

**Cross-Compliance  
Verifiable Standards  
2005 and 2006**

# **Cross-Compliance Verifiable Standards Guidance for Farmers**

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## Introduction

1. This booklet sets out the standards and requirements that farmers must meet in respect of the eight Statutory Management Requirements introduced from 1 January 2005 and the eight SMRs to be introduced from 1 January 2006. The detail of how farmers should respect Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition is also included.
2. This booklet replaces the CAP Reform Part 3: Cross-Compliance Verifiable Standards booklet and provides the most up to date version of the 2005 requirements.
3. Further details regarding the Cross-Compliance Inspection and Sanction Regime are detailed in the CAP Reform Part 4: Cross-Compliance Inspection and Sanction booklet.

## Background

4. All farmers claiming the Single Farm Payment and other direct payments have been required to meet Cross-Compliance conditions since January 2005.
5. These conditions are designed to provide a more sustainable basis for European agriculture and reflect a number of environmental and other objectives. They are, in essence, good farm management practices, and encourage responsible stewardship of the land.
6. All European Union Member States have to implement Cross-Compliance. The majority of requirements under Cross-Compliance reinforce existing legislation, or form part of existing codes of good practice, and farmers should therefore already be meeting most, if not all of these.

## Cross-Compliance Requirements

7. There are two aspects to Cross-Compliance. The first of these is compliance with specific articles contained within 19 European regulatory requirements covering the environment, food safety, animal and plant health and animal welfare and are known as the **Statutory Management Requirements**.
8. The Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) are being phased in over three years from 2005 - 2007.
9. Annex 1 of this booklet sets out the SMRs that came into effect during 2005. You have to comply with these to receive direct agricultural support payments. This Annex provides you with the full detail of the individual requirements of each SMR. All of these conditions are already legally binding on farmers. A breach of these legal requirements may lead to a partial or complete withholding of direct support payments. Member States have no discretion regarding the European laws that have to be applied as SMRs.

10. Annex 2 sets out the SMRs that come into effect for Cross-Compliance purposes from 1 January 2006. Again, the detail relating to each SMR is included. As with the requirements that came into effect from 1 January 2005 all of these conditions, with the exception of SMR 9, are already legally binding on farmers.
11. The second aspect of Cross-Compliance is a requirement that all those in receipt of direct agricultural support maintain all their land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition. The Northern Ireland **Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition** (GAEC) Measures have been developed from a framework set out by the European Commission to address the following issues:
  - **Soil erosion** – protection of soil;
  - **Soil organic matter** – maintenance of soil organic matter levels;
  - **Soil structure** – maintenance of soil structure;
  - **Minimum level of maintenance** – ensure a minimum level of maintenance and avoid the deterioration of habitats.
12. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has, as far as possible, used Good Farming Practice standards as a model for the development of GAEC in Northern Ireland.
13. Annex 3 sets out the GAEC requirements that came into effect from 1 January 2005 and that you have to comply with as a condition of receipt of direct agricultural support payments. A breach of these requirements may lead to a partial or complete withholding of direct support payments.
14. **You should note that you are still bound by all other environmental and animal health and welfare laws.** You may still be prosecuted in the criminal courts for breaching the SMRs, if their breach would be a criminal offence. In addition, if you have an Agri-Environment Agreement or claim Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowance, you are still obliged to meet all the standards of Good Farming Practice (the guidance booklets for these schemes contain full information). Where the requirements of agri-environment schemes go further than the GAEC standards, it is the GAEC standards that will be the basis for determining any subsequent reduction in direct payments.

## **General Information**

15. Cross-Compliance applies to all land within an agricultural business irrespective of whether it is used to activate Single Farm Payment Scheme entitlements. For permanently held land (either owned or under an agricultural tenancy), Cross-Compliance applies for the full 12 calendar months. Each Single Farm Payment claimant must also comply with the Cross-Compliance requirements on set-aside land, common land, shared grazing and land taken in conacre.
16. This booklet sets out the Cross-Compliance rules for Northern Ireland. The rules vary across England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. Accordingly, where your holding crosses a border you may have to make different arrangements on each side of the border. You should obtain copies of all relevant guidance that applies to your farm/holding.

## **Statutory Management Requirements(SMRs) Applicable from 1 January 2005**

This Annex sets out the SMRs that came into effect from 1 January 2005 and that you have to comply with as a condition of receipt of direct agricultural support payments. The full list of SMRs applicable from 1 January 2005 is as detailed below. The following pages provide greater detail on the individual requirements of each SMR.

| <b>No</b> | <b>EC Directive / Regulation</b>   |
|-----------|--|
| 1.        | Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (applicable Articles 3, 4(1), (2), (4), 5, 7 and 8).  |
| 2.        | Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna (applicable Articles 6, 13, 15 and 22 (b)).  |
| 3.        | Council Directive 80/68/EEC on the protection of groundwater against pollution caused by certain dangerous substances (applicable Articles 4 and 5).   |
| 4.        | Council Directive 86/278/EEC on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture (applicable Article 3).  |
| 5.        | Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources (applicable Articles 4 and 5).   |
| 6.        | Council Directive 92/102/EEC on identification and registration of animals (Articles 3, 4 and 5).  |
| 7.        | Commission Regulation (EC) No 911/2004 as regards eartags, holding registers and passports in the framework of the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals (Articles 6, 8 and 9).                           |
| 8.        | Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products (Articles 4 and 7). |

## **SMR 1. Conservation of Wild Birds**

### **1.1 Main Requirements**

You must not kill, injure, capture, or keep any wild bird, without a licence in authorised circumstances (certain quarry species of birds may be killed outside the close season and certain pest species of birds may be killed by landowners or occupiers under the terms of General Licences issued by the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS)).

You must not destroy, damage, remove or keep their nests or eggs, nor disturb birds whilst nesting, unless you have a licence to do so.

### **1.2 Verifiable Standards - All Land**

Compliance with the provisions of Articles 5, 7 and 8 of the above Directive as implemented by the 1985 Wildlife Order and Conservation Regulations.

### **1.3 Verifiable Standards - Areas Within Natura 2000 Sites**

If you have a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) on your land, you will have been formally notified by the EHS and will already be aware of the environmental obligations which exist on your land.

- You must not carry out operations or activities specified in the Area of Special Scientific Interest notification that are likely to damage the interests of the Natura 2000 site which have not been notified to EHS and consented to.
- Compliance with terms of management agreements.

### **1.4 Field checks**

In carrying out field checks, inspectors will look for,

- Compliance with the Main Requirements and relevant Verifiable Standards as detailed above.

## **SMR 2. Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna**

### **2.1 Main Requirements**

You must not pick, cut, collect, destroy or dig up European protected plants in their natural environment, unless you have a licence to do so (for example, Killarney Fern or Yellow Marsh Saxifrage).

You must not sell, transport or exchange any material taken from European protected plants in the wild, unless you have a licence to do so.

You must not disturb, kill or injure European protected animals, or damage, destroy or obstruct their places of shelter or breeding places, unless you have a licence to do so (for example, bats or otters).

You must not use prohibited methods of killing or taking certain other wild European protected animals (for example, Irish hare or pine marten).

You must not release, plant or allow to escape into the wild invasive non-native species (for example, American mink, Japanese knotweed or Giant hogweed).

### **2.2 Verifiable Standards - All Land**

- No evidence of destruction, cutting, uprooting, selling or exchange of European protected plant species.
- No evidence of use of prohibited methods of killing or taking European protected animal species.
- Compliance with measures designed to regulate introduction of non-native species.

### **2.3 Verifiable Standards - Areas Within Natura 2000 Sites**

If you have a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) on your land, you will have been formally notified by EHS and will already be aware of the environmental obligations which exist on your land.

- You must not carry out operations or activities specified in the Area of Special Scientific Interest notification as likely to damage the interests of the Natura 2000 site which have not been notified to EHS and consented to.
- Compliance with terms of management agreements.

### **2.4 Field Checks**

In carrying out field checks, inspectors will look for,

- Compliance with the Main Requirements and relevant Verifiable Standards as detailed above.

## **SMR 3. Protection of Groundwater Against Pollution**

Groundwater is an important resource for drinking water and provides the base flow for many surface waters such as rivers and lakes. By following the advice and information contained within this section, farmers should be able to avoid polluting groundwater with List I or List II substances.

### **3.1 Main Requirements**

Under the Groundwater Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998, an authorisation is required from EHS before disposing of various substances to land. The substances governed by the Regulations are called “List I” and “List II”.

#### **List I substances**

Examples of List I substances include:

- Organophosphorus compounds (such as spent pesticides, sheep-dip);
- Organotin compounds (such as anti-fouling paint);
- Mineral oils and hydrocarbons (such as diesel, petrol and heating oil).

#### **List II substances**

Examples of List II substances include,

- Lead, Zinc and Copper.

The main consequence of this legislation is that any farmers disposing of spent sheep dip or pesticides washings (not including backsprayed or re-used pesticide washings) to land must obtain a Groundwater Authorisation from EHS and comply with the conditions of that Authorisation.

#### **Authorisation conditions**

Authorisation conditions may include the following restrictions:

- Spreading on land within ten metres of a surface waterway (see Annex 4 for definition), or within 50 metres of any spring, well or borehole, irrespective of its current use;
- Spreading on land that is liable to flooding or is frozen hard or snow covered;
- Spreading on land that is free draining, steeply sloping, water logged or has cracked soil.

### **3.2 Verifiable Standards**

- Farmers disposing of List I or List II substances to land will be required to obtain and meet the conditions of a Groundwater Authorisation.
- Farmers will be required to produce, on request, satisfactory records, as detailed in the Groundwater Authorisation, that indicate that no breach of the legislation has occurred.
- No evidence of the pollution of groundwater by List I or List II substances.
- Farmers will be required to ensure the proper siting, operation and maintenance of a sheep dipper.
- Farmers will be required to comply with any Notice served by EHS under the Groundwater Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998.

### **3.3 Field Checks**

Inspections in respect of this measure will include checking of:

- The Groundwater Authorisation for disposal of spent sheep dip or waste pesticides (including washings) on your land. This does not include backsprayed or re-used pesticide washings (see DARD Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water);
- Written records detailing any disposals carried out in the last four years in accordance with conditions of the Groundwater Authorisation;
- Evidence of pollution of Groundwater by List I or List II substances;
- Any dippers to check if they pose a threat to groundwater, for example, through cracks/unsealed drain holes.

## **SMR 4. Protection of the Environment when Sewage Sludge is used in Agriculture**

### **4.1 Main Requirements**

Sewage and septic tank sludge contains significant levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, trace elements and organic matter and has a fertiliser value that is similar to that of animal manure and slurries.

However, sewage and septic tank sludge can also contain pathogens and heavy metals that could be potentially harmful to human, animal and plant health. It is therefore necessary to monitor and control the use of these sludges in agriculture in order to preserve crop yields and minimise health risks.

The spreading of sewage and septic tank sludge onto agricultural land is controlled by the Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1990 and enforced by EHS. This legislation applies only to the application of sewage sludge and septic tank sludge to commercial food crops, including for stock rearing purposes.

