



Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**

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AN ROINN

**Talmhaíochta agus
Forbartha Tuaithe**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Fairms an
Kintra Fordèrin**

FAS news

Farm Advisory System

newsletter

Spring 2016

Issue 04

Foreword

Martin McKendry,
Head of Development Service, CAFRE

I am pleased to introduce the fourth edition of the 'Farm Advisory System' (FAS) newsletter. This bulletin focuses on key advisory messages to help you realise the benefits of area-based schemes and EU support while minimising the risk of penalties from inspections.

What is FAS?

The EU requires all member states to have a Farm Advisory System (FAS) to inform farmers of their obligations in the following five areas:

1. Cross-Compliance regulations
2. Greening regulations and Land Eligibility
3. Rural Development Programme
4. Water Framework Directive
5. Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive

This issue of FAS News contains articles on a range of FAS topics including Cross-Compliance changes for 2016 on herd registers and sheep tagging, the safe use of pesticides and farmyard pollution. In addition two articles are also included covering the Farm Family Key Skills Rural Development project and the benefits of online application for the Basic Payment Scheme.

A list of FAS training courses is provided in a reply paid postcard so please complete and

Forthcoming Events

• CAFRE/AFBI Suckler Beef Farm Walks

22/03/2016 on the farm of Stephen Maguire, Maguiresbridge, BT94 4PN

23/03/2016 on the farm of David McKinstry, Magherafelt, BT45 7TE

24/03/2016 on the farm of Michael Griffiths, Saintfield, BT24 7EY

For further details and to register for any of the above events please call Development Service Administration, CAFRE at 028 9442 6716

• Bracken Control Event

Mid to late April at CAFRE's Greenmount Campus, Antrim.

To book your place on this course please visit www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/bracken-control/

• Level II Agriculture Business Operations course for the Young Farmer Scheme

For further information and to submit an expression of interest for the 2016/17 course please go to this website. www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/young-farmers-payment-regional-reserve/

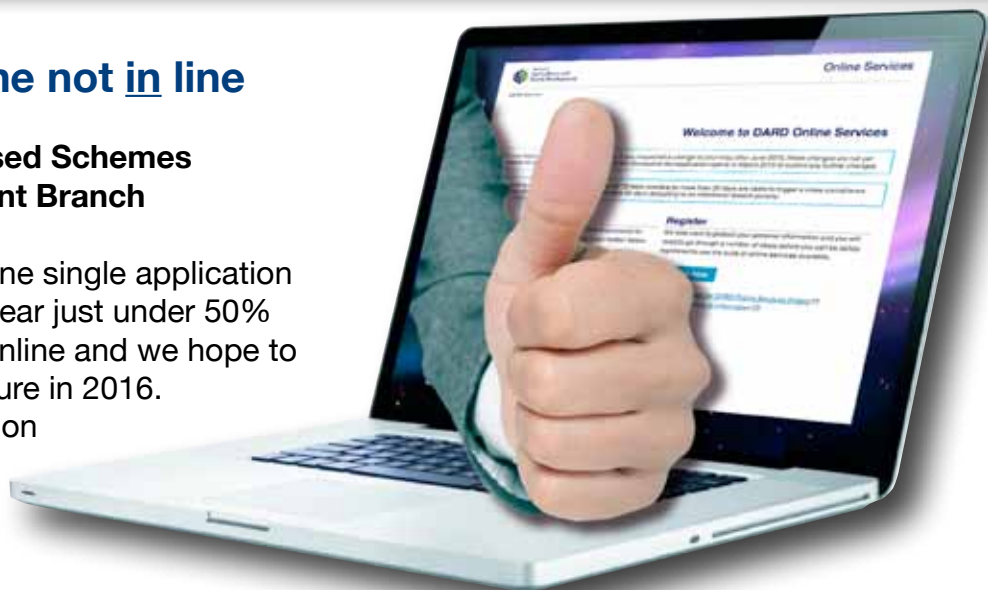
return the card to find out more about the various topics.

SAF 2016 – Get online not in line

Micky McTernan, Area-Based Schemes Organisational Development Branch

DARD will open its 2016 online single application period in early March. Last year just under 50% of applications were made online and we hope to significantly increase this figure in 2016.

This year the online application has several new features with even more benefits than before.



Error Alerts.

This new feature will alert the user to errors which means that mistakes (e.g. claiming more than you should) can be avoided which will help to make claims more accurate and prevent penalties. Help buttons are also available to provide advice on any issues that arise and these are not available on the paper SAF.

No need for paper maps.

Another important new feature is the ability to view and make changes to your map within your online Single Application and any changes you make will automatically update your field data tables. There is now no need for paper maps. New and enhanced tools incorporated into the 2016 online single application make map changes easy as field boundary changes such as mergers and splits can all be recorded online. You can also add and remove fields from your claim. All this can be done while you complete your application form and, in most cases, will mean that a paper LPIS correction form is not required.

This year all farmers with an EFA requirement are obliged to make their application online and to facilitate this we are developing new and additional features to our online single application. These features will be ready by the beginning of April along with specific support.

Instant receipt.

Once your online SAF is submitted you will receive an instant receipt and a summary of your claim. You can also make changes to your application right up to the application closing date without normally having to complete any extra forms. If you would like help to get started, or at any stage during the completion of your application, please call DARD at 0300 200 7848. Staff will guide you through the process and answer any questions you have.

Completing your application online means that you can submit it at a time that suits you and you can avoid the last minute rush to a DARD office. This is why DARD is saying “get online not in line”.

