



**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)

You can view a text-only version of the March  
Newsletter [by clicking this link](#).

**March 2023 –  
Issue 85**

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## Key dates to be aware of...

<b>31 March</b>	If you hold an abstraction licence ( <a href="#">GAEC* 2</a> ) which authorises abstraction during the winter and all year period (the authorised period of abstraction does not fall wholly between 1 April to 31 October), at the end of March 2023 the Environment Agency will ask you to report your water abstraction return for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.  You will need to submit your return by 28 April 2023; you can submit your return online by registering with the <a href="#">Environment Agency's Water Resource Licensing Service</a> .
<b>1 April</b>	You must not burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium on land, other than in upland areas, from this date. ( <a href="#">GAEC* 6</a> )
<b>16 April</b>	You must not burn heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium in upland areas from this date. ( <a href="#">GAEC* 6</a> )
<b>30 April</b>	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. You must also record the number and type of livestock in a building or hardstanding during the previous storage period. ( <a href="#">SMR**1</a> )

## In case you missed them...

<b>1 March</b>	You cannot cut or trim hedges or trees from this date, but you can carry out hedge and tree coppicing and hedge laying until 30 April. Not included in the ban are fruit and nut trees in orchards, and trees acting as windbreaks in orchards, vineyards, hop yards, or hop gardens. ( <a href="#">GAEC* 7a</a> and <a href="#">GAEC* 7c</a> )
<b>14 March</b>	Countryside Stewardship revenue claim declarations and Environmental Stewardship revenue claims open. ( <a href="#">GOV.UK</a> )
<b>14 March</b>	Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2023 application window opens. ( <a href="#">BPS 2023</a> )
<b>21 March</b>	Applications open for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Wildlife offers. The deadline to submit applications is 18 August, more detail can be found at <a href="#">GOV.UK</a>

\*GAEC = Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions

\*\* SMR = Statutory Management Requirements

For more details about the information provided in the key dates table, visit the [Guide to cross compliance in England 2023](#) and the [Rural Payments Agency key dates 2023](#) pages of [GOV.UK](#).

The Rural Payment Agency plans to replace the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) in England with delinked payments in 2024. BPS will end after the 2023 scheme year.

RPA plans to make delinked payments each year from 2024 to 2027; you can find further information on [GOV.UK Delinked payments page](#).

## Need extra support?

*We understand that it can be difficult to keep up to date with all the changes affecting the farming industry, and that the amount of information that is available can be daunting. The [FAS](#) is here to help. 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.



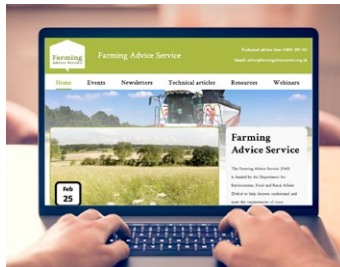
# How can we help you?

## 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 the relevant regulations. Our newsletter also provides articles on topics that are complementary to cross compliance, such as practices that 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.

## Technical articles available on the FAS website

The FAS and partners have 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:

- [Nutrient Management and Farming Rules for Water](#)
- [Environment Agency initial prospects for irrigation – forecast for 2023](#)
- [Reducing agricultural emissions of ammonia](#)
- [Supporting farmers to become resilient](#)
- [Net zero in agriculture](#)

## FAS launches new modules on the online training portal

The next online training modules are now available on the [FAS training portal](#).

In addition to the modules on cross compliance and net zero emissions in agriculture, there are two new modules available: **Farming Rules for Water** and **Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)**.

The training modules are open to anyone who wishes to [register](#); registrants qualify for two BASIS CPD points for completing each end-of-module quiz.

## Watch our webinar recordings and listen to our podcasts

If you missed our latest webinar “Practical Nutrient Management Planning” on 29 March, you can watch the recording on our [webinar pages](#).

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

The latest podcast on the **Future Farm Resilience Fund**, as well as our episode featuring **an introduction to nutrient management with Mel Holloway**, are [now available online](#).

# GAEC 1 Rule Reminder: Establishment of buffer strips along watercourses



Under the Cross Compliance Rules, [GAEC 1: Establishment of buffer strips along watercourses](#) is in place to protect watercourses against pollution and run-off from agricultural sources. This article summarises the Cross Compliance 2023 requirements and exceptions, and gives tips and guidance on how to make best use of buffer strips on farm.

'Buffer strips' is the term used to describe land which is maintained in permanent vegetation to protect watercourses from pollution and agricultural run-off. The term 'watercourses' refers to all surface waters, which include lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, canals, coastal water, estuaries and field ditches (it also includes temporarily dry watercourses).