Sewage sludge is defined in the Regulations as residual sludge from sewage treatment plants treating domestic or urban waste waters and from other sewage plants treating waste waters of a composition similar to domestic and urban waste waters.

### **4.2 Verifiable Standards**

- The average annual rate of addition to land by means of sewage sludge application of any of the elements listed in the sludge table of the Regulations must not exceed the limit specified in the table.
- The concentration in the soil of any of the elements listed in the soil table of the Regulations must not exceed the limit specified in the table either at the time of using sewage sludge or as a result of applying it.
- Sewage sludge is not to be applied if the soil pH is below pH5.
- Sewage sludge must be used in a manner that takes account of the nutrient needs of plants and ensures that the quality of the soil, surface waters and groundwater is not impaired.
- No fruit or vegetable crops other than fruit trees should be growing in the soil or being harvested at the time of sewage sludge application.
- Grazing of animals or harvesting of forage crops must not occur within three weeks from the date of application of sewage or septic tank sludge.
- Fruit and vegetable crops, which are grown in direct contact with the soil and eaten raw, must not be harvested within ten months from the date of application of sewage or septic tank sludge.
- Where untreated sewage or septic tank sludge has been applied without injection into the soil, it must be incorporated into the soil as soon as practicable.

- Where sewage sludge is used on agricultural land, its occupier must provide the sludge producer with details as to the date of application, quantity of the sludge used, address and area of the agricultural unit to which it was applied, and the name and address of the sludge supplier, if different from the sludge producer.

In addition, if the farmer/occupier is a sludge producer the following will apply:

- Sewage sludge must be analysed, before application, in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Regulations. The sewage sludge producer should carry out this analysis at least every six months;
- The soil within the application area must be analysed by the sewage sludge producer to determine the pH and metal concentrations, in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

### **4.3 Field Checks**

Inspections in respect of this measure will include checking of:

- Land to which sewage or septic tank sludge has been applied, and if appropriate, any adjacent surface waters and/or groundwater;
- Records providing information to the sludge producer on the quantity of sewage sludge used, the date of application, the area of the agricultural unit to which it was applied and the name and address of the sludge supplier (if different from the producer);
- Records of crop and harvest details for land to which sewage sludge has been applied;
- Evidence that the sewage or septic tank sludge has been applied in accordance with the requirements of the Verifiable Standards (4.2).

## SMR 5. Protection of Water Against Nitrate Pollution

### 5.1 The Nitrates Directive

The Nitrates Directive requires Member States to identify:

- All surface freshwaters and groundwaters that contain 'elevated' levels of nitrate (that is, nitrate concentrations in excess of 50mg NO<sub>3</sub>/L);
- All surface waters (fresh and marine) that are, or may become, eutrophic.

In both these instances, Member States must designate the catchment areas draining to these polluted waters as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and establish Action Programmes to regulate farming activities within NVZs. Alternatively, Member States may establish and apply Action Programmes throughout their national territory.

Until 1 October 2004, Northern Ireland had designated seven NVZs on the basis of elevated nitrate levels in groundwaters. These NVZs are very small and cover less than 1% of Northern Ireland's land area. The location of these NVZs can be found on the EHS website [www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk).

Northern Ireland also has a widespread problem of eutrophication of surface waters and a large proportion of this nutrient enrichment is attributable to agriculture. Following extensive consultation, the total territory of Northern Ireland has been designated under the Protection of Water Against Agricultural Nitrate Pollution Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 with effect from 29 October 2004. **Under this legislation, farmers in the seven existing NVZs must continue to apply the mandatory measures under the Action Programme for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999, until such times as a new Action Programme which will apply to all farmers in Northern Ireland is put in place. EHS is responsible for enforcement of these Regulations.**

### 5.2 Main Requirements (pending implementation of new Action Programme)

As stated in the preceding paragraphs, the main requirements of the new action programme will be published when this programme is put in place.

The following provides a summary of the key measures that apply to the seven existing NVZs (that is, those designated before 29 October 2004).

**In this summary, N = Nitrogen**

#### Closed Periods

| Closed Periods   | Arable         | Grassland  |
|--|----------------|--|
| Chemical N Fertilizer  | 1 Sept – 1 Feb | 15 Sept – 1 Feb  |
| Organic Manures (with high available N on sandy and shallow soils) | 1 Aug – 1 Nov  | 1 Sept – 1 Nov<br>(includes arable land with autumn sown crop) |

## Nitrogen Limits

| Nitrogen Limits   | Arable                          | Grassland        |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Chemical N Fertiliser   | Crop requirement                | Crop requirement |
| Organic manures field limit (excluding grazing deposition) <sup>(1)</sup>     | 250kg/ha total N                | 250kg/ha total N |
| Organic manures whole farm limits for farm area within NVZ designated in 1999 | 170kg/ha total N                | 250kg/ha total N |
| Organic manures whole farm limits for farm area within NVZ designated in 2003 | 210kg/ha total N <sup>(2)</sup> | 250kg/ha total N |

(1) Available N from organic manures must not exceed crop requirement.

(2) 170kg/ha total N from 1 June 2007 or until a new Action Programme is applied.

## Spreading Controls

- Chemical N fertilisers and organic manures must be applied evenly and accurately.
- Chemical N fertilisers or organic manures must not be applied when the soil is waterlogged, flooded, or frozen (12hrs or more in preceding 24hrs) or snow covered.
- Chemical N fertilisers or organic manures must not be applied to steeply sloping fields.
- Chemical N fertilisers must not be applied in a way that contaminates watercourses.
- Organic manures must not be applied within ten metres of watercourses.

## Livestock Manure Storage

There must be sufficient livestock manure storage to meet any applicable closed period for spreading organic manures, except where it can be demonstrated that any livestock manure in excess of the storage capacity will be disposed of in a manner that will not cause harm to the environment.

## Record Keeping

Adequate farm records must be kept and made available for inspection, upon request, covering a minimum period of five years or from the date of designation, whichever is the lesser, covering a range of information including cropping, livestock numbers, and the use of nitrogen fertilisers and organic manures.

### 5.3 Verifiable Standards

Compliance with Action Programme Measures including:

- N Fertiliser must not be applied to land during the specified closed periods (see Closed Periods table);
- Chemical N fertiliser application must not exceed crop requirement (see Nitrogen Limits table);
- Total N from organic manure application must not exceed the specified field and whole farm limits (see Nitrogen Limits table);
- Available N from organic manure application must not exceed crop requirement (see Nitrogen Limits table footnote 1);
- N Fertilisers must be applied in accordance with the spreading controls in the Action Programme;
- There must be sufficient livestock manure storage to meet any applicable closed period for spreading organic manures, except where it can be demonstrated that any livestock manure in excess of the storage capacity will be disposed of in a manner that will not cause harm to the environment;
- Adequate farm records must be kept and made available for inspection, upon request, covering a minimum period of five years or from the date of designation, whichever is lesser, covering a range of information including cropping, livestock numbers, and the use of nitrogen fertilisers and organic manures.

**These verifiable standards will be reviewed in accordance with the new Action Programme, when implemented.**

### 5.4 Field Checks

Inspections in respect of this measure will include checking of:

- Compliance with the Action Programme Measures as these relate to the seven existing NVZs (that is, designated before 29 October 2004);
- Farm practices and facilities;
- Farm records kept in accordance with the Action Programme Measures.

**These field checks will be reviewed in accordance with the new Action Programme, when implemented.**

## **SMR 6. Identification and Registration of Animals**

### **Cattle Registration**

#### **6.1 Main Requirements**

Any person keeping cattle must register with DARD and obtain a herd number.

#### **6.2 Verifiable Standard**

- The farmer is registered with DARD as a herd keeper of cattle.

#### **6.3 Field Checks**

Inspectors will check that records meet cattle registration requirements.

### **Pig Registration**

#### **6.4 Main Requirements**

Any person keeping pigs must register with DARD and obtain a pig holding number.

#### **6.5 Verifiable Standard**

- The farmer is registered with DARD as a keeper of pigs.

### **Pig Records**

#### **6.6 Main Requirements**

The owner or person in charge of pigs shall make and maintain a record, showing the following details:

- Identification mark including individual identification of the animal number, breed and description of pig;
- Date of birth/purchase;
- Movements on to or off a holding including name and address of seller, purchaser, market, abattoir;
- Date sold/disposed of/died;
- Number of pigs present on the holding.

#### **6.7 Verifiable Standard**

- An on-farm record book for pigs is kept in a format stipulated by DARD and is updated within 48 hours of each acquisition, sale, disposal, birth, death or re-identification taking place. The number of pigs on the holding is recorded on an ongoing basis.

## **Pig Identification**

### **6.8 Main Requirements**

All pigs must be correctly identified before leaving the holding premises or when they attain six months of age, whichever is sooner.

Pigs under six months of age moving off a holding must be identified by either an ear tag, ear tattoo, or a slap mark bearing the holding code. However, if finished pigs move directly from the holding of origin to an abattoir in Northern Ireland, they may be identified by a slap mark bearing a curer number previously notified to the Department.

Pigs over six months of age must be identified at all times by an ear tag, ear tattoo or slap mark bearing the holding code plus an individual number of not more than four characters. Alternatively, they may be slap marked with the holding code and have an ear tag bearing the individual number.

There are no exemptions to the identification or movement requirements in respect of pigs, which are moved to an exhibition, show or for breeding purposes and which are intended to return home.

### **6.9 Verifiable Standard**

- All pigs born on the holding are individually identified with an ear tag, ear tattoo or a slap mark before movement off the holding or when they attain six months of age, whichever is sooner.

## **Pig Movement**

### **6.10 Main Requirements**

When pigs move off a holding, a movement document from the book provided by DARD for the sole use of a particular holding must be completed. The original copy must accompany the pigs. The first copy must be sent to the seller's local Divisional Veterinary Office (DVO). The seller must retain the second copy for his records. All copies must be retained for a period of one year.

### **6.11 Verifiable Standards**

- Self-written movement documentation should be completed before movement of pigs off any holding.

### **6.12 Field Checks**

Inspections in respect of this measure will include checks on:

- Records to ensure that these meet the minimum requirements;
- Appropriate tagging/marketing of pigs.

### **Sheep and/or Goat Registration (from 1 Jan 2005 to 31 Dec 2005)**

#### **6.13 Main Requirements**

For Cross-Compliance purposes, the following requirements applied from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005. From 1 January 2006, the requirements listed under SMR 9 Sheep and Goat Identification Requirements will apply.

#### **6.14 Verifiable Standard**

- You need to be registered with DARD as a keeper of sheep or goats.

### **Sheep and/or Goat Records (from 1 Jan 2005 to 31 Dec 2005)**

#### **6.15 Verifiable Standard**

- You must keep an on-farm record book for sheep and goats in the format stipulated by DARD and update this within seven days of each movement taking place.

