

## **Press release: Gross pollution leads to more than £23,000 in fines and costs**

Spreading and storing excessive amounts of vegetable washings on a farm in Outwell, Norfolk led to gross pollution of a watercourse a court heard yesterday.

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## **News story: Derogation from some Ecological Focus Areas**

**Hot and dry weather conditions in England – BPS 2018 – A derogation (relaxation) from some of the Ecological Focus Areas (EFA) rules to increase the availability of fodder**

This derogation is in addition to the Hot and dry weather conditions in England guidance published on 31 July 2018 and the temporary prescription adjustments to some Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship options this year.

Due to the effects of this summer's very dry weather on forage stocks across the country, England has agreed to a derogation from certain greening rules with the European Commission. We are making regulations which we plan to bring into force by 30 September 2018. These regulations will allow farmers in England to relax the EFA rules for catch crops and green cover for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2018 scheme year.

These are one-off changes to the EFA rules set out in the BPS rules for 2018. They will apply to the winter green cover option in EFA only. All other EFA 2018 requirements are unchanged.

The regulations will mean that in England:

(a) areas under green cover may be established without sowing the mixture of crop species as detailed in the guidance, if the crops sown instead are grasses or other herbaceous forage

(b) areas under green cover may include areas under winter crops which are sown in autumn normally for harvesting for forage or for grazing (including fodder crops that do not meet the 'herbaceous forage' definition)

(c) where a cover crop has been established to meet the requirements set out

in the guidance (unharvestable mixture of at least 2 crops chosen from the permitted list), the minimum mandatory period for which the cover must be maintained is reduced to 4 weeks from the date of sowing, as long as a winter crop is sown afterwards and this period will end on 29 October 2018. Otherwise the cover crop must remain until 15 January, as set out in the guidance.

Where you have declared a cover crop to meet your 2018 EFA requirement, you will be able to sow grasses or other herbaceous forage crops either as a mixture or as a single crop, or winter crops which are sown in autumn normally for harvesting for forage or for grazing, which can be grazed or harvested. These are in addition to the crop mixtures detailed in the BPS rules for 2018.

## **How to apply for a derogation**

Email RPA at [ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk) using the subject title 'EFA Derogation'. Please include:

- the SBI and name of the business making the request
- a list of the affected land parcels indicating which of the 3 options above have been applied.

We should receive your request by 19 October 2018.

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## **Press release: £500 fine for Loughborough man fishing in Rothley in close season**

A 41-year old man from Loughborough has been successfully prosecuted after being found guilty of fishing for freshwater fish in the close season in May 2018.

The case was brought to Leicester Magistrates Court by the Environment Agency on 20 September 2018 where Clint Maskell, of Palmer Avenue, Loughborough pleaded guilty and was ordered to pay a total penalty of almost £500.

The penalty includes a fine of £333 plus costs of £125 and a victim surcharge of £33 after Clint Maskell was found fishing in the close on 16 May 2018 on the River Soar at Cossington Mill, Rothley, contrary to Environment Agency byelaws and national byelaws of the Water Resources Act 1991.

Following the verdict, Pete Haslock, Fisheries Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency said:

We regularly carry out enforcement operations in order to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries and we take all kinds of illegal fishing – including fishing in the close season, as in this case – extremely seriously.

We hope this case will act as a reminder to anglers of the importance of checking the byelaws in their area to find out which waterways are open to fishing during the close season. The case also shows anglers how seriously the courts take these offences.

Illegal fishing is not just unfair on other anglers who fish within the law, it also endangers the future of the sport by damaging the sustainability of fish stocks, so it is important for people to report any information about suspected illegal fishing to us in order for us to investigate.

This year the annual close season ran from 15 March to 15 June. Anglers can check the byelaws in their area [here](#).

Anyone who suspects anglers of illegal fishing are urged to contact the Environment Agency's 24/7 hotline on 0800 807060, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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