

# **NORTHERN IRELAND CROSS-COMPLIANCE VERIFIABLE STANDARDS**

**(effective from 1 January 2013)**

**1 January 2010  
(revised 1 January 2013)**

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<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CROSS-COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SECTION 1 .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>STATUTORY MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
SMR 1. CONSERVATION OF WILD BIRDS .....	10
SMR 2. CONSERVATION OF NATURAL HABITATS AND OF WILD FLORA AND FAUNA .....	13
SMR 3. PROTECTION OF GROUNDWATER AGAINST POLLUTION .....	15
SMR 4. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT WHEN SEWAGE AND SEPTIC TANK SLUDGE IS USED IN AGRICULTURE .....	18
SMR 5. Protection of Water Against Nitrate Pollution.....	21
SMR 6. PIG IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION .....	24
SMR 7. CATTLE IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION .....	27
SMR 8. SHEEP AND GOAT IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION .....	30
SMR 9. PLACING OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS ON THE MARKET.....	34
SMR10. FOOD AND FEED LAW .....	38
SMR 11. RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF SUBSTANCES HAVING HORMONAL OR THYROSTATIC ACTION AND BETA-AGONISTS IN FARM ANIMALS .....	46
SMR 12. PREVENTION, CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES (TSE).....	48
SMR 13. CONTROL OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE .....	52
SMR 14. CONTROL OF CERTAIN ANIMAL DISEASES .....	53
SMR 15. SPECIFIC PROVISIONS FOR THE CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF BLUETONGUE.....	54
SMR 16. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CALVES.....	55
SMR 17. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF PIGS .....	58
SMR 18. PROTECTION OF ANIMALS KEPT FOR FARMING PURPOSES .....	65
<b>SECTION 2 .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>GOOD AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION STANDARDS (GAEC) .....</b>	<b>70</b>
GAEC 1. SOIL MANAGEMENT.....	71
GAEC 2. SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING.....	75
GAEC 3. OVERGRAZING .....	79
GAEC 4. UNDERGRAZING .....	82
GAEC 5. FIELD BOUNDARIES .....	86
GAEC 6. PROTECTION OF HABITATS (WILDLIFE AREAS), ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND PERMANENT PASTURE .....	89
GAEC 7. IRRIGATION AUTHORISATIONS .....	95
<b>ANNEX 1 .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>GOOD AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION (GAEC) DEFINITIONS .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>ANNEX 2 .....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>ANIMAL WELFARE GUIDANCE .....</b>	<b>99</b>

## Introduction

1. This booklet provides details of the Northern Ireland Cross-Compliance requirements. It is effective from 1 January 2013 and replaces any previous Cross-Compliance guidance issued by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). A summary document setting out the Northern Ireland Cross-Compliance verifiable standards has been issued to all applicants for funding under the schemes listed in paragraph 4 below. The summary document can be found at the following web address).

## Background

2. The Cross-Compliance conditions are designed to promote sustainable agricultural practices in Europe and reflect a number of environmental and other objectives. They are good farm management practices, and encourage responsible stewardship of the land.
3. All European Union Member States have to implement Cross-Compliance. The majority of Cross-Compliance requirements 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.
4. All farmers claiming under the following schemes must meet the Northern Ireland Cross-Compliance conditions.
  - Single Payment Scheme;
  - Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances Scheme;
  - Aid for Energy Crops;
  - Protein Crop Premium;
  - Organic Farming Scheme;
  - NI Countryside Management Scheme;
  - Woodland Grant Scheme (agreements signed after 1/1/07)
  - Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (agreements signed after 1/1/07)
  - Sustainable Forest Operation Grant Scheme (agreements signed after 1/1/07)

## Cross-Compliance Requirements

5. There are two aspects to Cross-Compliance. The first of these is compliance with specific articles contained within 18 European regulatory requirements covering the environment, food safety, animal and plant health and animal welfare and are known as the **Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs)**.
6. The second aspect of Cross-Compliance is a requirement that all those in receipt of payments in respect of the schemes listed in paragraph 4 maintain all their land in **Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC)**. The Northern Ireland 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.
  - **Protection and management of water** – protect water against pollution and run-off, and manage the use of water.
7. 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.
8. This booklet sets out the requirements you must meet under each of the SMRs (Section 1) together with advice on how to meet these requirements. All of these requirements are already legally binding on farmers. Member States have no discretion regarding the European laws that have to be applied as SMRs. The booklet also sets out the Northern Ireland GAEC requirements (Section 2) that you have to comply with together with advice on how to meet these requirements. You must comply with the SMR and GAEC requirements as a condition of receipt of funding under the schemes listed in paragraph 4. A breach of these requirements may also lead to a partial or complete withholding of payments in respect of these schemes.
9. **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.

## General Information

10. Cross-Compliance applies to all land within an agricultural business irrespective of whether it is used to activate payment entitlements. For permanently held land (either owned or under an agricultural tenancy), Cross-Compliance applies for the full 12 calendar months. Cross-Compliance requirements also apply to set-aside land, common land, shared grazing and land taken in conacre.
11. This booklet sets out the Cross-Compliance rules for Northern Ireland. The rules vary across England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. 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.

## **Section 1**

### **Statutory Management Requirements**





## SMR 1. Conservation of Wild Birds

**The aim of these requirements is to protect wild birds, their eggs and nests. They apply to all claimants. If you have land designated as a Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation or Area of Special Scientific Interest extra rules apply.**

### 1.1 Main Requirements

You must not

- 1) Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture, or keep any wild bird<sup>1</sup>;
- 2) Intentionally or recklessly destroy, damage, remove or keep the nest of any wild bird while they are in use or being built. (Nests of Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Osprey, Barn Owl, Peregrine Falcon and Red Kite are protected at all times<sup>2</sup>);
- 3) Intentionally or recklessly damage, remove or keep eggs, of any wild bird;
- 4) Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird or their dependent young while they are nesting;
- 5) Kill or take huntable birds during the closed season for that species.

*You will not be in breach of these requirements if you are operating under a licence issued by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), or can rely on one of the legal defences or exceptions.<sup>3</sup>*

### 1.2 Verifiable Standards - All Land

- You must comply with the provisions of Articles 5, 7 and 8 of the Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds as implemented by the 1985 Wildlife Order and Habitats Regulations.

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<sup>1</sup> “Wild Bird” means any bird of a species which is ordinarily resident in or is a visitor to the European territory of any Member State in a wild state but does not include poultry or any game bird.

<sup>2</sup> Birds that are listed on Schedule A1 of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended).

<sup>3</sup> These are contained in Articles 4, 5, 6, 17 and 18 of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended).

In summary these provisions protect all species of wild birds. They prohibit:

intentional or reckless killing;

- intentional or reckless capture;
- intentional or reckless destruction of nests and eggs;
- intentional or reckless removal and keeping of eggs from the wild; and
- the intentional or reckless disturbance of these birds during the breeding season.

*You will not be in breach of these requirements if you are operating under a licence issued by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), or can rely on one of the legal defences or exceptions.*

*Contact a Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Wildlife Officer for further details on 028 90569551 or visit*

*[http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/wildlife\\_management\\_and\\_licensing.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/wildlife_management_and_licensing.htm)*

### **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 NIEA and will already be aware of the environmental obligations which exist on your land.

- You must not carry out or cause or permit to be carried 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 and for which NIEA have neither been notified nor consented.
- You must comply with the terms of management notices served by NIEA or the terms of any restoration order served by a court.
- You must not recklessly destroy or damage the special interest features of the area or disturb any fauna that are a special interest feature. (This requirement can apply to actions that take place other than on the SPA itself, but which have the same consequences.)

You will not break the rules for a SPA as outlined above if you have a reasonable excuse<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> A “reasonable excuse” may include: you have planning permission, you have consent from a public body or statutory authority that has complied with its duty to consult NIEA before giving its consent, it is an emergency operation (provided that NIEA is told as soon as possible after the emergency)

#### **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.

**For further information on the Natura 2000 sites, please contact NIEA on 028 9056 9516 or visit their website [www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/)**

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

**The aim of these requirements is to protect species of flora and fauna. They apply to all claimants. If you have land designated as a Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation or Area of Special Scientific Interest extra rules apply.**

### **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 NIEA licence to do so (for example, Killarney Fern or Yellow Marsh Saxifrage).

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

- You must not destroy, cut, uproot, sell or exchange European protected plant species.

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

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

- You must not carry out or cause or permit to be carried 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 and for which NIEA have neither been notified nor consented.
- You must comply with the terms of management notices served by NIEA or the terms of any restoration order served by a court.
- You must not recklessly destroy or damage the special interest features of the area or disturb any fauna that are a special interest feature. (This requirement can apply to actions that take place other than on the SAC itself, but which have the same consequences.)

You will not break the rules for a SAC as outlined above if you have a

reasonable excuse<sup>5</sup>.

## 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.

**For further information on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna please contact NIEA on 028 9056 9516 or visit their website [www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/)**

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<sup>5</sup> A “reasonable excuse” may include: you have planning permission, you have consent from a public body or statutory authority that has complied with its duty to consult NIEA before giving its consent, it is an emergency operation (provided that NIEA is told as soon as possible after the emergency)

## SMR 3. Protection of Groundwater Against Pollution

**The aim of these requirements is to protect groundwater by controlling the discharge or disposal of potentially harmful and polluting materials. They apply to you if you handle, store or dispose of listed substances such as sheep dip, pesticides, ammonia and biocides.**

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 hazardous substances and non-hazardous pollutants.

### 3.1 Main Requirements

Under the Groundwater Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009, an authorisation is required from NIEA before disposing of various substances to land. The substances governed by the Regulations are called hazardous substances and non-hazardous pollutants.

#### Hazardous substances

Hazardous substances must be prevented from reaching the groundwater. Examples include but are not limited to:

- organophosphorus compounds (such as sheep-dip and certain pesticides);
- organohalogen compounds (such as most pesticides)
- Biocides and plant protection products (such as pesticides, fungicides & herbicides);
- metals and their compounds (such as batteries);
- organotin compounds (such as anti-fouling paint);
- Mineral oils and hydrocarbons (such as diesel, petrol and heating oil).

#### Non-hazardous pollutants

The amount of non-hazardous pollutants reaching groundwater must be limited. A non-hazardous pollutant is any pollutant other than a hazardous substance.

Consequently no one must cause or knowingly permit the discharge (such as

disposal) of any hazardous substance or non-hazardous pollutant in circumstances that might lead to an indirect input into groundwater unless it is carried out in accordance with a Groundwater Authorisation.

One consequence of this is that anyone wishing to dispose of spent sheep dip to land must obtain a Groundwater Authorisation from NIEA and comply with the conditions of that Authorisation.

Similarly anyone disposing of biocide or plant protection product washings must obtain a Groundwater Authorisation from NIEA and comply with the conditions of that Authorisation UNLESS they are

- re-applying such waste back on the target crop OR
- re-using such waste to make more solution to apply to the target crop OR
- treating such waste via a lined biobed under the terms of a registered exemption from waste management licensing in which case no Groundwater Authorisation is necessary.

#### Authorisation conditions

Authorisation conditions will include the following restrictions:

- disposal must only take place on the authorised land area.  
No hazardous substances (such as sheep dip, biocides or plant protection product waste / washings) must be disposed of on
- land within ten metres of a surface waterway (see Annex 1 for definition), or within 50 metres of any spring, well or borehole, irrespective of its current use;
- land that is liable to flooding or is frozen hard or snow covered;
- land that is free draining, steeply sloping, water logged or has cracked soil.

