

FAS news Farm Advisory System newsletter

Spring 2017

Issue 07

Foreword

Eric Long, Head of Development Service, CAFRE

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

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;
- 2. Greening and Land Eligibility;
- 3. Rural Development Programme;
- 4. Water Framework Directive:
- 5. Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive.

This issue contains articles on a range of FAS topics including:

- Managing your Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) entitlements.
- Single Application and Maps and Entitlement Service Online Now!
- Update on pesticides regulations for users and sprayers.
- Sheep / Goat Tag Inspections in 2017.
- The Sustainable Agricultural Land Management Strategy for Northern Ireland.
- Update on Tuberculosis (TB) Strategy.
- FFKS training opportunities.

Forthcoming Events



• CAFRE Dry Stone Walling Courses
Dates: Friday 21st April 2017 at 10.00am.
Friday 26th May 2017 at10.00am.
Venue: Greenmount Hill Farm, 62C Glenhead
Road, Glenwherry.

To enrol for either of these courses please visit www.cafre.ac.uk/short-courses/dry-stone-walling/ or return the enclosed reply paid post card.

 Discover CAFRE Courses - Spring Open Days

Dates: Enniskillen Campus, Saturday 1st April 2017, 12 noon. Loughry Campus, Tuesday 4th April 2017, 3-8pm. Greenmount Campus, Wednesday 5th April 2017, 3-8pm.

A list of FAS training courses offered by CAFRE is provided on a reply paid postcard so please complete and return the card to find out more about the various topics. Alternatively go online at www.cafre.ac.uk to book a course.

Sheep / Goat Tag Inspections in 2017

Brian Dooher, Veterinary Service

Key points on sheep and goat tag inspections for flock owners.

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 DAERA. 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 different batches in your flock. They will have their identity fully checked and compared against the entry in your flock register.



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Replace missing tags

- 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.
- 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 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 DAERA website at the following links:

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidance-keepers-identification-and-movement-sheep-and-goats

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/cross-compliance-2017

Single Application and Maps and Entitlement Service Online Now!

Mairead O'Neill, Area Based Schemes

The 2017 Single Application opened on 1 March and will close on 15 May. Filling in your single application for area-based schemes is one of the most important things your farm business will do this year.



It is important to remember that DAERA will no longer be issuing paper Single Application Forms (SAFs). This means that if you want to apply for the Basic Payment Scheme and the Greening Payment, need to declare an Ecological Focus Areas (EFA), apply for the Young Farmers' Payment, ANC or Forestry, or apply for an allocation of Basic Payment Scheme payment entitlements from the Regional Reserve, the application will have be completed online.

All of the information you need is available at DAERA Online Services where you can access your land information, Basic Payments entitlement information and your Single Application Form (SAF) online. You can also transfer your entitlements online where it is a straightforward transfer by gift, sale or lease.



The online service is continually being improved, making it easier than ever in 2017. It has many built in features that can help you avoid penalties such as warnings and help buttons. You can make changes to your map and your field data table within your Single Application will be updated. It will calculate your greening requirement and if you have to declare an Ecological Focus Area, any previously declared features will be available for you to select or amend. You will get an instant receipt and summary of your claim emailed to you. You can submit changes right up to the application closing date.

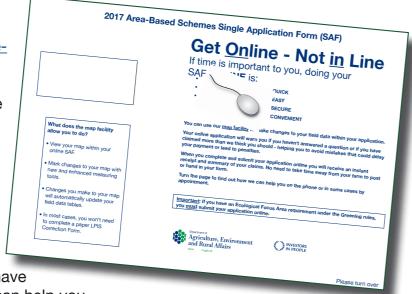
If you previously applied unsuccessfully for the Young Farmers' Payment and/or to the Regional Reserve, or are a new applicant in 2017, you will need to provide a completed 2017 YFP/RR (Young Farmers Payment/Regional Reserve) Form in hardcopy which you can download from the DAERA website and the required supporting evidence in person by 15 May 2017.

How do I apply Online?

Go to www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daera-online-services

 Are you registered for DAERA Online Services? For example, you may have used APHIS online. If so, you will have access to your Single Application and Maps and when the SAF period opens all your details are there, including your land information. If you have no changes the process should be

relatively straightforward. If you do have changes, the SAF Advisory service can help you.



• If you are not already registered for DAERA online services, or never applied online before you will require a DAERA access key and Government Gateway Account as well as an email address. Check out DAERA Online Services or call our SAF Advisory Service to get started.