Future plans.

From April 2016 DARD will be offering the facility to transfer Basic Payment Scheme Entitlements online.

Cross-Compliance changes for 2016

Ken Laverty, Area-based Schemes Operational Policy Branch

The way in which a number of Cross-Compliance rules relating to the identification and registration of cattle and sheep and goats are implemented changed on 1 January 2016.

Cross-Compliance requires all farmers who receive area based payments to comply with Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs). These measures help to protect public, animal and plant health, the environment and animal welfare.

Farmers must also comply with Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) standards which cover protection of water, minimum soil cover, prevention of soil erosion, maintenance of soil organic matter, retention of landscape features and avoidance of the deterioration of habitats.

Changes to SMR 7 (Cattle Identification and Registration):

- The herd register verifiable standard has been amended to allow the use of on-line herd registers. DARD published guidance for keepers on this in January 2016.
- For bovine animals found at inspection to have one ear tag missing, the threshold under which Cross-Compliance penalties will not be applied has been raised from 10% of animals within the herd or 20 animals (whichever is the lesser) to 15% of animals in the herd. This easement in approach has been backdated to the beginning of the 2014 scheme year and penalties applied using the 2014 threshold will be recalculated.
- A number of verifiable standards under SMR 7 require keepers to notify the births, deaths and movements of their bovine animals to

the Department within specific deadlines which are set out in the Cross-Compliance verifiable standards booklets. Until now when calculating Cross-Compliance penalties only late notifications identified during a Cross-Compliance Cattle Identification Inspection were taken into account. However, the European Commission has advised that DARD must take all late notifications made between the start of the scheme year up to, and including, the date of the completion of the inspection into consideration when calculating penalties. Therefore, from 1 January 2016 the records of any business selected for a Cross-Compliance inspection to assess compliance with SMR 7 will also be subject to an administrative check on APHIS.

This check will review the timeliness of each bovine notification the business was required to make in the period from the beginning of the scheme year to the end of the Cross-Compliance inspection. If the percentage of late notifications identified through the administrative check is equal to or below 30% a Cross-Compliance warning letter will be issued to this business. If the percentage is above 30% the late notification breaches will be included in the overall penalty calculation for the business. It is therefore important that farmers continue to make all their notifications within the required time limits.

Change to SMR 8 (Sheep and Goat Identification and Registration)

- Up until 31 December 2015, flock keepers were required to ensure that their sheep were correctly tagged before they leave the holding of origin or by 9 months of age. (6 months for intensively reared animals). Farmers were required to replace lost tags within 28 days.
- However from 1 January 2016 any flock keeper selected for inspection is required to present all of their sheep and/or goats to the Cross-Compliance inspector who will initially select 60 animals for inspection. The



A correctly tagged ewe and her two lambs. Please note these young lambs have been tagged for management purposes. Extensively reared lambs do not need to be tagged until they are 9 months old so long as they remain on the farm where they were born.

inspector will expect keepers to have their sheep gathered and available for selection when they arrive. The inspector will examine the animals to ensure that they have been correctly tagged and check the holding flock register to ensure that proper records are being kept. The European Commission has clarified that for Cross-Compliance purposes DARD must assess the animals in the condition in which they are presented rather than their condition at the end of the inspection. If a significant number of animals are not properly tagged then potentially all of the animals in the herd/flock will be inspected to satisfy the requirements of EU law.

- Where discrepancies are identified this is a breach of the EU Cross-Compliance tagging standard and the farm business will receive at least a warning letter. DARD will re-inspect a percentage of these cases to ensure that compliance is achieved. Inspections will not, however, lead to any financial penalty if:

- There is evidence that the animals inspected have been tagged in both ears. DARD must find no more than 1 animal which has never been tagged.

- No more than 30% of the animals inspected have missing tags. This 30% total includes sheep which have lost either 1 or 2 tags providing there is evidence that they have been tagged at some time.
- All of the animals selected for inspection are recorded in the farmer's holding register.
- Records are made in the holding register if/when animals are retagged.

Please see the further article on this topic which is also in this newsletter.

A letter was issued at the end of 2015 to area based payment applicants to inform them of these changes.

Full details of the Northern Ireland Cross-Compliance verifiable standards is available on the DARD website at www.dardni.gov.uk/articles/what-cross-compliance.

Sheep / Goat Tag Inspections In 2016

David Kyle, Veterinary Service

Key points on sheep and goat tag inspections for flock owners following the revised rules for 2016.

General advice

- Tag your animals as soon as you see missing tags to avoid penalties;
- Keep your flock/herd register up to date;
- Keep your movement documents up to date – these will be checked against your flock register.

Important points to note for inspections

- Under EU Rules, 3% of all active sheep flocks and goat herds are inspected annually by DARD. Most of these are selected on a risk basis, but some are selected at random, so no matter what size or type of flock or herd you own, you may be inspected.
- These inspections must be carried out to the satisfaction of EU Commission.
- If your flock is selected, all your animals will be inspected – this means the inspector must be able to see and count them all, and to select animals from them for closer examination.
- Individually selected animals will then be examined by the inspector. These animals will be selected from all batches in your flock. They will have their identity fully checked and compared against the entry in your flock register.

Replace missing tags to avoid penalties at inspection.



