



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

Cross compliance: water protection (SMR 1) (2024)

Summary of the rules to protect water from pollution.

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Introduction

The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 require all farms to protect water from pollution. Agricultural pollution can be detrimental to public health, the environment, local communities and to the agricultural industry itself.

The regulations set definitions for some materials and specify measures which must be carried out if you intend to undertake certain agricultural activities.

This Factsheet should be read in conjunction with the [Control of agricultural pollution regulations: guidance](#).

Requirements applying to all land

Record keeping requirements

Ensure compliance with all record keeping requirements. The records required include:

- for all holdings: before 30 April each year details of the number and type of animals on the holding from the previous calendar year and the number of days spent on the holding - to demonstrate adherence to the 170kg/ha Nitrogen limit
- for holdings with slurry storage systems: calculations to demonstrate there is sufficient capacity to store all slurry to be produced by animals kept in a building or on hardstanding during the storage period
- for holdings with pigs, poultry or other housed animals with no slurry system: calculations to demonstrate sufficient storage of all manure produced during the storage period., taking closed periods into consideration

- for holdings spreading nitrogen fertiliser: copies of nitrogen management plan and record of subsequent applications. For holdings importing or exporting livestock manure or slurry – records of all imports and exports to include dates, manure type, volume nitrogen content and destination
- if you spread organic manure, a Risk Map (see ‘Spreading Organic Manures’ below).

Take all sources of nitrogen into account - soil supply, organic manures and manufactured fertilisers, record when writing your nitrogen plan and calculating nitrogen crop requirements. **Full details of all record keeping requirements, including exemptions, are available in the [Control of agricultural pollution regulations: guidance](#).**

All records must be kept for a minimum of five years and must be made available for inspection on request.

Slurry storage

- make sure that all slurry (as defined in the [Control of agricultural pollution regulations: guidance](#)) is collected and stored in systems that have sufficient capacity for the storage period and meet the requirements for durability, maintenance and safety zones, are built in accordance with the relevant construction standards and have sufficient capacity to meet all the requirements of the regulations [Natural Resources Wales / Silage and slurry storage](#)
- separation of slurry into its solid and liquid fractions must either be carried out mechanically or on an impermeable surface. The liquid fraction after separation is defined as slurry and must be stored in a suitable container as required by the [Control of agricultural pollution regulations](#)
- carry out regular inspections of installations and make timely maintenance and repairs where necessary
- comply with any notices served by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) that

require improvements to be made to a slurry storage installation

Closed periods for high nitrogen organic manures

- comply with closed periods and post closed period limits for spreading organic manures with high readily available nitrogen (includes slurry and poultry manure)

Whole holding limit

- across the whole holding you must not exceed a limit of **170kg of Nitrogen (N) per hectare** from all livestock manure, including direct excreta from animals on the land and the spreading of manure
- this applies to each 12-month period beginning 1 January 2024
- holdings or part holdings not previously within a NVZ and exceeding the rate of 170kg/N/ha per year from livestock manure up to a maximum of 250kg/N/ha, you must undertake the Enhanced Nutrient Management (ENM) approach. The following are requirements of the ENM approach:
 - maintain the holding at 80% or more of the agricultural area sown with grass
 - undertake Enhanced Nutrient Management Planning including soil testing requirements for the identification of Phosphorus (P) indices and restrictions on livestock manure types
 - adhere to P application limits by crop type
 - record the spreading of N and P fertilisers
 - do not import any livestock manures
 - ensure the export of livestock manures are planned. A record of the amount and type of livestock manure intended to be exported during the calendar year must be made by 1 March 2024
 - identify relevant fields within the ENM approach on the risk map
 - adhere to additional requirements in relation to ploughing, crop rotation

- and sowing of crops
- maintain relevant buffer zones around watercourses and around supplementary feeding and drinking locations
- adhere to soil protection requirements
- apply slurry using precision spreading equipment
- you must have submitted a notice to NRW by **31 March 2024** if you are undertaking the ENM approach. Late notification will not be accepted

Full details of the requirements of the ENM approach are available in the [Control of agricultural pollution regulations: guidance](#).

