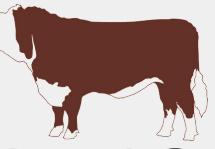


Farm Herefordshire



This guide was produced as part of the Farm Herefordshire collaborative approach. Our purpose is to improve the health of the Wye catchment through sustainable farming systems.



In partnership with



To achieve this we:

- Provide support to Herefordshire farms in multiple forms; 1:1 advice, events, discussion groups.
- Steer future farming and environment policy, regulations and schemes.
- Drive forwards relevant research and actively seek to ground truth findings.
- Capture and communicate the achievements of Herefordshire farmers.

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FARMING IN THE WYE

LAND MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SOIL, NUTRIENTS & WATER



Quick guide for farmers and advisers about the requirements of Farming Rules for Water and how to comply.

WHAT ARE THE RULES?

Farming Rules for Water

Contains 8 rules which came in to force in 2018 and set a consistent baseline of good practice across the agricultural industry in England. They apply to all land managers to reduce agricultural pollution.

This Guide

This guide has been produced by Herefordshire Rural Hub and the Environment Agency to help farmers, land managers and advisers understand the rules that apply to them and how to comply with them.



Advice & Guidance

If you would like advice and support about regulations and compliance on your farm, it is readily available from local advisers. Scan the QR code with a smart phone or contact Herefordshire Rural Hub to find out who can help:



JARGON BUSTING

Nutrient Management Plans:

Assess crop need, existing soil nutrient status and plans how the crop requirement will be met through applications of organic manures or artificial fertilisers.

Manure Management Plans:

Assess where manure can be spread, storage capacities, quantity of manure produced and whether exports may be required.

Cultivated land:

Includes land that has been cultivated, sown or harvested in the previous year, or received any applications of organic manure or manufactured fertiliser in the previous 3 years.

Agricultural pollution:

Includes soil, sediment and nutrients from manure or fertiliser.

Land Manager:

Any person who has custody or control of agricultural land, so can include owners and tenants.

WHAT ARE THE RULES?

Rule 1 - Nutrient Management Planning

- Applications of organic manures and manufactured fertilisers to cultivated land must be planned in advance to meet soil and crop nutrient needs and not exceed those levels.
- Soil testing must be carried out for N, P, K, Mg and pH at least every 5 years for cultivated land.

Rule 2 - Manure Storage

Organic manures must not be stored on land:

- within 10 metres of surface waters,
- where there is significant risk of runoff entering a surface water, or
- within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole.

Rule 3 - Conditions for Manure Applications

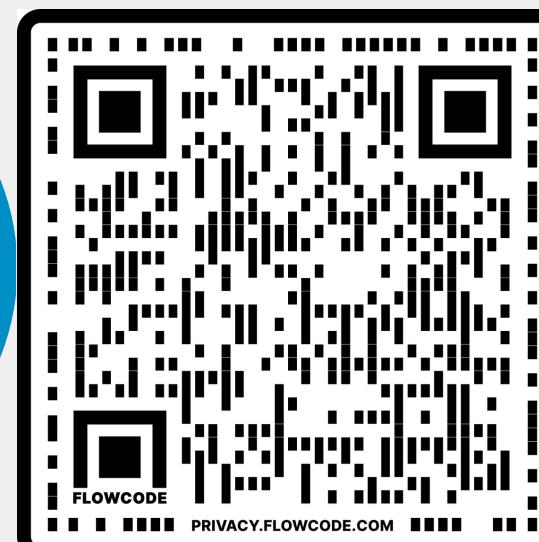
Organic manures or manufactured fertilisers must not be applied:

- if the soil is waterlogged, flooded, or snow covered.
- if the soil has been frozen for more 12 hours in the previous 24 hours.
- if there is significant risk of causing environmental pollution from soil erosion and run-off.

How to ensure compliance

- Document your nutrient management planning, soil test results, cropping plans and nutrient applications.
- Plan nutrient application based on all nutrients.
- Verify distances from muck heaps to surface waters.
- Monitor area around muck heaps for potential runoff.
- Check current and previous soil and weather conditions.
- Assess field risk for manure storage and spreading based on slope, soil condition, connectivity to surface water, drains, tracks and roads.

Advice on nutrient management planning is available from Catchment Sensitive Farming. Scan QR code with a smart phone or contact us to find out more:



WHAT ARE THE RULES?



Rule 4 - Location of Manure Applications

Organic manures must not be applied:

- within 10 metres of any surface water, or if precision equipment is used within 6 metres of surface water.
- within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole.

Rule 5 - Location of Fertiliser Applications

Manufactured fertiliser must not be applied within 2 metres of surface water.



Rule 6 - Soil Erosion and Runoff

Take all reasonable precautions to prevent significant soil erosion and runoff from:

- seedbeds, tramlines, rows, beds, stubbles (including harvested land with haulm), polytunnels and irrigation, and
- poaching by livestock.

