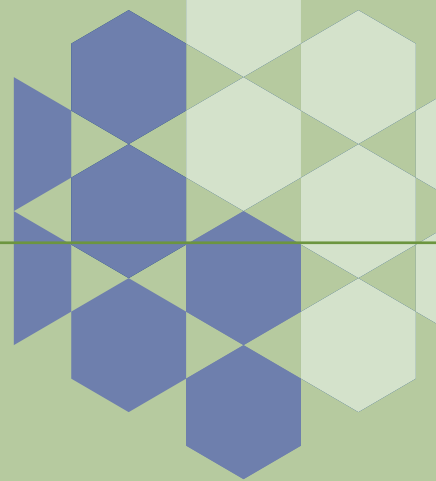


# Bulletin

## Helping You Comply



February 2011

Issue 5

**Martin McKendry, CAFRE Deputy Director**

I am pleased to introduce the fifth edition of 'Helping You Comply'.

This bulletin is part of the Northern Ireland Farm Advisory System and aims to help farmers keep up to date with various aspects of Cross Compliance.

### Land Eligibility

This issue has 3 articles looking at various aspects of the background to the EU disallowance and how DARD is working to resolve this issue.

Please read these three articles carefully as it is very important that the land areas claimed in your 2011 Single Application are correct.

### Completing your SAF/IACS form online

Completing your form online can eliminate many common errors and allow you to complete the form more quickly and easily.

We encourage you to try submitting your form online. You may be surprised how easy it is to do.

### The Review of Nitrates

The Nitrates Action Programme has been reviewed and you will find a summary on the separate fold out leaflet enclosed with this bulletin. Although most of the Action Programme is the same as before there may be some changes that affect your farm and the article in the bulletin summarises them. Additionally a revised Nitrates Guidance Booklet will soon be published and it will be available on the DARD website.

### Update on Sheep Tagging

The vast majority of farmers are now using electronic tags for their sheep flocks. This article gives additional information on how to record sheep when winter grazing, common grazing and moving to slaughter.



Department of  
**Agriculture and  
Rural Development**

[www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN  
**Talmhaíochta agus  
Forbartha Tuaithe**

MÁNNYSTRÍE O  
**Fairms an  
Kintra Fordèrin**

## CAFRE Training

Over 600 farmers returned the reply paid postcard which was sent out with the last Helping You Comply bulletin and we have again included a reply paid postcard with this bulletin. Training on the course 'Safeguarding Single Farm Payment' will be the priority this spring. The other courses will be held in the coming autumn and winter. I would urge you to complete the postcard as soon as possible to ensure you are invited.

## EU Disallowance

**Valerie Bell, Grants and Subsidies Policy Branch**

The Single Farm Payment (SFP) scheme was introduced in 2005. It represented a move away from subsidies based on production levels to a subsidy based on the area of land farmed. This change meant a different way of administering Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments. Rather than using cattle or sheep numbers to determine payments, the eligibility of land parcels became the key factor.

SFP contributes around £270m to the agricultural economy in Northern Ireland each year. It is vital that we can demonstrate to the European Commission that this money is being correctly paid. The Commission, as part of their control processes, audit all Member States to ensure that the scheme rules are being properly administered and that payments are only being made on eligible land.

In 2006, the Commission visited NI and carried out an audit on the land eligibility aspects of the SFP scheme. In particular, the Commission auditors looked at the accuracy of our farm mapping system and whether all the land being claimed and accepted for payment was eligible. Following this visit, the Commission auditors advised that they were not content with the traditional mapping arrangements that were in place. In particular, they were not satisfied that we had sufficient controls in place to safeguard EU funds.

In July 2010 the Commission formally announced its decision to apply a disallowance of 5% for the 2005 and 2006 scheme years (amounting to €33.72 million). Following further audits in 2008 and 2009, the Commission have advised that further disallowance for the scheme years 2007, 2008 and 2009 is likely.

