



Farming
Advice Service

Welcome to the Farming Advice Service (FAS) newsletter

*Thank you for continuing to subscribe
to our monthly newsletter.*

*We hope you find the content useful
and we 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

October 2022 – Issue 80

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Key dates to be aware of

31 October	If you hold a summer water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction wholly within the months of April to October), the Environment Agency will ask you to report your water abstraction return for summer 2022. You will have 28 days to send your return to the Environment Agency (GAEC** 2)
1 November	You can burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land, other than in upland areas, from this date. The burning season for land that is not within an upland area is 1 November to 31 March (and 1 October to 15 April for upland areas) (GAEC**6)
30 November	If you hold a summer water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction wholly within the months of April to October), the Environment Agency will ask you to submit your abstraction return for summer 2022 at the end of October 2022. You should submit your return by 28 November 2022. If you haven't already, you can register to submit your return online. Please visit the link at GOV.UK

In case you missed them...

15 September	For any land located in a nitrate vulnerable zone (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 were sown with crops on or before 15 September (SMR 1)
1 October	You can burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land in upland areas from this date (GAEC** 6)
1 October	For any land located in an NVZ, this 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 soils that are not shallow or sandy (SMR 1)
15 October	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 soils that are not shallow or sandy (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 the [Guide to cross compliance in England 2022](#) and Rural Payments Agency ([RPA](#)) [key dates 2022](#) at [GOV.UK](#).

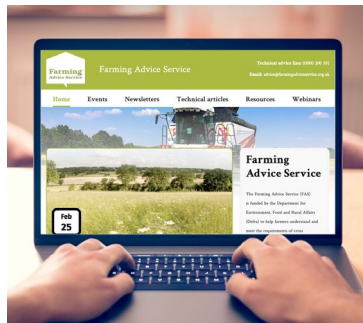
How can we help you?

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 (APHA), 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.

Watch our webinars and listen to our podcasts

The latest FAS webinar **Further planning for change – a panel discussion on navigating farming support schemes in 2023** has been rescheduled to 7 November and [registration is still open online](#).

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

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:

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

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.



Local woodland creation grants available to farmers and landowners

As well as generating income, well-designed and managed woodlands can support the foundations of food production. Woodlands on farms can boost productivity through healthy soil and water by reducing erosion and nutrient loss from surface run-off, while improving drought and flood resilience.

See where trees can fit on your farm in the Forestry Commission's leaflet on [how trees benefit your farm business](#), and read more about [how woodland creation benefits your farm](#).

The Forestry Commission's [England Woodland Creation Offer \(EWCO\)](#) is a national grant that supports woodland creation across all of England. From 2025, it will become part of the Local Nature Recovery scheme, itself part of the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS).

In addition to EWCO, there are **several bespoke grants** tailored to local circumstances. These are managed by **local woodland creation organisations** funded by Defra that can provide on-the-ground expertise, advice and support, as well as grant funding.

A list of woodland creation partnerships can be found below.

They can work with you to see how woodlands can support your farm or land.

[England's Community Forests](#) offer highly [competitive grants](#) for tree planting alongside years of local experience. Grants are bespoke so they can meet individual needs and can cover up to 100% of all costs. Locally based experts are available to support land assessments and planning, regulation and consideration of other complementary grant funding that may be available. Grants are available to anyone within one of the Community Forests, a list of which can be found [here](#).

The [National Forest](#) spans parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. It offers free and impartial advice on how trees could be included and managed on your farm and land to provide the most benefit. Grant schemes offer funding to cover design, planning and up to 100% of implementation costs, with personal support and flexibility to adapt to business needs and help develop new revenue streams.

The [Northern Forest](#) ranges from Liverpool to the Yorkshire coast, including areas around Chester, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, York and Hull. If you own or manage land in this area, the Northern Forest Partnership can offer [financial support](#) for woodland creation, funding up to 100% of the costs of tree planting and providing advice to landowners on the design and delivery of planting schemes.