### **Sheep and/or Goat Identification (from 1 Jan 2005 to 31 Dec 2005)**

#### **6.16 Verifiable Standard - Identification of Sheep And Goats**

- All sheep and goats born on your holding must be identified with an ear tag before the animal moves off the holding.

#### **6.17 Field Checks**

Farm visits will include checks on:

- The Flock Register - to ensure that records meet the minimum requirements outlined above;
- Sheep/goats – counted and tagged appropriately;
- Movement licences – to ensure that these have been used appropriately.

## **SMR 7. Identification and Registration of Bovine Animals**

### **7.1 Main Requirements**

These requirements are necessary for reasons both of traceability of the animals in event of a disease outbreak or risk to human health and thereby promoting the confidence of consumers in the Northern Ireland meat and dairy industries.

The requirements will also help to protect you against theft and fraud.

Cattle records must include the following:

- Ear tag number;
- Replacement tags/Retags;
- Colour, Breed, Sex and Date of Birth;
- Dam's Identification Number;
- Name and address of premises from which the animal moved;
- Date of movement on and off the holding or date of death;
- Name and address of premises to which moved or manner and place of disposal of carcase.

### **7.2 Verifiable Standards**

- On-farm registers are maintained and updated in accordance with the relevant time limits and in the format approved by DARD.

### **7.3 Field Checks**

Inspectors will check that records meet cattle identification requirements.

## **SMR 8. Identification and Registration of Bovine Animals (Labelling of beef and beef products)**

### **Cattle Registration**

#### **8.1 Main requirements**

Any person keeping cattle must register with DARD and obtain a herd number.

#### **8.2 Verifiable Standard**

- The farmer is registered with DARD as a herd keeper.

### **Cattle Identification**

#### **8.3 Main requirements**

Only DARD approved ear tags should be used.

All calves should be double tagged within 20 days of birth.

All births should be notified to the DVO (or on Animal Public Health Information System (APHIS) via the Rural Portal [www.ruralni.gov.uk](http://www.ruralni.gov.uk)) within 27 days of birth.

All deaths should be notified to the DVO (or on APHIS via the Rural Portal) within seven days of death.

#### **Ear Tag Requirements**

The regulations governing the identification of cattle have changed on three occasions in the last ten years. The following tables summarise the various formats approved for animals identified in Northern Ireland and the age groups of cattle to which they may be applied.

| Age Group  | Valid Identification Formats   |
|--|--|
| Born before 01 July 1994                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tattoo (pedigree cattle only);</li> <li>• Single metal tag;</li> <li>• Matching metal and plastic tag;</li> <li>• Pair of plastic tags (alpha numeric or all numeric).</li> </ul> |
| Born on or after 01 July 1994 and before 01 January 1998       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single metal tag bearing the letters United Kingdom;</li> <li>• Matching metal and plastic tag;</li> <li>• Pair of plastic tags (alpha numeric or all numeric).</li> </ul>        |
| Born on or after 01 January 1998 and before 14 September 1998* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching metal and plastic tag.</li> </ul>  |
| Born on or after 01 January 1998 and before 01 January 2000    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair of plastic tags (alpha numeric or all numeric).</li> </ul>   |
| Born on or after 01 January 2000                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair of plastic tags – must be all numeric.</li> </ul>  |

\*Between January and September 1998, the supply of plastic tags to Northern Ireland did not meet the demands of herd keepers. As a consequence, many animals born during this period were identified by means of metal tags (rather than alpha numeric plastic tags). The Department has required herd keepers to bring these animals into compliance by either:

- Applying a plastic ear tag bearing the same number as the metal tag to the other ear; or
- Retagging the animal with a pair of plastic ear tags but leaving the metal tag in place.

| Identification Type | Notes  |
|---------------------|--|
| Tattoo              | <p>Pedigree cattle born before 01 July 1994.</p> <p>Applied to the inside of the ear.</p> <p>The number format was defined by the breed societies and generally consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three letters corresponding to the herd in one ear;</li> <li>• Two or three letters and/or numbers identifying the individual in the other ear.</li> </ul> |
| Metal Ear Tag       | <p>A clasped steel band applied to the ear margin. The individual animal number appears on the outer surface and the herd number on the inner surface. Tags approved prior to 1987 did not include a check letter. Tags applied on or after 01 July 1994 must include the letters United Kingdom before the herd number.</p>   |

| Identification Type        | Notes   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Alpha Numeric Plastic Tags | <p>Each plastic ear tag consists of two parts (male and female), each of which bears the identification number. To be correctly identified, the animal must have a plastic ear tag bearing the same identification number in each ear.</p> <p>The identification number consists of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Line – the letters United Kingdom;</li> <li>• Second Line – the herd number;</li> <li>• Third Line – the individual animal number and check digit.</li> </ul> |
| All Numeric Plastic Tags   | <p>The design of the tags is identical to the alpha numeric plastic tags, only the format of the identification number differs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Line – the letters United Kingdom, followed by the digit 9;</li> <li>• Second Line – the herd number;</li> <li>• Third Line – the individual animal number and check digit.</li> </ul>   |

#### 8.4 Verifiable Standards

- Only DARD approved ear tags can be used for official identification purposes.
- All cattle born on a holding are double tagged within 20 days of birth.
- All births must be notified to DARD within 27 days.
- All deaths must be notified to DARD within seven days.

### **Cattle Movement**

#### 8.5 Main Requirements

All movements should be notified to the DVO (or on APHIS via the Rural Portal) so as to ensure that notification has arrived with DARD within seven days of movement.

#### 8.6 Verifiable Standards

- All movements of cattle must be notified to DARD within seven days.

#### 8.7 Field checks

Field checks will include the following:

- Ear tag number check of all cattle (this will involve a minimum of 10% or ten whichever number of animals is the greatest);
- Tagging of all animals is in line with the tables above;
- All animals are being tagged within 20 days of birth;

- Check records against APHIS and what is on the holding;
- That the records meet cattle identification requirements and all movements, births, and deaths are reported within the timescales noted above.

## **Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) Applicable from 1 January 2006**

This Annex sets out the SMRs that come into effect from 1 January 2006. These SMRs are in addition to the requirements that took effect in 2005. The following pages provide greater detail on the individual requirements of each SMR.

| <b>No</b> | <b>EC Directive / Regulation</b>  |
|-----------|---|
| 9.        | Council Regulation No 21/2004 establishing a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals (Articles 3, 4 and 5).   |
| 10.       | Council Directive 91/414/EEC concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market (Article 3).   |
| 11.       | Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the general principles and requirements of food law (Articles 14, 15, 17 (1), 18, 19 and 20).                                   |
| 12.       | Council Directive 96/22/EC concerning the prohibition on the illegal use in stock farming of certain substances having a hormonal or thyrostatic action and of beta-agonists (Articles 3, 4, 5 and 7).                |
| 13.       | Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (Articles 7, 11, 12, 13 and 15). |
| 14.       | Council Directive 85/511/EEC introducing Community measures for the control of foot-and-mouth disease (Article 3).  |
| 15.       | Council Directive 92/119/EEC introducing general Community measures for the Control of certain animal diseases and specific measures relating to swine vesicular disease (Article 3).                                 |
| 16.       | Council Directive 2000/75/EC laying down specific provisions for the control and eradication of bluetongue (Article 3).   |

## **SMR 9. Sheep and/or Goat Identification and Registration Requirements from 1 January 2006**

### **Sheep and/or Goat Registration**

#### **9.1 Main Requirements**

Any person keeping sheep and/or goats must register with DARD and obtain a flock number.

#### **9.2 Verifiable Standard**

- You need to be registered with DARD as a keeper of sheep and/or goats.

### **Sheep and/or Goat Register**

#### **9.3 Main Requirements**

The flock keeper must retain a Flock Register and record the following information in it:

- Date of Event/Event Code for example, birth, death, sold, purchased, lost;
- Number/Category of sheep/goats;
- Natal tags of animals born on holding;
- Movements Off for example, Movement Document Serial Number;
- Movements On for example, Movement Document Serial Number or Market Dispatch Document, Flock Number or market code of previous holding, tag numbers (if applicable);
- Others for example, total replacement tags, disposal method for dead animals.

#### **9.4 Verifiable Standard**

- An up-to-date Flock/Herd Register should be maintained in the format approved by DARD.

### **Sheep and/or Goat Identification**

#### **9.5 Main Requirements**

All sheep/goats born on a holding from 9 July 2005 must be tagged in the left ear before reaching nine months of age or before moving off the holding whichever is the earliest.

| Tagging of Sheep and/or Goats         |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Movements                             | How Sheep/Goats are tagged  | What to do if tag is lost  |
| First Move                            | Green tag (Natal Tag) in left ear within nine months of birth or before leaving the holding.  | Replace with next green tag in sequence.   |
| Second Move                           | Green tag (Movement Tag) in right ear on leaving the second holding or if kept more than 12 months in second holding.                   | If Natal Tag lost and a Movement Tag has been applied – no replacement natal tag needed.   |
| Third Move                            | Green tag (Movement Tag) in right ear if desired for ease of recording on movement documents (Record first and last number in sequence) | If Movement Tag lost – apply replacement tag – next green tag in sequence.<br>If both Natal and Movement Tags lost – apply total replacement tag (Orange).<br>Sheep bearing orange tags are not eligible for export. |
| Exports to GB                         | Green tag/s (Natal or Movement Tag)   | N/A  |
| Exports to ROI or other Member States | Green tag (Natal Tag) and Blue tag (Blue Export Tag) in left ear  | N/A  |

## 9.6 Verifiable Standards

- All sheep and goats born on the holding on or after 9 July 2005 are individually identified with an ear tag attached to its left ear within nine months of birth or before the animal moves off the holding, whichever date is earlier.
- All sheep and goats on the holding before 9 July 2005 must be identified with an ear tag attached to its left ear before it leaves the holding.
- All sheep and goats moving from a second holding must be identified with an ear tag attached to its right ear before it leaves the holding or within 12 months of residence on the second holding.
- Sheep which have no green tags in their ears must have an orange tag attached to its ear to show that it has lost its traceability.
- Lost tags must be replaced so as to maintain traceability.
- Ear tags being used are those approved by DARD for official identification purposes.

## **Annual Inventory**

### **9.7 Main Requirements**

An annual inventory in the format prescribed by DARD must be completed during the period from the 1 to 5 December and returned to DARD by 5 January.

### **9.8 Verifiable Standard**

- A flock keeper is required to submit an annual return to DARD which includes the total and categories of sheep on the holding;
- Details of the annual inventory must be recorded in the Flock Register.

## **Sheep and/or Goat Movement**

### **9.9 Main Requirements**

A movement document must be completed for all movements off a holding and sent to the DVO within seven days of the movement. Copies to be retained by the seller and buyer.

For sheep moving out of a market, a market dispatch document in the format prescribed by DARD must accompany the sheep. All market dispatch documents must be returned to the local DVO within 24 hours of the sale.

