

Farming For Water Quality

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What is the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP)?

The ASSAP is a new government / industry collaborative initiative running from 2018 - 2021. The programme offers a free support and advisory service (20 Teagasc and 10 Dairy Co-op advisors) and participation is voluntary. Its aim is to improve water quality through working with farmers.

Where will the ASSAP be available?

The National River Basin Management Plan has identified 190 Priority Areas for Action (PAA's) across the country where water quality improvements need to be made. These are located throughout Ireland covering all soil types and farming enterprise. These can be viewed on www.catchments.ie


Why is there a need for the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme?

Under the Water Framework Directive Ireland has been set a target of achieving 'good status' for all waters in Ireland. Water quality has remained static in the last number of years despite the huge investment made by the state and by private industry including farmers. This initiative is part of a new national approach which encompasses the whole community and aims to work with all sections of society to improve water quality in Ireland for all our benefit.

How will the ASSAP work?

The ASSAP is designed to work closely with the farming community in each catchment and is made up of scientists from the Local Authority Catchment Assessment Teams that will assess the streams





and advisors who will work closely with farmers providing them with a free and confidential advisory service. Farmers can avail of this service within the 'areas for action' on a voluntary basis.

What advisory service will the ASSAP provide?

Three main areas that will be looked at on farm are:

- Improved nutrient management with more targeted use of slurry and fertiliser
- New approaches to land management to reduce nutrient losses in critical source areas
- Better farmyard management and practices

At the end of a visit the advisor and farmer will agree on where the farmer should focus improvements or actions, if any are required, on the farm. The practical advice will be designed to 'break the pathway' and prevent nutrients from entering water.

Are the farm visits and consultations confidential?

Yes, all interactions between farmer and advisor are completely confidential and non-regulatory. The role of the advisor is to provide support and advice to the farmer.

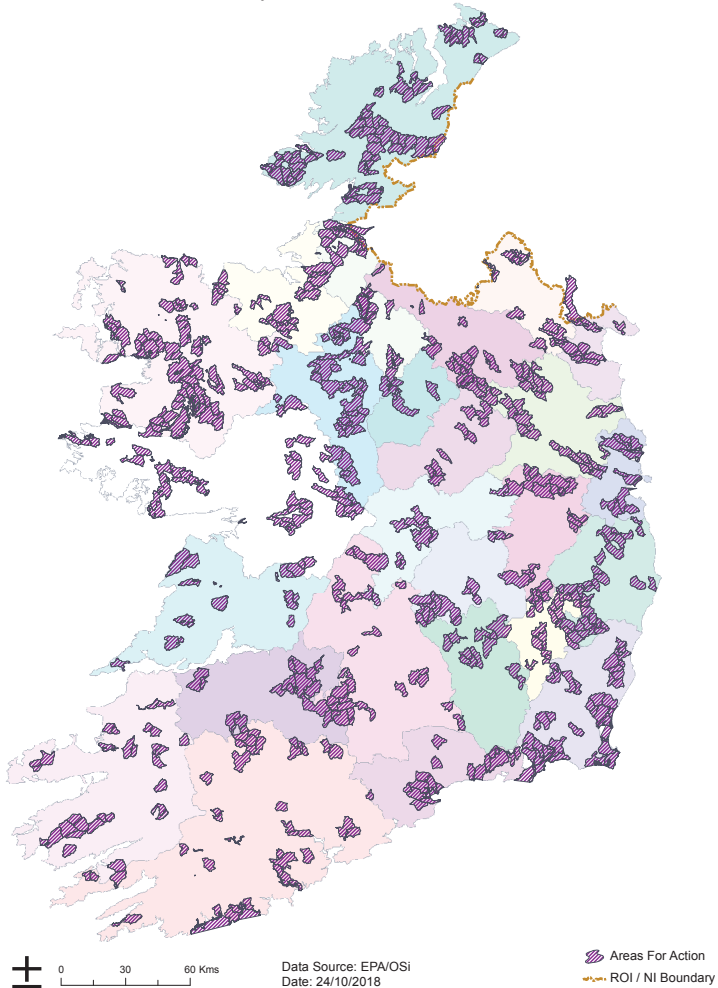
Who is supporting the ASSAP?

The programme is a collaborative one with funding and support received from the DAFM, DHPLG and Dairy Sustainability Ireland. Support from all the farming organisations for the programme has been very strong and this is vital in communicating and informing farmers about the ASSAP programme and its key messages.

How long will it run for?

The programme is funded until the end of 2021.

Priority Areas for Action 2018-2021



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