



Foreword

Eric Long,
Head of Development Service, CAFRE.

I am pleased to introduce the tenth 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 but focuses primarily on the annual Single Application that your Farm Business will have to complete in order to claim area based schemes for 2018:

- Importance of checking your information and making an accurate claim to safeguard your payments;
- Help options to support you in making your application online;
- How to keep up to date with announcements from area based schemes;
- How to apply for Tranche II of the Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS).

Forthcoming Events

EFS Training Reminder

If you have an Agreement for the Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) Wider then you need to do the training that relates to the Options you have selected. Your payment under the EFS depends on you successfully completing this training.

Training is carried out online.

- Log on to www.learn.cafre.ac.uk
- Click on Moodle which is found on the top bar
- Your username is your Business Number
- Your password is "Password" followed by the last three digits of your Postcode

Each of the lessons you are allocated must be completed. Be sure to click on the final button for each module once you have answered all the questions.

Please note - Completion of online training is essential to allow your payment to be processed.

Single Application and Maps Service now open for 2018 applications

Mairead O'Neill, Area Based Schemes, Organisational Development Branch, DAERA.

The 2018 Single Application and Maps Service 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 no longer issues paper Single Application Forms. All applications must be completed online by you or someone acting for you to claim payment for:

- Basic Payment Scheme and Greening Payment
- Young Farmers Payment (YFP)
- Regional Reserve Entitlement allocation or top up (as a Young Farmer or New Entrant)
- Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS)
- Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS)
- Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS)
- Farm Woodland Scheme (FWS)
- Forest Expansion Scheme (Annual Premia)

You must also use the Single Application and Maps Service to tell us about any changes to your land. You can no longer do this on paper.

Get Ready, Start Early, Complete on Time!

Before you start your application you are strongly advised to read the information and guidance and view the helpful 'how to' videos that are available on the DAERA website at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/grants-and-funding/area-based-schemes-2018-0

Check: If you need to tell us about any changes to your land. You do this using the online Single Application and Maps Service. The most common error is where applicants do not remove areas of ineligible vegetation, such as scrub, bracken or rush. If you were affected by flooding in 2017, you should claim as normal and submit a *Force Majeure/* Exceptional Circumstances FML1 Form for 2018 for consideration.

Check: If you are setting up a new farm business. Make sure you start this process early to avoid any delays to your application or payments.

Check: If you need to submit additional forms or evidence to support your application. If supporting evidence is not received within the application deadlines, your application (or the part to which the supporting evidence relates) may be rejected.

Check: If you have an EFS agreement that you comply fully with all the requirements and controls and the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme before you claim payment for your EFS Options and Non Productive Items.

Check: The important dates in the application window in the following table and bear these in mind when planning to complete your application.

Important dates and deadlines

1 March to 15 May	Single Application and Maps Application window open.
16 May to 31 May	Applications submitted by 15 May deadline, can be amended to increase or decrease the area you have claimed between these dates without penalty.
16 May to 11 June	Applications received on or between these dates will be penalized by 1% reduction on your payment for each working day it is late. For applications to the Regional Reserve the reduction increases to 4% for each working day it is late.
1 June to 11 June	Applications already received can also be amended between these dates to increase the area you have claimed by adding fields, but you will be penalized on the amended fields by a 1% reduction on your payment for each working day it is late. For applications to the Regional Reserve, the reduction increases to 4% for each working day it is late. You can reduce fields/areas during this period without penalty.
11 June	This is the final date for receiving applications or increasing the area you have claimed on your Single Application. You can still reduce the area you have claimed after this date without penalty, for example, by removing a field but only if we have not already notified you of a penalty or a planned inspection.

How do I apply?

Log on to DAERA Online Services using your Government Gateway or NI Identity Assurance (NIDA) details at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daera-online-services

Remember, you will need a valid email address so we can send you your application summary and important information about your application.

The online service is continually being improved making it easier than ever to complete your application. 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 the 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 in most cases. Details of any Environmental Farming Scheme Agreement you have will be displayed to enable you to claim your payment for work completed. 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 2018, you will need to provide a completed 2018 YFP/RR (Young Farmers Payment/Regional Reserve) Form (you can download this from the DAERA website) and the required supporting evidence **in person** at a DAERA Direct office by 15 May 2018.

SAF Advisory Service

If you need assistance, call our **SAF Advisory Service on 0300 200 7848 (Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm)** or use the convenient webchat facility within the application. Our advisors are ready to help you with any queries about your application.

If the SAF Advisor considers that you need further assistance, they may be able to arrange an appointment for you in your local DAERA Direct Office where staff can help as you complete your application. This is an appointment only service so you should ring the SAF Advisory Service.

Agent/Authorised person

Alternatively, you can use the services of an agent or trusted person that you know such as a relative or friend, who can be given online access to complete your application on your behalf. You will need to complete a form to nominate an authorised person if you have not previously done so. You can download this form from the DAERA website or your agent may provide this for you.

