



Farming
Advice Service

Welcome to the Farming Advice Service newsletter

Is this your first time seeing this email?

Due to a recent update in the RPA's contact list all claimants of BPS are now eligible to receive the monthly Farming Advice Service (FAS) newsletter and key dates reminder.

FAS is funded by Defra.

We provide free, confidential advice to help farmers in England understand and meet the requirements of cross compliance.

Contact us

FAS technical advice line: 03000 200 301

advice@farmingadvice.org.uk

farmingadvice.org.uk

**September 2022
– Issue 79**

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Key dates to be aware of

30 September	This is the deadline for Lump Sum Exit scheme applications (GOV.UK)
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)

In case you missed them...

1 August	If you have been granted a derogation by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), you may have been able to cut or trim hedges throughout August for the purpose of sowing oilseed rape or temporary grassland during that month (GAEC 7a)
1 August	For any land located in an NVZ, this was 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, except where crops would be sown on or before 15 September (SMR1)
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 was 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 was 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 was 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 was 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)

* GAEC = Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition

** SMR = Statutory Management Requirement

Need extra support?

We understand it can be difficult to keep up with all the changes affecting the farming industry at the moment, and that the amount of information available can be daunting. The [FAS](#) is here to help and you can also find the most up-to-date information on grants and payments at [GOV.UK](#).

If you are feeling overwhelmed and are not sure where to turn, the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution ([RABI](#)) and the Farming Community Network ([FCN](#)) offer support services by email and phone. A range of other organisations also offer complementary forms of support for the farming community; [click here](#) to view support organisations by topic.

The FCN receives between 100 and 150 calls from farmers each month, and they have now produced an article highlighting the learnings from these calls. For information on their top 10 observations from these calls, please [click here](#).

For more details about the information provided in the key dates table, visit [Guide to cross compliance in England 2022](#) and [RPA key dates 2022](#) at [GOV.UK](#).

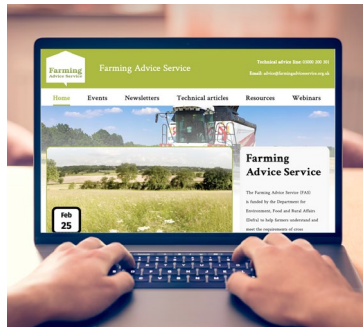
How can we help you?

Free and confidential advice

The 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 cross compliance requirements. 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 on the actions that can be taken to help farmers comply with applicable 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, as well as technical articles and webinars that cover various topics in more detail.



Contacting the advice line

Farmers requiring telephone advice can contact the **FAS technical advice line** on **03000 200 301**, Monday to Friday, between **08:30** and **17:00**. The Rural Services Helpline provides a single number for all **FAS, RPA, 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.

Upcoming FAS event: Further planning for change – Panel discussion on navigating farming support schemes in 2023

Following our popular “Planning for change” webinar in July, **Richard King** (Partner and Head of Business Research at The Anderson Centre) will be joined by members of the FAS and Defra’s Future Farming and Countryside Programme teams to answer your questions and discuss some common queries about how future farming support schemes can fit into farm business planning.



Monday 24 October 19:00–20:30

[\(Please click here to register for the event\)](#)

The event will run for 90 minutes and there will be an opportunity to put questions to our expert panel. If you are not able to make the live broadcast, a recording 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. After you have booked your place, you will receive an email with joining instructions. If this does not come through, please check your spam or junk folder.

If you have missed any of our previous webinar sessions from earlier in the year, you can watch the recordings on the [FAS website](#).

You can also listen to **podcasts** with expert speakers on the [FAS website](#), as well as through Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) closed period reminders



In this article, the 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 are 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](https://www.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@farmingadvice.org.uk.