## What you must do

- **Maintain a green cover:** All reasonable steps should be taken to maintain green cover within 2m of the centre of a watercourse or field ditch, or to land from the edge of the watercourse or field ditch to 1m on the landward side of the top of the bank.

### *Exception:*

You do not have to maintain a green cover if you have permission from the RPA.

- **Produce and keep a holding risk map:** If you spread organic manure, a map should be produced to show a) all surface waters and land within 10m of them, and b) all springs, wells and boreholes on your land or within 50m of the boundary and land within 50m of them.

The map must be updated with any changes within three months from the date of the change.

- [MAGIC maps](#) can be used to create a map, or [CSF's NVZ guide](#) includes an example of a risk map.
- **Top tip:** If your land is in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) you can use the same map for GAEC 1 compliance.



## GAEC 1 Rule Reminder: Establishment of buffer strips along watercourses



### What to avoid

- Applying manufactured N within 2m or organic manure within 10m of surface water.
- Applying organic manure within 50m of a spring, well or borehole.

#### Exceptions:

- Applying organic manure can be reduced from within 10m to 6m of surface water if using precision equipment e.g., trailing hose, dribble bar or shallow injector.
- Livestock manure can be spread within 10m of surface water if land is managed for breeding wader birds or as species rich semi-natural grasslands. Restrictions for this exception can be found under the [Cross Compliance Guidance](#).

### Application of fertilisers and pesticides

Avoid cultivating or applying fertiliser or pesticides within 2m of the centre of a watercourse or field ditch, or to land from the edge of the watercourse or field ditch to 1 metre on the landward side of the top of the bank of a watercourse or field ditch.

#### Exceptions:

- You can use pesticides for spot application to control certain weeds. A list of the weeds can be found under the [Cross Compliance Guidance](#).
- You are establishing a green cover and the land is part of a newly created field.
- You are establishing a green cover and the land was previously outside the cross compliance scope.
- You have permission from the RPA.

### Buffer strips and GAEC 7b Public rights of way:

1-2m of public right of way can form a 'protection zone' along watercourses, in this case, the rules of GAEC 1 still apply but should not limit public access.

### Buffer strips and SMR1 Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ):

If your land is in a NVZ and you therefore follow the rules under SMR 1, you will automatically meet the requirements of GAEC 1 except the first requirement, to 'maintain a green cover'.

### Buffer strips and the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI):

Under the SFI arable and horticultural soils standard '[Action 4: Winter cover](#)' you can use areas of green cover or multi-species cover crops on your buffer strips. Under the SFI improved grassland soils standard '[Action 4: Establish and maintain herbal leys](#)' you can use herbal leys on your buffer strips.

### Further information:

Championing the Farmed Environment (CFE): [Further guidance on establishing a grass buffer strip](#) and [maximising the value of your field boundary](#).

If you have any questions or require further support on GAEC 1 or any cross compliance requirements, please contact the FAS helpline on 03000 200 301 or email [advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk](mailto:advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk).

## New rules for farmers and land managers page on GOV.UK

Defra is making it easier for you to find regulations on GOV.UK.

Defra know that farmers have difficulty finding information about regulations on GOV.UK. They are trialling a new page to make it easier. The page covers many farming activities and links to relevant guidance and regulations. The regulations haven't changed.

You can find out more in the [Making the rules for farming easier to find](#) blog post and have a look at [rules for farmers and land managers](#). If you have any suggestions to improve the page, you can get in touch with Defra here.

## New Animal health and welfare funding for farmers

Applications for the [Animal Health and Welfare Equipment and Technology grant](#) are now open.

The grant supports improvements in livestock health and welfare, offering between £1,000 and £25,000 towards the cost of items from the list in the guidance. They are open to livestock farmers who keep cattle, pigs, sheep, broilers or laying hens.

Find out more about the benefits these grants can bring for happier, healthier and more productive livestock which are good for your business by reading [Defra's new Farming blog post](#).

The application portal is open from 23 March until 15 June 2023.

If you're interested in applying, Defra encourages you to discuss the grant with your vet first, to get advice on which items would best help your livestock. Please also read the [guidance on GOV.UK](#) and the [full list of items on offer](#) before making an application.

These grants are the next step on the Animal Health and Welfare

Pathway. Like other parts of the Pathway, such as the funded annual health and welfare review, they have been developed through careful co-design work with farmers, academics, vets and industry groups.