Whichever help service you need to use, we recommend that you take action early as demand may be high throughout the application period. Don't risk any delay that could affect your payment!

Don't miss important updates on schemes or new services from Area Based Schemes by subscribing to DAERA's email and/or SMS text service.

Herd the latest moos?

Keep up to date with your Area-based Schemes news and information!

Opt-in now to receive emails and/or texts.

How?

- To receive emails and/or texts log into DAERA Online Services: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/daera-online-services and go to "My Details"
- To receive texts only - **Text ABS to 67300**
- **Unsubscribe at any time.**



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

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Managing your Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) Entitlements

Mairead O'Neill, Area Based Schemes, Organisational Development Branch, DAERA.

To claim the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) you must have at least 3 entitlements, be actively farming 3 hectares of eligible land and declare this land on your annual online Single Application. There is no limit to the number of entitlements that you can hold but to claim payment on each of them you must be actively farming one hectare of eligible land to go with each entitlement. All land must be declared on your Single Application so that payment can be made on all of the entitlements.

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 activate the 'leased in' entitlements first.

The 'two year rule'

Entitlements do not have 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. Where you own entitlements and also lease in entitlements, but 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 will be done proportionately. See example 4. In some cases a fraction of a full entitlement may be confiscated. See examples 5 and 6.

The 2017 year was the first in which the 'two year rule' was applied so if you had entitlements confiscated, these will not be available to your farm business for the 2018 scheme year.

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

- Increase the area of eligible land that you will be actively farming 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 to another business.

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

Example 1

Business holds 30 entitlements.

Business did not submit a Single Application in 2016 and 2017 to activate entitlements.

Business did not transfer or lease any entitlements in 2016 and 2017.

As 30 entitlements were not activated for 2 consecutive years they will be confiscated.

Example 2

Business holds 40 entitlements.

Business declared 35 hectares of eligible land and activated 35 entitlements in 2016 and 2017. 5 entitlements were not activated for 2 consecutive years so will be confiscated.

Example 3

Business holds 20 entitlements on 16 May 2016.

10 entitlements belong to the business and are valued at €200 each.

10 are leased in from another business in 2016 for a period of 3 years and are valued at €250 each. The highest value entitlements are activated first.

In 2016 and 2017 the business declared 18 hectares of eligible land each year on their Single Application.

2016 10 entitlements @ €250 activated for payment.
8 entitlements @ €200 activated for payment.
2 entitlements @ €200 not activated for payment.

2017 the business still holds 20 entitlements.
10 entitlements @ €250 activated for payment.
8 entitlements @ €200 activated for payment.
2 entitlements @ €200 not activated for payment.

This means that 2 entitlements @ €200 which are owned by the business have not been activated in 2 consecutive years and will be confiscated.

Example 4

Business A holds 20 entitlements on 16 May 2016.

10 entitlements established in 2015 and valued at €200 each and

10 entitlements leased in from Business B in 2016 for a period of 3 years also valued at €200 each.

Business A declared 18 hectares of eligible land on their 2016 and 2017 Single Application.

2016 9 owned entitlements @ €200 activated for payment.
9 leased in entitlements @ €200 activated for payment.
2 entitlements @ €200 not activated for payment (one owned and one leased in).

2017 the business still holds 20 entitlements and activates 18 as above.

This means that 2 entitlements @ €200 have not been activated in 2 consecutive years and will be confiscated; one owned by business A and one leased in from Business B will not be returned to the original owner.

Example 5

Business A holds 5.32 entitlements @ €200 each and submits a Single Application in 2016 and 2017.

2016 3.72 entitlements @ €200 activated for payment.
4 entitlements @ €200 deemed activated for usage.*
1.60 entitlements @ €200 not activated (i.e. 5.32 minus 3.72).

2017 3.72 entitlements @ €200 activated for payment.
4 entitlements @ €200 deemed activated for usage.*
1.60 entitlements @ €200 not activated (i.e. 5.32 minus 3.72).

*For the purposes of confiscation, if the fraction of an entitlement activated (in this case 0.72) is greater than the fraction held by the business (in this case, 0.32), a full entitlement is considered activated for usage (not payment).

Therefore, at the end of 2017 1.32 entitlements @ €200 (ie 5.32 minus 4) are considered as not activated in 2 consecutive years and will be confiscated and returned to the regional reserve.

Example 6

As above Business A holds 5.32 entitlements @ €200 each and submits a Single Application in 2016 and 2017.

2016 4.31 entitlements @ €200 activated for payment.
4.32 entitlements @ €200 deemed activated for usage.*
1 entitlement @ €200 not activated (ie 5.32 minus 4.32).

2017 4.31 entitlements @ €200 are activated for payment.
4.32 entitlements @ €200 deemed activated for usage.*
1 entitlement @ €200 not activated (ie 5.32 minus 4.32).

*For the purposes of confiscation, if the fraction of an entitlement activated (in this case 0.31) is lower than the fraction held by the business (in this case 0.32), the larger fraction is considered activated for usage (not payment), in this case 0.32.