### **3.2 Verifiable Standards**

- If you are disposing of hazardous substances to land you must obtain and meet the conditions of a Groundwater Authorisation;
- You must produce on request satisfactory records, as detailed in the Groundwater Authorisation;
- There must be no evidence of the pollution of groundwater by hazardous substances or non-hazardous pollutants;



- You must ensure the proper siting, operation and maintenance of a sheep dipper (as outlined in the Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water, Air and Soil);
- You must comply with any Notice served by NIEA under the Groundwater Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

### 3.3 Field Checks

Inspections in respect of this measure will include checking of:

- The need for a Groundwater Authorisation for disposal of hazardous substances (such as sheep dip, biocides or plant protection product waste / washings). No authorisation is required for the disposal of biocide or plant protection product washings back on to the target crop nor for re-using such waste to make more solution to apply to the target crop nor for the treatment of such waste via a lined biobed under the terms of a registered exemption from waste management licensing;
- 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 hazardous substances or non-hazardous pollutants;
- Any dippers to assess if they pose a threat to groundwater, for example, through cracks or unsealed drain holes.

<p><b>For further information on the protection of groundwater against pollution please contact NIEA on 028 9263 3445 or visit their website <a href="http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/">www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/</a></b></p>
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## **SMR 4. Protection of the Environment when Sewage and Septic tank Sludge is used in Agriculture**

**The aim of these requirements is to ensure that when sewage sludge is used in agriculture there is no risk to human, animal or plant health and no harmful effects on soil. They apply to you if you use sewage sludge on your land.**

### **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 NIEA. 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**

- Sewage sludge must not be applied to land unless it has been tested in accordance with the Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (normally tested by the sludge producer).
- Sewage sludge must not be applied to land unless the soil to which it is to be applied has been tested in accordance with the Regulations (normally tested by the sludge producer).
- 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.
- Sewage sludge must be used in a manner that does not impair soil quality.
- Sewage sludge must be used in a manner that does not impair surface water quality.
- Sewage sludge must be used in a manner that does not impair groundwater quality.
- 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.
- If sewage sludge is not applied by, or on behalf of, the sludge producer the controller of the land must provide the sludge producer with details as to the date of application, quantity of the sewage 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.

If the controller of the land is a sewage sludge producer the following will also 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:

- Records of sludge and soil analyses;
- Records of crop and harvest details for land to which sewage sludge has been applied;
- If sewage sludge is not applied by, or on behalf of, the sludge producer, 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);
- Land to which sewage or septic tank sludge has been applied, and if appropriate, any adjacent surface waters and / or groundwater;
- Evidence that the sewage or septic tank sludge has been applied in accordance with the requirements of the Verifiable Standards (4.2)

<p><b>For further information on the protection of the environment when sewage and septic tank sludge is used in agriculture please contact NIEA on 028 9263 3445 or visit their website <a href="http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/">www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/</a></b></p>
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## **SMR 5. Protection of Water Against Nitrate Pollution**

**The aim of these requirements is to reduce the pollution of waters caused by nitrates from agricultural sources and to prevent such pollution occurring in the future. They apply to all claimants.**

### **5.1 Main Requirements**

A number of water quality problems affect the groundwaters, rivers and lakes of Northern Ireland and extend into the surrounding marine waters. The largest and most widespread of these is nutrient enrichment arising from too much nitrogen and phosphorus entering the water environment.

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) (the Directive) aims to improve water quality by protecting water against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources. In particular, it is about promoting better management of animal manures, chemical nitrogen fertilizers and other nitrogen-containing materials spread onto land. The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (2006 NAP Regulations) were introduced to meet the requirements of the Directive, improve the use of nutrients on farms and as a result improve water quality throughout Northern Ireland. This action programme covered the period 2007 – 2010.

The Directive also requires action programmes to be reviewed and, where necessary, revised, at least every four years. This process was carried out in 2010 and a revised action programme has now been set out in the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 (NAP Regulations) which update and replace the 2006 NAP Regulations. This action programme covers the period 2011-2014. The NAP Regulations apply to all agricultural land in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland was also successful in renewing a derogation for the period 2011-2014. This permits the land application of up to 250kg Nitrogen/hectare/year from grazing livestock manure under certain conditions. To operate under the derogation, grassland cattle farmers must meet specific criteria and submit an annual application to NIEA. The derogation applies in tandem with the NAP Regulations. The derogation is granted for the period 2011-2014 and is dependent on the continued implementation of the NAP Regulations.

### **5.2 Verifiable Standards**

Compliance with Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) measures including:

- Nitrogen (N) fertiliser, chemical and organic (including dirty water), must not be allowed to directly or indirectly enter a waterway or water contained in underground strata.
- N fertiliser, chemical and organic (with the exception of dirty water), must not be applied to land during the closed spreading periods. In addition to the closed spreading periods for chemical nitrogen fertilizer and organic manures, from 2011, farm yard manure is subject to a closed spreading period from 31 October until 31 January each year. There are additional land management requirements on farms that have nitrates derogations.
- All N Fertilisers, chemical and organic, must be applied in accordance with the land application restrictions specified in the Action Programme.
- N fertiliser application must not exceed crop requirement. Additional action is required on derogated farms.
- Nitrogen from livestock manure on non-derogated farms must not exceed 170kg Nitrogen/hectare/year and Nitrogen from grazing livestock manure on derogated farms must not exceed 250kg N/ha/yr. Additional action is required on derogated farms;
- All livestock manures and silage effluent must be collected, stored and managed in accordance with the livestock manure storage requirements specified in the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations.
- All farms must carry out crop and soil management to minimise soil erosion and nutrient runoff. Additional action is required on derogated farms.
- Adequate farm records must be kept and made available for inspection, upon request, covering a minimum period of five years or from the operational date of the NAP Regulations (1 January 2007<sup>6</sup>) or designation, whichever is lesser. Records must cover a range of information including cropping, livestock numbers, and the use of nitrogen fertilisers and organic manures. Additional action is required on derogated farms.

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<sup>6</sup> There are two guidance booklets to assist you in complying with the regulations. One relates to the period 2007-2010 and is the 'Guidance Booklet for Northern Ireland Farmers on the Requirements of the Nitrates Action Programme (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2006 and the Phosphorus (Use in Agriculture) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2006'.

The publication 'Nitrates Action Programme 2011-2014 and Phosphorus Regulations Guidance Booklet' relates to the period 2011-2014.

- Derogated farms must not exceed a surplus of 10kg phosphorus per hectare per year on the holding.
- You must comply with the terms of a notice served under the NAP Regulations

### **5.3 Field Checks**

Inspections in respect of this measure will include checking of:

- Compliance with the Action Programme Measures;
- Farm practices and facilities;
- Farm records kept in accordance with the Action Programme Measures. These field checks will be reviewed and implemented in accordance with any amendments to the Action Programme.

**For further information on the protection of water against nitrate pollution please contact NIEA on 028 92623188 or visit their website [www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/)**

## SMR 6. Pig Identification and Registration

**The aim of these requirements is to reduce the risk of pig disease spreading through controlling movements and improving traceability. They apply to you if you keep pigs**

### 6.1 Main Requirements

Council Directive 2008/71/EC provides a system of identification and registration of pigs to ensure traceability of animals for disease eradication or control purposes. It is essential that all pig movements can be traced so that notifiable pig diseases, such as Swine Fever, Foot and Mouth Disease and Aujeszky's disease, can be controlled. These requirements also serve to protect keepers against fraud and theft.

All pig holdings in Northern Ireland must be registered with DARD. DARD will allocate the herd keeper a holding code and serial numbered movement documents for the sole use of that holding. If any of the details provided when registering the holding changes, DARD must be notified within 7 days.

All pigs on the holding must be identified before leaving the holding or when they reach 6 months of age, whichever is earlier.

All pigs moving off a holding must be accompanied by the original movement document which must be retained by the keeper at the destination holding (buyer) for 3 years from the date of movement. The keeper at departure holding (seller) must send a copy to DARD within 7 days of the movement and retain a copy for 3 years; and the transporter must retain a copy for 6 months if he/she is not the buyer or seller.

### 6.2 Verifiable Standards

#### Registration and Identification

##### **You must**

- register with DARD **before** you move pigs (including pet pigs) onto your holding. Notify DARD **in advance** if you are going to start to keep pigs on new premises;.
- notify DARD within **7 days** of any changes to your registration details, for example, your address or if you no longer keep pigs on any premises;
- by the time your pigs reach 6 months of age, or before leaving they leave your holding if sooner, correctly identify them as shown below:
  - for pigs that are destined for slaughter under the age of 6 months



- a holding code on an eartag, ear tattoo or slapmark (however, finished pigs going direct to slaughter may be identified with a slapmark bearing a 4-digit curer mark);
  - for pigs over 6 months of age (breeding pigs) and any pigs intended for breeding moved off your holding before 6 months of age – a holding code and an individual identification number of up to 4 digits; or
  - pigs must be identified with an eartag bearing a holding code and individual identification number of up to 4 digits if they are moving to a show or market. This also applies for pigs destined for other Member States, unless with the permission of DARD.
- replace any lost or illegible (unreadable) means of identification within 28 days of discovery and before the pigs leave your holding.

### **You must not**

- alter, remove, or duplicate any identification mark on a pig.

## **On-farm records**

### **You must**

- once per year record in your holding register the total number of pigs on your holding.
- record the following information in your holding register within 48 hours of the event:
  - for movements on and off – the date of movement, the number of pigs moved and the movement document serial number;
  - for identification marks replaced with a different mark – the date of replacement, the number of pigs and the old and new identification marks; and
- ensure that these on-farm records are up to date, are kept for at least 3 years and are shown to an inspector on demand;
- ensure that movement documents, signed by the keeper, accompany pigs during movements. These should specify:
  - name, address and the holding code of the holding of departure;
  - name and address of the holding of destination;
  - date of the movement;
  - number of pigs that the document covers; and
  - identification mark of each pig being moved (including the individual identification number);
- where pigs are moved off your holding, send a copy of the movement document to DARD within 7 days of the movement, except if the movement is to a market, slaughterhouse or show;

- retain a copy of movement documents for movements onto and off your holding for at least 3 years and show them to an inspector on demand;

### **6.3 Field Checks**

Inspections in respect of this measure will include checks that:

- Records in the holding register meet the Requirements set out above;
- Movement documents have been used and retained appropriately; and
- Pigs are identified appropriately.

**For further information on pig identification and registration please contact DARD Veterinary Service on 0300 200 7840 or visit the DARD website - [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## SMR 7. Cattle Identification and Registration

**The aim of these requirements is to maintain a system for the identification and registration of cattle to facilitate their traceability, in particular in the event of a disease outbreak. They apply to you if you keep cattle.**

### 7.1 Main Requirements

EC Regulations require a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals to ensure traceability of animals in the event of a disease outbreak or a risk to human health. There are 11 cross compliance verifiable standards in respect of cattle identification and registration, and checks will be carried out to ensure that these standards are met. Upholding these standards not only meets EU legislation requirements but also maintains and strengthens confidence in the Northern Ireland beef and dairy industry. These requirements also serve to protect keepers against fraud and theft.

Under the verifiable standards, any person keeping cattle must register with DARD and obtain a herd number. All cattle must be tagged using DARD approved ear tags. Calves must be double tagged within 20 days of birth, and imports from outside the EU be double tagged within 20 days of the import checks. Any lost or illegible tags must be replaced within 28 days of discovery.