- The extent to which you are considered to have complied with the tagging rules will depend on the tags that were present in your sheep at the start of the inspection and not on completion of the inspection – this is **new** for 2016.
- If any animal is found to be missing tags you will get an automatic warning letter and you will be required to rectify shortcomings within 28 days. This will have consequences if you are in breach again next year. If more than 30% of the examined sheep have lost one or both tags, or if more than one of the sheep examined has never been tagged but should have been, you will be penalised financially.
- Your flock register and movement documents will also be checked and shortcomings will be penalised.

For more detailed information please refer to the previous article in this newsletter on Cross-Compliance changes for 2016. For further information on all of the sheep and goat tagging rules and the Cross-Compliance Verifiable Standards applicable to sheep and goats, please contact your local DVO at 0300 200 7840 or consult the DARD website at the following links:

www.dardni.gov.uk/articles/identification-registration-and-movement-sheep-and-goats

<https://www.dardni.gov.uk/publications/cross-compliance-verifiable-standards>

Farmyard pollution control to meet Water Framework objectives and prevent Nitrates breaches

Alan Morrow, DARD Countryside Management Delivery Branch

Agriculture uses approximately 75 per cent of the total land area in NI and as such, it has a huge influence on the water environment. Some of this is negative with farming being one of the main contributors to pollution of our rivers and lakes. For a water body to achieve Water Framework Directive (WFD) 'good status,' the water quality must be of a good standard across a range of chemical and biological parameters.

The Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) is the key measure for implementing the Water Framework Directive. The NAP measures are to improve the efficient use of manures and chemical fertilisers on farms and reduce the nutrient inputs to our water environment from agriculture.

Effective prevention of pollution from farms is an important aspect of protecting water quality. Farmyard pollution can have considerable implications for the farm business, including paying fines and restoration costs, losing various farm payments. It is the biggest cause



Typical fungus growth in a polluted drain which was caused by winter run-off from a farmyard.

of NAP breaches and damages the image of the wider agriculture industry. It is fair to say that for some of the WFD standards it would not be easy to detect a problem with a visual assessment of the waterway. However, constant vigilance involving regular assessment of waterways and the farmyard infrastructure can often uncover tell-tale signs indicating that all may not be well and prompt remedial action to prevent pollution.

Here are a few checks that you could carry out to improve pollution control on your farm.

Check your farm waterways regularly

Check all waterways on the farm on a regular basis for signs of contamination. Indications of pollution include an unpleasant odour, discolouration or the presence of froth, foam or fungus. Pay particular attention to the appearance of the waterway above and below all discharge points as any change may indicate pollution. Another feature to look out for during the growing season is luxuriant growth of vegetation within the waterway which may be a sign of nutrient enrichment. In winter it is easy to overlook checking waterways as field operations are less frequent. This is a mistake as farmyard use will usually be different from other times of year and run-off may well contaminate drains which are normally clean water channels.



Routinely check that the river bed downstream of an outfall is as clean as that observed upstream.

Silos and Silage Effluent

Silage effluent is one of the most potent sources of pollution on the farm as it is approximately 200 times more polluting than untreated sewage. Remember that effluent can continue to flow for a long time after grass has been ensiled and it remains a potential pollutant even after considerable dilution. Check that the silo walls, floor, wall-floor joints and effluent channel are in good condition. Regularly check the level of effluent in your tanks and ensure that effluent channels are clear of obstruction. Look for signs of effluent escape as often grass will appear scorched if effluent leakage is occurring.

Slurry tanks

Monitor the level of slurry or effluent in tanks at regular intervals to ensure that there is no risk of overflowing and also look out for signs of leakage. These include finding a lower volume than expected which may mean that slurry or effluent is escaping. On the other hand, more effluent or slurry may be discovered than expected - this too may point to a leaking tank but this time as a result of water leaking into the tank through the wall or floor. However, the most probable reason for finding the tank fuller than expected is that rain water has entered the tank because of poor clean and /or dirty water separation. Please note well that when making these checks never enter a tank as there is always the risk of gas. Only people who have the proper training and equipment should ever enter a tank. In an emergency, contact the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service who have the right equipment and training to deal with the situation.

Reduce the volume of dirty water produced

Always aim to minimise the area of the farmyard which is accessible by livestock. This will have a considerable effect on the volume of contaminated run-off which has to be collected and is the most cost-effective means of increasing slurry storage capacity. In addition to this, ensure that all spoutings and downpipes are in place and divert all clean yard and roof water in a sealed pipe to the nearest watercourse – clean water should not be allowed to mix with dirty water.

Pollution risk assessment

Our farm waterways can support a wide range of aquatic life, much of which is very sensitive to pollution. Remember slurry, manure and other farm effluents, even in small quantities, can have severe consequences if allowed to enter a waterway. By introducing a simple pollution risk assessment into your routine, a lot of potentially damaging and costly incidents can be avoided. This will help meet our challenging WFD target of 70% of all water bodies achieving “good status” by 2021.

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The Water Framework Directive – challenging targets for 2021

Siobhan Bowers, Environmental Farming Branch

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) Second Cycle River Basin Management Plans for the period 2015-2021 were published in December 2015.

What is the status of your local rivers and lakes?

Since 2009, progress has been made in increasing the number of our waterways that meet WFD “good” status. However, we were starting from a low base, with only 28% of water bodies at Water Framework Directive “good” status in 2009. By 2015, this has increased to 37% which demonstrates that measures such as the Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) Regulations are delivering improvements.

Across the EU, around 53% of all surface water bodies are estimated to be of at least “good” WFD status. Our target for the Second Cycle Plans is to achieve “good” status in 70% of water bodies in N.I. by 2021. While this is an ambitious target, it is achievable with a concerted effort to address all sources of water pollution including industry, domestic, sewage and farming.