Spreading organic manures

- if you spread organic manure, you must produce and update a map of the holding (a 'Risk Map'). A copy of the Risk Map must be made available on request. Details of what must be included on the risk map and guidance on how to produce the risk map is available in the [Control of agricultural pollution regulations: guidance](#)
- spread organic materials and fertilisers as accurately as possible and in a way which does not contaminate water courses, taking into account slope, ground cover, proximity to surface water, weather conditions, soil type and presence of land drains
- do not carry out spreading of organic manures within the no spread zones
 - 50m of a borehole, spring or well
 - 10m of surface water (6m if precision spreading)
- when applying specific organic manure to bare soil or stubble, you must incorporate it into the soil as soon as possible, and within 24 hours at the latest (exemptions may apply – see guidance)
- spread slurry using equipment with a low spreading trajectory (below four metres from the ground)

Spreading manufactured fertilisers

- manufactured nitrogen fertilisers must not be spread within two metres of surface water
- comply with the closed periods for manufactured nitrogen fertilisers (exemptions may apply). Further clarification regarding closed periods for applying manufactured nitrogen fertiliser are set out in the guidance

Field and crop nitrogen limits

- do not spread more than 250 kg/ha total nitrogen from organic manures on any given hectare in any 12-month period
- the total amount of nitrogen (organic and manufactured) permitted to be spread on specified crops must not exceed the maximum nitrogen limit (See guidance for specified individual crop limits)

Storage of organic manures other than slurry

- comply with rules on the location and storage of solid organic manures, including poultry manure
- comply with the temporary field heap location and duration requirements

Silage storage

- make sure that silage storage systems are built in accordance with the relevant construction standards, and field silage site rules are met (see guidance).
- carry out regular inspections of installations and make timely maintenance and repairs where necessary

- comply with any notices served by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) that require improvements to be made to an installation or field silage site

Notifications

- notify NRW in writing about a new, substantially enlarged, or substantially reconstructed silo or slurry storage system at least 14 days before beginning construction. [Natural Resources Wales / Silage and slurry storage](#)
- notify NRW of the place where a field silage heap (made on open ground as opposed to a clamp) is to be made at least 14 days before that site is first used
- you must have submitted notice to NRW by **31 March 2024** if you are undertaking the ENM approach. Late notification is not accepted

Field checks applying to all land

- check compliance with the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations requirements including record keeping requirements. All records will be checked at inspection
- check storage of organic manures (other than slurry) are stored correctly including temporary field heaps
- check organic manures and manufactured fertiliser has been applied as required in regulations
- check for notice to NRW of any new or substantially re constructed slurry or silage storage system
- assess capacity, durability, maintenance and safety zones for the making and storage of silage in clamps, bales and field heaps
- do not go into silage effluent tanks – inspect them from the outside only
- check actions have been taken in line with any notices issued by NRW
- assess capacity, durability, maintenance and safety zones for the storage of

slurry

- assess sufficient slurry and manure storage capacity during storage period to comply with closed period(s)
- assess farmer's regular inspection regime (inspection plan and records, as appropriate for the installation and components) and check for corrosion, damage, and leaks

Good practice

- read the guidance literature to help you comply with all the requirements
- refer to the guidance which provides templates as an aid to completing the necessary plans, records, and calculations
- refer to the [Farm scheme inspections: guide for farmers](#) for further detail on the physical and record check undertaken at inspection
- if contractors are spreading organic manures for you, provide them with a copy of your risk map
- ensure regular soil and manure analysis and use the results to influence nutrient planning, to include phosphate as well as nitrogen

Further information

For further information please contact:

- Agricultural Pollution Regulations Helpline (ADAS) 01974 847000
- Natural Resources Wales
- Farming Connect

or see [Cross compliance: useful contacts \(2024\)](#).

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