### **9.10 Verifiable Standard**

- All sheep moving off a holding must be accompanied by a movement document. The relevant sections must be completed by the seller.
- The original copy must accompany the animals and a copy must be retained by seller.
- A copy must also be forwarded to the local DVO within seven days.
- All sheep and goats moved on to the holding are accompanied by a movement document or a market dispatch document in the format prescribed by DARD.

### **9.11 Field Checks**

Field checks will include the following:

- Checks on the Flock Register;
- That records meet the Requirements mentioned above;
- That correctly completed movement documents or market dispatch documents must accompany sheep and goats during movement;
- Moves must be notified to DARD within the period specified in the legislation.

- That records have been maintained for a period of three years;
- That sheep/goats are tagged in accordance with the legislation;
- A count of sheep/goats is conducted at the time of the visit;
- That an annual inventory return has been made to DARD and that confirmation of receipt has been received by the flock-keeper;
- That movement documents have been completed and that copies, where appropriate, of these, together with the market dispatch documents, Export Health Certificates have been retained as required.

## **SMR 10. Placing of Plant Protection Products on the Market**

### **10.1 Main Requirements**

Farmers must not use any plant protection product unless:

- It has been approved under regulation 5, 7, 8 or 11 of the Plant Protection Products Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (as amended) (“PPPR”) and the Plant Protection Products (Basic Conditions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 which supplement the Plant Protection Products Regulations or the Control of Pesticides Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987 (as amended);
- It is used in accordance with any requirement or condition which is:
  - specified in the approval or in any extension of use granted under Regulation 10; or
  - required by the approval or extension of use to be on the labelling.
- It is used in accordance with the principles of good plant protection practice; and
- Whenever possible, it is used in accordance with the principles of integrated control.

Details of approved products are all recorded by the Pesticides Safety Directorate (PSD) under the pesticide product names on their website at [www.pesticides.gov.uk](http://www.pesticides.gov.uk). DARD issues Northern Ireland approvals in a parallel system to PSD.

### **10.2 Verifiable Standards**

Evidence of misuse of pesticides as indicated by pesticide residues in products. (The power to take samples is contained in paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 (FEPA) which is applied to products covered by the Plant Protection Products (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1995 (PPPR) by Regulation 24 of those Regulations).

- Ensure Farmers do not retain products, which are no longer approved for use (again enforcement powers FEPA applied by Regulation 24 of the PPPR).
- For any enforcement visits, check for the following:
  - That any pesticides being used by the farmer are approved products;
  - That they are used on approved crops only, at the correct dosage levels and leaving sufficient “buffer zones” so that spray does not enter water courses. This is also in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Pesticide on Farms and Holdings.

**Note:**

***The Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Pesticides on farms and holdings [the MAFF (now Defra's) Green Code recommends that checks be made on farm pesticide records where these are kept]. The MAFF Green Code, has not as yet been transposed into a Northern Ireland version, however it is a guide for good practice.***

### **10.3 Field Checks**

During on-farm inspections inspectors will check for:

- **Use of approved products**

Checks to ensure only approved products (as listed in the current Guide to Approved Pesticides prepared by the Pesticides Safety Directorate and the Health and Safety Executive) are being used and in accordance with their application specifications. The approval for application is restricted to a specified range of crops and conditions. All pesticide use is required to comply with the Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Pesticides on Farms and Holdings.

- **Storage of pesticides on farms and holdings**

Checks to ensure that only approved pesticides are being stored and that the store meets the following criteria:

- Suitably sited;
- Equipped and organised to hold the intended contents;
- Of adequate storage capacity;
- Soundly constructed of fire resistant materials;
- With suitable entrance and exit;
- Capable of containing spillage and leakage to the extent of 110% of the store's normal liquid contents storage capacity;
- Dry and protected from frost;
- With adequate lighting (natural or otherwise);
- Ventilated (natural or fan assisted);
- Marked (yellow and black hazard warning triangle symbol). The addition of a legend is optional;
- Secured against theft and vandalism.

- **Washing facilities and storage of clothing**

Checks to ensure there is adequate provision for the operator to wash, clean down protective clothing and store it away from normal clothing.

- **Keeping of records**

Checks to ensure:

- Records are accessible and clear and have been kept for all operations involving the storage, application and disposal of pesticides;
- That the stock control record is kept out of the store so that in the event of a fire the records survive;
- That all records are kept for at least three years and that the application record includes details of the field site, crop or item treated, the product used, its application rate and dilution, date and duration as well as weather conditions and any other relevant information;
- That the records are immediately available to an inspector.

- **Competence of operators**

Checks to ensure that operators are competent and that certain categories (contractors or people born after 31 December 1964) hold the appropriate Certificate of Competence or work under the direct and personal supervision of a Certificate holder. This will normally consist of a foundation module (known as PA1 which deals only with health and safety aspects of the use of pesticides). They must also hold the appropriate Application Module. Farmers normally require PA2A, which covers the use of the common hydraulic nozzle, tractor mounted sprayer. There are other specialist variations on PA2 to cover the use of air assisted, twin fluid, wick and rotary atomiser types. Those who use a hand held sprayer (knapsack) require the PA6 Module.

- **Application equipment**

Checks to ensure:

- That the sprayer is maintained in good condition, fitted with the appropriate nozzles and have a working pressure gauge;
- There is evidence of basic calibration (the operator either having calibrated the machine or at least being aware of the need to maintain a specified forward speed and specified working pressure) to achieve the target application rate. The recommended pressure must not be exceeded as this will result in drift. The operator must also be aware of the importance of only working in suitable wind / weather conditions;
- That the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available and in use at the appropriate times;
- That the facilities for cleaning equipment and PPE after use are arranged to avoid contamination of the environment and that suitable provision has been made for the safe disposal of surplus pesticide and empty containers.

## **SMR 11. Food and Feed Law**

### **Main Requirements**

For Cross-Compliance purposes you must, from 1 January 2006, comply with Articles 14, 15, 17(1), 18, 19 and 20 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 as far as they relate to an agricultural activity which you carry out or to agricultural land on your holding.

### **General Verifiable Standards**

While more detailed information on this Statutory Management Requirement will be issued in 2006, the general requirements of the relevant Articles of 178/2002 are summarised below. This may need to be expanded further especially as and when new food law comes into force. In the meantime, you should follow the requirements of the relevant Articles of 178/2002 below:

- You must not place food on the market if it is unsafe. Food is considered to be unsafe if it is either injurious to health or unfit for human consumption;
- You must not place unsafe feed on the market or feed it to food producing animals if it is unsafe. Feed is deemed to be unsafe for its intended use if it is considered either to have an adverse affect on human health or animal health or if it makes the food derived from food producing animals unsafe for human consumption;
- You must have adequate records and documentation. You must have in place, and maintain, traceability systems and procedures of both inputs to and outputs from your business. You will need to be able to identify:
  - (i) any person or business from whom you have been supplied with a food, a feed, a food-producing animal or any substance that will be incorporated into a food or feed; and
  - (ii) any businesses that you have supplied with any of your products.
- This traceability information must be made available to the competent authorities on demand. If you consider or have reason to believe that a food that you have imported, produced, processed, manufactured or distributed is not in compliance with the food safety requirements, and it has left your control, you shall immediately initiate procedures to withdraw that food from the market and inform the competent authorities of your actions;
- If you consider or have reason to believe that a feed that you have imported, produced, processed, manufactured or distributed does not satisfy the feed safety requirements you shall immediately initiate procedures to withdraw that feed from the market and inform the competent authorities of your actions. In addition, where any such feed is part of a batch, lot or consignment of feed of the same class or description, you must destroy the batch, lot or consignment unless the competent authority is satisfied otherwise;
- You must inform the competent authorities immediately if you consider or have reason to believe that a food, which you have placed on the market, may be injurious to human health or if a feed, which you have placed on the market, may not satisfy the feed safety requirements. You must also inform the

competent authorities of the action you have taken to prevent risks to the final consumer or risks arising from the use of that feed. You must not prevent or discourage any person from cooperating with the competent authorities where this may prevent, reduce or eliminate a risk arising from a food or feed;

- As a food or feed business operator you must ensure that foods or feeds satisfy the requirements of food law which are relevant to your activities. You will need to be able to verify that you have met these requirements.

*Food law* means “the laws, regulations, and administrative provisions governing food in general, and food safety in particular, whether at Community (European) or national level; it covers any stage of production, processing and distribution of food, and also of feed produced for, or fed to, food producing animals”.

A major part of the requirement to comply with all relevant food law will be compliance with the new food hygiene laws that apply from 1 January 2006 (Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 and Regulation (EC) No 853/2004). These Regulations place responsibility on farmers, as food business operators, for ensuring food safety at the beginning of the chain.

Some farming sectors (for example, milk and egg producers) are still subject to more specific hygiene requirements.

You will also need to comply with the new Feed Hygiene Regulation EC No 1831/2003. This will apply to most farms from 1 January 2008, but farms currently registered for mixing feeds containing additives will need to comply with conditions from 1 January 2006.

You must continue to respect existing legislation, including that on Maximum Residue Limits for contaminants and pesticides. Regulation (EC) No 466/2001 sets maximum permitted levels for mycotoxins and a number of environmental contaminants (lead, cadmium, mercury, nitrates, dioxins and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons). Commodities covered include cereals, fruit and vegetables, nuts, milk, eggs, and meat and meat products. Maximum permitted levels for pesticide residues are set out in the Pesticides (Maximum Residue Levels in Crops, Food and Feeding Stuffs) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002 (S.R. 2002/No.20) as amended.

## **SMR 12. Prohibition on the Illegal use in Stock Farming of Certain Substances having a Hormonal or Thyrostatic Action and of Beta-agonists**

### **12.1 Main Requirements**

Directive 96/22/EC prohibits the illegal use of substances having a hormonal or thyrostatic action and of beta-agonists in farm animals destined for the food chain. Surveillance for illegal use of these substances is required under Directive 96/23/EC. In Northern Ireland these Directives are implemented via the Animals and Animal Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) Regulations 1998 (as amended). These Regulations prohibit most uses of such substances in all species of farmed animals. However, legal administration of some of these substances is permitted under veterinary prescription for a very limited number of uses.

### **12.2 Verifiable Standards**

To comply with these requirements you:

Must not:

- Store oestradiol 17 $\beta$ , substances related to oestradiol 17 $\beta$ , beta-agonists that are for induction purposes in the treatment of tocolysis, or products containing these substances on the farm;
- Use hormonal substances for growth promotion;
- Use substances containing or related to oestradiol 17 $\beta$  for oestrus induction in farm animals after October 2006<sup>1</sup>.

Must:

- Use only United Kingdom authorised veterinary medicinal products for their authorised purposes;
- Follow the instructions for use;
- Update medicines records whenever these substances are used on the farm;
- Follow the withdrawal periods as laid out in the product's instructions for use or the veterinary prescription.

Other legal requirements apply to your dealings in veterinary medicines, for example, keeping written evidence of the source of all medicines for five years. These other requirements are contained in the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005. You are

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<sup>1</sup> UK law allows the use of oestradiol 17 $\beta$  or its ester-like derivatives only for oestrus induction in cattle, horses, sheep or goats or for treating cattle for foetus maceration, mummification or pyometra. However, its use for oestrus induction in cattle, horses, sheep or goats is prohibited from 14 October 2006.

liable to prosecution or other regulatory action if you do not follow them, although your entitlement to Single Farm Payments would not be directly affected.