It takes time to turn plans into changes on the ground. It also takes time for changes on the ground to show through in water monitoring results. The main problem across Europe is diffuse pollution which affects 90% of the EU rivers and 30% of its groundwaters. We need to continue our actions and efforts to reduce pollution from agriculture if we are to reach our target in 2021.

You can view and check the WFD status of your local rivers and lakes on the NIEA WFD webmapper at the link:

<http://maps.ehsni.gov.uk/wmuviewerplan2/>

Impacts of agricultural activities on WFD status

Agricultural activities may impact on water quality in several ways:

- direct impacts through run off or accidental releases of slurries and manures from farmyards, tanks, or during spreading activities. This is “point source” pollution.
- the long-term accumulation of nutrients, especially phosphorus, in soils over many years, which will lead to nutrient enrichment in rivers and lakes. This is “diffuse” pollution.
- Pesticide contamination.

River Basin Management Plans

The targeted approach for delivery of the River Basin Plans, which involves River Basin District Groups working in partnership with others, will continue for the Second Cycle Plans. One outcome from the last cycle of plans was the setting up of a Water Catchment Partnership to raise awareness of best practice when using pesticides in the garden or on the farm. This partnership aims to effectively tackle the problem of pesticides in the water environment, particularly in Drinking Water areas. The partnership includes representatives from the Ulster Farmers Union, NI Water, the Environment Agency, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise and the Voluntary Initiative.

The Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) Regulations are the basic measure to prevent water pollution from agricultural sources. However, the NAP will only be fully effective if all farmers comply with the Regulations, particularly in relation to preventing pollution of our waterways from slurry and effluent run off. It is essential that livestock manure and silage effluent storage facilities are maintained free of structural defect and managed to prevent seepage or run-off, directly or indirectly, into waterways. Therefore, you should carry out regular key checks of your storage facilities to identify any repairs that may require attention.

The Second Cycle Plans include additional agricultural measures to address diffuse and point source pollution from agriculture. These include, actions to improve water quality through Agri-environment schemes and Nutrient Management Planning. There are also measures in the Second Cycle Plans to address factors that affect fish populations and habitat.



Spreading by trailing shoe, or trailing hose increases nutrient efficiency and can help to reduce run off to waterways.

Actions farmers can take to improve water quality

In addition to complying with the NAP Regulations and checking your farmyard regularly to ensure it is not a source of pollution, you can contribute to improving water quality by:

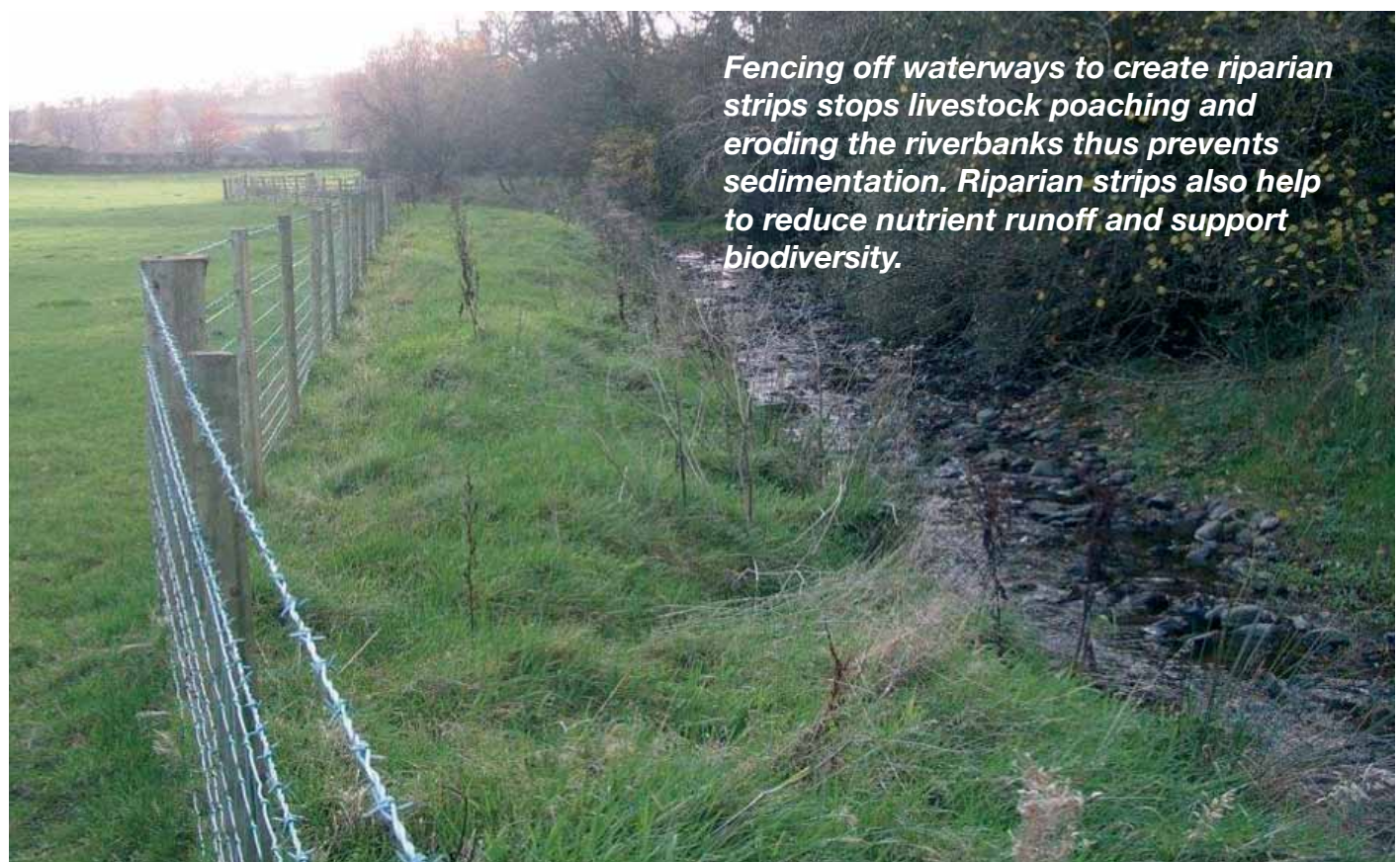
- Carrying out soil analysis and nutrient management planning.
- Spreading slurry by low emission equipment such as trailing shoe, trailing hose or soil injection.