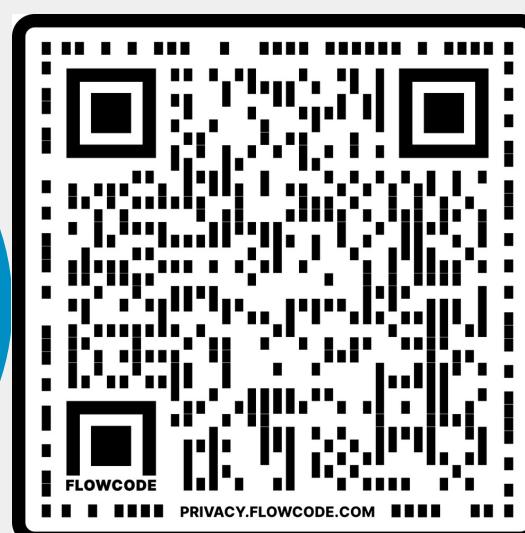
How to ensure compliance

- Regularly calibrate equipment and keep records.
- Measure distance of buffer strips or use GPS maps to show spreading locations.
- Check for signs of spread material within the restricted zone.

Reduce the risk of soil erosion and runoff by:

- Avoiding late cultivations and ensuring crop cover.
- Avoiding bare stubbles over winter by planting cover crops.
- Proactively managing soils to maintain good structure and organic matter levels to increase resilience in wet weather.
- Avoiding planting high risk crops like maize, stubble turnips, potatoes etc. on high risk fields.
- Have mitigation in place to protect watercourses should the worst occur.

Funding is available for buffer strips, cover crops and other options that protect soil and water. Scan QR code with a smart phone or contact us to find out more:



WHAT ARE THE RULES?

Rule 7 - Protect watercourses from livestock

Any land within 5 metres of surface water must be protected from significant soil erosion by preventing poaching by livestock.

Rule 8 - Location of feeders

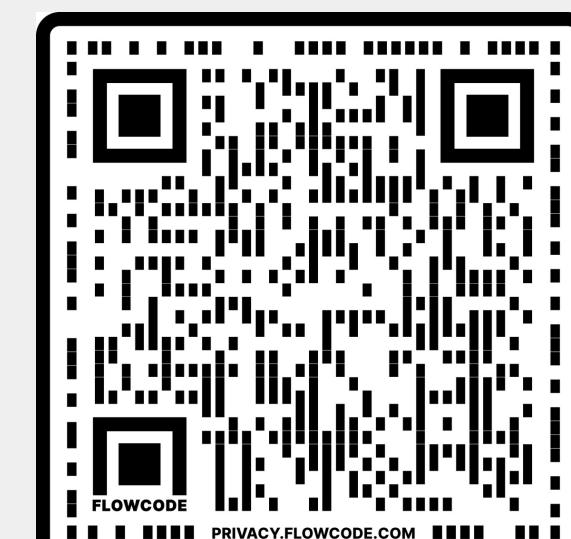
Livestock feeders must not be positioned:

- within 10 metres of any surface water.
- where there is significant risk of runoff from poaching around the feeder entering surface water.

How to ensure compliance

- Fence off watercourses from livestock and provide alternative water.
- Verify distances from watercourses and avoid potential pathways like tracks or roads that could connect to a watercourse.

Capital grants are available that could help protect watercourses from stock. Scan QR code with a smart phone or contact us to find out more:



WHAT TO EXPECT DURING AN INSPECTION

Before

- Normally inspections are organised in advance. You'll be contacted by either phone, email or post to arrange a convenient date and time.

During

- The EA use an advice-led approach to help farmers comply with regulations.

After

- You'll receive a post-inspection report, usually within two weeks. This will outline any actions required and the completion timeframes.

Enforcement

If a breach is found it will help if you are proactive in:

- identifying the changes you need to make
- agreeing a timescale to make changes

To check you've made changes, the Environment Agency may:

- do a follow-up visit.
- ask for evidence, such as photos of changes made.

If there is already pollution occurring or a high risk of pollution, the Environment Agency may take enforcement action. This may include prosecution.

Protected Habitats

- The Rivers Wye & Lugg are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- The standards our rivers must meet are tighter than others because of the sensitive and rare species and habitats they contain.
- Our rivers do not currently meet their water quality targets due to the quantity of nutrient and sediment being lost from the catchment.

Who contributes what?

- Studies by the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales conclude that ~70% of the nutrients in the Rivers Wye & Lugg arise from agricultural sources.
- Water companies are responsible for <30% and have investment programmes underway to reduce their contribution from sewage works and overflows.
- Independent research by Lancaster University ("RePhoKUs") also identified agriculture as the largest source of nutrient loss in the catchment.

NUTRIENT LOSSES IN THE WYE

- More Phosphate is imported to the catchment, as animal feed and fertiliser than is utilised by production. Over decades this excess has built nutrient levels in our soils beyond crop need.
- The sandy and silty soils found in the Wye are also less able to hold on to nutrients than other soils.
- The over supply of nutrients combined with our leaky soils has a cumulative impact on water quality downstream.

Losses from Agriculture; how & why?

- Nutrients are lost in three main ways;
 - Direct losses; runoff from yards, muck heaps, livestock in watercourses, inaccurate application etc.
 - Soil erosion; with nutrients attached to soil particles.
 - In solution in land drainage; especially from high risk soil types above Index 2. Avoid building P levels above Index 2 and run down high indices to reduce this risk.
- Complying with regulatory requirements and utilising support to improve infrastructure and build soil resilience will reduce losses of soil and nutrients in the Wye.

It is the **collective responsibility** of everyone farming, operating and sourcing from the catchment to prevent nutrient and soil losses occurring from land within their ownership, management or supply chains.