The types of substances whose uses are limited by SMR 11 include:

- Oestrogens, such as oestradiol and zeranol;
- Androgens, such as testosterone;
- Gestagens, such as melengestrol acetate;
- Thyrostats, such as methylthiouracil;
- Stilbenes, such as diethyl stilboestrol; and
- Beta-agonists, such as salbutamol and clenbuterol.

Examples of products that might contain these substances include:

- PRID, Planipart and Ventipulmin.

Your veterinary practitioner will be able to advise you on where use of these might be allowed.

**Examples of products whose use is illegal are:**

- **Component T-H, 20 Dose Strip**, a slow release anabolic agent containing **trenbolone acetate**, a growth-promoting steroid;
- **Compudose**, an implantable form of oestradiol, which promotes growth;
- **Finaplix**, an implant for feedlot heifers containing trenbolone acetate, a growth-promoting steroid;
- **MGA® 200 or MGA® 500, which contain melengestrol acetate**, used to improve rate of weight gain and feed efficiency in confined feeding heifers or for oestrus suppression in breeding heifers;
- **Ralgro**, an implant containing **zeranol** for growth promotion;
- **Synovex**, a range of growth promoting products that may contain **testosterone** and **estradiol benzoate**, or **progesterone** and **estradiol**.

**You should note the meaning of the following terms:**

- **Beta-agonists:**

A group of veterinary medicines that, as muscle relaxants, can be used in animals to aid calving and in humans to treat asthma. Some beta-agonists, such as clenbuterol and salbutamol, have been used illegally in animals at much higher concentrations as growth promoters, where they result in a higher

proportion of lean meat. Effects noted in some consumers of meat from such animals are increased pulse rate, palpitations or flu-like symptoms.

- **Hormonal substances including thyrostats:**

Include both naturally occurring and synthetic substances. Natural hormones are produced by endocrine glands such as the ovaries, testes, thyroid, adrenal or pituitary and released into the blood stream to be carried to a particular organ or tissue, where they produce a specific response. Synthetic substances that have hormonal action include, stilbenes, gestagens and thyrostats.

### **12.3 Field Checks**

- Checks for the presence of residues of banned substances and unauthorised substances in animals on farms and at abattoirs.
- Checks that where authorised veterinary medicines have been used, any residues present in the animals, presented for slaughter for human consumption, do not exceed EU maximum residue limits.
- Check medicine records as part of on-farm visit.
- Targeted sampling is also carried out during the year and animals are selected on the basis of specific criteria laid down in Commission Decision 98/179/EC.

Sampling of animals or carcasses where an authorised officer suspects that they may contain a residue of either an illegal substance or a veterinary medicine in excess of the relevant maximum is also undertaken.

## **SMR 13. Prevention, Control and Eradication of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE)**

### **13.1 Main Requirements**

Farmers must comply with the provisions of Articles 7, 11, 12, 13, and 15 of Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies as implemented by the TSE Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002 (SR 2002 No.225) as amended. A new consolidated Regulation, which will replace the amended TSE Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002, is due to come into force in early 2006. You will be informed should there be any changes to these requirements in light of the new legislation.

### **13.2 Verifiable Standards**

Farmers **must**:

- Immediately notify the Divisional Veterinary Officer of any animal suspected of being infected by a TSE;
- On notification of a TSE suspect or confirmed case, fully comply with movement restrictions, including any order to slaughter and destroy the animal(s), or any other notices served by an inspector imposing measures concerning that animal or other animals under the TSE Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002, as amended;
- Not feed to ruminants, any animal protein or any feedingstuff, which contains animal protein, except (subject to required processing):
  - milk, milk-based products and colostrum;
  - eggs and egg products;
  - gelatine from non-ruminants;
  - hydrolysed proteins derived from non-ruminants or from ruminant hides and skins.
- Not feed products containing the following to farmed animals (ruminants or non-ruminants), directly or in feedingstuffs:
  - processed animal protein (includes mammalian meat and bonemeal, poultry meal, feather meal);
  - gelatine from ruminants.
- Use the following proteins only for production of feed for non-ruminants and store and use complete feed containing them separately from ruminant feed:
  - fishmeal;
  - blood products;
  - blood meal, only where fed to farmed fish;
  - dicalcium phosphate and tricalcium phosphate of animal origin, (mineral-derived versions are permitted for all livestock and are most commonly used – feed labels not specifying ‘animal origin’ can be taken to be mineral);

and only use them where they are:

- Authorised by DARD to use derogated proteins to produce non-ruminant feed (for example, on-farm mixers – authorisation is always required where ruminants are present);
- Registered by DARD to use derogated proteins to produce non-ruminant feed where no ruminants are present (for example, on-farm mixers);
- Registered by DARD to use feed products containing derogated proteins on premises where ruminants are present.

The registration (referred to in the final bullet) will require farmers to confirm adequate on-farm measures, including storage and feeding arrangements to ensure that feed containing derogated proteins are not fed to ruminants and kept adequately separated from ruminant feed. Following registration DARD (QAB) inspection will confirm permission to use such products on the premises in line with EU requirements.

### **13.3 Field Checks**

Farm inspection visits will include checks on:

- Compliance with prohibition on feeding to ruminants of any animal protein or products containing animal protein, or processed animal proteins to any farmed animals, other than derogated proteins (as detailed at 13.2);
- On-farm measures for the feed production, storage (including separation) and feeding arrangements to ensure that feed containing proteins derogated for non-ruminant use are not fed to ruminants or contaminate ruminant feed;
- Any non-notification to DARD of a suspect TSE animal;
- Compliance with any movement restrictions in respect of a suspect TSE animal or any other notices imposing measures concerning that animal or other animals under the TSE Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002, as amended;
- Documentation to confirm any authorisation, registration or permission required for the use of derogated proteins for non-ruminant use, particularly where ruminants are kept on the same farm.

## **SMR 14. Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease**

### **14.1 Main Requirements**

Any person who has a suspected or actual Foot-and-Mouth infected animal shall notify DARD 'with all practicable speed'.

### **14.2 Verifiable Standards**

- The presence or absence of a notifiable disease. Verification will depend on notification in the event of suspicion of disease or on confirmation of the presence of disease by laboratory testing.

### **14.3 Field Checks**

Veterinary officers, inspectors, or private veterinary practitioners should pick up on incidences of concern during visits to the farm. In addition, inspections are carried out both ante- and post-mortem at slaughterhouses.

## **SMR 15. Control of Certain Animal Diseases**

### **15.1 Main Requirements**

Any person who suspects or knows that an animal or carcass is infected with any of the following diseases must notify DARD 'with all practicable speed'.

Rinderpest, peste des petits ruminants, swine vesicular disease, epizootic haemorrhagic disease of deer, sheep and goat pox, vesicular stomatitis, lumpy skin disease and rift valley fever.

### **15.2 Verifiable Standards**

- The presence or absence of a notifiable disease. Verification will depend on notification in the event of suspicion of disease or on confirmation of the presence of disease by laboratory testing.

### **15.3 Field Checks**

Veterinary officers, inspectors, or private veterinary practitioners should pick up on incidences of concern during visits to the farm. In addition, inspections are carried out both ante- and post-mortem at slaughterhouses.

## **SMR 16. Specific Provisions for the Control and Eradication of Bluetongue**

### **16.1 Main Requirements**

Any person who has a suspected or actual Bluetongue infected animal shall notify DARD 'with all practicable speed'.

### **16.2 Verifiable Standards**

- The presence or absence of a notifiable disease. Verification will depend on notification in the event of suspicion of disease or on confirmation of the presence of disease by laboratory testing.

### **16.3 Field Checks**

Veterinary officers, inspectors, or private veterinary practitioners should pick up on incidences of concern during visits to the farm. In addition, inspections are carried out both ante- and post-mortem at slaughterhouses.

## **Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) Measures**

As well as adhering to the SMRs, to receive direct agricultural support, you must ensure that you keep all your land in GAEC. This includes all land that you farm, even land on which you do not claim direct payments.

The following GAEC Measures are designed to ensure that land is farmed according to good agricultural practices that do not damage the environment.

There are six main GAEC measures:

- 1 Soil Management;
- 2 Supplementary Feeding;
- 3 Overgrazing;
- 4 Undergrazing;
- 5 Field Boundaries;
- 6 Protection of Habitats (Wildlife Areas), Archaeological Sites and Permanent Pasture.

Failure to meet the GAEC Measure Requirements could lead to the reduction, or in extreme cases the withholding of your direct agricultural support.

# 1. Soil Management

## 1.1 Soil Erosion

Soil erosion, the loss of soil particles by the action of wind and water, has not been a major problem in Northern Ireland. However, soil erosion can:

- cause damage to crops;
- block waterways with silt and contaminate them with soil nutrients;
- cause public nuisance through soil deposition on roads;
- lead to a gradual loss of top soil;
- damage aquatic life and diminish water quality.

Soil erosion by water may occur on sloping arable land and recently reseeded grassland. Hedges and the small field size in Northern Ireland help reduce erosion by intercepting water and suspended soil particles. Soil erosion may occur when rainfall intensity exceeds the soil's capacity to soak it up and the surface run-off is large enough and fast enough to carry soil particles.

Trampling by livestock increases the risk of soil erosion, which can increase the sediment load of a river, resulting in diminished water quality.

## 1.2 Soil Organic Matter

Maintaining soil organic matter in the topsoil influences its physical, chemical and biological properties, particularly its ease of cultivation, water retention capacity and nutrient availability to plants. If the organic matter level falls, it can restrict the soil's ability to support plant growth.

Cultivation increases the rate of decomposition of organic matter. Therefore, organic matter levels are most likely to fall under continuous arable cropping where there is little return of plant residues or animal manures.

In the mostly grass-based agricultural systems of Northern Ireland, the soil organic matter level ranges from 8-20% depending on previous cropping. Land that is continually cropped may be at risk from the loss of soil organic matter. Adding animal manures over several years, incorporating crop residues or sowing out in grass will increase organic matter levels in low organic matter soils.

## 1.3 Soil Structure

Soils can be physically damaged, perhaps irreversibly, by livestock trampling, compaction, topsoil removal and erosion. The use of heavy machinery when the soil is too wet can damage the soil structure, resulting in poor root and crop growth.

Sustainable soil management can be achieved by following the appropriate GAEC requirements outlined overleaf.

## 1.4 GAEC Soil Management Requirements

- Protect soils from erosion and maintain soil structure by preventing land from being severely trampled or poached.
- All cultivated land must have either crop cover, stubble cover, grass cover or be ploughed or disced over the following winter. Finely tilled bare seedbeds are not permitted over the winter. Compliance with the Nitrates Directive measures relating to land use management will become mandatory in line with the new Action Programme to be introduced in 2006.
- Do not carry out any cultivations if water is standing on the surface, or if the soil is waterlogged.

