

[News story: New guide for farmers to help reduce air pollution from ammonia](#)

Updated: We have added the animated video produced to support the launch of the COGAP to reduce emissions of ammonia from agriculture.

A new guide published today sets out the steps farmers, advisors and contractors can take to reduce ammonia emissions and help improve air quality.

Our [Clean Air Strategy](#) highlights that agriculture is responsible for 88% of UK emissions of ammonia gas, which 'over-fertilises' natural habitats with nitrogen and combines with other pollutants to produce fine Particulate Matter pollution which is harmful to human health.

The [Code of Good Agricultural Practice \(COGAP\) for Reducing Ammonia Emissions](#) sets out simple steps all farmers can take to reduce ammonia emissions, such as using a nutrient management plan to calculate fertiliser application rates.

It also includes more significant changes to slurry storage, spreading equipment and infrastructure, alongside innovative techniques such as slurry and digestate acidification and separation.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Air pollution is not just an urban issue and with 88% of ammonia emissions coming from farming, the government is taking concerted action.

With clear new guidance and financial support we will help farmers across the country to take action, reduce emissions and help improve air quality.

In addition to the new guidance, Defra is providing a package of financial and technical advice to help farmers reduce their emissions.

Defra is investing £3 million over the next three years to fund a specialist team of experts who will offer support, advice and guidance on the most effective ways to reduce emissions from ammonia on their land.

It will fund demonstrations of the latest low-emission spreading equipment and one-to-one advice on reducing ammonia emissions which will be available from Catchment Sensitive Farming officers by the end of this year.

A video has also been produced by Defra to support the launch of the COGAP. [Ammonia emissions from agriculture video](#)

The RDPE Countryside Productivity scheme is currently offering 40% grants towards much of the manure management equipment recommended in the COGAP to reduce ammonia emissions. This includes low-emission spreading equipment, slurry and digestate storage bags, digestate processing equipment and mild acidification equipment. Farmers in priority catchments for reducing water pollution may also be eligible for grants towards covers for slurry stores and lagoons under the Countryside Stewardship scheme.

The voluntary code has been written by Defra in collaboration with the National Farmers Union (NFU), the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and the Agricultural Industries Confederation.

Contributions have also been made by other organisations including ADAS, the British Egg Council, the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers, the Environment Agency, Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF), the National Association of Agricultural Contractors, Natural England, Plantlife and the Tenant Farmers Association.

The guide includes information on how to reduce emissions when:

- storing organic manure
- applying organic manure
- applying manufactured nitrogen fertiliser
- feeding livestock
- housing livestock

NFU environment forum chairman Mark Pope said:

The NFU welcomes the launch of the Code of Good Agricultural Practice for Reducing Ammonia Emissions. The code contains a variety of measures to reduce ammonia emissions on farm, which in many instances provide multiple benefits to the environment and resource efficiency.

Farmers have recognised there is a need to reduce their ammonia emissions and the sector has made improvements with levels dropping by 10% in the past 30 years. However, further reductions are required from the industry in order to meet targets set under the Government's Clean Air Strategy. We urge Defra to continue to offer farmers guidance on this issue alongside targeted financial support where necessary.

Robert Sheasby, chief executive of the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC), which represents companies delivering both inputs and advice to farmers said:

We are pleased to note that the new code recognises the importance of professional advisers in guiding farm practice. Those on the Feed Adviser Register and FACTS Qualified Advisers are already undertaking additional training that will update some 4,500

professionals on the code's requirements.

By delivering advice tailored to the needs of individual farms, their crops and livestock, we will make a significant contribution to meeting Defra's ambition for productivity and ammonia mitigation.

Jill Hewitt, Technical Consultant at the National Association of Agricultural Contractors added:

Spreading manures, slurry and digestate waste has become a predominantly contractor operation and the NAAC welcomes new guidance to help farmers and contractors make decisions about the best way to apply waste to land to maximise nutrient content, and minimise air pollution.