Technical articles available on the FAS website

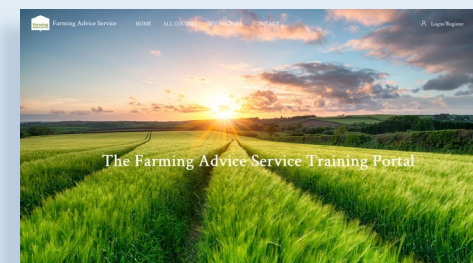
The FAS has produced a number of technical articles covering a range of topics, from farming practices to cross compliance. To access these articles, please click on the links below:

- [Navigating farming support schemes in 2023](#)
- [Reducing agricultural emissions of ammonia](#)
- [Supporting farmers to become resilient](#)
- [Net zero in agriculture](#)
- [Cross compliance inspections – common breaches and guidance](#)

FAS launches online training portal

Two online training modules are now available on the new [FAS Training Portal](#).

The modules on cross compliance and net zero emissions in agriculture are open to anyone who wishes to [register](#), and registrants qualify for two BASIS CPD points for completing the end-of-module quiz. Modules on the Farming Rules for Water and NVZs will be open soon, with additional modules to follow later in the year.



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 falls under the [Hedgerows Regulations 1997](#). In addition to this, some of these rules are cross compliance requirements under [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 for defining a protected hedgerow is on [GOV.UK](#) – these apply to the length, location and ‘importance’ of the hedgerow.

Apply to remove a countryside hedgerow

You can only remove a hedgerow if it is less than 30 years old; if you are the owner, tenant or manager of the hedgerow; or if you are 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 will need to provide plans relating to the hedgerow you want to remove – the local authority will explain what is needed. The LPA will be 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 the following.

- **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. Please note that leaving hedge trimming until later in the year helps provide more food and protection for birds and wildlife. You also have an obligation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 not to disturb or move nesting birds or their eggs.
- **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 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@farmingadvice.org.uk.



Domestic tree seed production to be ramped up with new grant

Domestic tree seed production is to be ramped up with new government funding announced on Thursday 22 September. A £1.2m Seed Sourcing Grant will boost domestic tree seed production, create green jobs, help meet the increased demand for trees and achieve the government's ambitious net zero targets.



The Seed Sourcing Grant is designed to enhance the quantity, quality and diversity of tree seed sources in England. Most tree seed planted in the UK is of British origin, but evidence suggests that British seed sources may struggle to meet future demand across all species and there are known to be global shortages of tree seed.

The grant also aims to improve the diversity of England's seed supply, for example by increasing the range of species and provenances available. This will be crucial for creating diverse and resilient woodlands that are better able to adapt to future climate conditions, as well as pests and diseases. It will also reduce the need to buy seed from the international market, lowering the risk of importing harmful pests and pathogens.

Eligible activities include:

- management of existing seed stands – the groups of trees in the landscape from which seed is collected – to ensure they are productive for seed collectors
- desk studies and field studies to identify and bring additional seed stands onto the National Register of Basic Material
- planning and planting of new seed stands
- planning and planting of new seed orchards, which are planted using seed or clonal material from known parents outside of the natural landscape in an area convenient for seed collectors.

Some activities will take time to implement, and so multi-year funding will be available up until March 2025.

To apply now, visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/seed-sourcing-grant>.

The closing date for applications is Sunday 13 November 2022.

Water abstraction reminders

With more of the country experiencing drought, the Environment Agency (EA) has updated its guidance on [water abstraction during prolonged dry weather and drought – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/water-abstraction-during-prolonged-dry-weather-and-drought) to help farmers. This includes a section on planning for the future and improving the resilience of your water supplies, changing your abstraction licence if necessary. The EA 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 delays to the determination of your licence application to help qualify for a water resources funding grant (e.g. a reservoir), please make sure you clearly mark on the application form ([Form WR328 Section A1.4](#)) that the application relates to the grant. The EA will then be in touch to discuss timescales.



Priority Catchment Abstraction Licensing Strategies (ALS)

On 30 June, the EA published the last five of their 10 priority catchment ALS – a target in the 25 Year environmental permitting (EP) and [Water Abstraction Plan 2017](#).

