

Farming compliance update

[Officer name]

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Recent pollution: insurance claim refused



(Representative photo showing storage in accordance with the AIC Fluid Fertiliser Code)

Agricultural waste exemptions

- July 2025: discounted charge for common farming exemptions capped at £88 (plus registration fee of £56). Exemptions valid for three years
- From April 2026, each EA farm inspection will include full assessment of that business's compliance with **all** waste exemptions
- Principle will apply that if the business is carrying out a waste activity **without** holding a valid exemption, it will be committing a waste offence
- Review your business's requirements. Be particularly careful with the following:
 - T23: On-farm aerobic composting
 - D7: Burning plant and untreated wood waste where it is produced
 - S3: Storage of sewage sludge
 - T32: Treating waste in a bio-bed or bio-filter
 - U1: Use of waste in construction
 - U10: Spreading waste to benefit agricultural land

The Farming Rules for Water: June 2025 onwards



(Illegal spreading discovered during the closed period)

Statutory Guidance on enforcing 'The Farming Rules for Water'

- Issued by the Secretary of State for Environment, Farming & Rural Affairs – updated June 2025
- This is guidance that the EA must consider when assessing if regulatory enforcement action should be taken
- The Statutory Guidance **does not** amend the law

Secretary of State's guidance to the EA

- All applications of organic manures and manufactured fertilisers must be planned to meet soil and crop need at the time of application
- In most cases, there will not be a soil and crop need for N in the autumn or winter. It remains DEFRA's position that this includes cover crops
- Nutrient applications must be planned so as not to give rise to a significant risk of agricultural diffuse pollution. Must have evidence to prove this.
- The EA will continue to lead with advice and guidance and take a risk-based approach to enforcement
- All farming regulation is scheduled for review by DEFRA

The EA's approach to enforcement

- This remains unchanged: advice-led
- Work with the EA to put in place necessary improvements within reasonable timescales
- Where possible, we will refer to CSF for support
- If we identify pollution, record incidents or do not get traction, then the EA enforcement and sanctions policy applies
- EA will recharge for attending and investigating pollutions

Winter-Ready Campaign 2025-26

What?

- Targeting illegal spreading of organic manures (including digestate and poultry wash-water) during closed period

Why?

- No agronomic need, but spread in autumn and winter, often due to lack of storage
- Spreading causes compaction, run-off, leaching and pollution

How?

- Comms during summer, to raise awareness
- Regular officer patrols in autumn/winter followed by appropriate enforcement

Is your farm winter ready?

Have you done the following to prepare?

Ensured all run-off from contaminated yards is collected and stored to be spread as slurry

Ensured you have 6 months storage to see you through winter

Made a contingency plan for extreme wet weather

Fixed and maintained broken gutters and down pipes

Prevented slurry and run-off from leaking out of cattle sheds and farmyards

Completed the AHDB Slurry Wizard to calculate your slurry storage requirement

Planned all applications to meet soil and crop need

Marked and understood where your drains go



Summary of advice about compliance

- Demonstrate awareness of (mitigation of) diffuse pollution risk
- Robust evidence of proper planning of nutrient applications
- Field records for nutrient applications: updated within one week
 - Include nutrient data from land coming back in hand after cropping licence/outdoor pig licence
- Field-heaps of manures (including biosolids): current and accurate risk maps
 - ALERT mapping tool for soil risk: <https://www.farmingadvice.service.org.uk/csf/tools>
- Silage field-clamps: must give EA at least 14 days' prior notice
- Maintain relevant waste exemptions:
 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-your-waste-exemptions>
- Take the utmost care to work within terms of your insurance cover
 - Also: <https://www.agindustries.org.uk/resource/fluid-fertilisers-guidance.html>

EA Environment Programme team

Interested in river and floodplain habitat restoration on your land?

→ We may be able to help fund it

- Please contact:

Environment Agency's
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Any questions?

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