Nigel Penlington, Head of Environment and Buildings at the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board said:

There is increasing pressure on farmers to control ammonia so we welcome this as a first step to help raise awareness and provide simple, practical steps to make a difference on the farm, improve the image of farming and its environmental performance and, at the same time, save farmers money and provide some benefits to the health and welfare of livestock and crop health.

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Speech: “For the first time in a generation, elections were not dominated by the conflict, but defined by campaigns about issues affecting ordinary people.”

Thank you Mr President.

And let me begin by welcoming His Excellency Vice President General Naranjo back to the Council, and let me also thank you warmly for the personal leadership you have shown in implementing the Peace Agreement and in working very closely with the United Nations and the UN Mission in Colombia. Thank you.

I would also like to thank Special Representative Arnault for his briefing today and for all the excellent work by him and his team in recent months.

Mr President, the United Kingdom welcomes the Congressional and Presidential elections held between March and June, which were the least violent and most inclusive in Colombia for decades. On behalf of the British Government I would like to congratulate President-elect Duque on his electoral victory, and also Vice President-elect Marta Ramirez, the first woman to take up this office in Colombia.

For the first time in a generation, elections were not dominated by the conflict, but defined by campaigns about issues affecting ordinary people.

We also warmly welcome another remarkable milestone brought about by the peace process: FARC’s participation in the elections for the first time, and last Friday, joining the new congress. The speed of the transition continues to surprise and inspire all who follow this journey.

But, as with all such transitions, the challenges remain considerable. And as the Special Representative has just said, the 2018 elections mark the beginning of a new phase of consolidating the peace process and broadening its ownership to all constituencies. Dialogue and cooperation will continue be an essential part of that work and FARC's presence in Congress will enable their voice to join others in building a consensus about the future.

We commend President Santos's statement on Friday welcoming the FARC to the Congress and commending their commitment to work within Colombia's constitution and democracy. And we welcome President-elect Duque's rejection of polarisation and his commitment to work for unity.

Mr President, we recognise the enormity of the achievements in implementation of the Peace Agreement to date, but, as set out in the Secretary General's report, we also recognise the significant work that remains. Though the elections were the most peaceful in recent history – a significant achievement – we are concerned by the security situation in some post conflict areas, particularly due to the proliferation of illegal armed groups. Violence between these groups has brought new fighting to some areas, and displacements, especially in the Pacific Coast region. This has claimed the lives of an increasing numbers of human rights defenders and social activists, who in many cases are targeted because they champion the rights of local communities.

I welcome the steps taken by the Government to reduce this violence, including the recent commitment by both President Santos and President-elect Duque to new special protective measures for social leaders in rural areas. We hope that the measures will help to address this challenge and we welcome the recruitment of more women officers in the National Protection Unit as a positive step.

As the Special Representative mentioned, on socio-economic reintegration of FARC members, we agree with the priorities he has set out for the coming months. And we hope that the parties will seize the opportunity to inject renewed momentum behind improving security and accelerating reintegration of former combatants, socio-economic development, and crop substitution programmes.

I also note that negotiations with the ELN continue in Cuba. We will welcome any developments that lead towards an end to violence.

Mr President, let me conclude by paying tribute once more to President Santos, who took the bold step of coming to the Security Council to ask for our support in 2016. His Government started an extraordinary journey that belongs to all Colombians and the UK remains committed to supporting them all the way to the end. This Council has been incredibly proud to support Colombia's Peace Agreement over the past two and a half years. In a world where conflicts destroy so many lives and cause untold suffering, Colombia's peace process offers inspiration and hope to us all. We look forward to continuing to work with President-elect Duque and his Government on continued implementation over the months and years ahead to consolidate gains already made for the Colombian people and to continue to inspire peacemakers around

the world.

Thank you.

Speech: Concrete steps on the ground to create an environment for free and fair elections in DRC

Thank you Mr President.

