

The logo for the Farming Advice Service, featuring the text 'Farming Advice Service' in a green serif font inside a white speech bubble shape.

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

**November 2022  
– Issue 81**

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## Key dates to be aware of

- 1 December** If you keep sheep and/or goats, you must carry out your annual count of the animals on your holding as of 1 December, enter this into your holding register and complete the inventory by 31 December. You will receive a letter in November which tells you what to do. (SMR\*\* 8)
- 1 December** Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship 2022 payment window opens.

## In case you missed them...

- 31 October** If you hold an abstraction licence which authorises summer abstraction (wholly within the period 1 April to 31 October inclusive), the Environment Agency will have asked you at the end of October 2022 to report your water abstraction return for the period 1 November 2021 to 31 October 2022. (GAEC\*2)
- You will need to submit your return by 28 November 2022.
- You can submit your return online by registering with the Agency's Water Resource Licensing Service [here](#).
- 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)
- 7 November** Mandatory housing measures for all poultry and captive birds were introduced to all areas of England. (GOV.UK)

\* GAEC = Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition

\*\* SMR = Statutory Management Requirement

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

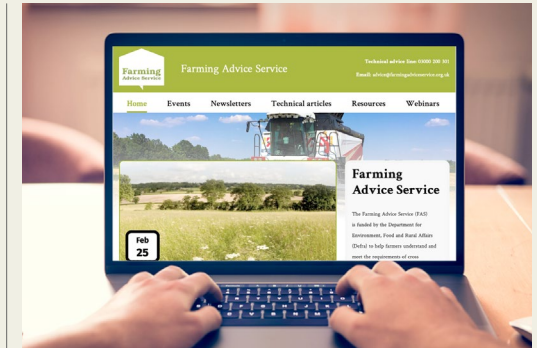
The FAS is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). We provide **free, confidential** advice to help farmers in England understand and meet the cross compliance requirements. These requirements apply to you if you are a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), Countryside Stewardship 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](mailto: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 webinar recordings and listen to our podcasts

Did you miss the latest FAS webinar (**Further planning for change – a panel discussion on navigating farming support schemes in 2023**) which took place on 7 November? You can catch up on this and many of our previous webinars 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.

## 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.



## 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](#).



# Record keeping for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution and account for approximately 55% of agricultural land in England. You can use the [interactive map on GOV.UK](#) to find out if any of your land is within a designated NVZ; if it is, you will need to comply with the NVZ rules. Record keeping is an important part of the NVZ rules. This article summarises the required records, please note, all records must be **kept for 5 years**.

- **The size of your holding.** If the size of your holding changes, this should be recorded within one month.
- **Risk map.** This must be produced if you spread organic manure. Risk maps should include: each field and its area (in ha), areas with sandy or shallow soils, land with a slope greater than 12° and sites suitable for temporary field heaps. They can be hand drawn and do not need to be to scale. The full list of [map requirements is on GOV.UK](#).
- **Field records.** You must record information about crops at various stages of their life cycle within one week of the event taking place. For example, the type of crop, sowing date and details of the organic manure/fertiliser spread. For more information, please visit [GOV.UK](#).
- **Livestock calculations.** If you have livestock on your holding, then by 30 April you must complete calculations to show you are compliant with the livestock manure nitrogen farm limit. This includes recording the number of livestock, type of animal and the number of days each animal spent on your holding. To help you with your calculations, you can download '[blank field records and standard values tables](#)' from GOV.UK.
- **Imports and exports of manure.** You must record the details of imports or exports of livestock manure within one week of the event taking place, including the date, amount, and name and address of supplier or recipient.
- **Manure storage.** You must record the capacity of the storage facilities on your farm. There are also calculations you must do that you can find on [GOV.UK](#). The [standard value tables](#) are also available to download to help you with your calculations.
- **Plan your nutrient use.** Your fertilisation plan must record plans for all your applications of nitrogen (manufactured and organic) on each crop in each field, including grass. [Nutrient management plans](#) can also be used to meet both NVZ and FR4W requirements.