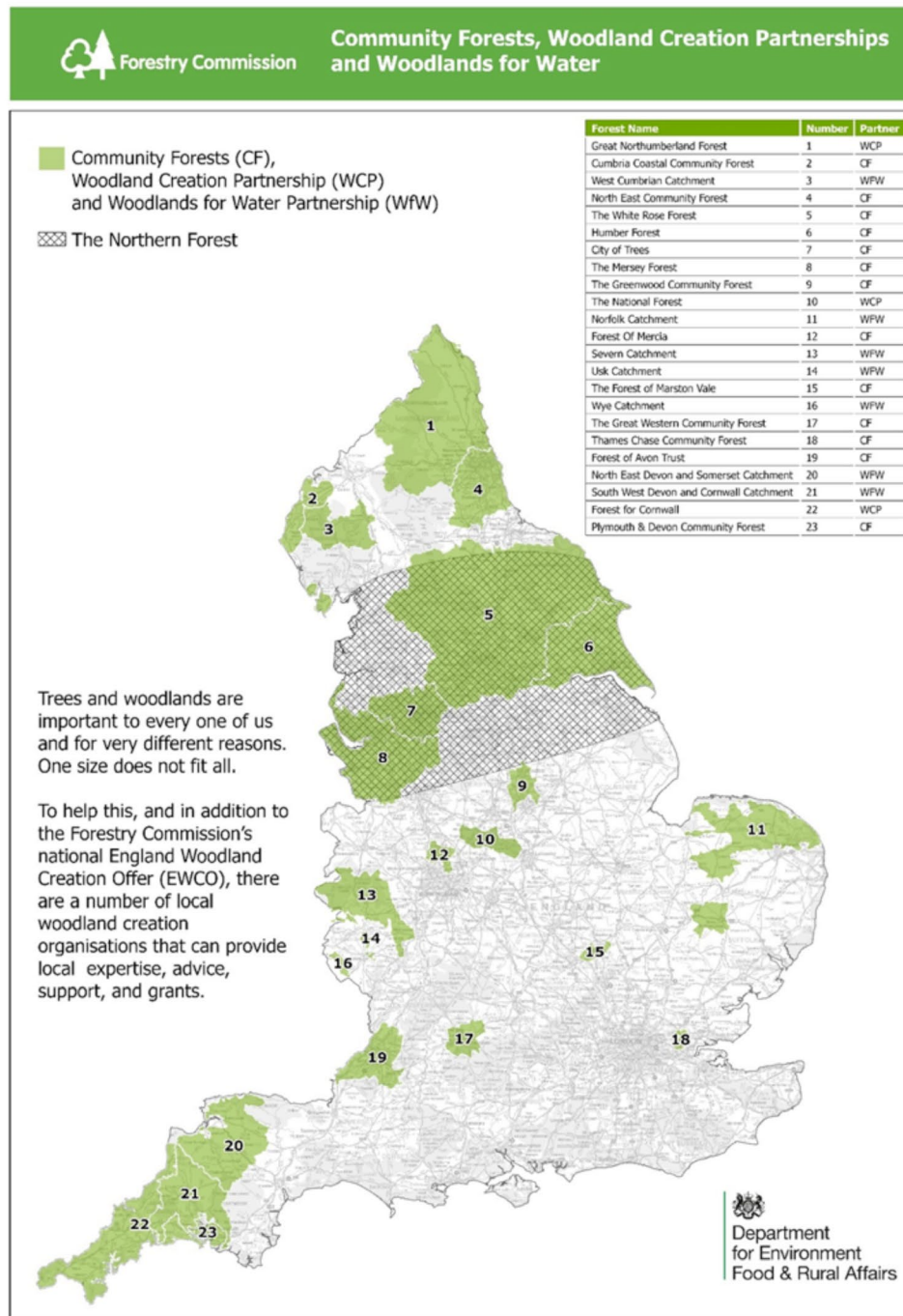
The [Great Northumberland Forest](#) helps landowners in Northumberland create well-designed and more diverse woodlands by combining trees and shrubs with crop and livestock farming, of whatever shape and size.

The [Forest for Cornwall](#) offers a range of support to farmers and landowners to help turn their woodland creation ambitions into reality by helping survey land, advising on types of planting and project management, and sourcing trees.

The [Woodlands for Water](#) partnership focuses on helping landowners and farmers plant and manage trees along rivers, watercourses and wider catchments. They provide expert advice to help create woodlands in selected river catchment areas across England.

River catchment areas are as follows:

- SW Devon/Cornwall – the Tamar and Fowey
- Norfolk Catchments – Bure, Glaven, Stiffkey, Wensum, Heacham, Lark, Gaywood and Wissey
- Wye Catchments – Dore, Dulas and Lugg
- Cumbria Catchments – Derwent and Ullswater catchment areas, including Petterill and Eamont sub-catchments
- Severn Catchment – Teme
- NE Devon/Somerset Catchments – Torrridge and Taw
- National Trust land



Is your farm fit for the future?

