

Nutrient Management Plan - Information Sheet

DEFA recognises that investment which advances nutrient management on farm can have positive effects on farm viability and deliver a number of potential wider benefits such as:

- Reduced need for artificial fertiliser;
- Better uniformity of application;
- Increased flexibility in rate and timing of application;
- Reduced contamination of grass and increased flexibility with grazing;
- Environmental sustainability.

DEFA will give preference to applications under this category which are accompanied by a Farm Waste Management Plan (FWMP). Generally, a FWMP should contain:

Introduction

The introductory section should identify the person who has drawn up the plan and include a brief description of the farm business, which covers:

- the individual holdings that make up the business;
- the area of the individual holdings;
- the typical stocking and cropping on each holding.

The introduction should also identify the particular holding or holdings that are being included in your Agriculture and Fisheries Grant Scheme application and in particular the holdings where a storage need has been identified. This should provide summary descriptions of:

- existing collection and storage systems, including an assessment of their age and condition;
- any deficiencies that have been identified in the existing system;
- the proposed solutions including details of the number of days storage that will be provided, if additional storage is required.

Quantities of livestock slurry and manure produced

Calculations in this section will use the typical numbers of livestock on the holding throughout the year.

This section should cover all slurries and manures produced by livestock on the holding/s where grant aid is being given. All calculations must be shown to demonstrate where the figures have come from. The following categories of material produced will typically have to be considered:

- Farmyard manure (FYM)
- Slurry/poultry manure
- Dirty water (from yards, dairy washings etc)
- Silage effluent

This information is best presented in a table format.

It is important that the plan identifies the total amount produced on a month by month basis. The total amount produced during the housing period can then be calculated.

Existing collection and storage systems

This section should provide a detailed description of the existing collection and storage systems. Information should be provided about:

- the age and condition of the system (and an assessment of its likely lifespan)
- the storage capacity of all elements of the system
- how the system is operated (including maintenance of 300mm 'freeboard' for slurry tanks or 750mm 'freeboard' for lagoons and earth banked compounds.)
- the method/s of applying livestock slurries and manures to land including the capacity of the spreading equipment and the application rate at which it operates i.e. application rate expressed in m³/hr
- if contractors are used for spreading then this must be stated in the plan along with a description of the type of equipment used
- a diagram of the farmyard should be produced that clearly identifies the existing areas of effluent production and storage. This should show all of the yard areas that drain to the storage system with an indication of the area (m²). Clean and foul drainage systems should be clearly identified.

Land Details

All of the individual holdings that make up the farm business should be listed in this section along with the area of potentially available spreading land associated with each holding (note that organic manure should not be spread on areas of rough/unimproved grass).

Definition of available land:

In the context of this guidance the land to be considered for availability is all of the land that is normally associated with the premises for which the FWMP is being prepared.

Where land is off-lying then the assessment of its availability may not be so straightforward, as it may be geographically unavailable. We have deliberately not defined a distance at which land is deemed to be unavailable, but plans must identify any such areas and provide justification as to why they are or aren't available for spreading.

Land available for spreading

A farm map must be prepared for the holding where the work is to be carried out. The map should be colour coded to categorise each field in terms of the environmental risk associated with spreading organic manure.

Detailed guidance on the steps required to produce a suitable map can be found in the '4-Point Plan' and PEPFAA Code.

Cropping

A description of the typical cropping on the farm should be included. The effect of cropping on the availability of land for spreading organic manure should be considered in this section.

Land availability schedule

A monthly land availability schedule should be prepared. This should take account of:

- the risk associated with spreading in each field at different times of year
- the unavailability of fields due to the crop type being grown or the proposed management in the year ahead

Available spreading days

Details must be provided of the days likely to be available for spreading each month. This should take account of average monthly rainfall, dry days and frost days. This information is available from the Meteorological Office or it can be on the basis of your own knowledge and experience of local conditions.

Accumulated production and distribution

This section matches the amount of livestock slurry and animal manure produced against the amount that can be spread on a monthly basis. Account will have to be taken of the maximum application rates set out in the 'Prevention of Environmental Pollution from Agricultural Activity' (PEPFAA) Code. This section will highlight any months in which the accumulated production exceeds the storage capacity of the existing systems.

Proposed solutions

This section should consider and compare all of the possible solutions to any problems that have been identified. If the system includes irrigation systems for the disposal of dirty water, then consideration will have to be given to the size of the storage tank. This must be able to cope with storm rainfall events (normally based max 48 hr rainfall figures averaged over 5 years for your area). Slurry reception pits that receive drainage water must also meet with this requirement.

Don't overlook simple solutions such as diverting clean water away from the slurry storage system. The 4-Point Plan gives useful guidance in this regard.

A revised plan of the farmyard should be produced that shows the site of the proposed works and any changes to the drainage system.

Contingency Plan

This section must consider the steps that would be undertaken in the following circumstances:

- Extended periods of very wet weather
- Land is frozen hard for extended periods
- Power/mechanical failure of any part of the system
- A potentially polluting incident arising during slurry spreading operations (e.g. contact DEFA Environmental Protection Unit on 685885 / 685896 or out of hours the Emergency Services Joint Control on 631212).

Conclusions

This section should provide a summary of the existing storage system and any deficiencies that have been identified. It should also detail the solutions that are to be implemented and the number of days storage that will be available following their implementation.

Once a Farm Waste Management Plan is drawn up, it must be followed in practice. The FWMP will enable good management practices to be implemented and minimise the risk of pollution. When circumstances change on the farm, the FWMP must be modified to cope with the changes.

The FWMP is a working document, which needs to be regularly updated to take account of changing circumstances, cropping patterns etc.