Both these actions will help you to use manures most efficiently and therefore, can reduce chemical fertiliser costs.

- Preventing livestock from eroding riverbanks and poaching which causes sedimentation.
- Consider applying to the new agri-environment scheme, the Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS), when it opens later in 2016. The EFS will include options to create riparian margins to enhance riverbanks and improve water quality by reducing diffuse pollution.

Nitrates and Nutrient Management Plan Training

CAFRE provide a combined training course on Nitrates and Nutrient Management Planning. This course will help you to understand the Nitrates Regulations, interpret soil analysis results and draw up a nutrient management plan which is supported by CAFRE's online nutrient management tools. To book training and find out more please complete the enclosed reply paid postcard or contact CAFRE by calling 0300 200 7841 or email: developmentsservice.admin@dardni.gov.uk.



Fencing off waterways to create riparian strips stops livestock poaching and eroding the riverbanks thus prevents sedimentation. Riparian strips also help to reduce nutrient runoff and support biodiversity.

Farmers advised that certificate of competence is needed for pesticide use

Deirdre O'Reilly, Environmental Farming Branch

Farmers are being reminded that they must obtain an approved certificate of competence when attending any training courses on pesticide application.

The assessment must be completed by an assessor who is approved by either City and Guilds or Lantra. It is essential to ensure that training is delivered fully and that the certificate of competence received will meet the legal requirements. If not then any certificate or records of training received will not be considered valid during an inspection.

While training is not compulsory prior to assessment it is recommended. Training for Pesticide Application via a Boom Sprayer (PA1 & PA2) is recommended to take a total of 12 hours and the subsequent assessment would typically take 2.5 to 3.5 hours.

Pesticide training, assessment and certification are available from a range of providers including CAFRE which provides training, assessment and certification by City & Guilds at both Greenmount and Loughry Campuses.

Training, assessment and certification can be arranged at CAFRE by:

1. Enrolling online at: os.cafre.ac.uk/website/onlineservices/courses.aspx (Select Industry Training – Agriculture) or
2. Contacting the Industry Training Administration Team directly by email: industry.trainingadmin@dardni.gov.uk or Telephone: 028 9442 6880

A full list of the specified certificates which meet the legal requirements under the Sustainable Use Directive is available on the DARD website at:

www.dardni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health/pesticides-use-and-regulations

These certificates are currently only available through City and Guilds or Lantra.



Farmers are reminded to make sure that their pesticide application certificates are from an approved awarding body.

Understanding a Pesticide Product Label

Karen Hughes, Environmental Farming Branch

The law requires that only authorised plant protection products shall be sold, supplied, used, stored or advertised. It is the responsibility of all farmers and contractors to understand pesticide product labels and ensure that they only use pesticides that are approved for the UK and at the correct rate and method.

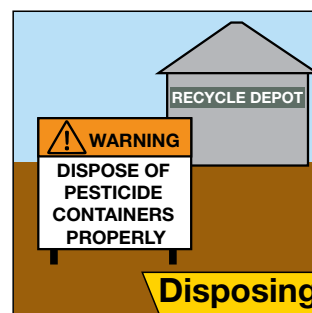
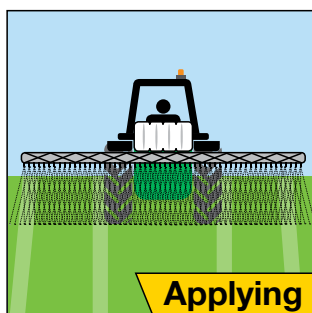
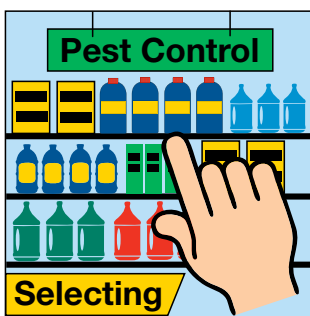
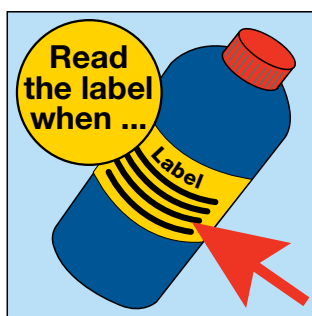
MAPP – Ministry Approved Pesticide Product

Only pesticides that have a MAPP approval number on the label can be used. This identifies that the product has been tested and is safe to use for the purposes stated. You are committing an offence if you store and use a foreign product which does not have a MAPP approved number, even if the label supplied with it is in English.

