survey is being delivered by Ricardo Energy and Environment and the findings will provide information for a wider project undertaken by the National Institute for Health Research Public Health Research (PHR) programme researching the impacts of ammonia on human health and the environment. Ammonia emissions in agriculture come from producing, storing and spreading manures and

slurries. Farm practices to limit the loss of ammonia to the air can benefit farm performance (by retaining useful nutrients), the environment and public health. If you have any questions, please contact Aim-Health@ricardo.com. FAS recently delivered a webinar on steps to reduce ammonia emissions on farms [which you can watch here](#). There is also an [article which you can read here](#).



Public rights of way – a reminder of the requirements

Many farmers will have land with public rights of way (PROW) that fall into the following categories:

- footpaths.
- bridleways.
- restricted byways.
- byways open to all traffic (BOATs).

If you own or occupy agricultural land with a PROW, please remember there are several rules you need to be aware of. This article details a few, and the [full guidance is available on GOV.UK](#). See also the recently updated [advice for land managers on the Countryside Code](#) with information on how to help visitors to PROWs behave appropriately.

If you are a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claimant, you must comply with these cross compliance requirements or you could receive a reduction in your payments.

Please keep PROWs on your land clear of obstructions

It is important for you to keep routes visible and clear of obstructions – such as fences, encroaching crops (other than grass) and barbed wire. This also includes making sure that vegetation does not encroach on to the route from the sides or above. Obstructing a PROW intentionally is a criminal offence and the highway authority has the legal power to demand that you remove any obstructions.



Check the guidance before replacing a stile or gate

Stiles and gates must be maintained so they are safe and easy to use. You can claim 25% (or sometimes more) from the highway authority for replacement work. Some authorities provide materials, while others may carry out the work themselves.

Where a stile needs replacing, always consult the highway authority first to agree if this should be replaced with a gap or a gate. If you are considering adding a new structure on a PROW, you must seek permission from the highway authority. Unauthorised structures will be classed as obstructions and may be removed by the highway authority at your expense.



Public rights of way – a reminder of the requirements

Stay up to date with restrictions on livestock and agriculture

Some animals are considered potentially dangerous to be kept on land that is crossed by a PROW. For example, you should carefully consider the temperament of a bull before putting them in a field with public access. For more information, [please visit the HSE website](#).



Pesticide use on a PROW

When applying pesticides, please ensure that you refer to HSE [Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products](#) before undertaking any work.

If you need to spray land crossed by a PROW, use pesticides approved for this use and follow the product instructions. If members of the public are using the PROW, spraying must be stopped.

Byways and field-edge paths

You must not cultivate (such as plough, or apply pesticides or fertiliser) any BOATs or restricted byways. The same applies to footpaths or bridleways that follow a field edge. Some PROWs may have a recorded legal width which must be adhered to. This can be checked on the definitive statement that accompanies the definitive map for PROWs

held by your local highways authority. Where it is not recorded, the following standard widths will apply:

- 1.5 metres for a field-edge footpath.
- 3 metres for a field-edge bridleway, BOAT or restricted byway.

Reinstate ploughed cross-field PROWs

Cultivating a cross-field footpath or bridleway should be avoided. If cultivation is necessary, you must make sure they remain visible on the ground, either to the legal recorded width, or, if this is not recorded, to a minimum width of one metre for a footpath, and two metres for a bridleway. They should be reasonable to use 14 days after the first cultivation. After this 14 days, if any further cultivation is required, the PROW should be indicated and reasonable to use after 24 hours.

Find out how to create, close, upgrade, downgrade or re-route a PROW

Highway authorities have certain powers to make changes to the PROW network in their areas.

You can agree to create a new PROW or apply to your highway authority to make an order extinguishing, diverting, upgrading or downgrading a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway in some circumstances. More information can be obtained from the rights of way section of your highway authority. [More information about making changes to the legal status of a PROW](#).



Farm woodlands – the benefits

Woodlands are precious features of the English agricultural landscape and expanding tree cover around your farm can provide far-reaching financial and environmental benefits for your business.

What are the main benefits for my farm?

- **Generate income.** You can grow marketable timber, harvesting wood fuel through regular management. Coppicing can produce products such as wood chippings (including for biomass heating) and temporary fencing. Commercial woodlands are subject to a range of tax reliefs.
- **Protect livestock.** Trees provide animal welfare benefits through the shade and shelter they provide for livestock. Examples of this are lower lamb mortality rates and improved live weight gain in cows.
- **Manage soil and nutrient losses.** Planting woodland between the field edge and a river can reduce sediment run-off by 90-100%, nutrient losses by 20-80%, and reduce pesticide loss in run-off by 60-100%.
- **Capture carbon and offset emissions.** Registering with the [Woodland Carbon Code](#) enables you to sell Woodland Carbon Units (WCUs) for every tonne of CO₂ sequestered by growing trees. Private buyers who want to offset their carbon emissions will purchase your WCUs, enabling you to open up a new revenue stream in your business. With the Woodland Carbon Guarantee, the Government promises to buy carbon credits from woodland creation if the market does not offer a higher price.
- **Reduce erosion.** Planting trees along rivers helps to stabilise riverbanks and prevent landslips.

- **Cut farm pollution.** Planting woodland shelterbelts around your farm lowers windspeed and can reduce spray drift up to 90%.
- **Create natural flood management and improve water quality.** Woodland in the right place helps slow run-off from your land as well as helping to reduce water pollution in our streams, rivers and lakes.
- **Boost biodiversity.** Woodlands are a haven for a diverse range of species, especially when connected to encourage wildlife corridors. Trees also provide an alternative source of food for pollinators.
- **Increase productivity.** Combining trees with crops and livestock can improve soil health that could lead to more sustainable yields.
- **Increase the capital value of your farm.** Depending on your location and land use model, woodland can enhance your land's capital value.