Let me begin by thanking the Special Representative Zerroughi for your very clear presentation and your report. I would also like to thank MONUSCO for all the important work it does in DRC. Thank you also to the Ambassador of Kuwait for your briefing. Sanctions remain an important tool that this Council has at our disposal to address threats to international peace and security in DRC.

And I would particularly like to thank Ms Bahimba for your really clear and incisive briefing to this Council and thank you in particular also for your work, for the very brave work, that your organisation does on the ground to support and advocate for women. I thought you made some really interesting and clear recommendations at the end of your speech and I would like to try and respond to each of those five recommendations in what I say today.

First, you spoke about the need for this Council to ask the government to respect human rights. We strongly agree with you and we share the concerns that you've expressed and that Special Representative Zerroughi has expressed about human rights violations and abuses committed in the DRC. In particular, with regard to the increase in sexual exploitation and abuse, we call for all these allegations to be swiftly investigated and for those responsible for them to be brought swiftly to justice.

You also made a recommendation about the need for all parties to respect the 31 December Agreement and the rule of law. And again, we strongly agree with you. We do welcome the limited progress so far and the steps taken by the government towards organising the elections, especially when it comes to voter registration.

But at the same time, we continue to be very concerned by the lack of progress on the implementation of the confidence building measures in the 31 December Political Agreement.

We call on all parties to remain committed to the Agreement, including by respecting fundamental rights and the electoral timeline, not just with words but also with actions.

And then in two of your recommendations, you called on us as a Council to do more to promote women's participation in politics and to materially support the organisations that do so. Again, we very much agree with you. As a Council, we all made clear when we adopted resolution 1325, that women need to be encouraged to meaningfully participate in all stages of the peace process and youth also need to be engaged. So we are very concerned to hear about the increase in sexual violence. I am concerned by the points you raised about the impact of the electoral law on women's participation, and also by the point made by SRSZ Zerroughi about the shortage of women candidates that have so far been declared. We're very concerned by this and we all need to work together to do more to encourage women's participation.

And then finally, you made some very specific points about the role of MONUSCO. We take those concerns very seriously. I'm not able to give you a detailed response to each of them right now but we will certainly take away those points and reflect on them.

We do welcome the important role that MONUSCO is playing in helping prepare for the elections so far. However, as with other speakers, we note that challenges remain and we continue to call for cooperation between CENI and MONUSCO as we prepare for those elections.

Thank you very much for those five clear recommendations. In conclusion, we believe it's vital that this Council remains closely engaged on the DRC in the coming months in the run-up to the elections. As with Ethiopia, we support plans for a Council visit later this year. We must continue to urge all parties to abide by the Constitution, to respect the 31 December Agreement, and to take concrete steps on the ground to create an environment for free and fair elections.

Thank you Mr President.

News story: Secretary of State: Statement following negotiation round Thursday 26 July

Thank you Michel for hosting us again.

It's good to be back here in Brussels for a second time this month.

This meeting comes at a crucial moment in our negotiations.

A lot has been achieved to date, thanks to the hard work of teams on both sides.

We have reached agreement, as Michel says, on the rights of the four million citizens that have chosen to make their home in either the UK or the EU.

We have provided certainty for businesses through an implementation period that gives both sides the time they need to prepare for our new relationship.

We have reached agreement on the financial settlement.

And we are stepping up our efforts on our joint commitment, as Michel again has said, to respect the Belfast Agreement in all its parts, safeguarding the historic progress it has fostered over the past two decades in Northern Ireland.

Our job now – one that Michel and I share together – is to do three things.

First, we must complete the Withdrawal Agreement, concluding those remaining issues.

Discussions this week have moved us closer again to an agreement on the last few remaining remaining areas, including governance, data protection and administrative procedures.

Second, we need to complete the Protocol on Northern Ireland and Ireland.

We must meet our joint commitments through the overall future relationship between the UK and the EU, which will provide a substantive lasting solution.

But in keeping with our commitment to include legal text detailing the 'backstop' solution in the Withdrawal Agreement, we advanced in June a detailed proposal for the customs element of the backstop.