Keepers must notify DARD of all births within 27 days, deaths within 7 days, movements (including cattle lost or stolen) within 7 days and imports from outside the EU within 15 days.

Keepers must also maintain an up to date herd register of cattle on their holding containing the following information:

- 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 holding or date of death; and
- Name and address of premises to which the animal is moved, or manner and place of disposal of carcass.

### 7.2 Verifiable Standards

#### Tagging

##### **You must**

- double tag with DARD approved ear tags within the following timescales:

- all calves born on your holding - within 20 days of birth or before the animal leaves your holding, whichever is the earlier;
  - all cattle imported from outside the EU - within 20 days of release from import checks or before the animal leaves your holding, whichever is the earlier.
- replace lost or illegible ear tags within 28 days of discovering the loss or before the animal leaves your holding, whichever is the earlier (where both tags have been lost and two new tags are applied, you must prove the identity of the animal).

#### **You must not**

- remove or replace ear tags without permission from DARD.
- alter or deface an ear tag.

### **Notification of births, movements and deaths**

#### **You must**

- notify all births of cattle on your holding to DARD no later than 27 days after the birth.
- notify DARD of any movements of cattle onto and off your holding (including cattle lost or stolen) within 7 days of the movement.
- notify DARD of any cattle deaths on your holding within 7 days.
- notify DARD of all cattle imported from outside the EU within 15 days of tagging the animal.

### **On-farm records (herd register)**

#### **You must**

- keep an up-to-date herd register for your holding in a format approved by DARD, which includes where appropriate the following details for each animal:
  - ear tag number;
  - if appropriate, any retag number and the date of retagging, or the date a replacement tag is applied;
  - colour, breed, and sex;
  - date of birth;
  - if the calf was born on your holding, the dam's ear tag number;
  - date of movements on and off your holding;
  - details of where the animal has moved to or from;
  - date of death.

- complete the herd register within the following timescales:
  - movements – 36 hours of it taking place;
  - birth of a dairy calf – 7 days;
  - birth of any other calf – 30 days;
  - a death – 7 days;
  - ear tag replacement – 36 hours of the replacement.
- keep the herd register for 10 years from the date of the last entry and make it available on request.

### 7.3 Field Checks

Inspections in respect of this measure will include the checking of:

- ear tag numbers of all cattle;
- tagging of all animals in accordance with the DARD valid identification formats listed on the DARD website [www.dardni.gov.uk/index/animal-health/animal-identification-registration-movements/animal-movements-cattle/animal-movements-cattle-tracing.htm](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/animal-health/animal-identification-registration-movements/animal-movements-cattle/animal-movements-cattle-tracing.htm);
- tagging of all animals within 20 days of birth;
- records kept by keepers corresponding with information stored on APHIS, and actual animals currently kept on the holding; and
- records kept by keepers meeting cattle identification requirements and all movements, birth, and deaths are reported within the timescales noted above.

**For further information on cattle identification and registration please contact DARD Veterinary Service on 0300 200 7840 or visit the DARD website [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## SMR 8. Sheep and Goat Identification and Registration

**The aim of these requirements is to maintain a system for the identification and registration of sheep and goats to facilitate their traceability, in particular in the event of a disease outbreak. They apply to you if you keep sheep and goats.**

### 8.1 Main Requirements

The rules are laid down in European Law (Council Regulation 21/2004) and national law (the Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) Order (Northern Ireland) 2009). The rules came into force across the European Union on 31 December 2009.

Under the verifiable standards any person keeping sheep and goats must tag their animals and maintain appropriate records.

#### **Tagging of Sheep and Goats**

- All sheep and goats must be identified within 9 months of birth or before they leave your holding, whichever is sooner. Please note that sheep and goats that are intensively kept (in other words those that are kept for milking or that are normally housed overnight) must be identified within 6 months of birth.
- All sheep and goats born or first identified after 31 December 2009 must be identified with two tags bearing the same number. For sheep, one of the identifiers must carry an electronic device (EID).
- The action to take for animals born before 31 December 2009 is as follows:
  - If at least one green tag is in place— no further action is needed unless the animal leaves your holding. An animal can stay on your holding for life with just one green tag.
  - All animals being moved off your holding must be upgraded before they move, to EID for sheep, or to two matching tags for goats.
- You must replace any lost or illegible tag within 28 days of discovery.
- When applying tags; upgrading older sheep to EID, or goats to double tags; and replacing lost tags, you must follow the detailed rules set out in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the guidance booklet at [www.dardni.gov.uk/pubs-ahw-sheep-eid-guidance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/pubs-ahw-sheep-eid-guidance).

## **Record keeping**

- You must maintain a flock or herd register and keep it fully up-to-date. You must retain your flock or herd register until at least 3 years have passed since every animal referred to in it have either died or left your holding.
- You must record births, deaths, replacement tag details, movements and the outcome of your annual inventory, in accordance with the guidance and within the timescales set out in your flock or herd register.
- You must ensure that your farm records are available for inspection on demand.

## **8.2 Verifiable Standards**

### **Tagging**

#### **You must**

- identify all sheep and goats with the correct means of identification within 9 months of birth or within 6 months of birth, if intensively kept (kept for milking or are normally housed overnight) or before they leave the holding of birth, whichever is sooner.
- double-tag sheep and goats with two identical identification tags, including one electronic device, for third country or intra-community trade.
- replace any lost or illegible means of identification within 28 days of noticing their loss or illegibility or before the animal leaves the holding – whichever is the earlier.

#### **You must not**

- remove or replace ear tags without permission from DARD, except when replacing lost or illegible tags.
- alter or deface any means of identification attached to an animal.

### **Record keeping**

#### **You must**

- keep up-to-date farm records in a format approved by DARD with the required information, including:
- an annual inventory of the animals kept on a date between 1 and 5 December;

- details of the movement of sheep and goats on and off your holding, including:
  - the date of the movement;
  - the number of animals moved;
  - the destination or origin of animals;
  - the transportation details for animals leaving your holding;
- information on any replacement means of identification;
- for animals born after 31 December 2009:
  - the identification code of the animals;
  - the year of birth and date of identification of animals born on your holding;
  - the month and year of death of animals on your holding.
- ensure that your farm records are available for inspection on demand.

### 8.3 Field Checks

The inspector will check a sample of your sheep/goats to ensure that they are tagged correctly and that their tag numbers are recorded in your on-farm records. They will check your holding register, your movement documents and, where appropriate, your lists of tag numbers given to you by a Central Point of Recording (CPR) for movements off your holding. CPRs include approved markets, meat plants or export assembly centres.

During on-farm inspections inspectors will check that -

- Sheep/goats are tagged in accordance with the legislation, including the replacement of lost tags.
- Movement documents for movements on and off the holding have been completed and retained in date order.  
CPR tag lists for movements of sheep to a CPR have been retained in date order with the keeper's movement document and holding register; and movement documents for animals leaving a CPR have been retained in date order with the holding register. **Note: You must ensure that the information on documents given to you by a CPR is accurate, including your name and address and flock number, the date of movement, the transport details, the number of animals in the batch, and the amount of tag numbers provided. You should also read the tags in a sample of sheep you have bought or sold to ensure that they are on the document.**
- For farm to farm moves, all individual tag numbers must be recorded accurately on the movement document.
- Records in the flock or herd register in accordance with the legislation. The following events must be recorded:-
  - Births;



- Movements on/off;
  - Replacement tags (including the cross-referencing of old and new tags where appropriate);
  - Deaths; and
  - Annual inventory.
- The number of sheep/goats on your holding is consistent with your annual inventory.

**For further information on sheep and goat identification and registration please contact DARD Veterinary Service on 0300 2007840 or visit the DARD website [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## SMR 9. Placing of Plant Protection Products on the Market

**The aim of these requirements is to ensure that plant protection products are used correctly and to minimize their risk to humans, animals and the environment. They apply to you if these products are used on your land.**

### 9.1 Main Requirements

Farmers must not use any plant protection product (“pesticide”) unless it has been approved under the Plant Protection Products Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011, or the Control of Pesticides Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987.

The Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) approves plant protection products for use in Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. Details of approved products are published by the CRD on their website at <https://secure.pesticides.gov.uk/pestreg/>.

Plant protection products must be used in accordance with any requirement or condition specified in the approval or in any extension of use. It is an offence not to follow the statutory conditions of use of a pesticide: these are set out in detail in the relevant notice of approval. Details of all approvals are published on the CRD website.

Plant protection products must also be used in accordance with the principles of good plant protection practice. The Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products can be read at or downloaded from the DARD website at: <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/ppp-code>

Whenever possible, plant protection products should be used in accordance with the principles of integrated control. “Integrated control” is the application of a combination of biological, biotechnological, chemical, cultural or plant breeding measures whereby the use of pesticides is limited to the minimum strictly necessary to maintain harmful organisms below levels above which economically unacceptable damage or loss would occur.

Guidance is available on the CRD website.

### 9.2 Verifiable Standards

- You must only use approved plant protection products.

- Plant protection products must be used in compliance with the conditions attached to the approval.
- You must follow the principles of good plant protection practice<sup>7</sup> and sustainable use<sup>8</sup>, as set out in the Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products.
- You must consider alternatives to the use of plant protection products, and the principles of integrated control.

### 9.3 Field Checks

During on-farm inspections inspectors will check for—

#### **Use of approved products**

Inspectors will check to ensure only approved products are being used, and that they are being used in accordance with their application specifications. The approval for application is restricted to a specified range of crops and conditions.

Details of approved products are published by the Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) on their website at [www.pesticides.gov.uk](http://www.pesticides.gov.uk).

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

Inspectors will check to ensure that only approved pesticides are being stored and that the store is:

- Suitably sited;
- Equipped and organised to hold the intended contents;
- Of adequate storage capacity;``
- Soundly constructed of fire resistant materials;

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<sup>7</sup> This means a practice whereby the treatments with plant protection products applied to given plants or plant products, in conformity with the conditions of their authorized uses, are selected, dosed and timed to ensure acceptable efficacy with the minimum quantity necessary, taking account of local conditions and of the possibilities for cultural and biological control.

<sup>8</sup> This covers for example: permits for aerial spraying, correct certification, checking and use of equipment and handling and storage of pesticides. Details can be found on the DARD website at [www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk)

- 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**

Inspectors will check 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**

Inspectors will check to ensure:

- Records are accessible and clear and have been kept for all operations involving the storage and application 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 readily available to an inspector.

### **Competence of operators**

Inspectors will check that you or your operators are competent and that any contractors, or other users 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 – for farmers, this is normally 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 PA6A Module.

### **Application equipment**

Inspectors will check to ensure that:

- 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 should not be exceeded as this may 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.

<p><b>For further information on placing of plant protection products on the market please contact Health and Safety Executive on 0800 0320121 or visit the DARD website <a href="http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance">www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance</a>.</b></p>
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## SMR10. Food and Feed Law

The aim of these requirements is to ensure the safe production of food for human consumption and food or feed that is fed to food producing animals. They apply to you if you are a food or feed producer, rearing animals for food or producing products of animal origin (for example, eggs or milk).

### 10.1 Main Requirements

For Cross-Compliance purposes food and feed production must be carried out in a manner that is compliant with the relevant statutory controls;

- Articles 14, 15, 17(1), 18, 19 and 20 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002.
- Food Hygiene Regulations (EC) No's 852/2004 and 853/2004.
- Feed Hygiene Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005.
- Regulation (EEC) No. 2377/90 Articles 2, 4 and 5.
- Regulation (EC) No. 396/2005 Article 18.