We must resolve the land eligibility issue and the way this is recorded on our systems otherwise the Commission will continue to apply disallowance. To address their concerns, DARD, in conjunction with Land and Property Services, has embarked on a remapping project. We have also been working closely with the Commission to clarify a number of land eligibility issues particularly on marginal land where there are features such as heather, rush and bracken.

We will be providing you with detailed guidance on land eligibility. It is vitally important you read this

guidance before completing your 2011 Single Application. Please make sure that you only claim on land that is eligible. We will be providing updates on the remapping project and information on what we need you to do as a result, throughout the year.

## Farm Maps

**Lynne Martin, LPIS Improvement Branch**

You may have heard about LPIS (Land Parcel Identification System) recently or about DARD facing a disallowance from the EC because of farms maps and wondered what it is all about. This article provides a quick overview.

### What is the LPIS?

LPIS is the new name for DARD's computerised farm map system. A land parcel is simply another name for a field. There are almost 750,000 fields recorded on the current LPIS.

### Why are the maps being updated?

The LPIS was created in 2004 by comparing 62,000 hand drawn farm maps with Ordnance Survey maps. While this was the most up-to-date information available at the time, the maps created did not show the maximum eligible area in each field.

This is important as each year you declare on your Single Application Form (SAF) the land that is eligible and our inspectors compare that declaration with what they find in the course of an inspection. Our experience in recent years is that most maps need many corrections.

### How will the maps be updated?

In 2011 we will begin a full review of the LPIS. Every field will be examined, compared to a

recent ortho photograph (a specialised aerial photograph) and where necessary corrected. To do this, we are working with Land and Property Services, who will draw the maps for us.

### How long will it take to fix the maps?

The project will be carried out in two phases. To start with, it will deal with the issues that the EU Auditors were most critical of. Phase One will correct field boundaries and ensure that all ineligible features such as building sites, laneways and scrub are removed from fields. This will be largely completed by early 2012. New maps will start to issue during the summer, 2011.

Phase Two will correct other more minor issues within the Ordnance Survey and DARD maps. You may hear this referred to as positional improvement. These changes are necessary to bring your map in line with modern survey (GPS) technologies. This means that some field boundaries will move slightly. The net result at farm level will be minimal for most farmers. Phase Two will complete by early 2013.

Phases One and Two will partly overlap. This means that when some farmers receive their new map in 2011, it will be their final map, having gone through both stages of the project. For others, when they receive their new map, it will only have gone through Phase One. They may also receive another map in 2012 after it goes through Phase Two.



This is an example of an ortho photograph. Farmers will receive ortho photographs of their land this spring to help them identify areas of eligible land.

**Is there anything that I should do now?**

You should closely examine your current farm map and make sure that all of the ineligible features such as buildings, lanes, tanks, and scrub have been removed. You can use the ortho photographs that we will send you this spring to help you do this. If you find any errors, make sure that you adjust your 2011 Single Application accordingly. To allow us to focus on the remapping exercise, whilst you can still tell us about changes to your maps, we

may not give you a revised map until we issue the new maps later in the year. In the interim it is important that you get your 2011 claim right.

**What should I do when I receive my new map?**

You will be asked to verify that your new map is correct. Check your new maps very carefully and tell us about any changes that are necessary. You know your land better than anyone. If your map is incorrect or you do not tell us about changes in the future and continue to claim on an incorrect area, you risk being penalised. You can use the ortho photograph that you receive in spring to help you check your map.

**Will I be penalised if my map is found to be wrong?**

If you do not tell us about changes to your fields and we find that you have claimed for

ineligible areas, then payments will be delayed and you may be penalised. It is in your interest to make sure your map is right.

**Whose responsibility is it to fix the maps?**

We share this responsibility with you. Once we provide a map, it is your responsibility to check it carefully and tell us about any errors. You must also keep it up-to-date by telling us of any changes. Most importantly, make sure that you do not claim on ineligible land. If you do, you may face penalties and delays in getting your payments. The EU auditors were critical that very few farmers tell us about changes to the eligible area within their maps.