Products sold in the South may have an identical label as those sold in the North of Ireland but they can only be used in the North if they have a MAPP number, or if the product has been given a parallel import license approval. You can check whether a particular pesticide has a parallel import license by searching for the product on the Pesticide register of approved products at <https://secure.pesticides.gov.uk/pestreg/>

You must:

- Only use approved pesticides.
- Use pesticides in accordance with the conditions attached to the approval and the information specified on the product label.
- Read and understand all the information contained in the label. Labels are legal documents providing direction on how to mix, apply, store, and dispose of a pesticide product.
- Monitor stocks to ensure that MAPP numbers are still current and approved uses have not changed. If unsure consult a BASIS approved agronomist or check the CRD website at <https://secure.pesticides.gov.uk/pestreg/>



Label Information

The label provides important information about the use of the pesticide. Be sure to read the entire label before each use of the pesticide. The label information should include:

Instructions for use

These usually provide information on:

- When to use, e.g. at what stage of development, frequency of use;
- Where to use, e.g. in which situations, on what crops; for example products labelled for use only on potatoes cannot be used on any other crop;
- How to use, e.g. shake well before use.

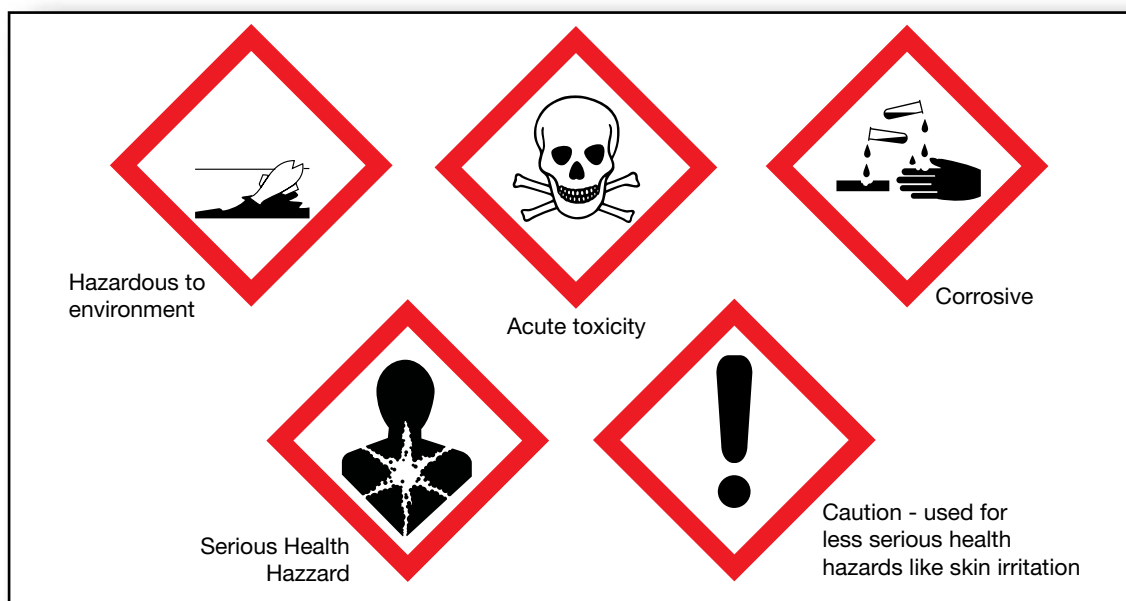
Safety Instructions

This section of the label normally includes:

- Protection during use, e.g. Wash hands and exposed skin after use or wear suitable protective gloves;
- Storage and disposal, e.g. Store in original container.

Symbols to look out for

You will have to carry out a COSHH assessment if the label has any hazard symbol. The most common hazard symbols are shown below:



Field of Use Restrictions

For example, *for use only as an Agricultural or Horticultural herbicide.*

Environmental Protection

This section indicates if the product can cause environmental damage – if it is harmful to wildlife, fish, pollinators or water bodies such as ponds, lakes, rivers, streams and springs. Any buffer zones stated must be abided by.

Maximum Dose Rate/Application Rate

The maximum dose rate is the rate of the pesticide allowed as a single application. This may be given as a rate of product per hectare or as a ratio of product to carrier, usually water. The label may recommend lower dose rates for specific uses – if unsure consult a BASIS approved agronomist.

Maximum Number of Treatments or Maximum Total Dose

This is normally stated as a condition per crop or per season and refers to the number of times you can treat the crop or the total amount of pesticide you can apply per hectare.

Latest time of application before harvest, replanting or re-entry interval

For example, at transplanting or the minimum interval between applications to the following crops must be observed. Apple, Pears: 14 days or a period of 14 days must be allowed between application of the product and the harvest of the crop.

Crop Specific Recommendations

A Crop Specific Recommendation will apply to a given crop or situation and will always be lower than the Maximum Dose Rate.

Application Rate or Volume Rate

This is the total amount of liquid (pesticide + water) to be applied to a given area, usually one hectare. Minimum and/or maximum rates may be given.