## Consultation launched on proposed registration requirements for all bird keepers in Great Britain

The UK Government is seeking views on plans to make it compulsory for all **poultry and other captive bird keepers** to register their bird(s) with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

It is currently mandatory for a person who is a keeper of 50 or more poultry at any single premises to register their birds on the Great Britain Poultry Register by providing specified information on the birds. The information on the register enables the government to communicate with poultry keepers quickly, manage any potential disease outbreak and carry out outbreak-related activities effectively.

These proposals are part of efforts to tackle Avian influenza.

The government welcomes all responses to the [public consultation](#) and invite individuals to share this opportunity with others. Responses will be used to help refine proposals and inform policy decisions on how the UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government will proceed with any subsequent legislative change.





# Managing livestock and public access

*With the annual turnout of cattle well underway, and the Easter break approaching, more people will be visiting the countryside. It is important to keep visitors as safe as possible on your farm by ensuring that risks to them from livestock are minimised.*

The [Countryside Code: advice for land managers](#) pages on GOV.UK give advice on a range of subjects for farmers, including creating a safe farm environment and managing cattle and public access.

The Health and Safety Executive provides on-line guidance for farmers on [cattle and public access in England and Wales](#). This summarises your responsibilities and provides a checklist and advice on how to manage livestock and public access on your farm. It recommends trying to avoid keeping cattle, particularly with calves at foot, in fields with public

access, but gives recommendations on what do if this is not practical.

The [Countryside Code](#) provides advice for people visiting the countryside on how to act responsibly and respect farmland and farm practices, such as keeping dogs under control, closing gates, not starting fires etc. You can provide appropriate signage on your farm to help people understand how to stay safe, and keep livestock safe, whilst using public rights of way.

Farming and land-owner organisations also provide advice on your responsibilities and have advice on managing livestock in areas of public access:

[Public and livestock safety: Top tips for fencing footpaths – NFUonline](#) and [Tips on staying legal with bulls and cows near footpaths – Farmers Weekly](#).

## Legislation:

In general, you have a legal duty of care under [the Occupier's Liability Act 1957](#) towards people visiting or crossing your land e.g., walking on public footpaths or on open access land. This duty also extends to people potentially trespassing.

Under [Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) both employers and those who are self-employed (i.e., most farmers) have an obligation to ensure that people outside their employment, or work activities, are not exposed to unnecessary health and safety risks, which could include livestock management.

Under the [Animals Act 1971](#) the keeper of an animal has a duty of care to prevent the animal from causing harm to others, whether this is a known dangerous species or a domesticated breed that may sometimes cause harm – such as cattle. Under the Act, the keeper of an animal is strictly liable for any harm or damage which may have been caused by it, regardless of whether or not the keeper/owner was at fault.

[Section 59 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981](#) bans the keeping of bulls in fields crossed by a right of way, unless they are under the age of 10 months or not of a recognised dairy breed, and they are accompanied by cows or heifers. Recognised dairy breeds are: Ayrshire, British Friesian, British Holstein, Dairy Shorthorn, Guernsey, Jersey and Kerry.

# Share your views on practices to reduce ammonia emissions through a series of online focus groups

*You are invited to take part in an online focus group to share your views on practices to reduce ammonia emissions.*

The UK's Clean Air Strategy highlights that agriculture is responsible for 88% of UK emissions of ammonia gas, which 'over-fertilises' natural habitats with nitrogen and combines with other pollutants to produce fine Particulate Matter pollution, which is harmful to human health.

Ammonia emissions in agriculture can be released at different stages of the manure management cycle, and [practices to reduce them](#) include using slurry spreading equipment, such as a trailing shoe or covering manure/slurry stores.

**Information on the level of uptake and challenges to farmers is lacking and the focus groups will be used to understand this more.**

The focus groups will bring together farmers from a range of farm sizes and expertise to provide feedback on the practicalities, benefits, costs and barriers to implementing ammonia mitigation practices, and what could be done to overcome these.

You do not need any specialist knowledge; all information you can share on your own experience will be valued and it will be an interactive session. All comments made during the focus groups will be recorded anonymously.

