

News story: New requirements for farmers to improve environment for all

New rules are now in force which will protect the water environment and save farmers money.

[The new rules](#), which came in to force on 2 April 2018, mean it is now mandatory for all farmers in England to maintain good practice to protect water quality and prevent water pollution incidents.

Collectively, farming related pollution incidents can harm wildlife in our rivers and seas. They also impact on our economy, resulting in higher bills from increased water treatment and affect our tourism and shellfish industry. Many farmers have already made great progress in addressing pollution risks but the new rules will help tackle water pollution by ensuring all farmers take action.

The rules will:

- promote good practice in managing fertilisers and manures;
- encourage land managers to take reasonable precautions to prevent diffuse pollution from runoff or soil erosion;
- require land managers to plan each application of manure or fertilisers, based on soil tests, to meet but not exceed crop and soil needs.

Our [25 Year Environment Plan](#) set out how these new rules will require every farmer to identify and manage risks to water and start taking precautions to reduce ammonia emissions, reducing pollution and soil erosion and improving resource efficiency.

Environment Minister Therese Coffey said:

This is a really important opportunity for farmers to reduce pollution in watercourses. In following these rules, farmers will be able to help reduce pollution incidents, improve water quality and save money through more efficient use of resources.

The new rules are an important part of our 25 year plan for the environment which will help us deliver our plans for a Green Brexit and leave our environment in a better state than we inherited it.

The new farming rules have been drawn up with farming and environment representatives so that they are practical, risk based and will prevent and reduce agricultural pollution. They encourage the farmer to think about the risk of water pollution, how to keep valuable topsoil on their fields and to apply fertilisers only when it is appropriate to do so. Farmers and land managers will be able to determine what approach is best for their land, through methods such as deciding when it is safe to spread fertilisers.

The rules cover:

- planning the use of manures and fertilisers to improve soil nutrient levels and meet crop needs;
- storing organic manures and positioning livestock feeders away from water bodies;
- applying manures or fertilisers to minimise impact on the water environment;
- precautions to prevent soil erosion;
- reducing livestock poaching.

Farming rules for water are part of a whole package of measures to help farmers and land managers look after the environment. The government is also investing £400 million through [Countryside Stewardship](#) which supports farmers in creating or restoring precious habitats and a £12 million farm ammonia reduction grant has incentivised farmers to tackle agricultural emissions.