Therefore, at the end of 2017, 1 entitlement @ €200 (ie 5.32 minus 4.32) is considered as not activated in 2 consecutive years and will be confiscated and returned to the regional reserve.

Online Entitlement Services

A new Online Entitlement Register Service is now available on DAERA Online Services which allows you or your agent to view the number, type and value of all BPS payment entitlements held by your farm business. The information displayed will include the year and method by which the entitlements were established as well as the projected value up to 2019. The new Online Entitlement Register Service will display your Entitlement Transfer ID which you will require if you wish to either transfer in or transfer out entitlements in 2018.

This new convenient service is accessible 24/7 and provides the most up-to-date information that DAERA holds on your 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 entitlement position.

For a small number of businesses who are affected by the two year usage rule, the entitlement information displayed on the online Single Application and the 2018 online entitlement register service will be inaccurate until the entitlement confiscation is applied in early April. We are writing to all farm businesses affected by this issue.

The Online Entitlement Transfer Service opens on Thursday 1 March 2018 and will close at midnight on Wednesday 2 May 2018 for transfers to take effect in the 2018 BPS scheme year. This service can be used for straightforward transfers (sale, gift or lease) from one farm business to another, with no business change or inheritance involved. It is a convenient 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 to request the Business ID and Entitlement Transfer ID from the person you are transferring your entitlements to. DAERA cannot provide you with the Business ID and Transfer ID of a third party. Once you have completed the online transfer, you will get an email confirming the successful transfer instantly.

You can download a form from the DAERA website to use for transfers involving:

- Inheritance or anticipated inheritance: Form TE1
- Farm business merger: Form BC3
- Farm business scission: Form BC4

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 which you can download at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/area-based-schemes-2018-guidance-and-forms



Update on the Environmental Farming Scheme

Rosemary Quinn, Countryside Management Delivery Branch, DAERA.

The Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) opened for first applications in 2017. Some 1,150 agreement holders are already in EFS Wider (W). Applicants progressing through to EFS Higher (H) agreements will be receiving their letters of offer this month. If this applies to you, please, watch out for communication from the Department. The response time to accept your agreement may be short and you will want to consider the detail of the agreement before committing to it.



If you already have an EFS(W) agreement, and your Options include planting, now is the time to get this work started. Remember you must claim for the works done on the Single Application and Maps Service on DAERA Online Services by 15 May 2018.

Training

Online training for EFS is available at www.learn.cafre.ac.uk. See page 1 for more details. Please access this to learn how to carry out the various options in your plan to the required standard. Training and keeping field records aims to help ensure a high standard of work and compliance with the EFS controls. All EFS information is available on the EFS Webpage including the very useful 'Online EFS Training - User Guide'.

Please note - Completion of online training is necessary to allow your payment to be processed.

EFS Tranche II

If you are not yet in EFS and are farming environmentally designated land you may be eligible to apply for Tranche II of EFS(H), opening in March 2018. Keep an eye on the press and the DAERA website for the dates. EFS(H) aims to deliver site-specific environmental management. The work will often involve payment for implementing a particular grazing regime and, where applicable to your farm, perhaps scrub, bracken or rush control.



Tranche II of EFS(W) will open for applications in August 2018. EFS(W) aims to deliver environmental benefits across the wider countryside outside of environmentally designated areas.

It is anticipated the EFS Tranche 11 agreements will start on 1 January 2019 and run for five years to 31 December 2023.

If the number of applications exceeds the funding available, applications will be ranked and those providing the highest environmental benefit will be selected. You are encouraged to apply for EFS. You are not committed to the Scheme until you return a signed agreement to DAERA.

For more information on the EFS:

- visit the DAERA website on: www.daera-ni.gov.uk
- Look out for details of EFS information evenings which will be running during the application period for both the EFS (H) and EFS (W) application windows.
- For assistance to complete your application, you can call the EFS Advisory Service on 0300 200 7848.

Your 2018 Greening Payment

Denise Phillips, Area Based Schemes, Operational Policy Branch, DAERA.

If applying for payment under the Basic Payment Scheme you must comply with greening requirements on all the eligible agricultural land on your holding. In return, you will receive a Greening Payment calculated as a percentage of the total value of the Basic Payment Scheme payment entitlements you activate each year.

There are three greening requirements:

- **Permanent Grassland**
This relates to the requirement to retain permanent grassland and to protect environmentally sensitive permanent grassland.
- **Crop Diversification**
This is designed to encourage a diversity of crops on holdings with 10 or more hectares of arable land.
- **Ecological Focus Areas**
This is designed to improve biodiversity on farms and to provide habitats for species in decline or at risk of extinction on holdings with more than 15 hectares of arable land.

There are a number of exemptions from the greening requirements meaning that some applicants, depending on their land use, will not have to undertake some or all of the greening requirements but will still receive the Greening Payment.