We believe this proposal represents a practical way forward. And it is an answer that respects the integrity of the EU, and the constitutional and economic integrity of the United Kingdom.

Our teams have been discussing this issue in detail and at length, and while of course more work needs to be done, our teams are approaching this issue in the right spirit.

With pragmatism on both sides I am confident we can find a way to resolve it into a workable solution.

That will be easier to achieve if it is clear that the backstop, if it were to be exercised at all, could only be for a time-limited period before the permanent future arrangements would become operational.

And would not give rise to an extended limbo.

Last but by no means least, we need to work up a clear and precise vision for our future relationship, and set this out in a political declaration to be signed alongside the Withdrawal Agreement.

And on the basis that there is no deal until we have the whole deal, there

will need to be a clear timeframe and obligation, written into the Withdrawal Agreement, to move expeditiously from this declaration to the conclusion of the binding agreements that will give it effect during the course of the implementation period.

Today Michel and I have discussed some of the key proposals set out in the UK's White Paper on the future relationship.

Our approach is designed to strike a new and fair balance of rights and obligations for the UK and the EU.

One which respects the EU's autonomy just as it does the UK's sovereignty.

The contours of our proposal are now well known, but allow me just to recap.

On the economic side, a free trade area for goods that avoids either party imposing additional checks at the border, protecting integrated supply chains and the jobs and livelihoods dependent on them, and meeting our commitments to Northern Ireland and Ireland.

This free trade area would be underpinned by a common rulebook and a new facilitated customs arrangement, with an institutional framework that I'll return to shortly.

Alongside this free trade area for goods, there will be new arrangements for services.

While recognising our access will be different in future, we seek to minimise barriers to trade between the UK and the EU, with specific arrangements for financial services, tailored to our close and interdependent relationship in this particular sector.

We have proposed robust commitments to ensure trade is open and fair, and while I understand the EU's underlying concern, the commitment to open and fair trade must of course be met on both sides.

We also want to see cooperation on energy and transport.

And we propose a framework for mobility that enables UK and EU citizens to continue to travel to each other's countries, businesses and professionals to provide services, and our young people to enjoy the educational opportunities and the rich tapestry of cultural life right across Europe.

On the security side, our proposal is for arrangements that maintain existing operational capabilities the UK and the EU deploy to protect our citizens.

And it's already clear from the discussions we have had this week that the White Paper has brought a new dynamic to this particular part of our wider conversation.

Next, we want to see continued coordination on foreign policy, defence and development issues – acting together to tackle some of the most pressing global challenges where it is more effective to work side-by-side.

Beyond trade and security, we propose a new arrangement to ensure the continued free flow of data.

Cooperative accords to strengthen joint work from science and innovation to international development.

And a new approach to our annual negotiations on access to waters and the sharing of fishing opportunities.

Underpinning all of this, we propose a joint institutional framework that respects our democratic prerogatives on both sides, ensures clear and consistent interpretation including of common rules, provides a clear and balanced approach to ending disputes through arbitration, and ultimately allows for the de-politicisation of our future relationship, which will need to be nurtured and reinforced over time.

Finally, I appreciate the questions that were posed by the Commission to my team on the Temporary Customs Arrangement.

We have addressed each one in detail and we will continue to address any outstanding concerns.

And we have published two White Papers, detailing comprehensively how we will incorporate in law the majority of the Withdrawal Agreement that has been agreed to date, and setting out our proposals as I have already outlined, for the future relationship.

We have designed our proposals both to respect the result of the referendum, and the core principles of the EU.

We have considered the innovative approaches the EU has taken in the past with other third countries – when the political will has been there.

In sum, the UK has set out our plans in detail.

Those plans are ambitious, principled and pragmatic.

I am committed to injecting new energy into these talks, along with Michel.

We have agreed to meet again in mid-August.

And then to continue weekly discussions to clear away all the obstacles that line our path, to a strong deal in October – one that works for both sides.

Michel, we've got work to do.