Help available

Check the DAERA website for Scheme information booklets and 'How To' videos to help you get it correct at:

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/area-based-schemes-2017-information-and-guidance

If you need assistance, we will be able to help you. Our SAF Advisory Service will answer your calls and emails if you wish to talk to someone about the schemes or your application or simply need some help to complete your online application. If the SAF Adviser considers that you need one to one assistance they may be able to arrange an appointment for you in your local DAERA Direct Office.

Alternatively, do you have someone you know who can help you? You can give someone else permission to complete your form online for you. This can be a member of your family, a friend, your accountant or an agent. You will need to complete a form to nominate an authorised person.

You can download this form from the DAERA website at the link above or call the SAF Advisory Service on **0300 200 7848.**

Please note the 2017 YFP/RR Form must be completed by those specified in it and completion cannot be delegated.

Online Entitlement Service

The Online Entitlement Transfer Service opened in early March and will close on 2 May 2017. This service can be used for straightforward transfers (sale, gift or lease) from one farm business to another, when no business change or inheritance involved. It is a convenient, quick and easy to use service which, if approved, automatically transfers entitlements without the need to complete a paper application form and wait for a decision to confirm if the transfer has been successful.

You will need the Business ID and Entitlement Transfer ID of the person you are transferring your entitlements to. Once completed, you will get an email confirming the successful transfer instantly. If you want the transfer to take effect for the 2017 BPS Scheme Year the closing date for completion of the online transfer is 2 May 2017.

For other transfers involving inheritance or a farm business change you can download a form from the DAERA website at:

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/area-based-schemes-2017-information-and-guidance

If you wish to use an agent to transfer your entitlements you will need to complete the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) Entitlements - Online Agent Authorisation form available at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/online-agent-authorisation-forms

Get ready now

If you think you will need more information or help to complete your 2017 Single Application or transfer of entitlements online, don't leave it until the last few weeks of the relevant application period as our telephone lines and offices may be busy.

Remember:

Filling in your single application for area-based schemes is one of the most important things your farm business will do this year. Get rea and do it early to give yourself peace of mi

Our SAF Advisory Service is ready to he

0300 200 7848

Managing your Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) Entitlements

Sharon McFlynn, Area Based Schemes, Operational Policy Branch

Entitlements are what farmers use to get paid BPS each year. They are allocated to active farmers but give no automatic right to the payment: a farmer must "activate" (use) his payment entitlements and declare an equivalent number of eligible hectares in a yearly application (SAF) in order to claim BPS.

How to use your entitlements in 2017

To use entitlements to get paid, you must hold at least 3, be actively farming 3 hectares of eligible land and declare this land on your Single Application Form (SAF) to claim BPS. There is no limit to the number of entitlements that you can hold however in order to claim payment on each of them you must be actively farming 1 hectare of eligible land to go with each of them. All land must be declared on your SAF so that payment can be made on all of the entitlements.

There is no requirement for entitlements to be used each year. However, if you don't use all of the entitlements that you hold at least once in any two year period, then you will lose some of them in the second year. This is known as the 'two year rule'. Entitlements that go unused for two consecutive years will be returned to the Regional Reserve. See examples 1 and 2 below.

How we activate entitlements

The Department must activate the highest value entitlements held by a business first. We do not differentiate between standard and regional reserve entitlements or between those owned by your business or leased in from another. Therefore, if you hold 'owned' and 'leased in' entitlements and the 'leased in' entitlements are higher in value than those 'owned' by your business we will always activate the 'leased in' entitlements first. Therefore, if you do not activate all of the entitlements at least once in any two year period, the entitlements 'owned' by your business may be at risk of confiscation. See example 3. However, if the 'leased in' entitlements are equal in value to those 'owned' by your business, the activation and confiscation of entitlements would be done proportionately. See example 4.

Please note there is no longer an option to keep hold of entitlements by rotating the ones that you use from year to year.

Example 1

A farmer established 30 entitlements in 2015 but did not submit a Single Application Form (SAF) in 2016 and did not transfer any of the entitlements in 2016. If the farmer does not submit a SAF in 2017, and does not transfer any of the 30 entitlements this will mean that they will not have been used (activated) for 2 consecutive years and will be confiscated as a result.

Example 2

A farmer established 40 entitlements in 2015 and in 2016 declared 35 hectares of eligible land and used ('activated') 35 entitlements. If the farmer declares 35 hectares of eligible land again in 2017, 5 entitlements will not have been used ('activated') in 2 consecutive years and will be confiscated as a result.

Example 3

A farmer holds 20 entitlements on 16 May 2016. Of these, 10 are the farmer's own entitlements established in 2015 and valued at €200 each and 10 are leased in from another business in 2016 for a period of 3 years and are valued at €250 each. The farmer only declared 18 hectares of eligible land on his 2016 SAF.