How will the Government support me?

With the [England Woodland Creation Offer](#) you could get more than £10,000 for every hectare of new woodland you plant. With expert support on hand, woodland creation can help you diversify, generate reliable revenue streams and deliver environmental benefits that support your wider land management goals. [To find out more visit GOV.UK.](#)





Nitrate Vulnerable Zones – remember, these records should be in place by 30 April

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. They account for approximately 55% of agricultural land in England. Record keeping is an important part of the NVZ rules. This article provides a reminder of the livestock and grassland records that you should have in place by 30 April each year.

Deadline reminders

Returns if you were granted an NVZ grassland derogation

If you held an NVZ [grassland derogation](#) for 2021, you are required to submit a [fertiliser account](#) to the Environment

Agency by 30 April 2022. This will provide details of your farming practices and fertiliser use for the period 1 January to 31 December, including:

- the total agricultural area in hectares of the derogated holding.
- the number and category of livestock kept on your farm.
- the amount and type of livestock manure imported to or exported from your farm.
- the weight (tonnes) and nitrogen content of all manufactured nitrogen fertiliser stocks kept on, imported to or exported from your farm.

[Download the Defra standard value spreadsheet](#) with tables to help with these records. You can submit your records electronically by email (regaware@environment-agency.gov.uk) or by post.

For more information, please visit [GOV.UK](#).

Livestock manure nitrogen farm limit

You must complete a calculation to show you have kept within the livestock manure nitrogen (N) farm limit for the previous calendar year by 30 April. The N content of livestock manure that can be applied on your holding (directly by grazing livestock or by spreading) is limited to 170kg/ha/calendar year (unless you hold a grassland derogation).

The limit applies as an average across your holding. It is recommended that you plan a year ahead to make

sure you do not exceed this limit. You must use standard values to work out how much nitrogen is produced by the livestock on your farm or brought on to your farm. These standard values can be found in the '[blank field records and standard values tables](#)' spreadsheet.

Livestock records

You must record, also, the following information for the previous calendar year by 30 April:

- the area of your holding in hectares.
- the number and type of livestock kept on your farm during the previous year, with the number of days each animal spent on the holding.
- a calculation of the amount of nitrogen produced by these animals and volume of manure produced during the storage period. The storage period for pigs and poultry is from 1 October

to 1 April (inclusive) and for cattle, sheep, goats, deer and horses, it is from 1 October to 1 March (inclusive)

- any imports/exports of livestock manure.
- a copy of your sampling and analysis of manures and/or output from software (for example, ENCASH).
- the dates and locations of any field sites used for storing manure.

You must keep these records for at least five years

Grassland management

By 30 April, you must have records on how any grassland was managed (cut or grazed) in the previous calendar year.

You can use the following resources to find more information on record-keeping requirements for land located in an NVZ:

- the [September 2020 FAS newsletter](#), which includes a summary of the records required.
- the [NVZ webinar](#) delivered by Briony Burge in December 2020, which includes an overview of the requirements if you have land in an NVZ.
- the FAS [NVZ: Back to basics](#) article, which has an overview of the NVZ requirements.
- a [handy guide to record keeping in an NVZ](#) was produced by Briony Burge in conjunction with Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF).

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](#). Please [subscribe to the blog](#) to ensure you see all the latest news.

- Defra published more details on the initial priorities for the [Animal Health and Welfare Pathway](#).
- Two blog posts covered plans for slurry: [how to make the best of your slurry](#) and [information on plans for slurry grants](#).
- Defra posted information on initial plans for the [regulatory baseline of legislation](#).
- The [Farming is Changing blog post](#) provides an overview on the changes to farming in England.
- Defra also [has a YouTube channel](#), where recently uploaded videos include case studies from farmers who have been involved in Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) trials.
- Defra has recently published guidance on the funding available for farmers, for Environmental Land Management, trees, animal health, slurry and protected landscapes. [The guidance has some information with links to further information](#).
- **AHDB levy:** On 8 March, it was announced that the UK Government and devolved governments agreed to end the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) levy for the horticulture and potato sectors. This will help deliver a reformed AHDB, and enhance accountability and value for money for farmers across the UK. [Read more information on GOV.UK](#).
- **Pesticide authorisation:** On 1 March, Environment Secretary George Eustice granted an application from British Sugar and the NFU for the emergency authorisation of a neonicotinoid pesticide treatment on this year's sugar beet crop. This was due to the risk from yellows viruses which could damage the UK's sugar production. The emergency authorisation was granted subject to strict conditions, including an initial threshold for use. It will help control aphid-borne viruses in the emerging crop. [More information can be found on GOV.UK](#).
- **Funds to increase tree resilience:** On 8 March almost £4.5 million was made available to fund innovative projects that enhance tree planting stocks and woodland resilience, with the reopening of the Forestry Commission-delivered Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds and the Tree Production Innovation Fund. [Read more information on GOV.UK](#).
- **Put Down Roots campaign:** Woodland creation offers a profitable way for farmers and landowners to boost their business, as well as deliver environmental benefits, alongside food production. The Forestry Commission and Defra are drawing attention to the attractive grant schemes and free specialist advice available through a recently launched campaign. To understand how you can get involved, email putdownroots@defra.gov.uk or [visit GOV.UK](#).

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If you don't already receive our 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/