In the majority of cases, the Single Application and Map Service will calculate if you meet the greening requirement and alert you if you do not. This calculation is based on the land information you provide on your application so you are strongly advised to carefully check that the correct field usage codes are used. Depending on the field usage codes used, your land will be classified as Permanent Grassland (PG), Permanent Grassland Sensitive land that cannot be ploughed (PGS), Permanent Crop (PC), Arable (AR) or Unclassified (UC). Land will be unclassified if it has

not been declared on a Single Application in the last five years, the field has had ineligible usages recorded against it or was most recently declared under a forestry usage. Once a field usage has been entered, a classification will be determined.

If you are required to make an Ecological Focus Area (EFA) declaration you can do this using the map on the Single Application and Maps Service. EFA features declared in 2017 will be shown on your map to use or amend for 2018, except for Nitrogen Fixing Crops or Fallow Land as these are likely to change each year.

Detailed rules on the Greening Payment are available in the booklet 2018 Guide to the Greening Payment. You can also view the booklets 'How to complete your Single Application Online in 2018' and 'How to make your EFA Declarations' as well view the helpful 'How to' videos on the DAERA website at:

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/grants-and-funding/area-based-schemes-2018-0

If you need further advice you can call the **SAF Advisory Service** on **0300 200 7848**.



Important changes for 2018

- **Plant Protection Products (PPPs)**

The European Union has introduced a complete ban on the use of PPPs on nitrogen fixing crops (NFC) and fallow land declared as Ecological Focus Area.

- I. Nitrogen Fixing Crops - the ban is applicable during the calendar year in which the crop is declared as EFA. Therefore, if the NFC declared as EFA in 2018 was sown in autumn 2017, the ban on the use of PPPs would apply from 1 January 2018 until 31 December 2018 or the date of harvest if earlier than 31 December 2018.
- II. Seed treated with a PPP - the ban also applies to seed treated with a PPP that was sown in autumn 2017 if the crop is to be declared as EFA in 2018.
- III. Fallow land - in the case of fallow land, the ban will apply during the EFA fallow period which is 01 February 2018 to 31 July 2018 inclusive.

DAERA wrote to all farm business which declared NFC as EFA in 2017 detailing this change and providing alternative EFAs which may be used to meet 2018 requirements.

If you declare NFC or fallow land you will be asked to confirm, on the Single Application, that you are aware of and will comply with the ban on the use of PPP's.

• **Crop diversification (CD) and EFA exemptions**

The 30ha limit of arable land that currently applies to some of the CD and EFA exemptions has been removed. Leguminous crops have been added to the list of uses which, if they exceed 75% of the arable area of the holding, will result in exemption from both CD and EFA. Leguminous crops that can be used to meet this exemption are:

Spring Peas - Feed pea, Mange tout, Marrow fat pea, Snap pea, Snow pea, Vining pea.
Spring Field Beans - Includes Broad beans, Field beans, Tic beans.
Winter Field Beans - Includes Broad beans, Field beans, Tic beans.
Spring Sweet Lupins
Winter Sweet Lupins

• **Changes to the conversion matrix that is used for calculating the value of the different types of EFA**

The conversion factors for short rotation coppice (SRC), NFC and sheughs have been increased and will be beneficial to farmers:

- I. SRC increases from 0.3 to 0.5
- II. NFC increases from 0.7 to 1.0
- III. Sheughs increases from 0.3 to 0.5

- Triticum spelta (Spelt) is to be regarded as a separate crop for diversification purposes.

- The sowing of mixtures of wild flower seeds on fallow land declared for EFA purposes is an acceptable fallow land cover.

Changes to the nutrient content of poultry litter and compliance with the Nitrates Action Programme

Elizabeth Ball, AFBI, Hillsborough and Gráinne McCarney, CAFRE.

With the exception of litter from standard broiler chicken production, the current standard values for poultry litter/manure nutrient content in the Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) and Phosphorus Regulations, are based on analysis carried out over 15 years ago.

Subsequent changes in nutrition, genetics and management will have resulted in changes in the nutrient profile of litter/manure from these systems. Therefore, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) was commissioned to analyse litter/manure from seven production systems in Northern Ireland: broiler breeders 0-18 weeks, broiler breeders 18-60 weeks, broilers (hot water heating), free range broilers (DoD), turkeys 6 weeks-kill, pullets and free range laying hens. This analysis has enabled the nutrient content and litter produced from ten different production systems to be quantified (Table 1).

This follows on from similar analysis of litter from standard broiler chicken production in 2012. That resulted in updated figures for broilers which are included in the current NAP 2015-2018. However, the change to new hot water heating systems in broiler houses in Northern Ireland may have influenced litter dry matter (DM) and nutrient content. Therefore, this production system has also been included in the analysis.

Nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) produced in litter per week or per crop of birds for the ten production systems were calculated. In general, there has been a substantial reduction in N and P produced when compared to current NAP values (Table 2).