These Regulations place responsibility on farmers, as food business operators, for ensuring food safety at the beginning of the chain.

*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”.

Milk and egg producers in particular have further specific hygiene standards in addition to the general requirements.

### 10.2 Verifiable Standards

#### **Food safety, withdrawal and recall**

- You must not place food on the market if it is unsafe. Food is considered to be unsafe if it is either injurious to human health or unfit for human consumption.
- If you have reason to believe that you have supplied food that does not

meet food safety requirements (it is either unsafe or injurious to health), and it has left your immediate control, then you must immediately initiate procedures to withdraw it from the market and inform the appropriate authorities. The appropriate authorities are Agri-food Inspection Branch within DARD and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland.

- Where food may already have reached consumers, they must be informed of the reason for withdrawal. The food must be recalled from the market if there is no other way of achieving a sufficiently high level of health protection.
- Additionally, if you believe that food which you have supplied, or which is in your possession which you intend to sell, could be injurious to health, you must immediately inform the appropriate authorities. You must also inform the appropriate authorities of actions you have taken to prevent risks to the final consumer.

### **Feed safety, withdrawal and recall**

- You must not place unsafe feed on the market or feed it to food-producing animals. Feed is deemed to be unsafe if it has an adverse effect on animal or human health or if it makes the food derived from food-producing animals unsafe for human consumption.
- If you have reason to believe that you have supplied feed that does not meet feed safety requirements, you must immediately initiate procedures to withdraw it from the market and immediately inform the appropriate authorities. The feed must be destroyed unless the appropriate authority is satisfied otherwise. The appropriate authorities are Agri-food Inspection within DARD and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland.
- If your feed product is already with the user of the feed, then they must be informed of the reason for its withdrawal. The feed must be recalled from the market if there is no other way of achieving a sufficiently high level of health protection.

### **Traceability**

- You must put in place systems and procedures related to the traceability of inputs to your farm. Inputs are food, feed, food-producing animals and any other substance intended/expected to be incorporated into feed. These systems must identify;
  - the name and address of your supplier;
  - the nature and quantity of the products that were supplied to you;
  - the date of delivery of these inputs to your farm.
- You must also put in place systems and procedures related to the

traceability of your products when they leave the farm. These systems must identify;

- the name and address of your customer;
  - the nature and quantity of the products that were supplied to that customer;
  - the date on which the products left the farm.
- It is for you to decide upon the system you use for storing information which could be computerised or comprise written records or receipts filed in order. However, it is stressed that the information must be complete, organised and understandable and must be in a format which is readily available, so that it can be produced when requested.

### **Hygiene of foodstuffs and feed hygiene**

- You must store and handle waste and hazardous substances separately and securely in a way that prevents contamination of food products or feed. Hazardous substances are any that have the potential to cause an adverse effect on health (human or animal).
- You must store feed correctly and away from chemicals or any other products prohibited for use as animal feed.
- Feed storage areas and containers must be kept clean and dry and cleaned regularly to avoid unnecessary cross-contamination.
- Appropriate pest-control measures must be implemented where necessary.
- Seed must be stored properly and in such a way that is not accessible to animals.
- You must store medicated feed and non-medicated feed which is intended for different categories or species of animals in such a way as to reduce the risk of it being fed to the wrong animals.
- You must also ensure that you handle non-medicated feed separately from medicated feed to prevent cross-contamination.
- The on-farm distribution system must ensure that the right feed is sent to the right destination. During distribution and feeding, feed must be handled in such a way as to ensure that contamination does not occur from contaminated storage areas and equipment.
- On-farm feed transport vehicles and feeding equipment must be cleaned periodically, in particular when used to deliver and distribute medicated feed.



- You must take adequate measures, as appropriate, to prevent the introduction and spread of contagious diseases transmissible to humans through food. This includes the application of precautionary measures when introducing new animals and reporting suspected outbreaks of such diseases to the appropriate authority.
- If applicable, you must adhere to statutory testing (that is Brucellosis) before sale/removal of animals off farm.
- You must observe the testing frequency required in the legislation for Tuberculosis/Brucellosis or other diseases.
- If you use feed additives, veterinary medicinal products or biocides on your farm this must be done correctly. To fulfill this requirement, you must ensure that their dosage, application and use are as stated on the label or as prescribed. This includes ensuring that food you produce does not contain residues of pesticides or veterinary medicinal products that are higher than the permitted maximum residue limit (MRL) for the product or medicine used. Pesticide residues in food you produce must not exceed the MRL at the time it is placed on the market as food. Unauthorised pesticides must not be used on the food you produce and residues of these substances must not be present in the food. For veterinary medicinal products, residues within food-producing animals must not exceed the MRL at the time the animal is placed on the market or presented for slaughter. Unauthorised veterinary medicinal products must not be used in food-producing animals and residues of these substances must not be present in the animals.
- If you are rearing animals, whether for food or for their products, you must only source and use feed from establishments that are registered and/or approved. This applies to manufactured feed and any substance or product intended to be used for oral feeding to animals. Examples of such products are compound feeds, pre-mixtures, additives and feed materials such as cereals and fodder. This also applies to co-products from the food and drink industry, for example, soya-bean meal, brewers' grains, wheat feed and bakery products.
- In addition to the information required for traceability, records of the following must be kept for the appropriate time if they are relevant to your business:
  - veterinary medicinal products, or other treatments, administered to your animals, the dates of the treatment and the withdrawal period;
  - the results of any analyses carried out on samples taken from food-producing animals or plants, or other samples taken for diagnostic purposes, that have importance for human and animal health;
  - any relevant reports on checks carried out on animals or

- products of animal origin;
  - use of plant protection products and biocides;
  - any use of genetically modified seeds (in feed production).
- You must take account of the results of any relevant analysis carried out on samples taken from primary products or other samples relevant to feed safety.
- You must take appropriate remedial action when informed of problems identified during official controls.

### **Dairy Hygiene Requirements (additional requirements for this sector)**

The following additional hygiene requirements apply where you are a producer of raw milk (from any species):

- You must ensure that raw milk must come from animals that;
  - are in a good general state of health;
  - present no sign of disease that might result in the contamination of milk and, in particular, are not suffering from any infection of the genital tract with discharge, enteritis with diarrhoea and fever, or a recognisable inflammation of the udder;
  - do not have any udder wound likely to affect the milk;
  - are not within the prescribed withdrawal period following the administration of authorised products or substances;
  - have not been administered with any unauthorised substances or products.
- You must ensure that raw milk comes from animals belonging to herds/holdings which have disease-free status for Tuberculosis and Brucellosis.
- Where your herd/holding is not free from Tuberculosis or Brucellosis, you may sell milk from your non-reactor animals if
  - you are selling to a wholesaler who will heat treat the milk before marketing it for human consumption; or
  - the raw milk is from sheep/goats and is intended to be made into cheese that has a maturation period of at least two months.
- Raw milk from any animal not complying with these requirements must not be placed on the market for human consumption.
- The isolation of animals that are infected, or suspected of being infected, with Tuberculosis and Brucellosis must be effective in order to avoid any adverse effect on other animals' milk.
- You must ensure that milking equipment and the premises where milk is stored, handled or cooled is located and constructed in a manner which

limits the risk of contamination of milk.

- You must ensure that premises used for the storage of milk
  - are protected against vermin - including birds and birds' nests;
  - are adequately separated from premises where animals are housed; and
  - have suitable refrigeration equipment in order to meet the post-milking cooling requirements.
- Surfaces of equipment that come into contact with milk (for example, utensils, containers and tanks) must be easy to clean and, where necessary, disinfected. They must also be maintained in a sound condition. This requires the use of smooth, washable and non-toxic materials. After each use, these surfaces must be cleaned and, where necessary, disinfected.
- Milking must be carried out hygienically, ensuring in particular that:
  - before milking starts, the teats, udder and adjacent parts are clean;
  - you satisfactorily identify animals undergoing any medicinal treatment which is likely to transfer residues to milk;
  - milk from such animals, or any animals that are still within the withdrawal period, is not used for human consumption.
- Immediately after milking, you must ensure that milk is held in a clean place designed and equipped to avoid contamination.
- The milk must be cooled immediately to not more than 8°C if it is collected daily or not more than 6°C if it is not collected daily. You do not need to meet these temperature requirements for cooling if the milk is processed within two hours of milking, or a higher temperature is necessary for technological reasons related to the manufacture of certain dairy products. In such cases, the appropriate authority must have previously authorised the use of a higher temperature.

### **Egg Hygiene Requirements (additional requirements for this sector)**

The following additional hygiene requirements apply if you are an egg producer. These apply to all eggs in shell that are produced by farmed birds:

- While they are on your premises, you must keep eggs clean and dry, free from extraneous odour, effectively protected from shocks and out of direct sunshine.

### **10.3 Field Checks**

During inspections, inspectors will include checks for:

## **General**

- Evidence of unsafe food or feed being produced or stored on the production holding. Also, evidence of food or feed being placed on the market for sale that is deemed to be injurious to health. Adequate notification, recall, withdrawal and disposal provisions should be in place commensurate to type and scale of business;
- Systems and procedures to provide traceability of inputs and outputs of products arriving and leaving the farm. Record keeping should include a record of:
  - names/addresses of suppliers/customers;
  - nature and quantity of products received/supplied;
  - dates of relevant transactions;
  - veterinary medicine purchases and use;
  - analytical results (for example, individual milk cow testing for high SCC/antibiotics);
  - use of plant production products and biocides;
  - any use of genetically modified seeds as feed.
- Storage and handling of waste and hazardous substances (any substances which have the potential to cause an adverse effect on health);
- Correct storage of food and feedstuffs. Different food or feed to be separately stored and the storage facilities to be appropriate to the product stored;
- Adequate measures to prevent the spread of contagious disease transmissible to humans through food. Examples are Tuberculosis and Brucellosis testing of cattle.

## **Dairy Hygiene**

- Basic animal health. Dairy cows in good general state of health presenting no sign of disease that may render the milk unsafe, including udder wounds. Withdrawal periods for veterinary medicine products observed before allowing affected milk to be offered for sale;
- Milk being withheld from animals that are not free from Tuberculosis or Brucellosis, and that such animals are isolated from the rest of the herd;
- Buildings and equipment (specific to raw milk production) being located, constructed and maintained in a manner which lowers the risk of contamination of product. Primarily, this includes the area(s) where raw milk is handled, cooled and stored;

- Effective vermin control. Birds and vermin are excluded from the raw milk production premises;
- Good milking practice. Before milking starts, the teats, udder and adjacent parts are clean. Any animals undergoing medical treatment are suitably and adequately identified;
- Milk storage temperatures. Milk being cooled immediately to
  - not more than 8°C, if collected daily or,
  - not more than 6°C, if not collected daily.

#### **Egg Hygiene**

- Eggs being kept clean and dry, free from extraneous odour, effectively protected from shocks and out of direct sunshine (this hygiene requirement relates to all eggs in shell that are produced by farmed birds).