## The focus groups

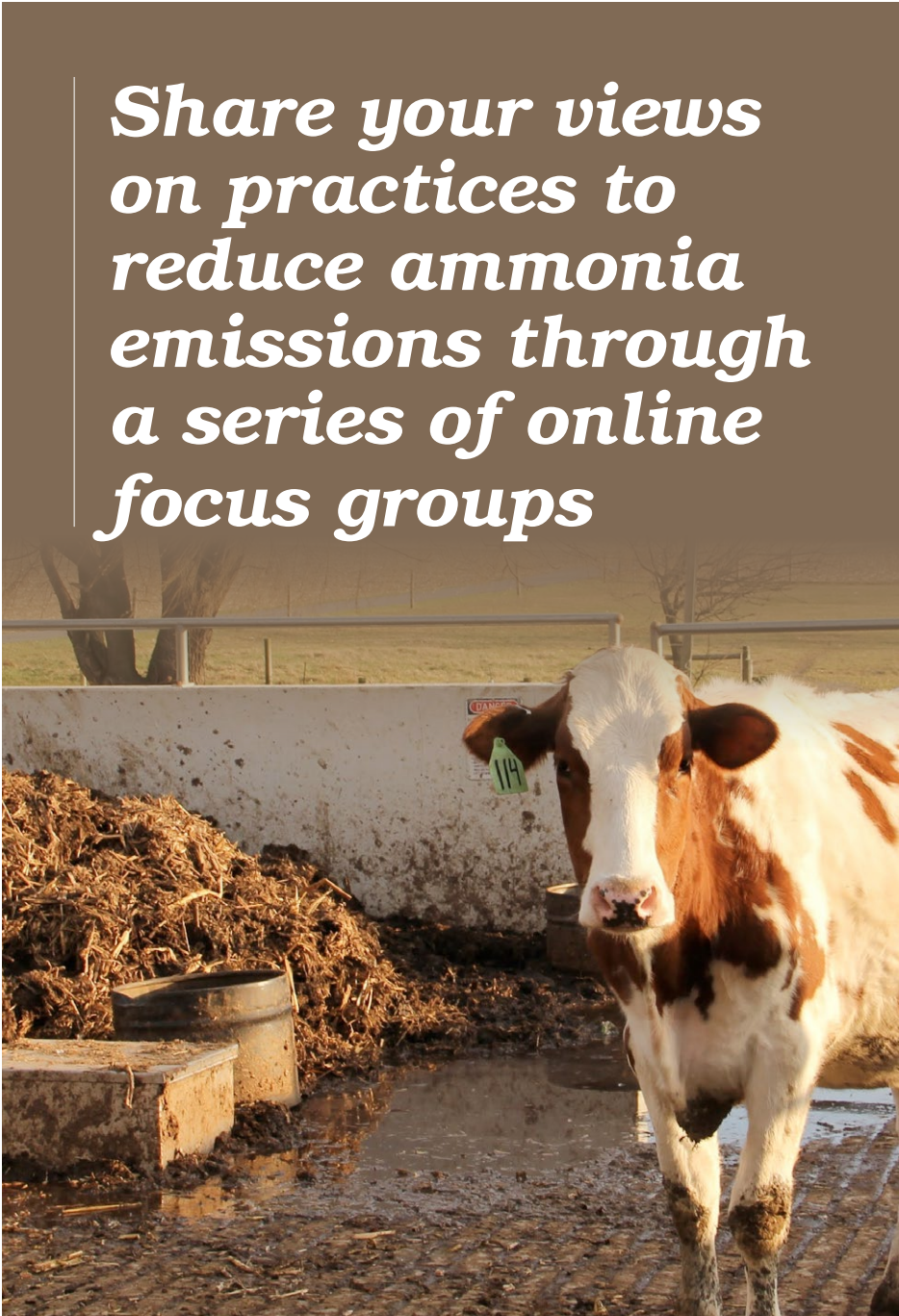
Please follow link to register an interest (places are limited to 10):

- [Mixed sector focus group](#)  
Wednesday 19th April, 12 noon - 2pm
- [Pig sector focus group](#)  
Wednesday 26th April, 12 noon - 2pm
- [Poultry sector focus group](#)  
Wednesday 3rd May 12 noon - 2pm

The findings from the focus groups will be used to support wider Ricardo research as part of the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Public Health Research (PHR) programme. The programme is focused on the environmental and health impacts from ammonia in agriculture, with a particular interest in the dairy, pig and poultry sectors.

If you have any questions, please email [Aim-Health@ricardo.com](mailto:Aim-Health@ricardo.com).

If you are unable to attend a focus group, but would like to share your views on ammonia, please [complete this quick 5 minute survey](#). There is an opportunity to enter into a prize draw to win a £50 Amazon voucher for completing the survey (the T&C's are provided in the survey).





# Trees on farms – *the latest updates*

## **Woods Mean Business: how woodland creation can help a thriving farm diversify its income**

The Forestry Commission's Woods Mean Business campaign (supported through Defra's Nature for Climate Fund) is running throughout the spring and aims to support farmers and landowners who are considering woodland creation to increase their income.

