

SMR 1: Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

December 2014

www.cymru.gov.uk

The European Nitrates Directive is an environmental measure designed to reduce water pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. It requires farmers in designated areas to follow the NVZ rules as detailed in the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone Guidance and workbook. These measures aim to reduce nitrate pollution within the designated areas.

The designated NVZs are areas of land draining into ground or surface waters that are currently (or have the potential to become) high in nitrates. Approximately 2.3% of Wales is designated as an NVZ. Further details are available from the Welsh Government Website.

Main requirements

- Comply with the closed periods for organic manure and manufactured nitrogen fertilisers.
- Ensure adequate storage capacity for all livestock manure or slurry to meet the requirements of the closed periods and associated rules set out within the NVZ Workbook and Guidance.
- Make sure that slurry and silage storage systems meet requirements for capacity (see NVZ Guidance and Workbooks), durability, maintenance and safety zones, are built in accordance with the relevant construction standards, and field silage site rules are met (see SSAFO Regulations Guidance Notes for Farmers).
- Comply with the NVZ rules on the location and storage of solid manures.
- Comply with any notices served by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) that require improvements to be made to an installation or field silage site.
- Carry out regular inspections of installations and make timely repairs where necessary.
- Notify NRW in writing about a new, substantially enlarged, or substantially reconstructed installation (silo or slurry storage system) at least 14 days before the structure is used for the first time.
- Notify NRW of the place where field silage (made on open ground) is to be made at least 14 days before that site is first used. Take all sources of nitrogen into account when calculating nitrogen crop requirements.
- Limit the total nitrogen in livestock manure applied to land either by spreading, or directly grazing animals so as not to exceed of 170kg/ha across the farm, unless a derogation has been granted by NRW.
- Spread no more than 250 kg/ha total nitrogen in organic material on any given hectare.
- Spread organic materials and fertilisers as accurately as possible and in a way which does not contaminate water courses (manufactured nitrogen fertilisers must not be spread within 2 metres of a surface water, and organic manure must not be spread within 10 metres), taking into account: slope, ground cover, proximity to surface water, weather conditions, soil type and presence of land drains.
- Spread slurry using equipment with a low spreading trajectory (below 4 metres from the ground).
- Control the spreading of nitrogen fertiliser and organic manure and produce a risk map.
- Maintain farm records as stipulated in the NVZ Workbook and Guidance for at least 5 years.

Field checks

- Check compliance with the NVZ rules.
- Check compliance with the SSAFO rules.
- Check relevant NVZ records – nitrogen plans, cropping, livestock numbers, fertiliser/manure/slurry usage and field risk map.
- Check actions have been taken in line with any notices issued by NRW.
- Assess capacity, durability, maintenance and safety zones (including those for the making of silage and storage of silage and slurry).
- Assess farmer's regular inspection regime (inspection plan and records, as appropriate for the installation and components) and check for corrosion, damage and leaks. Do not go into silage effluent tanks – inspect them from the outside only.

Good practice

- Notify NRW before you plan a new, substantially enlarged or substantially reconstructed installation (silo or slurry storage system), to ensure the installation will be compliant and costly alterations can be avoided.
- Obtain copies of guidance literature to help you comply with all the requirements
- Ensure regular soil and manure analysis and use the results to influence nutrient planning.
- Refer to the NVZ Farmers' Workbook which provides a template as an aid to completing the necessary plan, records and calculations which can be accessed at www.wales.gov.uk.
- Share your risk map with contractors.

For further information please contact:

Natural Resources Wales

See 'Useful Contacts' factsheet within this pack