**For further information on food and feed hygiene for farmers and growers please contact DARD Agri-food Inspection Branch on 028 9052 5001 or visit the DARD website - [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## SMR 11. Restrictions on the use of Substances having Hormonal or Thyrostatic Action and Beta-agonists in farm animals

**The aim of these requirements is to prohibit the illegal use in stock farming of substances that have a hormonal or thyrostatic action and beta-agonists, and to prevent the residues that these substances leave in meat and other foodstuffs from entering the human or animal food chain. They apply to you if you keep farmed animals.**

### 11.1 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.

### 11.2 Verifiable Standards

To comply with these requirements:

#### **You must not**

- Give food producing animals restricted substances\*\*, unless given in line with any permitted exceptions.
- Have substances on your farm –
  - which contain oestradiol 17  $\beta$ , or its ester like derivatives;
  - which contain beta-agonists to induce tocolysis in cows when calving;
  - with a hormonal or thyrostatic action – unless they have been prescribed by your veterinary surgeon.
- Have food producing animals on your farm to which have been administered any restricted substances, unless given in line with any permitted exceptions.
- Place on the market or send animals for slaughter to which have been administered any restricted substance, unless given in line with any

permitted exceptions.

- Sell meat, or any other animal product, derived from an animal to which any restricted substance has been administered, unless given in line with any permitted exceptions.

### **You must**

- Observe the relevant withdrawal period if your food producing animals have been given any of the restricted substances in line with the permitted exceptions.
- Make veterinary medicinal records relating to restricted substances available to the competent authority on request.

\*\* “restricted substances” means, thyrostatic substances, stilbenes, stilbene derivatives, their salts and esters, oestradiol 17 $\beta$  and its ester like derivatives and substances having oestrogenic, androgenic or gestagenic action and beta-agonists.

### **11.3 Field Checks**

- Checks for the presence of residues of banned substances and unauthorized substances in animals on farms and at abattoirs.
- Checks that where authorized 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 authorized 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.

**For further information on the use of substances having Hormonal or Thyrostatic Action and Beta-agonists in farm animals you should contact your Private Veterinary Practitioner. For information on the proper keeping of records relating to Veterinary Medicines visit the DARD website - [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## SMR 12.Prevention, Control and Eradication of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE)

**The aim of these requirements is to minimize the risk posed to human and animal health by certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). They apply to you if you keep farmed animals.**

### 12.1 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) 2010.

### 12.2 Verifiable Standards

#### **You must:**

- Immediately notify the Divisional Veterinary Officer of any animal or carcase in your possession or under your charge known or 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) 2010; in particular your attention is drawn to restrictions placed on cattle born before 1 August 1996 in your possession (if applicable)
- Not feed to ruminants, any animal protein or any feeding stuff, which contains animal protein, except the following (subject to required sourcing and 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.
  - Liquid milk replacers for unweaned ruminants containing fishmeal, if registered with DARD.
- Not feed products containing the following prohibited proteins to any farmed animals (ruminants or non ruminants), or mix prohibited proteins



with feedingstuffs:

- processed animal protein (includes mammalian meat and bonemeal, poultry meal, feather meal);
    - gelatine from ruminants;
  - Not use the following restricted proteins (i.e. proteins which can be fed only to non-ruminants), for on- farm production of feed for non-ruminants unless they are authorised by DARD to do so (applies whether ruminants are present or not ):
    - 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).
  - Not use feed products containing restricted proteins on premises where ruminants are present unless they have registered with DARD as doing so. The registration referred to in this point requires farmers to have adequate on-farm measures, including storage, and feeding arrangements to ensure that feed containing restricted proteins are not fed to ruminants and are kept adequately separated from ruminant feed to prevent contamination.
- Note:** The authorisation and registration requirement referred to is followed by DARD (AFIB) inspection which will confirm permission to use restricted proteins.
- Not export from the UK any bovine animal born or reared in the UK or imported into the UK before 1 August 1996.
  - Not place on the market any product consisting of or incorporating any material derived from a bovine animal born or reared in the UK or imported into the UK before 1 August 1996 except for milk.
  - Not place on the market or export progeny which were born to BSE positive animals during the 2 year period preceding or anytime after clinical onset of the disease in the BSE positive animal.
  - Not place on the market the semen, ova or embryos of TSE suspect or infected cattle, sheep and goats without complying with documentation requirements and restrictions applying to sale or export of such products.

### 12.3 Field Checks

Farm inspection visits will include checks on:

- Any non-notification to DARD of a suspect TSE animal or carcase;
- Compliance with any movement restrictions in respect of a suspect or confirmed TSE animal or any other notices imposing measures concerning that animal or other animals under the TSE Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 and in particular any restriction notice issued regarding cattle born before 1 August 1996.
- Compliance with the ban on feeding to ruminants of any animal protein or products containing animal protein;
- Compliance with the ban on feeding of prohibited animal proteins to any farmed animals;
- Compliance with authorisation requirement for use of restricted proteins for production of feed for non ruminants;
- Compliance with registration requirement for use of feed products containing restricted proteins on farms where ruminant animals are present;
- On-farm measures and feeding arrangements to ensure that feed containing restricted proteins for non-ruminant use are not fed to ruminants or contaminate ruminant feed;
- Documentation [issued by DARD] to confirm any authorisation/ registration required for the production /use of restricted proteins for non-ruminant feed;
- Compliance with the ban on export from the UK of any bovine animal born or reared in the UK or imported into the UK before 1 August 1996 (does not apply to export to Great Britain);
- Compliance with the ban on placement on the market of any product derived from a bovine animal born or reared in or imported into the UK before 1 August 1996 (except for milk);
- Compliance with the ban on placement on the market or export of progeny which were born to BSE positive animals during the 2 year period preceding or anytime after clinical onset of the disease in the BSE positive animal;
- Compliance with documentation requirements and restrictions applying to any placement on the market of semen, ova or embryos of TSE suspect or infected cattle, sheep and goats.

**For further information on the prevention, control and eradication of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies please contact DARD Veterinary Service on 0300 200 7840 or visit the DARD website - [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## SMR 13.Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease

**The aim of these requirements is to control and eradicate Foot-and-Mouth Disease. They apply to you if you keep livestock of a susceptible species.**

### 13.1 Main Requirements

Any person who has a suspected or actual Foot-and-Mouth infected animal shall notify DARD immediately.

### 13.2 Verifiable Standards

- The presence or absence of Foot and Mouth disease. Verification will depend on notification in the event of suspicion of disease or on confirmation of the presence of disease by laboratory testing. Any person who suspects or knows that an animal or carcass is infected with Foot-and Mouth Disease must notify DARD immediately.

### 13.3 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.

**For further information on the control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease please contact DARD Veterinary Service on 0300 200 7840 or visit the DARD website [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## SMR 14. Control of Certain Specified Animal Diseases

**The aim of these requirements is to control and eradicate the specified animal diseases listed below. They apply to you if you keep livestock of a susceptible species.**

### 14.1 Main Requirements

Any person who suspects or knows that an animal or carcase is infected with any of the following diseases must notify DARD immediately. 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.

### 14.2 Verifiable Standards

- The presence or absence of a specified disease.  
Verification will depend on notification in the event of suspicion of disease or on confirmation of the presence of disease by laboratory testing. Any person who suspects or knows that an animal or carcase is infected with any of the following diseases must notify DARD immediately. 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.

### 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.

**For further information on the control of the above diseases please contact DARD Veterinary Service on 0300 200 7840 or visit the DARD website [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## **SMR 15. Specific Provisions for the Control and Eradication of Bluetongue**

**The aim of these requirements is to control and eradicate bluetongue. They apply to you if you keep livestock of a susceptible species.**

### **15.1 Main Requirements**

Any person who has a suspected or actual Bluetongue infected animal or carcase must notify DARD immediately.

### **15.2 Verifiable Standards**

The presence or absence of Bluetongue.

Verification will depend on notification in the event of suspicion of disease or on confirmation of the presence of disease by laboratory testing. Any person who suspects or knows that an animal or carcase is infected with Bluetongue must immediately notify DARD.

### **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.

**For further information on the control and eradication of Bluetongue please contact DARD Veterinary Service on – 0300 200 7840 or visit the following website - [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## SMR 16. Minimum Standards for the Protection of Calves

**The aim of these requirements is to protect the welfare of calves by setting minimum standards for their care and husbandry. If you keep calves, they apply to you in addition to the requirements for the welfare of farmed animals (SMR 18)**

### 16.1 Main Requirements

The following requirements apply to keepers of calves. These are in addition to those listed in SMR 18 (Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes).

For the purposes of Cross-Compliance, the relevant national legislation will be applied. Further information on your legal obligations and advice on animal husbandry can be found in the DARD Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Cattle (details of which can be found in Annex 2). Owners and keepers are required by law to have access to the relevant welfare code.

Owners and keepers are required to comply fully with the relevant domestic legislation for the welfare of calves kept for farming purposes. Owners and keepers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of calves they own or keep and must ensure that calves are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering, injury or distress.

‘Calf’ means any bovine animal up to six months old.

### 16.2 Verifiable Standards

#### Inspection

- You must inspect all housed calves at least twice a day.
- If you keep calves outside, you must inspect them at least once a day to check that they are in a good state of well-being.

#### Freedom of Movement

- Each of your calves must be able to stand up, turn around, lie down, rest and groom itself without difficulty.
- You must not tether your calves. The only exception to this requirement is that you may tether group-housed calves, for up to one hour, when you are feeding them milk or milk substitute.

- Tethers must not cause pain or injury to your calves. You must regularly inspect the tethers and adjust them if necessary to make sure they are a comfortable fit. Each tether must avoid the risk of strangulation, pain or injury and allow your calf to lie down, rest, stand up and groom itself without difficulty.
- You must not muzzle your calves.

### **Accommodation, Environment and Equipment**

- You must not keep a calf in an individual stall or pen after the age of eight weeks unless a veterinary practitioner says that its health or behaviour means it needs to be isolated to receive treatment. If necessary, you must isolate sick or injured calves in suitable accommodation with dry comfortable bedding.
- The width of any individual stall or pen for your calf must be at least equal to the height of the calf at the withers, measured in the standing position. The length must be at least equal to the body length of your calf - measured from the tip of the nose to the rear of the pin bone - multiplied by 1.1.
- Individual stalls or pens for your calves (except for those isolating sick animals) must have perforated walls which allow your calves to have direct visual and physical contact with each other. Some but not all open fronted pens do not meet this description.
- If you keep calves in groups, the unobstructed space you must allow for each calf must be:
  - at least 1.5 square metres for each calf with a liveweight of less than 150 kilograms (kg);
  - at least two square metres for each calf with a liveweight of 150kg or more but less than 200kg; and
  - at least three square metres for each calf with a liveweight of 200kg or more.
- If you keep your calves in a building, the floors must be:
  - smooth but not slippery so as to prevent injury to the calves;
  - designed so they do not cause injury or suffering to calves standing or lying on them;
  - suitable for the size and weight of the calves; and
  - rigid, even and stable.
- You must keep all housed calves (including those you keep in hutches or temporary structures) on, or at all times give them access to, a lying area. This area must be clean, comfortable, well-drained and well-maintained with appropriate dry bedding. It must not affect the calves in



any negative way.

- If you keep your calves in an artificially lit building, you must provide artificial lighting for a period which is at least equal to the period of natural light normally available between 9.00am and 5.00pm.
- You must properly clean and disinfect housing, stalls, pens, equipment and utensils used for your calves to prevent cross-infection and the build-up of disease-carrying organisms. You must remove dung, urine and left-over food as often as necessary to reduce smells (as far as possible) and to avoid attracting flies or rodents.

### **Feed, Water and Other Substances**

- You must feed all weaned calves at least twice a day.
- If you keep your calves housed in a group and they do not have continuous access to feed, or are not fed by an automatic-feeding system, you must make sure each calf has access to food at the same time as the others in the feeding group.
- As well as the general requirements for providing drinking water in SMR 18, you must give your calves fresh drinking water at all times in hot weather conditions or when they are ill.
- You must give all calves food which contains enough iron to make sure they have a blood haemoglobin level of at least 4.5mmol/litre.
- You must make sure that each calf receives bovine colostrum as soon as possible after it is born. This must be within the first six hours of life.