It is intended that the NAP regulatory values will be revised in March 2018 to reflect the nutrient profile of litter/manure from these production systems. These revised values will be subject to verification by the European Commission. Please note that existing figures for conventional broiler production, broiler litter and non-free range layers and layer manure will still be used where appropriate.

This work was conducted by AFBI and funded by DAERA, Moy Park Ltd. and Skea Eggs Ltd. The project was undertaken in collaboration with Moy Park Ltd., Skea Eggs Ltd., Ready Egg Products, Ballygarvey Eggs, Clarkes of Keady, Thompsons of Armagh, Glenshane Eggs and John Thompson and Sons Ltd.

The success of this project was a result of the high level of collaboration between AFBI and industry and as a consequence, scientifically robust evidence-based recommendations were established.

Table 1: Nutrient content and quantity of litter produced from different poultry production systems

	DM (%)	Total N (kg/t)	Available N(kg/t)	Total P ₂ O ₅ (kg/t)	Available P ₂ O ₅ (kg/t) soil index 0-1*	Available P ₂ O ₅ (kg/t) soil index 2+#	Litter quantity (t/1000 birds)	Proportion of total P to total N
Broiler breeder 0-18 weeks	55	17.5	5.3	27.1	16.3	27.1	3.0	0.68
Broiler breeder 18-60 weeks	60	20.7	6.2	25.3	15.2	25.3	14.7	0.53
Broiler breeder 0-60 weeks	59	20.2	6.1	25.6	15.3	25.6	17.7	0.55
Broilers (hot water heating)	72	33.8	10.1	16.1	9.7	16.1	1.0	0.21
Free range broilers (DoD)	57	26.4	7.9	15.4	9.2	15.4	1.7	0.25
Turkeys (0-6 weeks)**	58	24.8	7.4	13.7	8.2	13.7	9.2	0.24
Turkeys (6 weeks-kill)	58	24.8	7.4	13.7	8.2	13.7	12.3	0.24
Turkeys (0-kill)**	58	24.8	7.4	13.7	8.2	13.7	21.5	0.24
Pullets	72	32.7	9.8	27.6	16.6	27.6	2.3	0.37
Free range laying hens	46	18.8	5.6	17.3	10.4	17.3	17.3	0.40

*also for all potato and vegetable crops # except for potato and vegetable crops

**Figures for turkeys may be updated when additional analysis of 0-6 weeks turkey litter is completed.

DoD -Day old to death.

Table 2: Nitrogen and phosphorus excretion rates for different poultry production systems

	N(kg) produced/1000 birds/crop		P(kg) produced /1000 birds/crop	
	Current NAP	Revised value	Current NAP	Revised value
Broilers (hot water heating)*	40	33.8	8.4	7.0
Free range broilers (DoD)*	40	44.9	8.4	11.4
Turkeys (0-kill)**	611 males 363 females	229	254 males 104 females	55
Turkeys (6 weeks-kill)**		305		73.8
Turkeys (0-kill)**		534		129
	N(kg) produced/1000 birds/week		P(kg) produced /1000 birds/week	
	Current NAP	Revised value	Current NAP	Revised value
Broiler breeder 0-18 weeks	5.9	2.9	2.1	2.0
Broiler breeder 18-60 weeks	21.0	7.2	7.6	3.9
Broiler breeder 0-60 weeks	19	6.0	6.8	3.3
Pullets	5.7	4.7	2.1	1.7
Free range laying hens*	12.0	5.4	4.6	2.2
* No specific category in the current NAP 2015-2018 regulations but standard figures for broilers and layers had been previously used for these categories.				
** Figures for turkeys may be updated when additional analysis of 0-6 weeks turkey litter is completed.				
*** After consultation with industry, it was decided that it was no longer necessary to split turkey production into male and female categories.				

Compliance with the Nitrates Action Programme (NAP)

The nitrogen loading of a farm is a key component of NAP and has an upper limit of 170kg N/ha/year (unless you are grassland farmer operating under an approved derogation). If you are a poultry grower using one of these systems, the new N and P excretion rates, along with the nutrient content of the associated litters, means:

- the nitrogen loading for your farm can now be calculated according to the particular system you operate;
- the nitrogen loading for your farm may change and in some cases may be reduced;
- the amount of poultry litter needing to be exported from your farm to comply with the 170kg N/ha /year limit may also change and in some cases be reduced;

From March 2018, you will be able to calculate the nitrogen loading for your farm using the revised poultry figures. Log onto the CAFRE Nutrient Calculators at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/onlineservices.

Storage of poultry litter

Poultry litter should be stored in middens with adequate effluent collection facilities. It can also be stored in temporary field heaps, subject to meeting certain conditions and obtaining prior authorisation from NIEA. The maximum storage time for field heaps is 120 days and only the quantity of litter to be spread in a field can be stored in that field. Field heaps must be covered with an impermeable membrane within 24 hours of placement in the field and sited at the required distance from water ways. To apply for authorisation for poultry litter field heaps contact NIEA on 028 9262 3280 for further information on storage, closed periods and land application of poultry litter please refer to: [2015 2018 NAP and Phosphorus Guidance](#)

Make the most of your slurry storage facilities

Siobhan Bowers, Environmental Farming Branch, DAERA.