Example of an Application Rates table shown on a label

Target Weeds	Hydraulic Sprayers	Amount of Product	Treated Area	Water Volume
Emergent weeds e.g. Reed, Grasses, Water Cress	Boom Sprayer	5.0 litres	1 ha	200-400 litres Optimum 250 litres
	Knapsack Sprayer	50 ml	100 m ²	2.0 to 4.0 litres
Floating Weeds e.g. Water-lilies	Boom Sprayer	6.0 litres	1 ha	100-200 litres
	Knapsack Sprayer	60 ml	100 m ²	4.0 litres

Additional information and pesticides application training courses

CAFRE provides training on the safe use of pesticides and the PA1 course includes training on the use of labels. Training can be arranged by:

1. Enrolling online at: os.cafre.ac.uk/website/onlineservices/courses.aspx
(select Industry Training - Agriculture) or by
2. Contacting the Industry Training Administration Team directly:
 - Email: industry.trainingadmin@dardni.gov.uk
 - Telephone: 028 9442 6880

New Training Programme for N.I. Farmers

Finbarr Daly, Rural Training and Development Branch.

In the coming months, under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and as a part of the Farm Business Improvement Scheme, CAFRE will be launching the Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) training initiative. This is a sister Programme to the recently launched Business Development Groups (BDG). The FFKS is designed to complement the BDG initiative in that it is aimed at those farmers who may not be able to commit the time required for the more in depth training which will be available under BDG. That said farmers who participate in the FFKS programme will be able to avail of a suite of comprehensive training courses which will cover key areas such as: Business Planning; Health and Safety; Animal Health and New Technologies. The training courses are being designed to help farmers manage their farm business more effectively and to learn about their legal obligations under each of these areas.

There is no doubt about the challenges that are facing farmers today from increasing input costs and reduced farm gates prices. The planned training under FFKS is designed to help farmers with their decision making in this challenging environment. Information about the roll out of the training programmes will be published over the coming months and we look forward to seeing many of you avail of this training initiative.

How do you find out more?

If you would like more information on how you could enrol on the Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) programme, please e-mail kt.admin@dardni.gov.uk or call CAFRE Knowledge Transfer Administration on 028 9442 6790.



John Sands, far right, CAFRE Senior Development Adviser, discussing Farm Family Key Skills with the Goudy family from the Ards peninsula.

Rodenticides Stewardship Regime

Luke Le Rendu, Health and Safety Executive.

In July 2015 the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU) launched, a Rodenticide Stewardship Regime for the UK to ensure that risks from using rodenticides are properly managed. This Regime was established following discussions with Government and other interested stakeholders, including the UFU and other farming organisations. It will help to provide robust assurance that the continued use of rodenticides is following a hierarchy of risk controls for rodents and it promotes responsible use and good practice by all suppliers and professional users.

The use of Anticoagulant Rodenticides to control rodents outdoors presents a higher level of risk to other animals such as predatory birds and mammals than would normally be considered acceptable. However the Government recognises that, despite these risks, the outdoor use of rodenticides is sometimes necessary as part of properly managed rodent control strategies. From 31 March 2016 stewardship-labelled rodenticides products for outdoor professional use will require compliance with stewardship conditions. Non-stewardship-labelled products will be gradually removed from the market and they will cease to be available on 1 April 2017. To obtain professional quantities of rodenticides, farmers who are a member of a relevant farm assurance scheme will need to meet the requirements for stewardship by 31 December 2017, as part of the agreed transitional arrangements. The earlier deadline of 1 April 2017 is when all other users, who are not part of a relevant farm assurance scheme, need to comply with the requirements of stewardship to access professional quantities of products.



Please check the 4 options in the article to make sure that you use rodenticides safely and legally.

Under the stewardship regime farmers have **4 options** for dealing with the rodents:

1. Purchase and use of professional rodenticide packs carrying 'stewardship conditions' labels, by being in possession of a certificate demonstrating professional competence from an approved training programme and awarding organisation recognised by CRRU.
2. Employ a professional pest controller.
3. Be a member of a farm assurance scheme which has among its standards a requirement for an audited programme of rodent pest management. This will apply only until the end of 2017.
4. Purchase and use amateur rodenticide products.

Additional Information

For further information of stewardship visit CRRU UK's website at:

<http://www.thinkwildlife.org/about-crru/>
Telephone: 019 2426 8433

Details of approved certification, acceptable at the point of sale for purchase of professional use Rodenticides (under the terms of the UK Rodenticide Stewardship Regime) can be found online at www.thinkwildlife.org/list-of-training-and-certification/

Training and certification can be obtained via the AHDB hub which is available online at www.ahdb.org.uk/projects/RodentControlHub.aspx

Information about Training Centres in Northern Ireland who provide approved training and certification can be obtained by contacting Paula Smyth from Lantra by telephone on 078 6790 8171 or by email to Paula.Smyth@lantra.co.uk



Integrated Pest Management

Deirdre O'Reilly, Environmental Farming Branch

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a key element of the EU Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (2009/128/EC). This Directive requires pesticide users to take action to minimise the use of pesticides through the implementation of IPM methods on their farms.

The UK National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (Plant Protection Products) sets out how the general principles of IPM should be implemented by all professional pesticide users.

The National Action Plan also requires all professional pesticide users to be trained and hold an accredited certificate of competence or work under the supervision of a certificate holder, where such supervision is being provided for the purposes of training. Certification must include training on IPM.

All professional pesticide users are expected to apply the general principles of IPM from 1st January 2014.