### **16.3 Field Checks**

In addition to the checks on standards listed in SMR 18 (Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes) farm inspection visits will include checks to ensure that you have complied with the verifiable standards in respect of inspection (page 55), freedom of movement (page 55), accommodation, environment and equipment (page 56) and feed, water and other substances (page 57).

**For further information on the minimum standards for the protection of calves please contact DARD Veterinary Service on telephone number – 0300 200 7840 or visit the DARD website - [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## SMR 17. Minimum Standards for the Protection of Pigs

**The aim of these requirements is to protect the welfare of pigs by setting minimum standards for their care and husbandry. If you keep pigs, they apply to you in addition to the requirements for the welfare of all farmed animals (SMR 18)**

### 17.1 Main Requirements

The following requirements apply to keepers of pigs. They are in addition to those listed in SMR 18 (Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes).

For the purposes of Cross-Compliance, the relevant national legislation will be applied. Further information on your legal obligations and advice on animal husbandry can be found in the DARD Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Pigs (details of which can be found in Annex 2). Owners and keepers are required by law to have access to the relevant welfare code.

Owners and keepers are required to comply fully with the relevant domestic legislation for the welfare of pigs. Owners and keepers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of animals they own or keep and must ensure that pigs are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering, injury or distress.

‘Pig’ – an animal of the porcine species of any age, kept for breeding or fattening.

‘Boar’ – a male pig after puberty, intended for breeding.

‘Gilt’ – a female pig intended for breeding, after puberty and before farrowing.

‘Sow’ – a female pig after the first farrowing.

‘Piglet’ – a pig from birth to weaning.

‘Weaner’ – a pig from weaning to the age of ten weeks.

‘Rearing pig’ – a pig from ten weeks until slaughter or service.

### 17.2 Verifiable Standards

#### Freedom of Movement

- Your pigs must be free to turn round without difficulty at all times, including while tethered, where this is allowed. To meet this requirement, the minimum sizes for stalls are set out in the accommodation section below.
- You can only tether pigs for veterinary purposes. You must not tether

them at any other time.

- Tethers must not cause pain or injury to your pigs. You must regularly inspect the tethers and adjust them if necessary to make sure they are a comfortable fit. Each tether must avoid the risk of strangulation, pain or injury and allow your pig to lie down, rest, stand up and groom itself without difficulty.

### **Accommodation, Environment and Equipment**

- You must make sure the accommodation for your pigs allows each pig to:
  - stand up, lie down and rest without difficulty;
  - have a clean, comfortable and adequately drained place in which it can rest (including making sure that any bedding is clean, dry and not harmful to the pigs);
  - see other pigs (unless the pig is isolated for farrowing or for veterinary reasons);
  - maintain a comfortable temperature. This means that you cannot keep them in the high temperature/high humidity environment that is known as the 'sweat box system'; and
  - have enough space to allow all the pigs to lie down at the same time.
- For piglets, you must, if it is necessary to meet the requirements above, provide them with a source of heat and a dry and comfortable lying area away from the sow where all of them can rest at the same time.
- Stalls or pens used for holding individual pigs must allow them to turn around at all times. They must have the following measurements:
  - the inside area must be at least the square of the length of the pig;
  - no side inside the stall must be less than 75% of the length of the pig. The length of a pig is measured from the tip of its snout to the base of its tail while it is standing with its back straight.

The paragraph above does not apply under the following circumstances:

- to a female pig for the period between seven days before the predicted day of her farrowing and the day on which her piglets are weaned (including any piglets fostered by her);
- keeping a pig in a stall or pen for veterinary purposes;
- keeping a pig in a stall or pen for the purposes of servicing, artificial insemination or collecting semen;
- keeping a pig in a stall or pen while it is fed;
- keeping a pig in a stall or pen for the purposes of marking, washing or weighing it;
- keeping a pig in a stall or pen while its accommodation is being cleaned;
- keeping a pig in a stall or pen while it is waiting to be loaded for

transportation.

- The period during which you keep the pig in this way must not be longer than needed for that purpose. The requirements for a minimum size of stall or pen also do not apply if these refer to a stall or pen that the pig can enter or leave when it wants. In this case, the stall must be entered from another stall or pen where the pig is normally kept and which does comply with the minimum standards.
- If you keep your pigs in a building, the floors must be:
  - smooth but not slippery so you prevent injuries to the pigs;
  - designed, built and maintained so they do not injure the pigs standing or lying on them or cause them suffering;
  - suitable for the size and weight of the pigs; and
  - rigid, even and stable (where no litter is provided).
- If you use concrete slatted floors when keeping pigs in groups, the following measurements apply:

	<b>Maximum width of the openings (millimetres)</b>	<b>Minimum width of slats (millimetres)</b>
Piglets	11	50
Weaners	14	50
Rearing pigs	18	80
Gilts after service and sows	20	80

- As well as the general requirements in SMR 18, if you keep pigs in an artificially lit building, you must provide lighting of at least 40 lux for at least eight hours each day.
- You must not expose your pigs to constant or sudden noise. You must make sure that noise levels above 85 decibels are avoided in the part of any building where you keep your pigs.
- To enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, you must give all pigs permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material such as straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such which does not affect their health in a negative way.
- If you keep weaners and rearing pigs together, you must take measures to prevent fighting which goes beyond normal behaviour. You must isolate, or keep separate from the group, pigs which show persistent aggression towards others or are victims of that aggression.

## **Feed, Water and Other Substances**

- If you keep your pigs housed in a group and they do not have continuous access to feed, or are not fed by an automatic-feeding system, you must give each pig access to the food at the same time as the others in the feeding group. (Specific requirements for sows and gilts are set out on page 62).

## **Mutilations and Interventions**

- You must not carry out any procedures on your pigs that result in damage to or loss of a sensitive part of the body or which change bone structure, except for reasons of treatment or diagnosis. There are some exceptions shown overleaf.
- The procedures which are allowed may only be carried out under hygienic conditions by:
  - a veterinary practitioner; or
  - a person who is legally allowed, has been trained in line with the appropriate laws and is experienced in carrying out the procedures.
- The procedures allowed are:
  - castration of male pigs - as long as the method used does not involve tearing tissue. If this is carried out after the pig is seven days old it must only be performed by a veterinary practitioner;
  - boars' tusks may be reduced in length where necessary to prevent injuries to other animals or for safety reasons;
  - nose ringing – but rings must not be put in animals kept continuously in indoor husbandry systems;
  - ear tagging or ear notching when carried out for identification purposes.
- The following two procedures must not be used routinely, but only if there is evidence that injuries to sows' teats or to other pigs' ears or tails have taken place:
  - evenly reducing the corner teeth of piglets by grinding or clipping. This must take place no later than seven days of age and must leave an intact smooth surface;
  - docking a part of the tail. If docking is carried out after the pig is seven days old, it must only be performed under anaesthetic by a veterinary practitioner and the pigs should receive prolonged pain relief for as long as necessary.
- Tooth reduction or tail docking must not be carried out unless you have already taken other measures to improve environmental conditions or management systems to prevent tail biting and other vices.

### **Specific Requirements for Boars**

- You must place and build boar pens to allow the boars to turn round and to hear, see and smell other pigs. The pens must also contain clean resting areas and the lying area must be dry and comfortable.
- The minimum unobstructed floor area for an adult boar must be six square metres. However, when boar pens are also used for natural service, the floor area must be at least 10 square metres and must be free of any obstacles.

### **Specific Requirements for Sows and Gilts**

- If necessary, you must treat pregnant gilts and sows against internal and external parasites.
- If they are placed in farrowing crates, you must thoroughly clean pregnant sows and gilts.
- In the week before the expected farrowing time, you must give sows and gilts enough suitable nesting material unless it is not technically practical because of the slurry system you use.
- During farrowing, an unobstructed area behind the sow or gilt must be available for the ease of natural or assisted farrowing.
- If you keep sows loose in farrowing pens, there must be some method of protecting the piglets, such as farrowing rails.
- In the week before the expected farrowing time and during farrowing, you may keep sows and gilts out of sight of other pigs.
- You must keep sows and gilts in groups except during the period between seven days before the predicted day of farrowing and the day on which the weaning of piglets (including any piglets fostered) is complete. The pen where you keep the group must have sides greater than 2.8 metres (m) in length, except when there are fewer than six in the group. In this case, the sides of the pen must be no less than 2.4m in length. On holdings of fewer than 10 sows, you may keep sows and gilts individually as long as their accommodation keeps to the general requirements for pig accommodation.
- The total unobstructed floor area available to each female pig after service, when you keep them in groups, must be at least 1.64 square metres for each gilt and 2.25 square metres for each sow. When you keep these animals in groups of fewer than six, you must increase the unobstructed floor area by 10%. When you keep these animals in

groups of 40 or more, you can reduce the unobstructed floor area by 10%. A part of this - equal to at least 0.95 square metres for each gilt and at least 1.3 square metres for each sow - must be continuous solid floor. Up to 15% of this area may be for drainage openings.

- As well as the requirements of the paragraph entitled Feed, Water and Other Substances on page 61, you must feed sows and gilts using a system which means each pig can get enough food even when other pigs are competing for food.
- You must give all dry pregnant sows and gilts enough bulky or high-fibre food as well as high-energy food to satisfy their hunger and need to chew.

### **Specific Requirements for Piglets**

- A part of the total floor where you keep the piglets must be large enough to allow the animals to rest together at the same time, and must be solid or covered with a mat, or be littered with straw or any other suitable material.
- If you use a farrowing crate, you must give the piglets enough space to be able to be suckled without difficulty.
- You must not wean piglets from the sow at an age of less than 28 days unless the welfare or health of the dam or piglets would otherwise be affected negatively. You may wean them up to seven days earlier if you move them into specialised housing which you empty and thoroughly clean and disinfect before you introduce a new group and which is separate from housing where you keep sows.

### **Specific Requirements for Weaners and Rearing Pigs**

- The unobstructed floor area available to each weaner or rearing pig reared in a group must be at least:

<b>Minimum unobstructed floor area (square metres)</b>	<b>Average weight of pigs in the group (kilograms)</b>
0.15	10 or less
0.20	Greater than 10 but less than or equal to 20
0.30	Greater than 20 but less than or equal to 30
0.40	Greater than 30 but less than or equal to 50
0.55	Greater than 50 but less than or equal to 85
0.65	Greater than 85 but less than or equal to 110
1.00	Greater than 110

- You must place pigs in groups as soon as possible after weaning. You must keep them in stable groups with as little mixing as possible.
- If you have to mix pigs that are unfamiliar with one another, you should do this at as young an age as possible, preferably before or up to one week after weaning. When you mix pigs, you must give them enough opportunities to escape and hide from other pigs they are not familiar with.
- Tranquillising medication, used on pigs in order to help with mixing, must not be used unless there are exceptional conditions and only after you have consulted a veterinary practitioner.

### 17.3 Field Checks

In addition to the checks on standards listed in SMR 18 (Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes) farm inspection visits will include checks to ensure that you have complied with the verifiable standards in respect of freedom of movement (page 58), accommodation, environment and equipment (page 59), feed, water and other substances (page 61), mutilations and interventions (page 61) as well as the specific requirements relating to boars (page 62), dry sows and gilts (page 62), piglets (page 63) and weaners and rearing pigs (page 63).