The wet weather over the autumn and winter has meant that there is pressure on slurry storage on many farms. Now at the start of spring, it is a good time to examine all slurry storage tanks on the farm. It is important that you check around your yard to ensure that you are making the most of your storage capacity. You may be able to identify some improvements which could increase your effective slurry storage capacity for next winter.



Can you identify improvements to maximise your slurry storage capacity?

Check your tanks

Due to prolonged poor weather conditions many slurry tanks will have been filled with more silage effluent and rainwater than normal. As a result, tanks will be fuller than normal for this time of year. It may be necessary to pump slurry from one tank to another, where there is spare capacity, in order to maximise your slurry storage.

Keep clean water clean

Examine the rainwater running from roofs or clean concrete areas. Where this is entering into slurry tanks and stores, valuable slurry storage space is being used unnecessarily. Check that all guttering and downpipes around your farmyard are functioning properly and repair where necessary. This is critical as every typical roofed shed could contribute around 7,000 gallons of rainwater in the last two weeks of January. Likewise any rainwater falling onto clean yard areas should be diverted to storm water drains and not collected in slurry tanks.

Minimise the dirty yard area

A reduction in the volume of contaminated water produced could also be achieved by reorganising the farmyard to reduce the area of yard which livestock have access to. Keeping the yard free from manure will significantly reduce the volume of dirty water or slurry to be collected in a tank.

Slurry storage capacity

Remember you are required under the Nitrates Action Programme to have sufficient capacity to store slurry for a minimum of 26 weeks for pig and poultry enterprises and a minimum of 22 weeks for all other enterprises. Note, these are minimum capacities - you may need more.

Remember that even though the closed period is finished, weather and ground conditions are major factors in defining when you can spread slurry. This is especially the case in areas of high rainfall or where land is waterlogged. You must also ensure that your storage is adequate to cover periods of adverse weather and soil conditions outside of the closed spreading period.

Conditions for spreading slurry

It is important to remember that no organic or chemical fertilisers can be applied on land which is waterlogged, flooded, liable to flood, frozen or snow covered or when heavy rain is forecast. Applications also cannot be made on steep slopes where a risk of water pollution exists. Remember too that to make best use of the fertiliser value of slurry, there needs to be crop growth to use the nutrients it contains.

It is important to note that the Nitrates Action Programme is a requirement of Cross-Compliance. Failure to comply may result in a breach and could potentially result in a reduction in your Basic Payment Scheme and other direct payments.

More information about the requirements under the Nitrates Action Programme is available at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/nitrates-directive

Protect our rivers and lakes when using pesticides

Leanne Harris, Environmental Farming Branch, DAERA.

Pesticides used for weed control are often detected in rivers and lakes by NI Water. Their presence often increases the cost of treating drinking water by NI Water and poses a risk to local aquatic life. We all have a responsibility to ensure that if pesticides must be used, we do so safely. It is essential to follow the conditions and instructions on the product label carefully. It is useful to be aware of some of the main risks when using pesticides:

Storage	Pesticide stores can hold a lot of concentrated chemical; a fire or a leak at a chemical store can have a huge impact downstream.
Cleaning	Large quantities of dilute spray solution are generated during container cleaning and sprayer washing. This can easily reach water through farm drains.
Disposal	Burying pesticide wastes in a tip is illegal and results in long term damage to water quality.

Sprayer Filling	Drips and spills of concentrated pesticides or pellets can have a big effect on water quality.
Drift	Drift can concern neighbours and harm aquatic life and water quality.
Over Spray	Spraying over watercourses can kill aquatic life as well as jeopardising water quality.
Surface Run-Off	Pesticides can leave the field during soil erosion and in surface run-off.
Drain Flow	Pesticides attached to soil particles or in solution can reach water when drains are flowing.

Further information can be found at:

www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/media/1013/h2ok-advice-sheets-may-2016-v11.pdf



The Voluntary Initiative have designed a 'Check It Out Tool' to help farmers and spray operators review and improve spraying practices to reduce risk of pesticides reaching water. Please use the link below to give it a go: www.checkitout.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/tool/

Comprehensive guidance including the Code of Practice is available on the DAERA website at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health/pesticides-use-and-regulations



Managing rushes and maintaining water quality

Graeme D Campbell, Crops and Sustainability Development Branch, CAFRE.

Rush cover has become a major problem throughout Northern Ireland over the past few years. Rush is a herbaceous, low-nutrient plant which is commonly found in areas of high rainfall with heavy acidic soils. Heavy infestations of rush can be very damaging to priority habitats and they also reduce both the quality of grazing and the stock carrying capacity of the land. Where rush is present it is very important to consider if the eligibility of land for area based schemes is affected.