## Useful resources to help with understanding the rules:

- FAS has produced an **article** summarising the NVZ requirements. You can read it [here](#).
- A handy **record-keeping guide** has been produced by Briony Burge of Creedy Associates Ltd that was commissioned by the Catchment Sensitive Farming partnership and Wessex Water. The guide aims to simplify the recording requirements in an NVZ and includes guidance on risk maps, spreading rules and more. The guide can be accessed [here](#).
- In December 2020, Briony Burge delivered a **webinar** on the NVZ rules. You can watch the recording and access the Q&A document for free on the [FAS website](#).
- The [December 2020 FAS newsletter](#) included an article that answered some of the common queries on NVZs received through the FAS helpline - including the calculations required in an NVZ.
- The [March 2021 FAS newsletter](#) included a summary of the records required to be in place by 30 April each year.
- The [April 2021 FAS newsletter](#) included an article on the rules for spreading organic manures and manufactured fertilisers in an NVZ.
- Guidance regarding the NVZ requirements when using nitrogen fertilisers can be found on the GOV.UK page [Using nitrogen fertilisers in nitrate vulnerable zones](#).
- 'Think Manures' is a guide to manure management and includes information on how to make the best use of your manure stores and gives guidance on the spreading rules. It can be accessed for free from the Tried & Tested website [here](#).

If you have any questions or require further support, please contact the FAS helpline on 03000 200 301 or email [advice@farmingadvice.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.org.uk).



# Bird flu housing measures for England and new support for farmers

*Mandatory housing measures for all poultry and captive birds were introduced to all areas of England on Monday 7 November 2022, following a decision by the United Kingdom's Chief Veterinary Officer. The measures legally require all bird keepers to keep their birds indoors and to follow stringent biosecurity measures to help protect their flocks from the disease, regardless of their type or size.*

The order extended the mandatory housing measures that were already in force in the hotspot areas of Suffolk, Norfolk and parts of Essex to the whole of England.

For farmers and producers dealing with the impact of bird flu, Defra has recently introduced a [new package of support](#), which alters the existing compensation scheme, to allow compensation to be paid to farmers from the outset of a planned cull rather than at the end. This will enable swifter payments to help farmers stem any cash flow pressures and provide earlier certainty about their entitlement to compensation.

In consultation with the Food Standards Agency, an easing of the marketing rules for poultry products has been introduced in England. This means that farmers who breed turkeys, geese or ducks for their meat will have the option to slaughter their flocks early and freeze these products, which could then be defrosted and sold to consumers between the period 28 November and 31 December 2022. This option will give farmers certainty over business planning.

To assist all bird keepers in instigating and maintaining good biosecurity, Defra has published [Biosecurity guidance](#) and a [biosecurity self-assessment checklist](#). Further updates on the latest avian influenza situation and advice on housing birds can be found on the guidance page for Avian influenza on [GOV.UK](#).

Avian influenza poses incredibly difficult challenges for bird keepers and others who are on the frontline of this disease. There are numerous support networks that individuals can contact for help including the Defra [Rural Services Helpline](#) on 03000 200 301. Defra are also in partnership with Farming Help to support their work and assist the farming community through these challenging times. If this affects you, please either contact Farming Help on 03000 111 999 or visit the [Farming Help website](#).





# How to spot and report BSE in cattle

*Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) is a notifiable disease. Animal health legislation and cross compliance rules ([SMR9](#)) require you to report your suspicion of it in any animal in your care. You can help Defra by remaining vigilant for signs of the disease.*





## How to spot and report BSE in cattle

While cases are now fortunately rare (the most recent cases in the UK were confirmed in Scotland in 2018 and in England in 2021) according to mathematical modelling by scientists at the APHA, it is still possible that further cases may occur over the next few years as the disease continues to decline.

Due to the length of the incubation period, affected cattle do not usually show signs of BSE until they are at least four or five years old. Cattle with BSE may slowly develop some of the following signs over a period of weeks or months:

- apprehension or nervousness (flighty)
- repeated, exaggerated reactions to touch or sound (startle), also to stimuli with which the animal was previously familiar
- weakness or high stepping of the legs, particularly the hind legs
- reluctance to cross concrete or drains, turn corners or enter yards, or go through doorways
- aggression towards humans or towards other cattle
- manic kicking during milking or reluctance to allow milking
- head held low
- difficulty in rising, progressing to recumbency, often with the hind legs in an abnormal position
- tremors under the skin
- loss of body condition, weight or milk yield
- excessive nose licking.