The highest value entitlements were activated first. So, in 2016, 10 entitlements valued at €250 each and 8 entitlements valued at €200 each were activated. 2 entitlements were unused. If, in 2017, the farmer again declares 18 hectares of eligible land then 2 of the farmer's own entitlements valued at €200 will go unused for a second year and will therefore be confiscated.

Example 4

A farmer holds 20 entitlements on 16 May 2016. Of these, 10 are the farmer's own entitlements established in 2015 and valued at €200 each and 10 are leased in from another business in 2016 for a period of 3 years also valued at €200 each. The farmer only declared 18 hectares of eligible land on his 2016 SAF.

In 2016, we will have activated 9 of the entitlements owned by the farmer and 9 that have been leased in. 2 entitlements were unused. If, in 2017, the farmer again declares 18 hectares of eligible land then 2 entitlements worth €200 will go unused for a second year and will be confiscated- 1 which is owned by the farmer and another that has been leased in and won't be returned to the original owner.

The 'two year rule'

2017 will be the first year that the 'two year rule' will apply.

Therefore, if you did not activate all of the entitlements held by your business in 2016 and will not be farming sufficient eligible agricultural land to activate all of them in 2017, then you are at risk of losing some or all of the entitlements not activated for payment in 2016.

In order to avoid confiscation in 2017, there are two options available to you:

- Increase the area of eligible land that you will be actively farming in 2017 so that the number of eligible hectares is at least equal to the number of entitlements held by your business; or
- Transfer the entitlements that will not be used in 2017 to another business.

Transferring entitlements

A transfer of entitlements involves the movement of entitlements from one farm business to another by one of the following methods:

- by gift,
- by sale,
- by lease,
- through actual inheritance,
- through anticipated inheritance.

The 'transferee' or 'lessee', that is the business receiving the entitlements, must meet the definition of an active farmer before entitlements can be transferred to them.

Transfers by sale, gift or lease can be made through our online transfer service at www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/daera-online-services

To do so, you will need the Entitlement Transfer ID and business ID of the transferee. If an agent is transferring entitlements on your behalf you will also need to provide them with your Entitlement Transfer ID. There is no paper form to complete and, if approved, the transfer will take place instantly. You will receive an email to confirm the completion of the transfer.

Transfers by inheritance or where there is business change involved cannot be facilitated through the online service. Further guidance and information on transferring entitlements can be found www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/grants-and-funding/area-based-schemes-2017 or by contacting 0300 200 7848.

You will need to transfer the entitlements before 2 May 2017 for the transfer to take place in time for the 2017 BPS Scheme year. Applications received after the 2 May 2017, will not take effect until the 2018 BPS scheme year.

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Pesticide Application Equipment Testing

Karen Hughes, Environmental Farming Branch

Pesticide Application Equipment Testing Requirements

All pesticide sprayer application equipment, excluding handheld and knapsack equipment must have a certificate showing that it has passed an independent inspection before it can be used.

The subsequent testing requirements are as follows:

- every five years from 26 November 2016 and every 3 years from 26 November 2020 for boom sprayers, air assisted broadcast sprayers and sprayers attached to aircraft.
- every 6 years from 26 November 2016 for boom sprayers less than 3m wide, foggers, misters, batch dippers and applicators for granular pesticides.

New spray equipment must be inspected within 5 years of the date of purchase. Handheld equipment and knapsack sprayers should be regularly checked and maintained.

A person who owns or leases sprayer application equipment must ensure that such equipment is not used unless it has passed inspection.

Pesticide application equipment certification and Mutual Recognition

The National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS) is currently the only officially-designated provider for certification of pesticide application equipment in the UK.

However pesticide application equipment i.e sprayers certified by an approved inspector, on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), in the ROI can now be used to apply pesticides in the UK.

This is referred to as Mutual Recognition.

Pesticide application equipment which has been certified by NSTS in the UK and then imported into the Republic of Ireland (ROI) can be used in the ROI.

If the application equipment remains in use in the ROI, subsequent tests must be carried out in the ROI by a Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) approved inspector.

For further information please see: www.nsts.org.uk/ or

www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/



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Do you use pesticides? - If so, a certificate of competence is a legal requirement

Leanne Harris, Environmental Farming Branch

Farmers are reminded that they must undertake an assessment and obtain an approved certificate of competence if they are applying professional pesticides. If you are not applying the pesticides yourself, you are responsible for ensuring the person applying them on your land has the necessary certificate of competence. This is a legal requirement under the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012.