It is important to note that small areas of rush in fields are beneficial for ground nesting birds such as curlew and snipe. These areas give the cover that is required for nests and provide protection for the chicks. Rush also provides cover for the Irish Hare, so rush management is about getting the correct balance as severe infestations have a negative impact on wildlife. Fields with over one third rush cover require management to achieve a better balance between open space and cover.

Managing rush with pesticides can have a serious impact on the quality of our watercourses. The grassland herbicide MCPA is a particular problem in Northern Ireland and it is essential that best practice and advice is followed when using herbicides.

Routine monitoring of water in watercourses in Northern Ireland has shown elevated levels of MCPA. This herbicide can reach surface water through run-off and also drift from agricultural activity such as pesticide application via a boom-sprayer. An extra water treatment process is required to remove MCPA which significantly increases the cost of producing drinking water to the high standard which Northern Ireland Water (NI Water) customers expect.

In 2017, NI Water piloted a free 'weed-wiping' trial in the Seagahan area, near Markethill, Co Armagh. This provided farmers with an effective alternative method to conventional boom spraying and it also helped to protect the valuable water source. NI Water has worked closely with CAFRE, 'The Water Catchment Partnership' and the farming industry to deliver this innovative campaign.

The free weed-wiping service used the herbicide glyphosate as an alternative to spraying MCPA. Glyphosate is more easily removed at the water treatment stage and is not long-lived in the aquatic environment, unlike MCPA. The pilot project showed encouraging results, having excellent rush kill in grassland and also demonstrating considerable improvements in water quality in the local reservoir. The Seagahan project will continue in spring and summer 2018 and NI Water are considering expanding the free weed-wiping service to other areas where MCPA is a problem.

CAFRE rush technology project

In 2014 CAFRE established four rush technology project sites across Northern Ireland to demonstrate different rush control methods. This project is expected to run for five years and monitoring takes place throughout each growing season. Cutting, weed wiping with glyphosate, spraying with MCPA and liming have taken place at each demonstration site and there is also an untreated plot for comparison purposes.

Findings to date show that chemical treatment with glyphosate is the best method of control. The plots that were cut and the re-growth weed wiped with glyphosate have a lower percentage rush cover. It is important to remember that extreme care must be taken when using glyphosate that no damage is caused to the underlying habitat.

Findings to date also show that continuous cutting only encourages more rush growth and that rush cover is increasing throughout these plots. Plots treated with MCPA at the recommended rate are slower to respond, with follow up application required for two or three years. The plots that were limed are also showing a reduced percentage of rush cover.

CAFRE are intending to hold **Practical Rush Management Events** in 2018. These events will include the demonstration of rush control machinery.

These events will be advertised later this year. Booking must be carried out online by visiting: www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/industry-training/agri-environment-topics/rush-control

If you have any queries please call CAFRE Industry Training on 028 9442 6880.



Rush cutting on a CAFRE Rush Control Demonstration Plot with a Quad and Flail Type Cutter.

DAERA Online Services - New nidirect log in option

Pamela Gardiner, Rural Training and Development Branch, CAFRE.

DAERA is changing the way users log into DAERA Online Services. Currently users log in using Government Gateway. This method of logging in will no longer be available from March 2019, therefore DAERA Online Services have introduced a new nidirect log in option alongside Government Gateway in the interim period.

How to access DAERA Online Services via nidirect

- Step 1: Create an nidirect account online.
- Step 2: Verify your identity at a DAERA Direct office.
- Step 3: Log in to the verified nidirect account.

For further details on each of these steps including a video demonstration visit:

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/onlineservices


Advice for individual farmers

- Existing online users - can choose to register with nidirect or use your existing Government Gateway account until March 2019. You **will be required** to have registered with nidirect **before March 2019** to continue accessing DAERA Online Services.
- New online users - DAERA recommends you register with nidirect now rather than use a Government Gateway account and then change to nidirect before March 2019.

Advice for agents

- Existing agents - should continue to use your Government Gateway account to access DAERA Online Services on behalf of your clients.
- New agents - should register with Government Gateway to access DAERA Online Services on behalf of your clients.

For further information about accessing DAERA Online Services:

 028 9442 6699

onlineservices@daera-ni.gov.uk

 Text Easy to 67300

 www.daera-ni.gov.uk/onlineservices

Are you using the CAFRE Crop Nutrient Calculator?

George Mathers, Crops and Sustainable Development Branch, CAFRE.

The soil analysis report contains a wealth of information on the nutrient content of your soils. It can help you to:

- Improve availability of soil nutrients by the application of lime as required;
- Plan manure and chemical fertiliser applications to meet crop requirement and produce high quality grass and forage crops;
- Improve and maintain soil fertility;
- Save money on chemical fertiliser; and
- Improve water quality by reducing the risk of nutrient loss.

Are you applying the right fertiliser and at the right rate?