**For further information on the minimum standards for the protection of pigs please contact DARD Veterinary Service on telephone number – 0300 200 7840 or visit the DARD website - [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance).**



## SMR 18. Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes

**The aim of these requirements is to protect the welfare of farmed animals by setting minimum standards for their care and husbandry. They apply to you if you keep any species for farming purposes.**

### 18.1 Main Requirements

SMR 18 applies to all farmed animals. SMRs 16 and 17 list extra requirements if you keep calves and pigs. For the purposes of Cross-Compliance, the relevant national legislation will be applied. Further information on your legal obligations and advice on animal husbandry can be found in the DARD Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock (details of which can be found in Annex 2). Owners and keepers are required by law to –

1. be acquainted with the provisions of the statutory welfare code(s) relating to the animals to which he attends;
2. have access to the relevant welfare code(s)
3. have received instruction and guidance on those codes.

Owners and keepers are required to comply fully with the relevant domestic legislation for the welfare of animals kept for farming purposes. Owners and keepers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of animals they own or keep and must ensure that animals kept for farming purposes are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering, injury or distress.

### 18.2 Verifiable Standards

#### Staffing

- You must make sure that your animals are cared for by sufficient staff who have the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional skills.

#### Inspection

- You must inspect your animals thoroughly at least once a day to check that they are well if kept in husbandry system where their welfare depends on frequent human attention. In systems other than this, you must inspect them at intervals which will avoid them suffering. You will find the specific requirements relating to calves in SMR 16.
- You must have enough lighting so that you can carry out a thorough inspection at any time. This lighting may be fixed or portable.

- If any of your animals appear ill or injured, you must care for them immediately. If they do not respond to this care, you must get veterinary advice as soon as possible. If necessary, you must isolate sick or injured animals in suitable accommodation with dry comfortable bedding.

### **Keeping Records**

- You must keep a record of:
  - any medicinal treatment given to your animals; and
  - the number of deaths found when the animals are inspected.
- You must keep these records for at least three years under animal welfare laws (from the date on which the treatment was given, or the date of the relevant inspection for deaths). You must make the records available to any authorised person at an inspection or when otherwise asked for.

Veterinary medicine records that you currently keep for other purposes are acceptable for this requirement, providing they meet the minimal requirements set out by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD).

### **Freedom of Movement**

- You must not restrict your animals' freedom of movement if this causes them unnecessary suffering or injury. You should take account of the species of animal, established experience and scientific knowledge. Where appropriate you should also note the requirements for calves (SMR 16) and pigs (SMR 17).
- If your animals are continuously or regularly tethered or confined, you must give them enough space to avoid unnecessary stress. You must also allow them to exhibit their normal behaviour in line with established experience and scientific knowledge. Where appropriate you should also note the requirements relating to tethering - for calves (SMR 16) and pigs (SMR 17).

### **Accommodation, Environment and Equipment**

- Materials used in building accommodation must not be harmful to your animals. This would include, for example, lead paint or excessively rusting metal. This particularly refers to the pens, cages, stalls and equipment which your animals may come into contact with.
- You must use materials that can be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- You must build and maintain accommodation so that there are no sharp edges or anything that sticks out and could injure your animals.

- You must keep air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative air humidity and gas concentrations within limits which will not harm your animals.
- When you keep animals in buildings, you must not keep them in permanent darkness.
- You must provide enough artificial lighting if there is not enough natural light in a building to meet the animals' biological needs and normal behaviour. In this case, you must also give them an appropriate period of rest from artificial lighting.
- Where appropriate you should also note the requirements for calves (SMR 16) and pigs (SMR 17).
- You must, if necessary give animals protection from adverse weather conditions, predators and risks to their health when not kept in buildings. At all times, they must have access to a well-drained lying area.
- If you have any automated or mechanical equipment that is essential for the health and wellbeing of your animals, you must inspect it at least once a day to check that there are no faults with it and that no parts of the equipment have become seriously worn. If you discover any faults or you find parts of the equipment that have become seriously worn, you must correct these immediately. If this is impossible, you must take appropriate steps to protect the health and wellbeing of your animals until you can get the fault rectified. These steps may include using other methods of feeding and watering and methods of providing and maintaining a satisfactory environment.
- If the health and wellbeing of your animals depends on an artificial ventilation system, you must have an appropriate back-up system which, if the main system fails, guarantees enough air renewal.
- You must thoroughly inspect the ventilation back-up system at least once every seven days and test each alarm system at least once every seven days to check that they work. If you find any faults (whether at inspection or at any other time), you must put them right immediately. If you have an audible alarm, you must respect the requirement relating to exposure of pigs to noise (SMR 17).

### **Feed, Water and Other Substances**

- You must feed your animals a wholesome diet which is appropriate to their age and species. They must receive enough food to keep them healthy, meet their nutritional needs and promote a positive state of

wellbeing.

- You must give all animals access to feed at intervals appropriate to their biological needs (and, in any case, at least once a day). This applies unless your vet has told you otherwise. Where appropriate you should also note the requirements for calves (SMR 16).
- You must give all animals either access to a suitable water supply and enough fresh drinking water each day or they must be able to get enough fluid in any other way.
- You must not give your animals food or liquid in a manner, or containing any substance, which may cause them unnecessary suffering or injury.
- You must design, build, place and maintain feeding and watering equipment so that you minimise any contamination of food and water and the harmful effects of competition between animals.
- You must not administer a substance which is harmful to your animals' health and welfare apart from those given on the advice of a veterinary practitioner for treatment or preventative reasons.

### **Mutilations and Interventions**

- The general rule regarding mutilations and interventions is that you should not carry out such actions on your animals.
- However, some procedures may be justified because of the overall welfare benefit obtained through performing them. Where such an acceptable mutilation is carried out on livestock species, it must be done so with a local anaesthetic in accordance with United Kingdom law and by an appropriately trained person. Where United Kingdom law requires a veterinary practitioner to carry out a mutilation, it must not be done by anyone else.

### **Breeding Procedures**

- You must not carry out natural or artificial breeding or breeding procedures which cause, or are likely to cause, suffering or injury to any of your animals (such as inappropriate mating with an immature or unsuitably sized female). This does not prevent you from using natural or artificial breeding procedures that are likely to cause minimal or momentary suffering or injury, or that might require interventions which would not cause lasting injury. You can continue using procedures that are currently allowed under existing law.
- You must not keep animals for farming purposes unless it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of the normal genetic and

physical characteristics of their breed, that you can keep them without any negative effects on their health or welfare.

### **18.3 Field Checks**

Farm inspection visits will include checks to ensure that you have complied with the verifiable standards in respect of staffing (page 65), inspection (page 65), record keeping (page 66), freedom of movement (page 66), accommodation, environment and equipment (page 66) feed, water and other substances (page 67), mutilations and interventions (page 68) and breeding procedures (page 68).

**For further information on the minimum standards for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes please contact DARD Veterinary Service on – 0300 200 7840 or visit the DARD website – [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance)**

## **SECTION 2**

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

## GAEC 1. Soil Management

**The aim of these requirements is to protect soil from erosion, maintain soil organic matter and protect soil structure. They apply to all farmed land.**

### 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 below.

### 1.4 Verifiable Standards

- You must protect soils from erosion and maintain soil structure by preventing land from being severely trampled or poached.



*Fig 1: Poaching must not result in soil erosion*

- You must comply with the Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 relating to land use management.

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 1st 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; or
- the land is sown with a crop which will take up nitrogen; or
- the land is left with a rough surface, ploughed or disced; to encourage the infiltration of rain.

You will not be in breach of this requirement if you have prepared the land as a seedbed but are unable to sow the crop within 10 days (because to do so would result in a breach of the GAEC standard on



waterlogged soil) or because severe weather conditions make this impracticable. In either case, the land must be sown as soon as practicable.

Residues of crops harvested late (after 1<sup>st</sup> November), such as maize and potatoes must be left undisturbed until just before sowing the following spring.

- You must not carry out any cultivations if water is standing on the surface, or if the soil is waterlogged. Cultivations include any mechanical field operation, for example, harvesting, manure spreading, ploughing or discing.

## **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;
- It is necessary for the protection of animal welfare during periods of extreme weather conditions.
- DARD has granted a temporary exemption from this rule because of extreme weather conditions, in which case you will need to comply with any conditions that are attached including reinstatement requirements.

## **1.6 Guidance**

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*

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.

*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. 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 soil run-off into waterways,
- Evidence of finely tilled bare seedbeds during the winter;
- Evidence of cultivations occurring on waterlogged soils or where water is standing on the surface.

**Further information on GAEC 1 can be obtained from [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance) or by contacting DARD Countryside Management Branch on 0845 3044502.**

**Further information on the Nitrates Directive can be obtained from NIEA on telephone number – 028 92623188 or visit the NIEA website [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk)**

## GAEC 2. Supplementary Feeding

**The aim of these requirements is to protect soil from erosion and to protect semi-natural habitats, archaeological sites and water quality. They apply to all farmed land.**

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 Verifiable Standards

- Supplementary feeding sites / sacrifice areas are not permitted on:-
  - semi-natural habitats. These include broadleaved woodland / scrub, species-rich grassland and moorland (semi-natural habitat definitions are listed in Annex 1).
  - within 10 metres of the boundary of an archaeological feature or site.
  - within 10 metres of a waterway, 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.



*Fig 2: Feeding livestock within broadleaved woodland is not permitted.*

- Supplementary / winter feeding sites and sacrifice areas should be rotated and managed to prevent excessive trampling, poaching or vehicle rutting to minimise soil erosion and must not cause run-off to waterways. Sacrifice areas 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



*Fig 3: Choose feeding sites carefully to avoid damaging semi-natural habitat or water quality.*

## **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 10 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 Guidance**

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

### *Good site management*

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 1).

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. Hardcore 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.

Trampling associated with feeding areas can damage archaeological sites (definition provided in Annex 1). Do not locate feeding sites within 10 metres of an archaeological site (definition provided in Annex 1).

Information on archaeological features which may be located on your farm can be obtained from NIEA Historic Monuments Unit on 028 9054 3168 or [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk)

### *Sacrifice areas*

If not managed properly sacrifice areas can cause soil erosion, nutrient runoff, 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. The management of outwintered livestock must comply with the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 ([www.ni-environment.gov.uk/dard-nitratesguidance.pdf](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/dard-nitratesguidance.pdf)).

### Winter Fodder Crops.

Brassica fodder crops should not be grown in steeply sloping fields with a high soil erosion risk. Strip grazing from the top of sloping fields can help reduce the risk of soil run-off. Watercourses and ditches in crops grazed through the winter are particularly susceptible to soil erosion through livestock poaching and destabilising river banks. Leaving an uncultivated grass buffer strip adjacent to such features, and temporarily fencing them off or grazing towards them, will help prevent damage.

## **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, within 10m of an 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, soil erosion or vehicle rutting as a result of supplementary feeding livestock.

**Further information on GAEC 2 can be obtained from [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance) or by contacting DARD Countryside Management Branch on 0845 3044502**



## GAEC 3. Overgrazing

**The aim of these requirements is to protect grassland, semi natural habitats and archaeological sites from overgrazing. They apply to all farmed land.**

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 Verifiable Standards

- You must 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 cause damage to an archaeological feature.



*Fig 4: Overgrazing resulting in exposed peat soils at risk of erosion.*

### 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 NIEA Conservation Designations and Protection on 028 90 569515 or [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk) for further information;
- Agri-environment scheme agreement. Contact DARD on 0845 3044502.