These documents:

- describe the catchments and why water is important
- give clear advice on water availability
- describe present and future risks
- tell people what we are doing to address unsustainable abstraction
- demonstrate how the priority catchments have successfully used collaborative and innovative approaches to improve access to water and the environment

Some case studies of these ALS include:

[South and West Somerset ALS](#)

[Alt Crossens ALS](#)

[Till and Tweed ALS](#)

[East Devon ALS](#)

[Arun and Western Streams ALS](#)

The ALS give readers an insight into the ‘catchment focus’ – a stakeholder-led approach that engages with people and groups to trial innovative ways to improve access to water and the environment.

One such trial is taking place in the Alt Crossens priority catchment in Lancashire. The catchment is key to UK horticultural food production, but suffers from water scarcity. The EA has worked with:

- a local farmer
- the Mersey Rivers Trust
- an irrigation equipment supplier

Here, people can visit a demonstration farm and learn about world-leading drip feed/trickle irrigation technology and rainwater storage. Adoption of this technology saves money and water and improves the environment.

The informal and friendly setting is perfect for getting people together to talk about water and get involved in the catchment focus approach. More information is available at the [Demonstration Farm Project website](#).

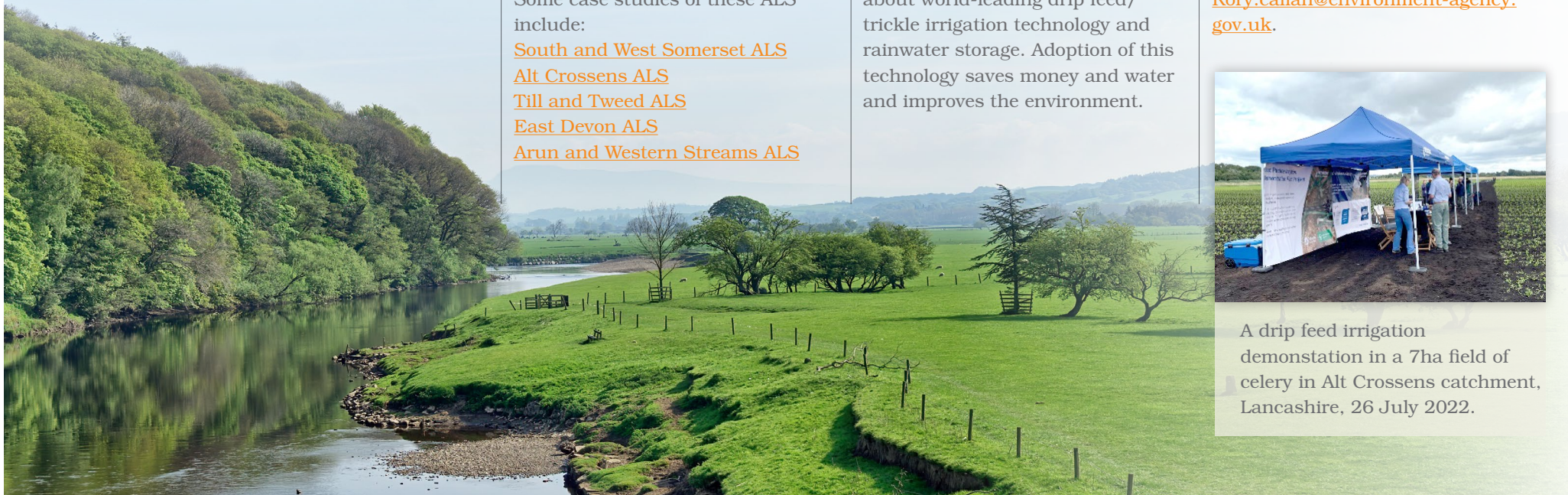
There are over 50 trials and initiatives covered in the priority catchment programme. The other five ALS were published between 2020 and 2021:

- [Witham ALS](#)
- [Idle and Torne ALS](#)
- [East Suffolk ALS](#)
- [Cam and Ely Ouse ALS](#)
- [Wye ALS](#)

For more information, please contact Rory.callan@environment-agency.gov.uk.