Not all BSE cases may display the above signs but two or more of these signs in a single animal are suspicious. For downer cows, it is important to know whether any of the signs were previously present before the animal was unable to get up.

If you suspect that an animal may have BSE and you live in England, call the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301. In Wales, contact 0300 303 8268. In Scotland, contact your local Field Services Office. An APHA vet will visit your farm and carry out a veterinary assessment on the animal as soon as possible.

If an APHA vet suspects that your animal may have BSE, they will issue you a notice restricting the movement of the animal. Depending on the animal's condition, they will either cull it on your premises or transport it to an APHA laboratory for slaughter. It will be tested to find out if it has BSE and you will receive compensation at market value. If the animal is culled on your premises, you will need to return the completed passport to the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) (for animals in England or Wales) or to ScotEID (for animals in Scotland) within seven days of the death. If the animal is transported to an APHA laboratory for slaughter, you will need to report the movement as usual; the passport must accompany the animal to the laboratory and APHA will return the completed passport in this case.

The APHA vet will put a "whole herd restriction" in place prohibiting the movement of cattle on and off your farm until the cohorts (animals born and/or reared with the suspect for up to 12 months before or after its birth and shared feed with it, and offspring aged under two years of the suspect animal) are identified, after which APHA will lift the whole herd restriction and issue notices restricting the movements of these animals.

If the suspect animal subsequently tests positive for BSE, all offspring aged under two years and all cohorts will be culled and destroyed. Compensation will be paid at market value. More information on compensation can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

More information on how to spot BSE and what will happen if the disease is suspected or confirmed can be found at [www.gov.uk/guidance/bse](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bse).

Videos showing cattle with clinical signs are available at:

- <https://www.youtube.com>



# Water abstraction reminders

*With significant rainfall over the last few weeks, many rivers have responded. If you have a winter storage reservoir please make the most of every opportunity to refill when flows are above any hands off flow abstraction licence condition.*

Winter is the ideal time to review your water needs. The Environment Agency (EA) [guidance](#) on water abstraction during prolonged dry weather and drought is designed 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.

## Slurry infrastructure grant announcement

On 23 November Defra published the full guidance for the new slurry infrastructure grant on [GOV.UK](#).

The slurry infrastructure grant is part of the [Farming Investment Fund](#). The grant is intended to help livestock farmers improve or expand their slurry storage capacity to six months, based on existing livestock numbers. It will also fund the fitting of impermeable covers on grant-funded stores.

The grant will be launched shortly, but Defra have shared the guidance now so that farmers have the information and time they need to prepare.

The guidance covers what the new grant will offer, how to apply for the grant and what to look out for over the coming months. You will also find guides on how to plan your storage, on the prioritisation of grants in round one should they be oversubscribed, and on the detailed specifications for eligible items.



## 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.

- Last month Defra [released a podcast](#) to celebrate National Young Farmers' Week 2022 and to welcome three up-and-coming young people in farming. Charlie Beaty, Ed Dungait and Charlotte Garbutt discuss how to get started in farming, the importance of education and the range of roles in agriculture. They also discuss the benefits that new talent can bring to the sector.
- The [Forestry Commission](#) also has a [blog page on GOV.UK](#) where it posts information and advice about trees and woodlands. You can [sign up to the Forestry Commission's e-alerts](#) to receive updates.



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## Stay up to date with us



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### Subscribe to our free monthly newsletter

If you don't already receive our monthly FAS newsletter, please visit [farmingadvice.service.org.uk](https://farmingadvice.service.org.uk) and enter your email address into the newsletter sign-up box.

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

In line with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018, FAS has updated its privacy policy to explain how your data is kept safe.

To view the policy, please visit [www.farmingadvice.service.org.uk/events/privacy/](https://www.farmingadvice.service.org.uk/events/privacy/).