Farmers often ask how to work out the nutrients supplied by slurry, how much chemical fertiliser should be applied and at what rate?

This can be a complex and time consuming calculation, but the Crop Nutrient Calculator, developed by CAFRE with support from AFBI does it quickly and easily.

Silage Cut 1			
	Nitrogen (N)	Phosphate (P ₂ O ₅)	Potash (K ₂ O)
Total Crop Requirement:	120 kg/ha (96 units/acre)	40 kg/ha (32 units/acre)	80 kg/ha (64 units/acre)
Organic Manure Nutrients:	30 kg/ha (24 units/acre)	40 kg/ha (32 units/acre)	95 kg/ha (76 units/acre)
Fertiliser Nutrients:	89 kg/ha (71 units/acre)	0 kg/ha (0 units/acre)	0 kg/ha (0 units/acre)
Nutrients to be Supplied:	- 1 kg/ha (- 1 units/acre) (undersupplied)	0 kg/ha (0 units/acre)	+ 15 kg/ha (+ 12 units/acre) (oversupplied)
Organic Manure to be Applied			
Manure Type	Volume Applied	Method of Application	When Applied
Beef Cattle Slurry 6% Dry Matter	33 m ³ /ha	Slurry - Tanker and splash plate	Spring
Fertiliser to be Applied			
Fertiliser Type	Quantity of Product Applied		
- 27 0 0	330 kg/ha		

When using the Crop Nutrient Calculator to get a recommendation for what a crop needs to grow all you have to do is to input the field details from your soil analysis report, then select the crop you are growing, and the previous crop grown in the field. From there you can select the type and amount of slurry or manure applied and the calculator will work out how much nitrogen, phosphate and potash is supplied by it and what still needs to be supplied from chemical fertiliser.

The summary report from the Crop Nutrient Calculator is shown above for an example silage crop and it details the crop requirement and how these were supplied from slurry and chemical fertiliser. All the phosphate and potash was supplied from the slurry. The remaining nitrogen was then supplied using a straight nitrogen product (27.0.0). (The oversupply of potash can be carried through to the second cut).

By using the information in your soil analysis to maximise the use of slurry and manures means that chemical fertiliser is a top up application. So to make full use of your soil analysis report start using the Crop Nutrient Calculator by logging on to www.daera-ni.gov.uk/onlieservices and selecting CAFRE Nutrient Calculators.

Pig welfare – reducing tail-biting

Siobhán Kyle, Animal Welfare & Enforcement Branch, DAERA.

The European Commission has produced leaflets and videos to assist with compliance with Recommendation 336/2016 to reduce the need to dock pigs' tails. These resources are available at the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/practice/farm/pigs/tail-docking>

Tail-biting is a sign of stress and is a multi-factorial problem - there is no silver-bullet solution. This stress is usually caused by inadequate environmental conditions and management practices.

There are six key factors:

1. Enrichment material.
2. Thermal comfort, air quality and light.
3. Health and fitness.
4. Competition.
5. Diet.
6. Pen structure and cleanliness.



From 2018 DAERA will be carrying out inspections to ensure that pig producers are complying with their legal obligation to minimize the need for tail-docking. When inspected by DAERA, pig producers will be expected to provide evidence of the actions that they have taken and the results of risk assessments carried out before and after interventions. The inspection will cover the legal requirement for environmental enrichment -

“To enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, all pigs shall have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material such as straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such which does not adversely affect the health of the animals.”

The first step towards compliance is to carry out a risk assessment and then to take action on any issue identified. Risk assessments can be carried out using the online WebHAT tool <https://webhat.ahdb.org.uk/>. Private Veterinary Practitioners should also be able to provide pig producers with advice on risk assessment and on measures to reduce stress in pigs.

Farm Family Key Skills raising awareness on Farm Businesses across Northern Ireland

Siobhán Sheppard, Farm Family Key Skills Scheme Manager, CAFRE.

Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) is an initiative under the Farm Business Improvement Scheme (FBIS), which is partly funded by the EU under the NIRDP 2014-2020.

Over 1000 farm family members, from across Northern Ireland, have already availed of training under the FFKS scheme covering key areas such as Succession Planning, Taxation, Health & Safety, Nutrient Management, Pig Health and Biosecurity. FFKS is aimed at farmers, farm family members and employees associated with both the agricultural and horticultural sectors. The short training courses will continue to run for the next three years and are delivered by CAFRE appointed contractors to local communities both on and off farm.

Later this year the FFKS scheme will launch First Aid for Farm Families training which will help individuals deal with an on-farm accident. There will also be further Animal Health training focused on the key areas of improvement for livestock businesses.

CAFRE encourages individual farmers, their family members and employees to attend this training. Training can also be arranged for groups of farmers and family members.



If you would like more information on how you could enrol on any of the short courses within the Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) scheme, please go to www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/ or E-mail kt.admin@daera-ni.gov.uk or call CAFRE Knowledge Transfer Administration on **028 9442 6790**.