A drip feed irrigation demonstration in a 7ha field of celery in Alt Crossens catchment, Lancashire, 26 July 2022.



Apply now for the sixth Woodland Carbon Guarantee Auction

Applications can be made for the sixth Woodland Carbon Guarantee Auction until 23:59 on Sunday 6 November, with the auction taking place 21–27 November 2022.

The [Woodland Carbon Guarantee](#) is a Forestry Commission-administered £50 million scheme that aims to help accelerate woodland planting rates and permanently remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Following an online auction process, successful bidders will be offered the option to sell woodland carbon in the form of Woodland Carbon Units – a financial value given to each tonne of carbon stored – to the government over 35 years at a guaranteed price protected against inflation. The scheme reflects the government's confidence in the continued growth of markets for woodland carbon, as landowners will have a revenue stream in future from selling carbon on the domestic market.

Before applying for the Guarantee, land managers will need to have registered with the [Woodland Carbon Code](#), which provides the tools and information required to forecast and verify the carbon they are capturing and can sell in future. More information on the woodland carbon code can be found in the [August 2022 edition of the FAS newsletter](#).

[Apply for the Woodland Carbon Guarantee here.](#)





Updates from the Future Farming blog and industry announcements

Defra regularly updates the [Future Farming blog](#). Please [subscribe to the blog](#) to ensure you receive all the latest news.

- Reducing grower dependence on chemicals to manage pests, weeds and diseases will be the focus of a new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) standard due out in 2023. ADAS is working with the NFU and SRUC to create an online decision support tool that will help growers and farmers adopt integrated pest management practices. They are looking for arable, grass and horticultural growers to test this tool and provide feedback. All participants will be reimbursed for their time. To learn more and sign up to take part, visit the [ADAS website](#).
- [Catchment Sensitive Farming \(CSF\)](#), led by Natural England in partnership with Defra and the EA, will be extending farm advice to all agricultural areas in England by April 2023. To support the expansion, CSF plan to run a farmer awareness-raising campaign later this year. It will focus on farms that can deliver the greatest environmental benefits for water, air quality and natural flood management. In relation to this, they will provide support to help farmers in decision-making through the Agricultural Transition period. CSF will support farmers and growers through change, working alongside them to help make their farm fit for the future. More details will follow in October.
- The SFI, which launched in June, pays farmers for actions they take (going beyond regulatory requirements) to manage their land in an environmentally sustainable way. From 1 September, if you have land in a Countryside Stewardship or Environmental Stewardship agreement but not on common land, you can now apply online directly by [signing into the rural payments service](#). Read the [most recent blog](#) on the SFI for further details.
- All pig sector stakeholders are invited to share their views on how fairness and transparency can be improved in the industry. A [UK-wide public consultation](#) was launched by Defra on 15 July 2022 to respond to the unique challenges facing the supply chain. The consultation will close on 7 October 2022. Participating in the consultation takes very little time and all responses are anonymous.
- Is your land in an area that has a [Community Forest or Woodland Creation Partnership](#)? You could be eligible for some recently announced [funding to help plant trees](#).
- The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway supports improvements in farm animal health and welfare. The first step of the pathway is the [Annual Health and Welfare Review](#). Starting this autumn, farmers who keep cattle, sheep and pigs can get funding to pay for a vet or vet-led team to visit their farm and carry out a yearly review. Defra are now ready to put more of the pathway to the test, and we need your help.
- The [Forestry Commission also has a blog page on GOV.UK](#) where it posts information and advice about trees and woodlands. [Sign up to the Forestry Commission's e-alerts](#) to stay up to date.

Stay up to date with us



Get the latest updates by following us on Twitter

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



Subscribe to our free monthly newsletter

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/.