



**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil**
Department of Housing,
Planning and Local Government

Nitrates Derogation Review 2019

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the
Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine and the EPA and Teagas

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Proposed Measure	Proposed Implementation
<p>Nutrient Management Planning (NMP) is an integral part of the nutrient use efficiency of a farm and the submissions indicated that how a NMP is implemented at farm level needs greater consideration. The review group acknowledges that all derogation farms must complete a NMP to be eligible for derogation however there are additional measures required in order to understand and maximise the nutrient use efficiency of a farm. The review group recommend the following for inclusion;</p>	
<p>Compulsory adoption of a farm scale liming programme on derogation farms and on farms with a stocking rate above 170 kgs N/ha. Lime releases up to 80kg N/ha/year</p> <p>unlocks soil phosphorus (P) and potassium (K)</p> <p>increases the response to freshly applied N, P & K</p> <p>at farm level every €100 investment in lime equates to approximately €700 in extra grass production annually</p>	<p>2020</p>
<p>Mandatory environmental training. Knowledge transfer is a vital component of dealing with agricultures environmental issues and will allow derogation farmers to</p> <p>Keep up-to-date with current issues</p> <p>Learn from the experiences of others</p> <p>Increased contact with advisors</p> <p>Deal with problems as a group</p> <p>Improve profitability</p> <p>Gain new skills and knowledge</p>	<p>2021</p>
<p>Mandatory use of low emission equipment</p> <p>Agriculture is responsible for 99% of ammonia losses in Ireland. Manure spreading is responsible for 30% of those losses. Low emission slurry spreading techniques, such as band spreading or trailing shoe, place the slurry in bands or lines on the soil or crop,</p>	

<p>rather than the entire surface as with a conventional splashplate method. Slurry applied with a low emission method has been shown to reduce ammonia losses by 30% compared to splashplate application. Low emission slurry spreading techniques combined with adequate application timing helps to decrease ammonia emissions.</p>	<p>2020</p> <p>2021</p>
<p>All farms must submit export forms for slurry movements earlier each calendar year to facilitate timely nutrient management planning. This will facilitate more real time nutrient accounting at farm level to ensure optimal nutrient use efficiency and recording.</p>	<p>2020</p>
<p>Grassland Management</p>	
<p>Training on grassland management and recording of Grass Production on farm;</p> <p>Despite the established benefits of grass-based milk and meat production, Irish livestock farmers are currently not optimising sufficiently grass production and utilisation. Training is important to ensure a level of competence is established to ensure farmers understand the benefits of the production and utilisation of grass. Indeed, Teagasc research indicates that the current levels of grass grown (and utilised) on dairy, beef and sheep farms can be increased. Measuring grass and understanding the benefits of budgeting can improve the nutrient use efficiency as well as profitability of the farm.</p> <p>The potential reward of utilising more grass in livestock production is huge. Teagasc estimates that if grass utilised were to be increased by one tonne DM/ha/year, the benefit to dairy farmers would be €181/ha and €105/ha to drystock farmers.</p>	<p>2020</p> <p>2020 or 2021</p>
<p>Incorporation of Clover in Swards – The incorporation of clover into ryegrass pastures has the potential to reduce costs, increase animal performance and improve environmental sustainability on Irish dairy farms. This has the potential to reduce the level of chemical fertilisers while achieving similar levels of dry matter production.</p>	<p>2020</p>

Land Eligibility	
Commonage/rough grazing will not be eligible for derogation in 2020 - and cannot be included for the calculation of the chemical fertiliser allowance for the holding – this will reduce the chemical fertiliser allowance on marginal lands and reduce the risk of losses to the environment	2020
Crude Protein in Concentrate Feeds	
A reduction in the crude protein in concentrate feeds for grazing livestock on farms with a grassland stocking rate greater than 170 kg/ha in order to reduce excess protein in animals diets. This measure provides a number of co-benefits to both water, air and climate challenge. From an economic perspective excess protein are losses from a financial and environmental perspective and striking the balance between production and the environment is critical.	2020
Biodiversity	
Biodiversity loss continues in an unprecedented manner farmers will be required to implement a biodiversity measure on derogation farms. Key management strategies that simultaneously achieve optimum livestock performance and minimise environmental impacts are essential to meet the future challenge however the implementation of appropriate ecological measures to halt the decline of biodiversity is also critical.	2020

Concluding Comments

The Review Group has examined all submissions received and made recommendations primarily with the focus of building greater awareness of how agriculture and our natural resources must co-exist and achieve equilibrium in balancing production with environmental sustainability.

In considering the views of each of the submissions and recognising the scope of the Nitrates Directive, the Group have considered it appropriate based on the terms of reference and purpose of the review to propose several recommendations for implementation on Derogation Farms. Each proposal has been considered on its individual technical merit.

The proposed new measures are aimed at further strengthening the protection of water and attaining optimum soil fertility that is consistent with both efficient agricultural production and effective water quality protection. The recommendations made represent the agreed common position of all the experts comprising the Group.

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