**2011 Timetable of events related to SFP and new maps**

Ortho photographs and new eligibility booklet issued to farmers	March 2011
SFP pack starts to issue	March 2011
DARD begins the LPIS Improvement Project	March 2011
New maps issue to farmers for verification	Aug 2011– early 2012

## Land Eligibility Matters

Valerie Bell, Grants and Subsidies Policy Branch

As stated in the article on EU disallowance, following their visits to NI, the European Commission (EC) auditors raised concerns about Single Farm Payment (SFP) and other area aid payments being made on ineligible land. We have been working with the EC to clarify these issues and while the majority of the rules concerning land eligible and not eligible for payment remain the same, we have had to make some changes to how we handle some land types such as heather, rush and bracken.

The general principles are that:

- Land being used to support a SFP claim must be in agricultural use for the entire calendar year (1 January to 31 December) except in cases of force majeure/exceptional circumstances.
- Land claimed as eligible must be accessible for livestock and farm machinery.
- Agricultural parcels which are impenetrable, inaccessible for livestock or not in agricultural use are considered ineligible.
- Eligible land for SFP purposes includes any land that is used for permanent pasture, arable crops or permanent crops.

This year, to help you identify when land is eligible or ineligible, we are providing more detailed information on eligibility and specific land types (for example land with heather, bracken, scrub, rush and trees) in a new booklet called "A Guide to Land Eligibility". This booklet is in addition, to the "Guide on



Bracken is not an eligible land use for SFP and other land based schemes.

How to Complete your 2011 Single Application (SAF 1) and Field Data Sheet (SAF 2)". Both booklets will be sent to all SAF applicants in late March. Please read both of these booklets carefully before you submit your Single Application this year.

It is vital that you only claim for land that is eligible. If we later find that you have claimed land that is not eligible, we will treat this as over-declaration and apply penalties as appropriate.

You should take time to read both of these guides. They will help you to complete your application accurately and help avoid any delay in your payment or possible penalties.

### Training

CAFRE will be offering a training course entitled 'Safeguarding Single Farm Payment' to help you understand how the changes to the land eligibility rules will affect you. If you are interested in attending please complete and return the enclosed postcard as soon as possible as we will be arranging these courses in the next few weeks.

## Single Application Online – the way to go!

Max Cronin, Single Farm Payment Branch

Last year almost 3,600 farmers submitted their Single Applications online.

### What's in it for you?

Before you start to complete your paper 2011 Single Application, consider the benefits of doing it online.

1. The online application is designed to help reduce the number of errors that you might make when completing your application. As you work your way through the online application, you will be alerted if you make mistakes such as claiming for an area greater than the field size available.
2. Some of the calculations are worked out for you as you complete your claim.
3. You can also view your farm map online as you complete the application. This includes an aerial photograph that can help you determine eligible areas you

4. can claim on.
4. Our experience over the last few years suggests that farmers who send their Single Applications online are more likely to receive their payment earlier.

David Rankin, Chairperson, Northern Ireland Agricultural Consultants Association (NIACA) commends the Single Application online service saying: "Submitting a Single Application electronically is a simple, reliable, and efficient system with less chance of making mistakes. Applications can be submitted around the clock and you get an instant receipt. This can help you avoid queues at DARD offices to hand in paper forms and reduces the risk of forms being lost in the post."

He also remarked: "When you use the online system you can save a copy of your field data sheets and download them instantly if there is a query in the future. This means less



NIACA members, Rory Gormley (Secretary), David Rankin (Chairperson) and Fiona Agnew discussing the benefits of using DARD's Single Application online service on behalf of their clients.

paperwork. The Single Application online service also gives you easy access to ortho-image farm maps. These will help you check field sizes and identify areas that may not be eligible for SFP.”

He also singled out the claim tracking service for praise. It gives you the latest, up-to-date information on your claim without having to ring Single Farm Payment Branch in Orchard House. In concluding, David said, “To put it simply, the online service is an ideal way to complete Single Applications with no hassle or worry.”