Training and assessment is available for a range of pesticide application methods including knapsack, boom sprayer, weed wiper, orchard sprayer or slug pellet applicator. It is recommended that training in the use of a boom sprayer, for example, should take a total of 12 hours and the subsequent assessment would typically take 2.5 to 3.5 hours.

It is essential to ensure that training is delivered fully and that the certificate of competence received following the assessment will meet the legal requirements. If not then any certificate or records of training received will not be considered valid during an inspection.

A full list of the specified certificates which meet the legal requirements under the Sustainable Use Directive is available on the DAERA website at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-treehealth/pesticides-use-and-regulations

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

Training, assessment and certification

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 enrolling online at: www.cafre.ac.uk/?s=pesticides

If you have any queries about booking a place on this course, you can contact Industry Training Administration by emailing: Industry.TrainingAdmin@daera-ni.gov.uk or calling 028 9442 6880.

Calibrating a boom sprayer during a training course at CAFRE

Information on pesticide regulations can be found on the DAERA website at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daera-pesticide-legislation

Delivering Our Future, Valuing Our Soils: A Sustainable Agricultural Land Management Strategy for Northern Ireland

Paddy Savage, Agri Emissions and Land Branch

21st October 2016 marked another significant step forward in the implementation of the Agri Food Strategy Board's (AFSB) "Going for Growth" report as an Expert Working Group launched its strategy for sustainable land management in Northern Ireland Agriculture. This strategy, entitled "Delivering" Our Future, Valuing Our Soils: A Sustainable Agricultural Land Management Strategy for Northern Ireland" arose from the AFSB's recommendation that a "strategic regional land management policy" should be developed for Northern Ireland.

This recommendation was delivered through an independent Expert Working Group, chaired by Dr. John Gilliland OBE, a

former President of the Ulster Farmers' Union and ex-Sustainable Development Commissioner for Northern Ireland. Membership of the group comprised of a range of leading figures from the farming, environmental, supply chain and government sectors. A key principle in the group's formation was that members were appointed for their individual expertise and did not represent any organisations with which they may be affiliated. The aim was to produce a series of recommendations which would help local farmers to increase profitability in a way which also improved environmental performance on farm.

Aided by a DAERA secretariat, the Expert Group worked on their report for almost two years after their first meeting in December 2014. From the outset, the group were keen to meet with farmers and land managers to seek the views of those who are actively managing land. Meetings were held right across Northern Ireland with visits made to a range of livestock enterprises in both the lowlands and uplands. More diverse land uses such as agro-forestry and willow plantations were also examined first hand.

As the group considered the current state of land management in local agriculture, one consistent message dominated their deliberations;

We must value and improve the health of our soils

The Expert Working Group have produced a total of 27 recommendations, all of which flow from this central premise.

Key recommendations made in the report include:

- A complete GPS soil sampling and analysis of Northern Ireland's fields;
- A full aerial scan of Northern Ireland using laser technology (LiDAR) so that water quality interventions can be targeted and carbon stored in trees and hedgerows (carbon sequestration) quantified;
- An enhanced regime of water quality monitoring;



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- Provision of an online decision support tool for farmers to support land management by providing easy access to soil analysis results and other key information;
- Liming to optimise pH on agricultural land;
- Optimise nutrient management on farms;
- Increase grass utilisation on farms by at least one tonne of dry matter per hectare per year and improve grass and silage quality by 5 8%;
- Increased use of more efficient and environmentally friendly slurry application techniques such as trailing shoe, band spreader or shallow injection;
- Transferring nutrients between farms in a biosecure manner;
- Capital support for nutrient reprocessing;
- Establishing woodland biomass and trees within farming systems to improve soil structure, extend grazing seasons, reduce nutrient loss to waterways and increase carbon sequestration;
- Implementation of an "advocacy first" approach to environmental governance;
- Introduction of a fiscal incentive to encourage land rental to change from conacre to longer term leases of at least five years, building on the recent availability of a model lease for longer term land rental from Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV)/ Northern Ireland Rural Valuers Association (NIRVA);
- Develop a sustainability brand for Northern Ireland.

If the targets set by the Expert Working Group for increases in grass yield and quality are achieved, there will significant benefits for both farm profitability and the environment. AFBI analysis has shown that grassland farms which utilise 1 extra tonne of better quality Dry Matter per hectare will increase profitability by around $\mathfrak{L}300$ per hectare per year on dairy farms and up to $\mathfrak{L}200$ per hectare on beef farms. Crucially, this approach will also have significant environmental benefits with whole farm phosphorus balances reducing by at least 60% on dairy and beef farms.