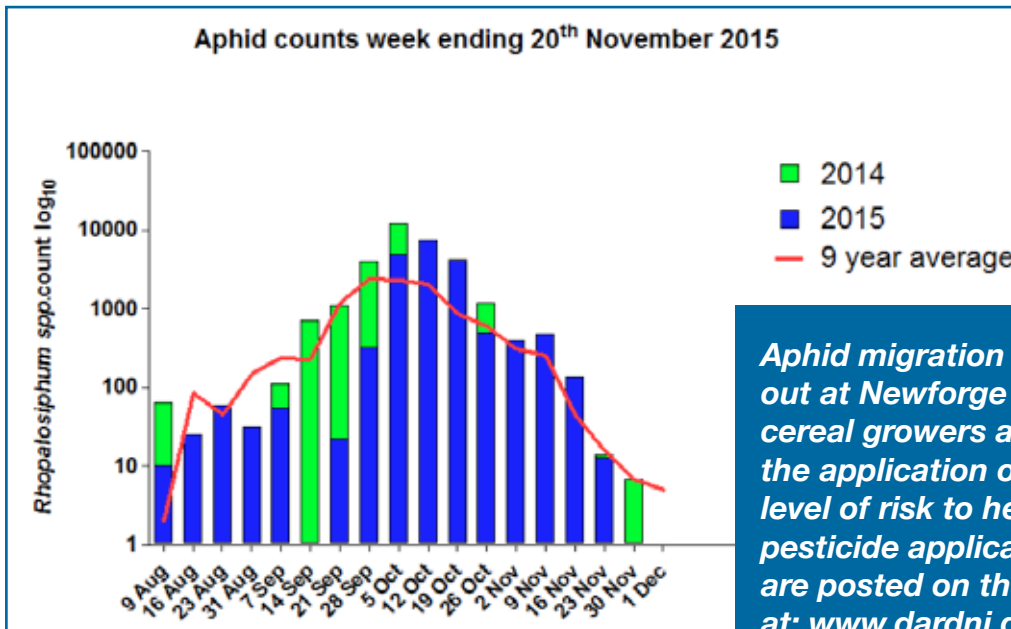
What is IPM?

IPM is a sustainable approach to managing pests by combining biological, cultural, physical and chemical tools in a way that minimises economic, health and environmental risks. IPM emphasises the growth of a healthy crop with the least possible disruption to agricultural ecosystems and encourages natural pest control mechanisms.

IPM is not a single pest control method but a series of pest management evaluations, decisions and controls. **Generally, a four-tier approach is followed:**

- **Prevention** - As a first line of pest or disease control aim to avoid situations where the pest or disease may become a threat. Plan to prevent, minimise and avoid pest and disease problems. A well devised crop rotation is a good starting point, together with consideration of:
 - cultivation techniques;
 - the use where appropriate of resistant or tolerant cultivars and standard or certified seed and planting material;
 - the use of balanced fertilisation, liming and irrigation or drainage practices;
 - the use of good hygiene measures (e.g. cleaning machinery);
 - the protection and enhancement of important beneficial organisms (e.g. by adequate plant protection measures or the utilisation of ecological infrastructures inside and outside production sites).
- **Monitor and identify pests** - Not all pests and/or diseases require control. Accurate identification allows appropriate control measures to be taken. This removes the possibility that unnecessary or incorrect pesticide applications will be used.
- **Set action thresholds** - This is when a pest population and/or a disease reaches a certain level, or environmental conditions are such that action should be taken to prevent economic loss.

- **Control** - When monitoring, identification and thresholds of pests and/or diseases indicate that action is needed, appropriate control measures can be taken. Non-chemical methods should be selected first e.g. mechanical weeding or trapping. If these are not available or do not work, targeted pesticide applications can be used. Field applications of non specific pesticides are the last resort.



Aphid migration monitoring is carried out at Newforge by AFBI to help cereal growers assess the need for the application of aphicides based on level of risk to help avoid unnecessary pesticide application. Monitoring details are posted on the DARD Crops website at: www.dardni.gov.uk/articles/barley-yellow-dwarf-virus-control



*The bird cherry-oat aphid *Rhopalosiphum padi* is the aphid responsible for transmission of barley yellow dwarf virus in cereals.*

Record Keeping

Professional pesticide users are expected to maintain records to demonstrate the application of the general principles of IPM.

- The Voluntary Initiatives Integrated Pest Management Plan is available online at www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/en/vi-schemes/ipm-plans. This plan can be completed by any farm or nursery enterprise that uses professional pesticides to produce crops, ornamentals, fodder or feed.
- The 'Application of IPM at user level' record sheet can be used for IPM record keeping purposes.
- DARD has also produced an Integrated Pest Management Guide to assist farmers with understanding the requirements of IPM. This guide, which includes an IPM record sheet is available on the DARD website at www.dardni.gov.uk/integrated-pest-management

Advice on IPM

When advice is required, professional pesticide users should obtain it from professionally qualified advisors who hold a BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection (Sale and Supply) or equivalent.

Benefits of IPM

- IPM allows producers to make informed decisions to manage their crops and minimise reliance on pesticides. It can therefore help to reduce costs.
- IPM can help maintain biodiversity, decrease pollution and lower the build-up of pesticide resistance.
- Use of IPM will help to demonstrate adherence to the Code of Practice for using Plant Protection Products.
- IPM can therefore play a significant role in making farming more environmentally, economically and socially sustainable.

Additional Information

Comprehensive advice on all aspects of using pesticides is contained on the DARD Code of Practice for Plant Protection Products. The Code explains how to use plant protection products safely and so meet the legal conditions which cover their use. A summary A3 wall chart has also been produced to accompany the Code and it provides users with a quick reference guide. Both documents and further information on Pesticide Regulations are available on the DARD website at: www.dardni.gov.uk/dard-pesticide-legislation

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