## 1.5 Exceptions

Exceptions will be granted where one or more of the following applies:

- The soil is waterlogged only within five metres of a gateway or other access point and access is required to an area of land that is not waterlogged;
- The area is an established track to land that is not waterlogged;
- Mechanical operations are required to improve the drainage of the land;
- Mechanical operations are essential for the welfare of humans or animals;
- It is essential to harvest a crop of fresh vegetables and/or fruit to meet contractual deadlines, or where the quality of the produce would deteriorate if not lifted;
- Exceptions from the above measure will be permitted where it is necessary for the protection of animal welfare during periods of extreme weather conditions.

## 1.6 Advice

The following guidance is provided to help you adopt farming practices which minimise the risks of soil erosion, maintain soil organic matter and protect soil structure to help ensure sustainable grass/crop production.

### *Avoid severe trampling/poaching by livestock*

Signs of severe trampling/poaching or vehicle rutting may include one or more of the following:

- no visible remains of grass/vegetation, bare soil;
- deep bare soil trenches caused by vehicle tracks;
- bare soil often mixed with frequent amounts of livestock manure;
- waterlogged soils, livestock “wading in muck”.

Livestock should be managed appropriately according to the ground and climate conditions to ensure soil erosion does not occur. Remove livestock from any area which starts to show signs of severe trampling or poaching. Some areas of riverbanks may be prone to soil erosion by livestock. If this is likely to lead to severe trampling or poaching, the area should be fenced off.

Cultivated land – no finely tilled bare seedbeds during the winter

After harvesting a crop of cereals (other than maize), oil-seeds, grain legumes (for example, peas or beans), you must ensure that from harvest until 1 March in the following year, one of the following conditions is met on that land at any time:

- the stubble of the harvested crop remains in the land;
- the land is sown with a temporary cover crop. If grazed and/or cultivated during the autumn or winter, a rough surface shall be left;
- the land is left with a rough surface (ploughed or disced) to encourage the infiltration of rain.

Green cover, either grass or stubble is the preferable option to prevent soil erosion and loss of nutrients. Winter cropping is still permitted. You may establish a crop at any time between harvest and 1 March, provided you comply with the rules up to the time of sowing.

The Nitrates Directive Action Programme measures relating to land use management will become mandatory when introduced in 2006. Details on these requirements will be issued to farmers once the Nitrates Action Programme is agreed.

Waterlogged Soil – no cultivations

Waterlogged soils are soils where water appears on the surface of the land when pressure is added.

Cultivations are not permitted on waterlogged soils. Cultivations include any mechanical field operations, for example, harvesting, ploughing and discing. Where exceptions are granted, soil compaction can be reduced if low ground pressure tyres and/or dual wheels are used on tractors/machinery.

## **1.7 Field Checks**

When performing GAEC inspection checks in respect of this measure Inspectors will look for:

- Signs of heavy trampling, rutting or poaching causing soil erosion on any land;
- Evidence of finely tilled bare seedbeds during the winter;
- Evidence of cultivations occurring on waterlogged soils or where water is standing on the surface.

## 2. Supplementary Feeding

Supplementary feeding sites are essential to many upland hill farms especially during the winter period to provide feed to livestock. Good supplementary feeding site management will result in minimal damage to the underlying and surrounding plant cover and to the environment. The grass/vegetation will recover within the same growing season, thus providing more feed for livestock.

Inappropriate management of supplementary feeding sites, for example, round feeders placed on wildlife areas (semi-natural habitats), for example, heather moorland, woods or on archaeological features will result in damage. Excessive trampling and poaching associated with permanent supplementary feeding sites may result in soil erosion and damage to the soil structure.

### 2.1 Supplementary Feeding Requirements

- Supplementary feeding sites on semi-natural habitats, archaeological sites, or within ten metres from waterways, or 50 metres from a borehole or well (irrespective of its current use), or 250 metres from any borehole used for a public water supply are prohibited.
- Supplementary feeding sites should be rotated and managed to prevent excessive trampling, poaching or vehicle rutting to minimise soil erosion and to avoid run-off to waterways.
- Sacrifice areas/paddocks are not permitted.

### 2.2 Exceptions

This measure will not apply to areas within five metres of gateways and farm tracks. This is provided sites are not located on a semi-natural habitat, or archaeological sites, or ten metres from waterways, or 50 metres from boreholes or wells (irrespective of current use), or 250 metres from boreholes used for a public water supply.

Exceptions from the above measure will only be permitted where it is necessary for the protection of animal welfare during periods of extreme weather conditions.

### 2.3 Advice

The following provides guidance on how to manage supplementary feeding sites without damaging soil, water, habitats and archaeological sites.

#### *No feeding sites on habitats, archaeological sites or near waterways*

Feeding on habitats can damage these important wildlife areas. Feeding sites are not permitted on semi-natural habitats. Semi-natural habitats include woodland, species-rich grassland and moorland (semi-natural habitat definitions are listed in Annex 4).

Trampling associated with feeding areas can damage archaeological sites (definition provided in Annex 4). Do not locate feeding sites on/or adjacent to archaeological sites.

Feeding sites may cause “run-off” which may result in pollution of neighbouring waterways, therefore avoid siting feeding sites within the limits provided (waterway is defined in Annex 4).

#### Good site management

Signs of excessive trampling/poaching or vehicle rutting are listed under the Soil Management Measures (Section 1.6).

Sites should be regularly rotated, and sited on hardcore areas (including lanes) where possible. Sites on hard areas will not require rotation. Hard core areas must not be created on semi-natural habitats, or archaeological features, or ten metres from waterways, or 50 metres from boreholes or wells (irrespective of current use), or 250 metres from boreholes used for a public water supply.

#### Sacrifice areas

Sacrifice areas are not generally permitted as they cause soil erosion, nutrient run-off, destroy soil structure, and the original vegetation cover. They cause particular long-term environmental damage to semi-natural habitats. Nutrient run-off may cause pollution of a neighbouring waterway, borehole or well.

Sacrifice areas will only be permitted on improved grassland/arable land where the land is flat and must be located ten metres from waterways, or 50 metres from boreholes or wells (irrespective of current use), or 250 metres from boreholes used for a public water supply. Sacrifice areas must not be situated on or adjacent to archaeological sites. The area must be ploughed and sown in the following spring. Natural regeneration (recovery of the sward) and surface seeding will be permitted provided there is at least 90% grass/crop coverage by the end of spring.

## **2.4 Field Checks**

When performing GAEC inspections in respect of this measure, inspectors will look for:

- Evidence of supplementary feeding sites on semi-natural habitats, archaeological sites or ten metres from waterways, or 50 metres from boreholes or wells, or 250 metres from boreholes used for a public water supply;
- Evidence of excessive trampling, poaching or vehicle rutting as a result of supplementary feeding livestock;
- Evidence of sacrifice areas/paddocks with the exception of sites listed under the Exceptions above.

## 3. Overgrazing

Overgrazing is grazing land with livestock in such numbers as to damage the growth, quality or species composition of the vegetation to a significant degree. There is little or no plant cover and there may be evidence of run-off or standing water. Overgrazing can result in soil erosion, increase the risk of flooding and cause damage to semi-natural habitats and archaeological features. Overgrazing is often associated with evidence of poor animal condition.

Due to the enormous variation in conditions that can arise, a single maximum stocking density for the whole of Northern Ireland will not apply. Instead, farmers will be required to manage their livestock according to the land type and climate conditions which are specific to the farm.

### 3.1 GAEC Overgrazing Requirements

Avoid overgrazing grassland, semi-natural habitat, or archaeological sites with livestock in such numbers which would damage the growth, quality or species composition of vegetation on that land to any significant degree (that is, where there is no vegetative cover and/or there is evidence of run-off or standing water), or destroy the archaeological feature.

### 3.2 Exceptions

This measure does not apply on land where these requirements conflict with the management required by:

- Areas of Special Scientific Interest or Natura 2000 Sites (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation). Contact EHS Conservation Designations and Protection Branch (028 9054 6685) or [www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk) for further information;
- Agri-environment scheme agreement. Contact your local DARD Countryside Management Branch (CMB) office for further advice.

This measure does not apply to areas within five metres around gateways/laneways provided this land is not a semi-natural habitat, archaeological site within ten metres from waterways, or 50 metres from boreholes or wells (irrespective of current use), or 250 metres from boreholes used for a public water supply.

Exceptions from the above measure will only be permitted where it is necessary for the protection of animal welfare during periods of extreme weather conditions.

### 3.3 Advice

The following advice is to help you recognise the signs of overgrazing and to provide guidance to help prevent overgrazing occurring.

### Signs of overgrazing

Signs of overgrazing are a combination of the following: very short sward, grasslands with a sward height of less than 3cm, rough grassland/moorland with a sward height of less than 5cm, a high density of cattle/sheep dung and frequent areas of bare ground.

### Prevention of overgrazing

Graze livestock in numbers appropriate to the ground and climate conditions. Keep stock numbers limited to the carrying capacity of the field. Regular shepherding on open hills may be required to prevent localised overgrazing. Move livestock once any signs of overgrazing become apparent.

### Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowance (LFACA) Scheme

Farmers receiving the LFACA Payments must adhere to the minimum stocking rate of 0.2LU/ha of eligible stock.

## **3.4 Field Checks**

When performing GAEC inspection checks in respect of this measure, inspectors will look for:

- Evidence of overgrazing.

## 4. Undergrazing

Land abandonment is not allowed under Cross-Compliance. Many of the wildlife areas, birds and other animals in Northern Ireland are dependent on grazing livestock, particularly cattle. Therefore, continue to graze and/or cut your grass to avoid land being infested by weeds and/or scrub to such an extent that it could no longer be farmed.

Undergrazing may be identified as allowing the growth, quality or species composition of grazed vegetation to deteriorate significantly through the lack of, or insufficient grazing management.

Undergrazing or encroachment of scrub will only be permitted where it is required for environmental benefit, for example, as part of agri-environment schemes.

### 4.1 GAEC Undergrazing Requirements

- Undergrazing must be avoided by using appropriate grazing or cutting management, except where it is deemed necessary for environmental management, for example, as part of an agri-environment agreement.
- Avoid infestation by species such as rhododendron, gorse/whin, Giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and noxious weeds (listed in Annex 4), which degrade the agricultural and environmental value of the land to such an extent where the land is not capable of returning to agricultural production by the start of the next growing season.

### 4.2 Exceptions

This measure does not apply on land where these requirements conflict with the management required by:

- Areas of Special Scientific Interest or Natura 2000 Sites (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation). Contact EHS Conservation Designations and Protection Branch (028 9054 6685) or [www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk) for further information;
- Scheduled archaeological sites. Contact EHS Built Heritage (028 9054 3004) or [www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk) for further advice;
- Agri-environment scheme agreement. Contact your local DARD Countryside Management Branch (CMB) office for further advice.

