

# Farming rules for water - Rule 1

As harvest continues, planning will also be underway for the next stage of the cropping cycle which can include the application of organic manures or manufactured fertilisers in preparation for autumn planting.

## The Farming rules for water

Rule 1 of the Farming rules for water (Regulation 4 of the Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations 2018) sets out the requirements for these nutrient applications, building on the positive, professional and responsible approach to the use of organic materials and fertilisers the farming sector has worked hard to develop.

Rule 1 says that the application of organic manures or manufactured fertiliser must be planned so that it does not exceed the needs of the soil and crop on the land and does not give rise to a significant risk of water pollution and also takes into account the weather conditions and forecasts for the land at the time of the application. In addition reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent water pollution from the application.

Planning must take into account the results of soil testing, which must be done at least every five years on land that is cultivated by physical or chemical means. Soil nitrogen levels can be used to assess N levels instead of soil testing.

## What it means for the farmer and land manager

- Farming rules for water do not impose a ban on the application of any organic manure or manufactured fertiliser.
- The nutrient needs of each farm and field can be different in terms of what is required, and when, to meet crop and soil needs. What the farmer needs to know is that anything beyond that, or applications that pose a significant risk of pollution are likely to represent breaches of rules 1-5 of the Farming rules for water.
- When assessing compliance Environment Agency officers will consider organic manure and manufactured fertiliser applications, and their planning, on a field by field basis.

## Where to go for further information

- More details of the rules can be found on [www.gov.uk/defra/farmingrulesforwater](http://www.gov.uk/defra/farmingrulesforwater)

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