Through this campaign, the Forestry Commission is promoting how woodland creation can help farmers diversify their business and generate reliable revenue streams through the sale of carbon units, timber and wood fuel. There are additional opportunities from the development of leisure and recreational activities, and information on how woodland creation can also boost farm productivity.

Factors such as finances, space and soil will influence what avenues are available to each business, but farms with as little as one hectare can make woodland creation work for them.

The Forestry Commission has developed a new set of resources highlighting the direct and indirect financial benefits of woodland creation and some of the opportunities available:

- **Woods Mean Business [video](#)** showcasing how woodland creation can offer business diversification and boost revenue.
- **More detailed information** in an [online guide](#) that covers each income avenue.
- **An [infographic](#)** demonstrating how every part of a tree can be used to generate income.
- **Forestry Commission [blog](#)** on layering different grants to create woodland and what to think about before you consider diversifying.



## Trees on farms – the latest updates

### The Woodland Carbon Guarantee – applications are now open

The Forestry Commission has published information on woodland creation options to help farm businesses diversify and generate reliable revenue streams.

This includes from the sale of woodland carbon, whilst delivering environmental benefits that support land management goals, nature, and society. Carbon markets present an opportunity for land managers to sell the carbon that new woodlands will sequester, while at the same time helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

[The Woodland Carbon Guarantee](#) provides the option to sell captured carbon to the government for a guaranteed price every five or ten years up to 2055/56. This provides an additional long-term income from woodland. Land managers can also choose to sell the credits on the open market rather than to the government when the time to sell comes.

In the private markets woodland creation projects can generate returns from the sale of woodland carbon to companies wanting to offset, with carbon prices ranging from £10 to £30+ per unit. There are different factors that can affect your carbon unit prices, more information on this can be found in the Forestry Commission's [Woods and Carbon fact sheet](#).

Registering with the [Woodland Carbon Code](#) (WCC) is the first step towards generating income from the sale of official carbon units sequestered by new woodland. You must register your woodland creation project with the WCC before planting trees. You can then apply to participate in a Woodland Carbon Guarantee auction to sell your carbon credits to the government for a guaranteed price that is index-linked.

There are also grants available to help you plan your woodland and plant your trees, such as the [Woodland Creation Planning Grant](#), and the [England Woodland Creation Offer](#), which you can apply for alongside the WCC and the Guarantee.

#### The Woodland Carbon Guarantee: upcoming auction (auction no. 7)

Following customer feedback, the Forestry Commission has made some changes for the seventh auction, including removal of project categories and the publication of the reserve price. To find out more about the Woodland Carbon Guarantee process, including how to apply, please visit the [Getting started with the Woodland Carbon Guarantee](#) webpages.

The next Woodland Carbon Guarantee auction will take place from 12:00 noon on Monday 15 May to 12:00 noon on Sunday 21 May 2023. **The application deadline to take part in the auction is 23:59 on Sunday 30 April 2023. To apply, or for more information, [visit gov.uk](#).**

For further information on successful Woodland Carbon Guarantee projects, read the Forestry Commission's [new case study](#) which looks at why two landowners applied (on 3- and 6-hectare sites), or delve deeper into how woodland income from grants, carbon, and timber stack up in our 10 and 100 hectare financial case studies available [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.

- [Animal Health and Welfare grants: apply now.](#)  
These grants, of between £1,000 and £25,000, go towards the cost of items from a list which are designed to improve the health and welfare of livestock. In this post, Defra shares more about the grant, why you might want to consider it and how to apply.
- [The science behind the Sustainable Farming Incentive \(SFI\).](#)  
In this post, Defra shares scientific examples of how the actions within the SFI can support businesses and bring about positive environmental outcomes whilst maintaining food production.
- [Grants available in 2023.](#)  
In this post, Defra gives a roundup of the grants on offer in 2023, including:
  - Research, development and innovation
  - Automation and robotics
  - Productivity and slurry management
  - Tree health
  - Animal health and welfare
  - Water management.
- [Watch: How the Sustainable Farming Incentive works hand in hand with arable crop production.](#)  
In this video case study from the Isle of Wight, SFI agreement holder Caroline Knox explains how the SFI works hand in hand with commercial maize and rye production on her farm.
- [Farming podcast: Next steps for environmental land management.](#)  
In this episode, Lisa Warne talks to John Renner and his son, Charlie. John farms on the border of the Northumberland National Park between Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick.

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## 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](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/).