### 4.3 Advice

The following is provided to help you recognise the signs of undergrazing and gives guidance on how to prevent undergrazing on your land.

#### Signs of undergrazing

The growth and quality of grass and other vegetation becomes very long, rank and the species composition of the sward becomes reduced to only the most competitive species. Invasive scrub such as rhododendron, gorse, Giant hogweed,

Japanese knotweed and/or other noxious weeds may take over the whole field, making it inaccessible for grazing livestock and impossible to cut the underlying grass sward. The land must be capable of returning to agricultural production by the start of the next growing season or 15 May at the latest. Land must be able to be grazed by livestock or permit entry to mow/cut using a tractor.

#### Noxious weeds

Control the spread of noxious weeds by cutting before they set seed. Noxious weeds can be treated with appropriate approved chemicals; spot spraying is recommended. Noxious weeds include all weeds listed under the Noxious Weed Order 1977 and are listed in Annex 4.

#### Minimum stocking density

No minimum stocking density is required unless you receive LFACA Payments. Farmers receiving LFACA Payments must adhere to the minimum stocking rate of 0.2LU/ha of eligible stock.

#### Prevention of undergrazing

Keep cattle/sheep at sufficient numbers to prevent land being taken over by, for example, scrub/bracken, but ensure livestock are not causing overgrazing. If your stock numbers decrease significantly, then your land may be at a greater risk from undergrazing and you may need to increase grazing or cutting.

#### Scrub control

Keep scrub encroachment from extending beyond current levels by grazing or cutting/mowing. Scrub should not be cut during the bird nesting season from 1 March to 31 August. Gorse/whin should be controlled by cutting and treating stumps with glyphosate. Burning of whin/gorse is not recommended as this causes seed germination and leads to the further spread of new growth of whin/gorse.

#### Cutting/mowing

If possible do not mow/cut grass between 15 March and 15 July to prevent damaging ground nesting birds. If cutting/mowing, you should remove the cut vegetation and dispose of in a manner which does not harm the environment. If land is not being grazed, the land may need to be cut/mowed at least once a year.

### **4.4 Field Checks**

When performing GAEC inspection checks in respect of this measure, inspectors will look for:

- Evidence of undergrazing by significant encroachment of scrub, rhododendron, unwanted plant species including noxious weeds to such an extent where the land is not capable of returning to agricultural production by the start of the next growing season;
- Evidence of eligible forage area.

## 5. Field Boundaries

The Northern Ireland farmed landscape is characterised by field boundaries. They provide valuable shelter for stock, nesting cover for birds and a variety of habitats and food for wildlife. Field boundaries include all types of hedges, dry stone walls, ditches and earthbanks.

Hedges are defined as hedgerows, hedge banks, rows of trees and hedgerow trees. Ditches are “sheughs”/open channels with or without water. The primary function of sheughs (or ditches) is to drain land. However, they are also valuable landscape and wildlife features, important for many plants, animals, birds and insects. Sheughs should therefore be managed, not only as drainage channels, but also as valuable wildlife habitats.

Birds nest in the majority of our hedges, and therefore hedge maintenance, cutting, laying or coppicing is not permitted during the bird nesting season between 1 March and 31 August. This is to avoid damaging the birds, nests or chicks and complies with the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

### 5.1 GAEC Field Boundary Requirements

- Removal of field boundaries (dry stone walls, ditches, hedges, earthbanks) is not permitted except by prior written permission from DARD. This includes infilling or laying drainage pipes in open sheughs.
- Hedge cutting/ coppicing or laying is not permitted between 1 March and 31 August.

### 5.2 Exemptions

Hedge cutting between 1 March and 31 August will be permitted where health and safety is an issue, for example, roadside hedges.

Hedgerow trees may be removed if there are health and safety reasons unless a tree preservation order is in place.

Hedgerow trees may be removed on rotation for timber, provided young saplings are left to grow as replacement trees in the hedge.

This measure does not apply to permanently dry sheughs/ditches.

### 5.3 Advice

The following advice is provided to help you comply with the Field Boundary GAEC requirements.

#### Field boundary removal

DARD will assess and grant derogations for field boundary removal after using DARD field boundary assessment criteria, which will include consideration of the area of the field and the quality of the field boundary. Contact your local DARD Countryside Management Branch (CMB) office for further advice.

### Hedge cutting

Where hedges are cut, it is recommended that this is in a 2-3 year rotation and ideally during January and February to provide a food resource for farmland birds. Where fencing of hedges involves cutting the hedges, you must not cut the hedge between 1 March and 31 August, unless there is a health and safety reason or an animal welfare reason.

### Cleaning out sheughs/ditches

Sheugh maintenance is permitted. It is recommended that sheugh cleaning should be carried out during the autumn to late winter. Clear away only vegetation and silt from sheughs; avoid deepening or widening the sheugh. Try to leave the vegetation untouched along one side of the sheugh at cleaning. Bulrushes, water plantain and water crowfoot control algae, provide fish spawning beds and encourage insects.

## **5.4 Field Checks**

When performing GAEC inspection checks in respect of this measure, inspectors will look for:

- Evidence of field boundary (hedge, sheugh, stonewall, hedgerow) removal without prior DARD permission. Retention of field boundaries on the ground may be checked against maps and aerial photography;
- Evidence of hedge trimming, coppicing or laying carried out between 1 March and 31 August.

## **6. Protection of Habitats (Wildlife Areas), Archaeological Sites and Permanent Pasture**

Wildlife areas (semi-natural habitats) are areas supporting wildlife such as woodland, scrub, wetlands, flower rich (species rich), meadows, moorland (definitions are provided in Annex 4). Semi-natural habitats contribute to both the landscape character and the wildlife value of the countryside.

Archaeological features have a unique historic role in the countryside providing a link to the past. Earth science sites are areas of bedrock or surface deposits that provide important evidence of the patterns, processes and dating of geological and biological events from the beginning of the Earth's history to the present day.

Many of these important wildlife areas and archaeological sites have been lost or damaged over the last 50 years due to agricultural intensification practices, for example, land reclamation and overgrazing. Illegal burning of heather/gorse between 15 April and 31 August may destroy nests and ground nesting birds as well as potentially destroying neighbouring woods and farmland. Controlled periodic burning of heather in small areas from September to March is advantageous for grazing and wildlife conservation.

### **6.1 GAEC Protection of Habitats, Archaeological Sites Measure Requirements**

- Retain all semi-natural habitats (woodland, scrub, moorland, wetlands, species-rich grasslands), ponds, shelterbelts, trees protected under the Tree Preservation Order, archaeological features and earth science sites.
- Comply with the DARD Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Uncultivated/Semi-natural areas Regulations 2001. Farmers must not undertake new drainage works, ploughing, clearing, levelling, re-seeding or cultivations on uncultivated land or semi-natural habitats without prior approval from DARD.
- Do not burn heather, gorse, whin or fern between 15 April and 31 August (Game Law Amendment Act (Northern Ireland) 1951).

### **6.2 Advice**

The following advice is provided to help you comply with the GAEC requirements relating to the protection of wildlife areas and archaeological sites.

#### *Habitats, archaeological sites, earth science sites*

Semi-natural habitats definitions are provided in Annex 4. Identify all these on the farm and ensure all workers/contractors are aware of such areas. Monitor sites regularly to ensure no damage is occurring.

Identify the archaeological sites (defined in Annex 4) on your farm and ensure all workers /contractors are aware of such features. A list of all these is available from EHS Built Heritage (028 9054 3004) [www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk). Regularly check sites for signs of damage, particularly trampling damage by livestock.

Identify all earth science sites (see Annex 4 for definition) on your farm and ensure all workers/contractors are aware of such areas. Monitor sites regularly to ensure no damage is occurring.

These requirements reinforce existing rules on Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). TPOs are made by Planning Service to protect trees, groups of trees and woodlands that are of local amenity. You must not breach a TPO by cutting down, uprooting or wilfully destroying a tree or wilfully damaging, topping a tree in such a way as to be likely to destroy it.

#### Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Uncultivated/Semi-natural Areas Regulations 2001

Anyone wishing to carry out an intensive agricultural activity/ project on uncultivated land or a semi-natural area must apply to DARD, Environmental Policy Branch for prior consent. Reseeding, drainage and other cultivations are all considered as intensive agricultural projects.

Uncultivated land is land with less than 25% ryegrass and/or other sown grass species or white clover. DARD will also consider the past management practices of the land, for example, past reseeding, drainage, fertiliser practices. Semi-natural areas/habitat definitions are listed in Annex 4.

Contact DARD Environmental Policy Branch (028 9052 4326) for an information leaflet and further information.

#### Infilling land

Any farmer wishing to infill any of his land with soil, spoil, hard core or any waste material must apply to the Department of the Environment (DOE), Planning Service, Special Studies Unit and obtain the necessary consents before commencing this activity. Contact DOE Planning Service, Special Studies Unit (028 9041 6892) for further information.

#### Heather/gorse burning

If burning, complete all burning within the permitted period to avoid damage to nesting birds. Gorse burning should be avoided as this contributes to the spread of gorse as burning results in gorse seed germination. Further advice on selective controlled burning can be provided by DARD Countryside Management Branch (028 9052 0922).

### **6.3 Field Checks**

When performing GAEC inspections in respect of this measure, inspectors will check for:

- Evidence of removal of semi-natural habitats, archaeological and earth sites;
- Evidence of a breach of the DARD EIA regulations;
- Evidence of burning heather, whin or gorse between 15 April and 31 August.

## 6.4 Permanent Pasture

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that there is no decrease in the total area of Permanent Pasture in Northern Ireland. Member States are obliged to ensure that the ratio of permanent pasture to the total agricultural area shall not decrease to the detriment of permanent pasture by more than 10%. The ratio must be established each year on the basis of the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) Single Application declarations.

## 6.5 GAEC Permanent Pasture Requirements

- No restrictions on the conversion of permanent pasture to arable cropping will be imposed providing the national area of permanent pasture is not reduced by more than 5% of the total agricultural area. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Uncultivated/Semi-natural Areas Regulations 2001 will ensure that the ploughing of environmentally valuable permanent pasture is properly risk assessed.
- DARD will monitor the Northern Ireland area of permanent pasture as a proportion of the total agricultural area to ensure that the national area of permanent pasture is not reduced by more than 5%.
- If there is a 5% decrease in the Northern Ireland level of permanent pasture, DARD will put in place a control mechanism to ensure the 10% tolerance level is not breached.

## 6.6 Advice

The following advice is provided to help you comply with permanent pasture (see Annex 4 for definition) requirements.

### Tree planting on permanent pasture

Planting trees, afforestation of permanent pasture is exempt from the requirement to retain permanent pasture, providing it complies with the Forestry EIA Regulations.

### Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Uncultivated/Semi-natural Areas Regulations 2001

Only permanent pasture which can be classified as uncultivated land (less than 25% ryegrass and/or other sown grass species or white clover) requires written prior permission from DARD before reseeding. The EIA regulations will ensure that all ploughing of environmentally valuable permanent pasture is properly risk assessed.