In welcoming the report at its launch event, Minister Michelle McIlveen MLA noted that the actions proposed in the report had significant potential to deliver on her Department's dual mandate for farming and the environment. The Minister committed to consider the report carefully and examine how DAERA may be able to support implementation of its recommendations by farmers.

Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) update

Mervyn Dunlop, Veterinary Service Animal Health Branch

The TB Strategic Partnership Group (TBSPG)

The TBSPG is an independent high level advisory group which was established in 2014 and tasked with developing a strategy and implementation action plan to effect a progressive and sustained reduction of TB in the cattle population with a view to eventual eradication. On 15 December 2016 TBSPG launched it's TB Eradication strategy and action plan.

Their recommendations are set out in seven themes:

1. Governance

The TBSPG want to facilitate a shared commitment to the eradication of diseases by facilitating a partnership approach between government and stakeholders.

An Integrated Eradication Programme Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication The TB Strategic Partnership Group 2016

2. Culture and Communications

The TBSPG want to ensure communications are effective at all levels and ensure that all stakeholders understand and accept the part they play in eradicating the disease.

3. Tools and Processes

The TBSPG want to maximise and enhance existing tools and processes to ensure the disease is detected as soon as possible.

4. Wildlife

The TBSPG want to address the reservoir of disease in badgers and contribute to the health of the badger population.

5. Herd Health Management

The TBSPG want to enable farmers to reduce the risks to their herd and thereby contribute to herd health and productivity.

6. Finance

The TBSPG want to encourage a shared commitment to eradicating TB and identify sustainable arrangements for the delivery of the strategy.

7. Research

The TBSPG want to ensure that research remains a priority so that the Strategy can be developed going forward.

The TBSPG Strategy and the background papers that provide more detail about the evidence they considered are available at www.daera-ni.gov.uk/tbspg-btb-eradication-strategy-ni

What happens next?

Officials in the Department are continuing to work through the recommendations so that they can provide advice to any new Minister. It is likely that the Department will consult on any planned approach.

Overdue TB tests

TB tests must be completed by the due date to avoid the risk of a Cross-Compliance penalty being applied to your area-based scheme payments (including payments in relation to the Basic Payment Scheme). Penalties are applied to herds which are found to be in breach of Cross-Compliance Statutory Management Requirement 4 (Food and Feed Law) which requires that "You must observe the testing frequency required in the legislation for Tuberculosis". Significantly overdue tests may attract a substantial financial penalty of up to 100% of the payment.

If you wish to discuss the due date of your next TB test please contact your local Divisional Veterinary Office. For any queries related to Cross-Compliance area-based scheme penalties in relation to late TB tests please contact the Agri-food Inspection Branch on **028 9052 4606**.



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Farm Family Key Skills training will enhance Farm Businesses across Northern Ireland

Siobhán Sheppard, Rural Training and Development Branch, CAFRE.

Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) is an initiative under The Farm Business Improvement Scheme (FBIS), which is a key element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

Over the next four years CAFRE will deliver a wide range of training courses covering key areas such as Business Planning, Health and Safety, Animal Health and New Technologies (ICT). FFKS training is aimed at farmers, farm family members and employees associated with both the agricultural and horticultural sectors. Short training courses will be delivered by CAFRE appointed contractors at a local level across Northern Ireland.

Since spring 2016 over 500 trainees have attended Health & Safety training, bespoke training for pig farmers covering Parasitic & Respiratory conditions and Biosecurity training. During 2017 the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC) will deliver further Health and Safety training on-farm and in local community venues. The Health & Safety training programme will cover the four main areas of risk on farm; Slurry, Animals, Falls and Equipment bespoke to each technical area. The wider farm family and employees are encouraged to attend to ensure the safety message is a priority for all people with a link to the farm business.

Later this year the FFKS scheme will launch Business Planning training which will help farm families focus on the key areas of improvement for their farm business. If you would like further information on how you can enrol on any of the short courses within the Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) programme, please go to www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/ or email kt.admin@daera-ni.gov.uk or call CAFRE Knowledge Transfer Administration on **028 9442 6790** or complete the reply paid CAFRE Training Booking Card.

Don't forget to complete your CAFRE Training Booking Card

A list of FAS training courses offered by CAFRE is provided on the enclosed reply paid card, please complete and return the card to find out more about the various topics.

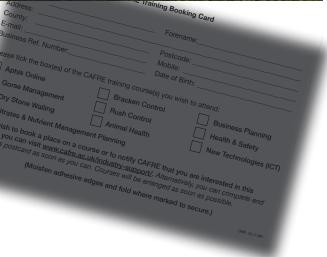














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