

A large, light green circular graphic containing a white stylized figure with its arms raised in a 'V' shape. The figure is composed of simple, rounded shapes. The background of the slide is white.

The White Peak Partnership Advisors Training Day

New Farming Rules for Water

Paul Chambers
Environment Officer

Farming Rules for Water

- Enabling legislation is The Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations 2018
- Came into force on 2 April 2018
- Set out provisions to reduce and prevent pollution of coastal waters, inland freshwaters and groundwater from diffuse agricultural sources
- Apply to farmers (“land managers”) in England

DEFRA's New 'Farming Rules for Water'

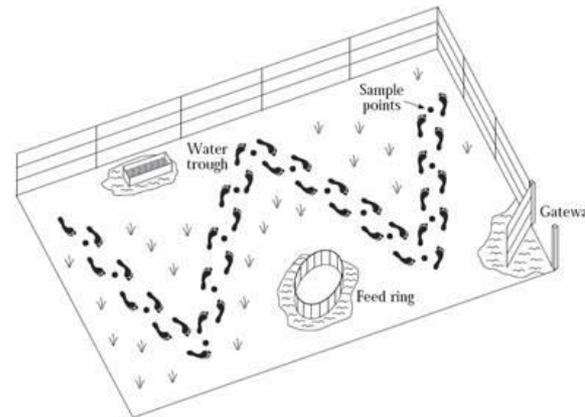
- All farmers in England need to follow a new set of farming rules for water
- The rules:
 - promote good practice in managing fertilisers and manures
 - encourage land managers to take reasonable precautions to prevent diffuse pollution from runoff or soil erosion
 - fulfil obligations of the Water Framework Directive

Farming Rules for Water

- Based on 'Best Practice'
- Designed:
 - to protect and improve water quality and the environment as a whole
 - to be simple and aligned with existing rules
 - to be proportionate, practical and reasonable
 - to be collaborative, in line with responses to 2015 consultation and government's 25 year plan for the environment
- Full definitions are in the legislation

Rule 1: planning use of manures and fertilisers

- Application of organic manures and manufactured fertilisers to cultivated land must be planned in advance to meet soil and crop nutrient needs and not exceed these levels
- Planning must take into account the significant risk of pollution and the results of testing for Phosphorus, Potassium, Magnesium, pH and Nitrogen levels in the soil
- Soil testing must be done at least every 5 years



“Significant risk of pollution”

- Take into account the following factors:
 - slope of land, especially if slope is greater than 12 degrees
 - any ground cover
 - proximity to inland fresh waters, coastal waters and wetlands
 - weather conditions and weather forecasts
 - soil type and condition
 - presence and condition of agricultural land drains
- Places emphasis on farmer to do the right thing

Rule 2: storing organic manures

- Organic manures must not be stored on land:
 - within 10 metres of inland freshwaters or coastal waters
 - where there is significant risk of pollution entering inland freshwaters or coastal waters
 - within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole



Rule 3: applying manures or fertilisers

- Organic manures or manufactured fertilisers must not be applied:
 - if the soil is waterlogged, flooded, or snow covered
 - if the soil has been frozen for more than 12 hours in the previous 24 hours
 - if there is significant risk of causing pollution



Rule 4: where not to apply organic manures

- Organic manures must not be applied:
 - within 10 metres of any inland freshwaters or coastal waters, or within 6 metres of inland freshwaters or coastal waters if precision equipment is used
 - within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole



Rule 5: where not to apply fertiliser

- Manufactured fertiliser must not be applied within 2 metres of inland freshwaters or coastal waters



Rule 6: reasonable precautions to prevent soil erosion

- Take all reasonable precautions to prevent significant soil erosion and runoff from:
 - the application of organic manure and manufactured fertiliser
 - land management and cultivation practices, e.g. seedbeds, tramlines, rows, beds, stubbles (including harvested land with haulm), polytunnels and irrigation
 - poaching by livestock



Rule 7: protecting against soil erosion by livestock

Any land within 5 metres of inland freshwaters and coastal waters must be protected from significant soil erosion by preventing poaching by livestock by, for example:

- Moving livestock regularly
- Fencing off watercourses
- Wintering livestock on well-drained, level fields



Rule 8: position of livestock feeders

- Livestock feeders must not be positioned:
 - within 10 metres of any inland freshwaters or coastal waters
 - within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole
 - where there is significant risk of pollution from poaching around the feeder entering any inland freshwaters or coastal waters



Compliance and Enforcement

- DEFRA expect that most farmers already comply
 - Farmers need to review and check that they do
 - Non-compliance is an offence and could result in a fine or Civil Sanction (restoration notice, compliance notice, stop notice, fixed or variable monetary penalty, enforcement undertaking)
- Environment Agency will:
 - Provide advice and guidance on new rules
 - Regulate the new rules;
 - as part of existing programme of work
 - in line with enforcement and sanctions policy
 - using existing enforcement tools, starting with advice and guidance
- Rules will be reviewed in 3 years
- Monitor improvement in water quality through existing programmes

Summary and further guidance

- April 2018 new 'best practice' rules aimed at protecting water from agricultural diffuse pollution came into force
- Focus on fertilisers, manures and soil management
- Most farmers will already comply through good practice, Cross Compliance and NVZ rules
- EA will regulate through existing programme of advice and guidance
- Review in 3 years

- Search 'Farming Rules for Water' on GOV.UK
- EA Customer Contact Centre 03708 506 506



Thank you for listening!

Any questions?

Paul Chambers – 07802 329140