Once you’ve completed your Single Application online, you’ll be asked to confirm that everything is in order before being prompted to submit your application. If you accidentally

leave something out or don’t answer a question you should have, you’ll be alerted. All these features are designed to help get rid of mistakes in your application and reduce the chances for delay to your payment. Once we receive your application you are sent an e-mail receipt to say we’ve got it and a few days later you will also be sent a paper acknowledgement letter. You’ll also get an electronic summary of your application showing all the important information about your 2011 claim. So, what are you waiting for? It makes sense and saves time. To find out how to complete your Single Application online, why not give us a call on (028) 9442 6699 or log on to [www.dardni.gov.uk/onlineservices](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/onlineservices).

**It really is easy once you know how!**

## The Revised Nitrates Action Programme 2011 - 2014

Jayne Armstrong, Countryside Management Delivery Branch

The Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) aims to improve the use of nutrients on farms and improve water quality throughout Northern Ireland. Some changes have been made to the NAP for the next four years from 2011 to 2014. The key changes are summarised below.

### Farmyard manure (FYM) land application and storage

With effect from 31 October 2011, FYM will be subject to a closed spreading period from 31 October until 31 January. Until 31 December 2012, FYM may be stored in a field heap where it is to be applied, but for no longer than 180 days. After that date FYM field heaps are only permitted for no longer than 120 days.

### Spreading on steeply sloping ground

No chemical or organic fertilisers must be applied on steep slopes where there is significant risk of water pollution. Steep slopes are defined as an average incline of 20% or more on grassland or an average incline of 15% or more on all other land where other significant risks of water pollution exist. Risk factors need to be assessed. These include the proximity to waterways, the time to incorporation, the type and amount of fertilizer being applied and the soil and weather conditions. Additional advice on how to assess these risks will be available in the new NAP Guidance Booklet 2011-2014.

### Chemical nitrogen fertiliser application

The spreading distance from any waterway for chemical nitrogen fertiliser has increased from 1.5m to 2m.

### Poultry litter storage

Poultry litter may be stored in a field heap until 30 September 2011 for a maximum of 180 days in the field where it is to be applied. It must be covered with an impermeable membrane within 24 hours of placement in the field. The field storage of poultry litter will be reviewed in 2011. Further detailed guidance will shortly be issued to poultry producers.

### Other changes

- The standard figures for the amount of nitrogen pigs excrete have been reduced.

- A requirement for farmers to manage silage effluent collection and storage facilities to prevent pollution has been introduced.
- Clarification has been provided on who may be responsible for different offences under the Regulations.
- Standard phosphorus contents for a greater range of agricultural products and feedstuffs have been introduced for those farms operating under derogation.

A summary of all measures contained in the NAP 2011 – 2014 is included with this bulletin. If you would like further advice about NAP, please contact your local DARD Adviser or go online at [www.dardni.gov.uk/index/countryside](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/countryside)

The revised Nitrates Action Programme has a closed period for farmyard manure for the months of November, December and January each winter.



## Reminder on Sheep Tagging Rules

John Love, Food Animal Information Support Unit

You must identify all lambs on your holding with an EID tag set by the time they reach nine months of age.

It is also important that you replace any lost or unreadable tags within 28 days of discovery and before the sheep leaves your holding. If the animal was born on your holding, the replacement EID tag must be yellow.

If it was not born on your holding both replacement tags must be red. Red tag sets are available from all authorised tag suppliers and they must be authorised on APHIS, before purchase. You should ensure that you have a stock of red replacement tags. If you get a cross-compliance inspection we will check that you have used them, as and when needed. Red tags only indicate that the flock number on the tag is not that of the flock of birth. Red tags do not restrict sheep movements, so you can still move them off your holding, including to the south of Ireland.

When moving sheep off your holding, you must complete a movement document. This includes moves to shows and winter grazing.