## **Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) Definitions**

### **Moorland**

Areas of bog, dwarf shrub, heath and montane habitat.

### **Wetlands**

Areas of naturally high water table including fen, marsh, swamp, standing waters, saline lagoons, rivers and streams.

### **Species-rich grasslands**

Areas of neutral, acid, wet and calcareous grassland (including limestone pavement). These have a low productive sward. Ryegrass, Timothy and white clover comprise less than 25% of the sward.

### **Broadleaved woodland/scrub**

Areas where vegetation is dominated by broadleaved trees and shrubs containing less than 15% conifers.

### **Coastal habitats**

Areas of maritime cliff and slopes, sand dunes, vegetated shingle, saltmarsh and all areas below high water mark.

### **Archaeological features/sites**

Existing historic or archaeological sites which have been identified by the Department of Environment in the Sites and Monuments Record. These include megalithic tombs, standing stones, stone circles, cairns, barrows, hillforts, raths, cashels, churches and castles.

### **Earth science sites**

Areas of bedrock (both natural and made exposures), surface deposits, static landforms and active process sites that provide important evidence of the patterns, processes and dating of geological and biological events from the beginning of the Earth's history to the present day.

### **Waterways**

Any river, stream, watercourse, inland water (whether natural or artificial) or tidal waters and any channel or passage of any kind (whether natural or artificial) through which water flows. It also includes the channel or bed of a waterway, which for the time being is dry. This is as given in the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and subsequent amendments.

## Noxious weeds

Are as listed under the Noxious Weed Order 1977 and include:

|          |                             |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| Wild oat | Avena fatua L.              |
|          | Avena ludoviciana Durieu    |
| Thistle  | Cirsium vulgare (Savi) Ten. |
|          | Cirsium arvense (L.) Scop.  |
| Dock     | Rumex obtusifolius L.       |
|          | Rumex crispus L.            |
| Ragwort  | Senecio jacobaea L.         |

## Field Boundaries

Field boundaries include dry stone walls, ditches, earth banks, hedges and rows or trees.

## Ditches

Ditches are sheughs/open channels with water for at least part of the year.

## Permanent Pasture

Permanent pasture is defined as permanent grassland which is over five years old which has been declared on the Area Aid application in 2003. Land which has been ploughed and reseeded within the same year may be defined as permanent pasture.

## Further Information and Contacts

### The Booklet

If you require clarification on any of the issues raised in this booklet or would like to request the booklet in a different format, please select one of the following communication options:

**Telephone:** 028 9052 5549 or for those with hearing disabilities 028 9052 4420.

**E-mail address:** [gspd.sfps@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:gspd.sfps@dardni.gov.uk)

### Postal Address:

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Rural Payments and Inspection Division  
Room 558  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast BT4 3SB

### Publications:

All publications referred to in this booklet are available on the DARD website address as follows: [www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk)

### Statutory Management Requirements

1. Conservation of Wild Birds
2. Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna

### For additional information on Natura 2000 sites contact:

Environment and Heritage Service  
Conservation Designations and Protection Branch  
35 Castle Street  
Belfast BT1 1GH

Tel: 028 9054 6685  
Fax: 028 9054 6594  
E-mail: [robert.aiken@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:robert.aiken@doeni.gov.uk)

### For additional information on wildlife issues contact:

Environment and Heritage Service  
Biodiversity Unit  
35 Castle Street  
Belfast BT1 1GU

Tel: 028 9054 6502  
Fax: 028 9054 6508  
E-mail: [anne.murray@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:anne.murray@doeni.gov.uk)

### **3. Protection of Groundwater**

#### **Guidance**

Practical guidance can be found in the following publications:

- Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water (specifically the section on sheep dipping);
- Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Air and Soil.

#### **For additional information please contact:**

Environment and Heritage Service  
Water Management Unit  
Calvert House  
23 Castle Place  
Belfast BT1 1FY

Tel: 028 9025 4824  
Fax: 028 9025 4865  
E-mail: [adrian.gregory@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.gregory@doeni.gov.uk)

### **4. Protection of the Environment when Sewage Sludge is used in Agriculture**

#### **Guidance**

Practical guidance can be found in the following publications:

- Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water;
- Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Air and Soil;
- Code of Practice for the Agricultural Use of Sewage Sludge.

#### **For additional information please contact:**

Environment and Heritage Service  
Water Management Unit  
Calvert House  
23 Castle Place  
Belfast BT1 1FY

Tel: 028 9025 4824  
Fax: 028 9025 4865  
E-mail: [adrian.gregory@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.gregory@doeni.gov.uk)

## 5. Protection of Waters Against Pollution Caused by Nitrates

### Guidance

Practical guidance can be found in the following publications:

- Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water;
- Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Air and Soil;
- Guidelines and Manure Planning for Farmers in NVZs.

### For additional information please contact:

Environment and Heritage Service  
Water Management Unit  
Calvert House  
23 Castle Place  
Belfast BT1 1FY

Tel: 028 9025 4739

Fax: 028 9025 4865

E-mail: [kieran.mccavana@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:kieran.mccavana@doeni.gov.uk)

## 6 Identification and Registration of Animals (Tagging and Record Keeping Requirements)

### 7 Identification and Registration of Bovine Animals

### 8 Identification and Registration of Bovine Animals (Labelling of Beef and Beef Products)

### 9 Sheep and Goat Identification and Registration Requirements from 1 January 2006

### Guidance

Detailed guidelines for good practice in the **farming of cattle** are to be found in:

- Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock – Cattle.

Information on the **welfare of pigs** may be found in:

- DARD's Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Pigs.

Detailed guidelines for good practice in the **farming of sheep** are to be found in:

- Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock – Sheep.

**For additional information contact:**

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Animal Health Division  
Room 917  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast BT4 3SB

Tel: 028 9052 5248 or 028 9052 5266  
Fax: 028 9052 5281  
E-mail: john.mcconnell@dardni.gov.uk

**10 Placing of Plant Protection Products on the Market**

**Guidance**

Practical guidance can be found in the following publications:

- Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Pesticides on Farms and Holdings (Green Code);
- Code of Practice for the Use of Approved Pesticides in Amenity Areas and Industrial Areas (Orange Code);
- Approved Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Pesticides for Non-Agricultural Purposes (Blue Code).

The Green Code is currently being revised. The new code, Pesticides Code of Practice for using Plant Protection Products, is expected to be published by Defra early in 2006. DARD will, in due course, produce a revised Northern Ireland Green Code.

**For additional information contact:**

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Food, Farming Environmental Policy  
Room 654  
Dundonald House  
Belfast BT4 3SB

Tel: 028 9052 4525  
Fax: 028 9052 4059  
E-mail: linda.meldrum@dardni.gov.uk

## **11 Food and Feed Law**

Food Standards Agency for Northern Ireland  
10a - 10c Clarendon Road  
Belfast BT1 3SB

Telephone: 028 9041 7700  
Fax: 028 9041 7726  
E-mail: [infofsani@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:infofsani@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

## **12 Prohibition on the Illegal Use in Stock Farming of Certain Substances having a Hormonal or Thyrostatic Action and of Beta-agonists.**

### **Guidance**

Useful guidance can be found in the following publication:

- The Compendium of Data Sheets for Animal Medicines 2005 lists nearly all United Kingdom authorised veterinary medicinal products. It is published annually by the National Office of Animal Health, ISBN 0 9548037-0-1.

### **For additional information contact:**

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Food Policy Branch  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast, BT4 3SB

Tel: 028 9052 4341  
Fax: 028 9052 4801  
E-mail: [niall.heaney@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:niall.heaney@dardni.gov.uk)

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Veterinary Services Division  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast, BT4 3SB

Tel: 028 9052 4114  
Fax: 028 9052 5012  
E-mail: [peter.price@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:peter.price@dardni.gov.uk)

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Chemical Surveillance Branch  
Veterinary Sciences Division  
Stoney Road  
Belfast BT4 3SD

Tel: 028 9052 5651  
Fax: 028 9052 5626  
E-mail: glenn.kennedy@dardni.gov.uk.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Agriculture Food and Environmental Science Division  
Newforge Lane  
Belfast BT9 5PX

Tel: 028 9025 5337  
Fax: 028 9066 9551  
E-mail: sam.mitchell@dardni.gov.uk.

**13. Prevention, Control and Eradication of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs).**

**For additional information contact:**

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
TSE Branch  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast BT4 3SB

Tel: 028 9052 5539 or 028 9052 4289  
Fax: 028 9052 4982  
E-mail: colin.wilson@dardni.gov.uk

**14. Measures for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease.**

**15. Measures for the Control of Certain Animal Diseases.**

**16. Provisions for the Control and Eradication of Bluetongue.**

**Guidance**

Further guidance is included in the Contingency Plan for the disease, which is available from Animal Disease Control Branch.

**For additional information contact:**

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Animal Disease Control Branch  
Room 715 Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast  
BT4 3SB

Tel: 028 90524395  
Fax: 028 9052 4804  
E-mail: Margaret.hood@dardni.gov.uk

**Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition Requirements Guidance**

For further advice you should refer to:

- The Codes of Good Agricultural Practice (CoGAP) for Water, Soil and Air;
- DARD Field Boundaries Booklets;
- DARD Booklet on Heather Moorland Management.

or contact your local DARD, Countryside Management Branch Office on the telephone numbers below,

**Co Derry/Londonderry**

Crown Buildings  
Artillery Road  
Coleraine  
Co Derry/Londonderry  
BT52 2AJ  
Tel; 028 7034 1111  
Fax: 028 7034 1140

**Co Tyrone**

Sperrin House  
Sedan Avenue  
Omagh  
Co Tyrone  
BT79 7AQ  
Tel: 028 8225 1020  
Fax: 028 8225 3500

**Co Antrim**

Kilpatrick House  
38 – 54 High Street  
Ballymena  
Co Antrim  
BT43 6DT  
Tel: 028 2566 2800  
Fax: 028 2566 2838

**Co Armagh**

2 Newry Road  
Armagh  
Co Armagh  
BT60 1EN  
Tel: 028 3751 5600  
Fax: 028 3751 5611

**Co Down**

Rathkeltair House  
Market Street  
Downpatrick  
Co Down  
BT30 6LZ  
Tel: 028 4461 2211  
Fax: 028 4461 8226

**Co Fermanagh**

Inishkeen House  
Killyhevlin  
Enniskillen  
Co Fermanagh  
BT74 4EJ  
Tel: 028 6632 5004  
Fax: 028 6634 3000

## **Workshops**

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) Workshops include:

- Cross-Compliance and Good Farming Practice;
- Dealing with Farm Wastes;
- Field boundary Management.

Contact 028 9442 6874 for details on the workshops available in your local area.

## **SFP Helpline**

Farmers should contact the following helpline number:

**Tel: 028 7131 9900**

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Single Farm Payment Section  
Orchard House  
40 Foyle Street  
Derry/Londonderry  
BT48 6AT  
Fax: 028 7131 9800  
E-mail: [gspd.sfps@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:gspd.sfps@dardni.gov.uk)