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) is led by Natural England, in partnership with Defra and the Environment Agency. It works with farmers, communities and organisations in catchments across England to improve the quality of air, water and natural flood management, through the Agricultural Transition.

In 2021, as part of Defra's Future Farming Countryside Programme Strategy, the government committed additional funding to CSF. The funding will enable CSF expansion across the whole of England by April 2023, with a focus on farms that can deliver the greatest environmental benefits.

What CSF can do for your business

CSF Advisers work with farmers to produce food in a way that protects water, air and soil, minimising losses and maximising efficiencies.

CSF Advisers are locally based with an understanding of the challenges farmers face. They will work alongside you to take the latest advice and tailor it to best benefit your business.

CSF provides locally informed and confidential on-farm advice to help you make confident decisions on:

- Soil management
- Nutrient, slurry and manure management
- Ammonia reduction
- Farm infrastructure and machinery set-up
- Pesticide handling
- Water resources and natural flood management
- Local environmental priorities
- Land management
- Agricultural Transition, including grants

What makes CSF farm advice different?

- CSF offers confidential advice so you can take positive action
- CSF seeks 'win-wins' for the environment and your business
- CSF provides free, government-funded advice and training across England

Your local CSF Adviser can help...

- Save you money
- Future-proof your farm
- Improve your local environment
- You meet current regulations

CSF can provide...

- One-to-one visits from your local CSF Adviser
- Tailored on-farm advice from specialists
- On-farm events, shows and demonstrations
- Advice on relevant grants

Get in touch with your local CSF Adviser today.

Visit [GOV.UK/catchment-sensitive-farming](https://www.gov.uk/catchment-sensitive-farming) to find the email address of your local team and get advice on grant support.



Catchment Sensitive Farming

Working together for a healthy environment

83% of farmers who had met their CSF Adviser agreed they were a person whose advice they could trust



CSF has approved 3,000+ on-farm improvements during 2021 under the Countryside Stewardship scheme



38% of England's farmed area managed by CSF-engaged farmers



Advice delivered to more than 24,000 farm holdings



4-12% reduction in agricultural losses of nitrate, phosphate and sediment



Helped farmers take 80,000 positive actions to reduce pollution



34% reduction in pesticides in our rivers



4-8x greater pollution reduction from agri-environment scheme farms that also implemented CSF advice



Farming Rules for Water: Rule 8 – position of livestock feeders



Since 2 April 2018, all farmers in England have had to comply with rules introduced to help improve water quality by reducing diffuse pollution. The rules standardise good farming practices that prevent manure, fertiliser and soil from entering watercourses. There are **eight rules in total** (five about managing fertilisers and manures, and three on managing soils). This article is about Rule 8.

Rule 8 requires you not to place livestock feeders:

- Within 10m of inland freshwaters or coastal waters
- Within 50m of a spring, well or borehole
- Where there's a significant risk of pollution

Assessing pollution risks

You must take into account the risks of pollution when deciding where to position livestock feeders, including risks from:

- The slope of the land, in particular if the angle is greater than 12 degrees
- Any ground cover
- The distance and connectivity to inland freshwaters, coastal waters, wetlands, springs, wells or boreholes
- The soil type and condition of the land
- The presence and condition of land drains

It is important that you identify the risks that apply to your land and your land management practices.

Water abstraction reminder

If you hold a summer water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction wholly within the months of April to October), the Environment Agency will ask you to submit your abstraction return for summer 2022 at the end of October 2022. You should submit your return by 28 November 2022. If you haven't already, you can register to submit your return online. Please visit the link at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). You will need your email address and licence number(s) to register. Other benefits of registering include allowing other people access to manage your licence and returns, while some licence holders will receive water abstraction alerts by email to allow abstractors to start taking water quickly again once river flows or groundwater water levels have recovered. More information on water abstraction can be found in the [September edition](#) of the FAS newsletter.





The importance of knowing your soil

Achieving good soil health is essential for productivity, sustainability and profitability. Understanding your soil's chemical, physical and biological properties is key to understanding the current state of your soil and the actions you can take to improve and maintain its health.