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 10 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 Guidance

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 i.e. where there is no vegetative cover and/or there is evidence of run-off or standing water), or damage to an archaeological feature.

**Further information on GAEC 3 can be obtained from [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance) or by contacting Countryside Management Branch on 0845 3044502**

## GAEC 4. Undergrazing

**The aim of these requirements is protect farm land from undergrazing including infestation from invasive species and noxious weeds.**

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

### 4.1 Verifiable Standards

- You must avoid undergrazing (to such an extent where the land cannot be returned to agricultural production by the end of the next growing season) must be avoided by using appropriate grazing or cutting management.
- You must prevent encroachment by invasive species such as Rhododendron, Giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam which degrade the agricultural and environmental value of the land.
- You must prevent the infestation of noxious weeds (listed in Annex 1) through compliance with the Noxious Weed Order 1977.

### 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 NIEA Conservation Designations and Protection on 028 90 569515 or [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk) for further information;
- Scheduled archaeological sites. Contact NIEA Historic Monuments Unit on 028 9054 3168 or [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk)
- Agri-environment scheme agreement. Contact DARD on 0845

### 4.3 Guidance

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 whin / gorse or bramble often predominates. Land must be able to be grazed by livestock or permit entry to mow/cut using a tractor.

Where undergrazing is noted at inspection it must be returned to agricultural production by 1<sup>st</sup> October of the following growing season by following DARD management advice.

#### Invasive plants

Unwanted vegetation which is both agriculturally and environmentally degrading including Rhododendron, Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam must be controlled. These non native plants have the potential to damage semi-natural habitats by out-competing native plants. They can sometimes be damaging to human health.

For further information please read the Best Practice Management Guide [www.invasivespeciesireland.com](http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com).



Fig 5: Giant Hogweed, often found along riverbanks.

#### 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 1.



*Fig 6: Ragwort and Thistle seeding in mid summer.*

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

Land which is accessible and grazeable can be considered eligible for SFP and LFACA provided dense patches of scrub and whins, or areas inaccessible because of scrub or whins, are excluded from the area claimed.

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.



*Fig 7: The spread of whins must be controlled to ensure land remains eligible for Single Farm Payment.*

#### 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 to such an extent where the land cannot be returned to agricultural production by the end of the next growing season.
- Evidence of invasive species. i.e. Rhododendron, Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam
- Infestation of noxious weeds
- Evidence of eligible forage area.

**Further information on GAEC 4 can be obtained from [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance) or by contacting DARD Countryside Management Branch on 0845 3044502**

## GAEC 5. Field Boundaries

**The aim of these requirements is to retain field boundaries and prevent cutting during the bird nesting season. They apply to all farm land.**

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 Verifiable Standards

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

### 5.2 Exceptions

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 or to field boundaries within, or marking the boundary of non-agricultural land (for example, a dwelling-house or building site).

### 5.3 Guidance

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

#### Field boundary removal

'Remove' includes any operation which uproots or otherwise destroys a hedgerow, either directly or indirectly. DARD will assess and may grant derogations for field boundary removal after using DARD field boundary assessment criteria, which include consideration of the area of the field and the quality of the field boundary.

Existing gateways can be widened up to 10m without permission. Field Boundary Removal application forms are available online or from your local DARD Direct Office.



*Fig 8: Hedge removal requires permission from DARD.*

#### 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.



*Fig 9: Field Hedge cutting cannot take place between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> August.*

#### 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, earthbank) 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.

**Further information on GAEC 5 can be obtained from [www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance) or by contacting DARD Countryside Management Branch on 0845 3044502.**



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

**The aim of these requirements is to protect semi natural habitats, archaeological features and permanent pasture. They apply to all farm land.**

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 1). 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 Verifiable Standards

- You must retain and not damage semi-natural habitats including broadleaved woodland / scrub, moorland, wetlands and species-rich grasslands. Reclamation of semi-natural habitats is only permitted where prior written permission has been obtained from DARD.
- You must not infill or extract peat, sand or gravel on semi-natural habitats is prohibited without permission from DOE Planning Service.
- You must not damage archaeological features, earth science sites and trees protected under a Tree Preservation Order.
- You must comply with the DARD Environmental Impact Assessment

(Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.

- You must not burn heather, gorse, whin or fern between 15 April and 31 August (Game Law Amendment Act (Northern Ireland) 1951).

## 6.2 Guidance

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 1. Identify all broadleaved woodland / scrub, moorland, wetlands and species-rich grasslands (greater than 0.1ha) on the farm and ensure all workers/contractors are aware of such areas. Monitor sites regularly to ensure no damage is occurring.



*Fig 10: Damage to wetland is not permitted*

It is a criminal offence to damage any natural feature designated as an ASSI, SPA or SAC. Unauthorised ploughing of a designated site may attract significant penalties over and above any Cross Compliance sanctions. Information on designated sites which may be located on your farm can be obtained from NIEA Conservation Designation Branch on 028 90569515 or [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk).

Identify the archaeological sites (defined in Annex 1) on your farm and ensure all workers / contractors are aware of such features. Regularly check sites and ensure damage is not occurring, particularly trampling damage by livestock. Information on archaeological features which may

be located on your farm can be obtained from NIEA Historic Monuments Unit on 028 9054 3168 or [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk)

Identify all earth science sites (see Annex 1 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 willfully destroying a tree or willfully damaging, topping a tree in such a way as to be likely to destroy it.

*Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) Regulations (NI) 2007*

Anyone wishing to carry out an intensive agricultural activity / project on uncultivated land or a semi-natural area must apply to DARD, Countryside Management Unit for prior consent. Reseeding, application of fertilizer, spraying, drainage and other cultivations are all considered as intensive agricultural projects.

‘Uncultivated land’: land which has not been cultivated in the last 15 years, involving either physical cultivation such as ploughing and sub-surface harrowing or chemical cultivation such as application of fertilisers

Semi-natural areas/habitat definitions are listed in Annex 1. For further information on the EIA (Agriculture) Regulations 2007 or to apply for consent, you must make a screening application to DARD, giving details of the work you propose to carry out. Application forms can be requested from:

Countryside Management Unit  
Lindesay Hall  
Loughry Campus  
Cookstown  
County Tyrone  
BT80 9AA  
Telephone: (028) 8676 8310  
Email: [wiki.bell@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:wiki.bell@dardni.gov.uk)  
or downloaded from <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/eia-word-form.doc>

*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 team to obtain the necessary consents before commencing this activity. Contact DOE Planning Service, Special Studies Unit (028 9041 6886) for further information. Where material is being imported onto the farm for disposal it will also require a waste management authorization.

For further information on waste management contact NIEA Land and Resource Management Unit (028 90 569453)



*Fig 11: Infilling / dumping is not permitted on farm woodland*

#### Extraction of Peat / Sand or Gravel

The extraction of peat, sand or gravel within certain and specific parameters may fall within “permitted development”, as defined in The Planning General Development Order 1993 (Northern Ireland). Where planning permission is required and not obtained the farmer may be subject to enforcement action. Specific advice and guidance should be obtained from Planning Service Minerals Unit, using [mineralsenquiries@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:mineralsenquiries@doeni.gov.uk) or contact the Minerals team (02890416902).

#### 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 Delivery Branch.

### **6.3 Field Checks**

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

- Evidence of reclamation / infilling or mineral extraction on semi-natural habitats;
- Damage to archaeological and earth sites;
- Evidence of a breach of the DARD EIA (Agriculture) Regulations 2007;

- Evidence of burning heather, whin or gorse between 15 April and 31 August.

### **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.

## **6.4 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 (Agriculture) Regulations (NI) 2007 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.

## **6.5 Advice**

The following advice is provided to help you comply with permanent pasture (see Annex 1 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 Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

Only permanent pasture which can be classified as uncultivated land (land which has not been cultivated in the last 15 years, involving either physical or chemical cultivation) requires written prior permission from DARD before reseeding. The EIA (Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 will ensure that all ploughing of environmentally valuable permanent pasture is properly risk assessed.

**Further information on GAEC 6 can be obtained from  
[www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/cross-compliance) or by contacting DARD  
Countryside Management Branch on 0845 3044502**

## GAEC 7. Irrigation Authorisations

**The aim of these requirements is to manage the use of water for irrigation. This applies to anyone abstracting or impounding water for irrigation.**

### 7.1 Main Requirements

The Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 help protect the water environment including protected species and dependent ecosystems and deliver efficient and sustainable water usage in Northern Ireland.

Anyone abstracting more than 10m<sup>3</sup> (2,200 gallons) of water from the natural environment in any 24 hour period is required to obtain an authorization or licence from NIEA and is required to carry out any abstraction in accordance with that authorization or licence.

### 7.2 Verifiable Standards

- If you are abstracting or impounding more than 10m<sup>3</sup> in any 24hr period you must have authorization and adhere to the requirements of the authorization.
- If you are abstracting or impounding more than 20m<sup>3</sup> in any 24hr period you must hold an abstraction license and adhere to the requirements of the license.

### 7.3 Field Checks

Inspections in respect of this measure will include checking:

- Authorisations or Licences issued under the Water Abstraction & Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
- Records providing information on abstracted volumes, locations of abstractions, dates of abstraction and the area of land irrigate



**Information on GAEC 7 can be obtained from**

**Abstraction and Impoundment Licensing Team  
Northern Ireland Environment Agency  
17 Antrim Road  
Lisburn  
BT28 3AL**

**Tel: 028 9263 3482**

**Fax: 028 9267 6054**

**Email: [AIL.Team@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:AIL.Team@doeni.gov.uk)**

**Website: [http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/water\\_resources/abstraction.htm](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/water_resources/abstraction.htm)**



## **ANNEX 1**

### **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**

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

#### **Scrub**

Areas which contain shrubs, stunted trees or brambles. Scrub may be open or dense and contain hawthorn, blackthorn, gorse (whin), bramble, honeysuckle, dog rose, bushy willows (sally) or stunted hazel with few or no mature trees present

#### **Coastal habitats**

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

#### **Archaeological features/sites**

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	<i>Avena fatua</i> L.
	<i>Avena ludoviciana</i> Durieu
Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i> (Savi) Ten.
	<i>Cirsium arvense</i> (L.) Scop.
Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> L.
	<i>Rumex crispus</i> L.
Ragwort	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i> 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.

### **Waterlogged**

This occurs when the watertable rises into the root zone of the plant and the soil is saturated with water. The soil is boggy under foot.

### **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.

## Annex 2

### Animal Welfare Guidance

Further guidance on **SMR 16 Minimum Standards for the Protection of Calves** can be found in:

- Northern Ireland Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock; Cattle.

Further guidance on **SMR 17 Minimum Standards for the Protection of Pigs** can be found in:

- Northern Ireland Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock; Pigs.

Further guidance on **SMR 18 Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes** can be found in:

NI Code of Recommendations for Welfare of Livestock: Cattle  
NI Code of Recommendations for Welfare of Livestock: Pigs  
NI Code of Recommendations for Welfare of Livestock: Laying Hens  
NI Code of Recommendations for Welfare of Livestock: Sheep  
NI Code of Recommendations for Welfare of Livestock: Turkeys  
NI Code of Recommendations for Welfare of Livestock: Deer  
Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Ducks  
(Defra)

Codes of Recommendations for Welfare of Livestock: Goats (Defra)  
Codes of Recommendations for Welfare of Livestock: Rabbits (Defra)  
Codes of Recommendations for Welfare of Livestock: Meat Chickens  
and Breeding Chickens (Defra)