### Winter grazing

The recording rules for moves to winter grazing are as follows:

- You do not need to complete a movement document or record the move in your flock register if you take land for use as winter grazing for your sheep, you look after them yourself, and they do not mix with anyone else's animals.

- If the keeper at the destination holding looks after them, or if they mix with other animals while there, then this is considered to be a movement off your holding. In this case you must complete an SG2 movement document with the tag numbers of all the sheep and send it to DARD. Both you, and the keeper at the winter grazing, must record the movement in your flock registers.

### Common grazing

The recording rules for moves to common grazing are as follows:

- If you move sheep to common grazing that is not adjacent to your holding you must complete a SG2 movement document and send it to DARD. You must use separate documents to notify moves both to and from common grazing. You do not need to record the tag numbers of the sheep.
- If common grazing is adjacent to your holding, which means your sheep move directly to common grazing without travelling across anyone else's land or on public roads, you do not need to notify the movement to DARD by a movement document. But, you must record all moves to common grazing in your flock register, whether adjacent to your holding or not.

### Movements to slaughter

If you send sheep to slaughter through a lamb group, or a shared haulier where the sheep will mix in pens or in the vehicle, you must ensure that you read and record the tag numbers before animals from different holdings are mixed.

If you operate premises where you collect sheep for transport to an abattoir in Northern Ireland you must register your premises with DARD as a slaughter collection centre.

If you also keep goats please ensure that you have them registered in a separate herd, with its own tags, movement book and herd register.

### Further information

You can find further detailed information on the tagging and recording rules by contacting your local Divisional Veterinary Office or on the DARD website at [www.dardni.gov.uk/animal-movements-sheep-and-goats](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/animal-movements-sheep-and-goats).



This ewe lamb is properly identified with a conventional tag and an electronic tag.



## **DARD telephone numbers**

### **Animal Health & Welfare and Veterinary Public Health**

Information and services relating to animal welfare, veterinary public health, and the prevention and control of animal diseases.

**0845 30 44 500**

### **Education and Training**

Education and training courses provided by College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE).

**0845 30 44 501**

### **Environment**

Agri-environment schemes. Countryside Management advice including Cross-Compliance, Nitrates Directive, Codes of Good Agriculture Practice, Farm Waste Management, Uncultivated Land Regulations and Field Boundary Removals.

**0845 30 44 502**

### **Farming**

Livestock. Crops. Horticulture. Plant health. Equine. Organic farming. Farm business management. Information technology.

**0845 30 44 503**

### **Fisheries**

Aquaculture. Sea fisheries. Fish health. Foyle, Carlingford & Irish Lights Commission.

**0845 30 44 504**

### **Flood Defence and Drainage**

Sea and river defences. Flood protection. Flood risk management. Drainage. Maintenance of designated watercourses. *For flooding emergencies and to contact Rivers Agency outside normal working hours see Rivers & Waterways in the Government Offices section of the telephone directory.*

**0845 30 44 505**

### **Food**

Knowledge and technology transfer. Marketing support to food businesses. Food industry training. Food Business Incubation Centre. Food Safety. Product certification. Marketing and quality standards.

**0845 30 44 506**

### **Forests**

Timber production and marketing. Plant health controls for wood and bark, Woodland grants (including Short Rotation Coppice). Recreation. Educational visits. *For caravanning and camping bookings you will need to book directly with the Forest Park. See the Forestry section in the Government Offices pages.*

**0845 30 44 507**

### **Grants and Funding**

Single Farm Payment, LFACA, agri-environment, farm, fisheries, forestry and rural development payments and grants, pre-2005 schemes.

**0845 30 44 508**

### **Rural Development**

Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, Rural and community development, Farm diversification, Rural Champion, Rural Proofing, Rural White Paper.

**0845 30 44 509**

### **DARD Corporate Services**

DARD Headquarters, Press Office, information services and systems, human resources and facilities management.

**0845 30 44 510**

### **Textphone**

For people with hearing difficulties.

**0845 30 44 511**

### **Calls from non-UK numbers or networks/International Calls**

**+44(0)28 9037 8418**