Soils are most commonly tested for **chemical** properties, including the primary nutrient content of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K), 'micronutrients' (such as sulphur, magnesium, cadmium, iron, aluminium and zinc) and the soil pH level. These results provide farmers with valuable information for effective [nutrient management](#). Having a good understanding of existing and required soil nutrition levels can support farmers to make good decisions, help them save money and time, and reduce the impacts on biodiversity, water and air quality by:

- Increasing crop yield and quality
- Matching the amount of artificial and organic fertilisers used to the needs of the crop and soil and applying these only when the crop needs them
- Minimising nutrient waste

Physical properties (such as structure, texture, porosity and colour of the soil) often vary considerably. They depend on factors such as underlying bedrock, crop type and rotation, frequency and type of machinery used, livestock type and stocking density, and the weather. Structural assessments can be conducted visually and carried out annually. Improving soil structure:

- Improves resilience to surface capping, slumping, waterlogging and drought
- Reduces soil compaction and improves soil workability

Soil **biology** should consist of a high diversity of organic matter. Soil organic matter is made up of plant and animal matter that release nutrients into the soil

as they decompose. Farmers can improve organic matter by adding organic manures and incorporating plants or crop residues. Reducing drainage and the cultivation of soil will slow the decay of organic matter. Increasing organic matter:

- Improves soil fertility and the biota structure
- Reduces the risk of capping, compaction and erosion

This article has been produced in association with industry initiative Tried and Tested. For further support on soil testing, [find a laboratory here](#).

Defra's new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme promotes effective nutrient management of soils through standards. Farmers are paid for these land management actions. More information can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

Support your industry: provide your views on farm practices that reduce ammonia emissions and enter a prize draw

Many farmers in the UK have introduced practices that reduce emissions of ammonia. However, information on the level of uptake of these practices and challenges to further uptake is lacking. If you are a farmer, land manager or contractor who uses slurry or manure, [we invite you to take part in this survey to share your views on practices that reduce ammonia emissions.](#)

Ammonia has negative impacts for human health and the environment. In agriculture, it can be released from the production, spreading and storage of manure or slurries. Practices such as:

- Using slurry spreading equipment such as trailing shoe, trailing hose or injectors;
- Keeping solid floors in livestock housing and yards as clean as possible
- Covering manure or slurry stores;

Not only reduce ammonia but can also have a positive impact for farming businesses. Introducing practices to reduce ammonia retains nitrogen, creating opportunities for cost savings due to the reduced need for manufactured fertilisers.

The survey lists practices that reduce ammonia emissions and asks about the costs, benefits and barriers involved in implementing them. Even if you have not introduced any of these practices, we would still like to hear your views on the challenges for farmers, who need recognition for good practices and support for further uptake.

The survey is anonymous, and you are not required to answer every question or provide any identifying information unless you choose to do so.

Once you have completed the [survey](#), you have the option of entering a prize draw for a £50 Amazon voucher. If you would like to be entered, please provide your email address at the end of the survey (only one entry per email address). The winner will be selected randomly when the survey closes in 2023. Full T&Cs are provided on the survey.

Ricardo Energy & Environment are delivering the survey as part of wider research being undertaken by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), Public Health Research (PHR) programme, with support from Defra and other stakeholders across the UK.

If you have any questions, please contact Aim-Health@ricardo.com.

Independent review into labour shortages in the food supply chain survey

The [Independent Review into Labour Shortages](#) in the food supply chain has launched its survey into the workforce in farming, processing and manufacturing. They are inviting food businesses to fill in [the survey](#) and provide vital data on labour shortages in the food supply chain before 21 November 2022.

The independent review is led by John Shropshire, Chairman of G's Fresh Group. He will be supported by an expert panel drawn from expertise across farming, fisheries, processing and manufacturing aspects of the food supply chain. If you have any questions regarding the review or completion of the survey, then please get in touch through the Independent Review mailbox: independent.labour.review@defra.gov.uk.



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.

- Following recent media speculation about the future of farming policy in England, you may have some questions about Defra's work. Please read [this post on Defra's media blog](#), which sets out Defra's response and position. For the latest updates from the programme, [subscribe to the Future Farming blog](#).
- 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.
- Defra has recently announced the launch of the next phase of the Future Farming Resilience Fund (FFRF) which provides business support to farmers and land managers in the first few years of adapting to Agricultural Transition. If you currently receive direct payments you can receive this support and it is **free of charge**. It is designed to help you make the right business choices for the future. Providers of FFRF and further information can be found on [GOV.UK](#).
- The SFI scheme, 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 apply online directly by [signing into the Rural Payments service](#).
- ADAS, SRUC and the NFU are looking for farmers and growers to contribute to the development of the future ELMS. Defra are funding this work as part of their Tests and Trials programme. The test will develop tools and guidance to provide reliable information for farmers, growers and advisers making Integrated Pest Management decisions.

Participants involved in the project will be reimbursed for their time – [Register your interest in taking part](#).

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/.