

Farm roadways and water facing new regulations

Mark Treacy
Teagasc Dairy
Advisor, Clonakilty



New on-farm measures aimed at further reducing Irish farming's environmental footprint, with particular regard to water, climate and air quality, were signed into law by the Government on 20 November 2020 under SI No 529 of 2020. This new statutory instrument has introduced many new on-farm requirements, with effect from 1 January 2021. These on-farm requirements will vary from farm to farm depending on the farm's stocking rate in the previous calendar year.

A technical amendment has also been made to increase the nitrogen excretion figure for the average dairy cow from 85kg to 89kg of organic nitrogen which impacts on all dairy farmers, as well as beef farmers finishing dairy cull cows.

Measures relating to the prevention of direct runoff from farm roadways to "waters" applies to all farms, regardless of enterprise or stocking rate. For all farm roadways, there can be no sediment or nutrient run-off into "waters". This includes watercourses, rivers, drains, lakes, etc (including features which may carry no water for part of the year). This measure was discussed in detail in the last issue of *Today's Farm*.

Changes applying farms with a grassland stocking rate of $\geq 170\text{kg}$ organic N per hectare

Farms with a grassland stocking rate (GSR) of $\geq 170\text{ kg organic N per hectare}$ are now required to exclude bovines from watercourses and locate all water troughs at least 20m from watercourses. This means bovines cannot drink, or have access to freely enter or cross watercourses (clarified further below). Watercourses on your farm are defined as the solid blue lines on the OSI 1:5000 scale maps, viewable on this website <https://store.osi.ie/index.php/osi-place-map.html> (select Customise, A3, 1:5,000 and landscape). To comply with these requirements the following is required:

- Where watercourses are currently unfenced, a fence must be erected at least 1.5m from the top of the bank.
- Existing fences must be moved out to at least 1.5m from the top of the watercourse bank.
- An exception to this is where an existing roadway runs parallel to a watercourse.



The existing fence will suffice provided there is a fence on both sides of the roadway and the roadway is cambered away from the watercourse, along with an earthen bank between the roadway and watercourse.

- Bovines are still permitted to cross through watercourses provided both sides of the watercourse are fenced 1.5m back from the top of the bank. Bovines cannot freely drink from the watercourse, and fences are in place

Summary of new regulations Effective from 1 January 2021

Derogation

Yes

Requirements from Jan 2021

- Four-year liming plan.
- LESS (from January).
- Ration crude protein $\leq 15\%$ (fed 1 Apr – 15 Sept).
- No roadway runoff to watercourses or waters.
- Water troughs $>20\text{m}$ from watercourses.
- Fence watercourses 1.5m from top of bank.
- Fence watercourse crossings.
- Grass measurement or training course.
- Sustainability and NUE courses.
- Clover in grass seed mix.
- Hedgerow management plan.

to prevent bovines freely crossing or going up/down stream.

- All new and existing water troughs must be located at least 20m from watercourses.

While not a legal requirement at present, the provision of bridges over watercourses where regular crossing is necessary is still considered to be best practice.

Changes applying to 5,000 non-derogation farmers from 1 January 2021

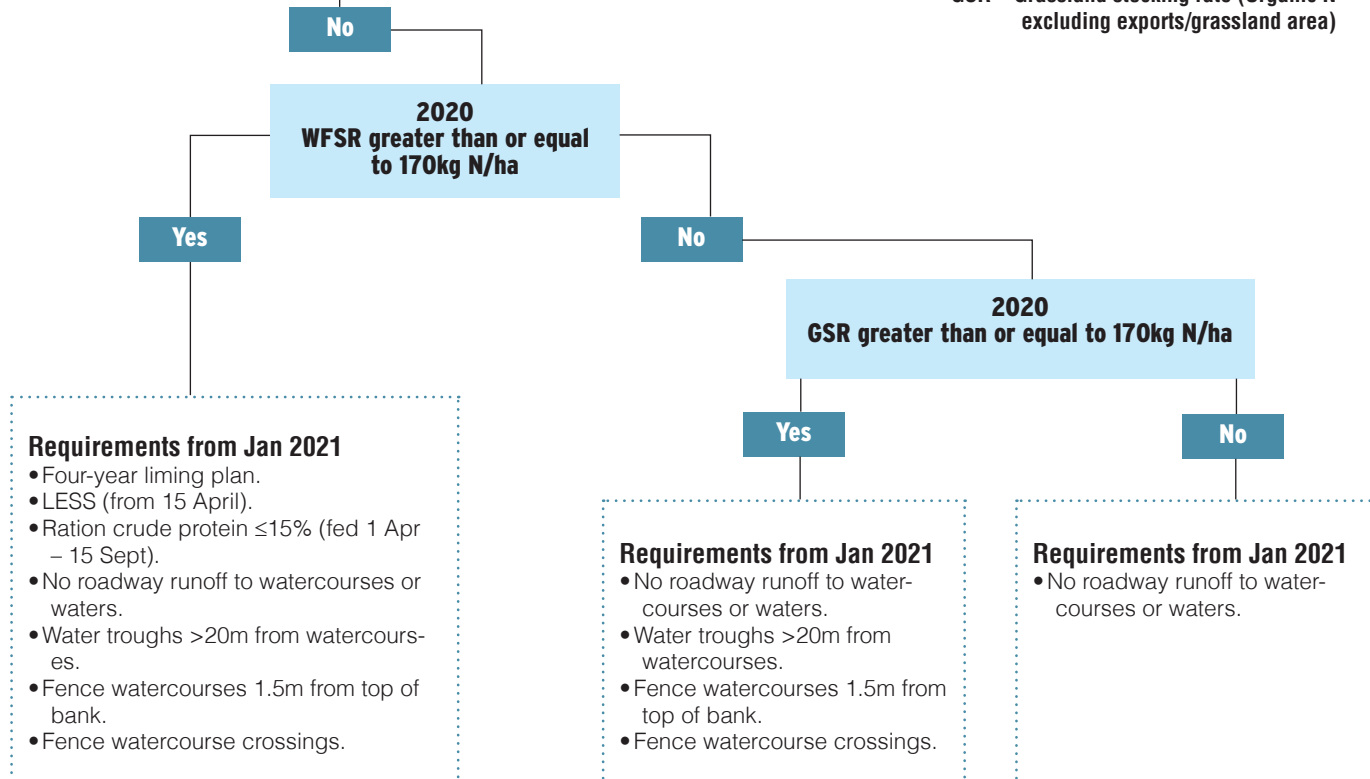
Approximately 5,000 farms in Ireland export slurry to comply with the 170kg organic N per hectare limit and stay outside of derogation. In addition to the requirements already outlined for farms with a GSR of $\geq 170\text{kg organic N per hectare}$, these farms with a whole farm stocking rate (WFSR) of $\geq 170\text{ kg Organic N per hectare}$ (excluding slurry exports) are now required to implement a number of additional new measures. These additional requirements remove most of the potential benefits at farm level of avoiding derogation.

- These measures are:
- A requirement to apply lime where soil analysis results show an agro-

applicant 2021

WFSR = Wholefarm stocking rate (Organic N excl. exports/total eligible area incl grassland and arable)

GSR = Grassland stocking rate (Organic N excluding exports/grassland area)



conomic need. A minimum of 25% of the total lime requirement needs to be applied each year.

- Limit the crude protein of ration fed to grazing bovines greater than two years of age to $\leq 15\%$ during the period from 1 April to 15 September.
- Use Low Emission Slurry Spreading (LESS) equipment for all slurry applied from 15 April 2021.

The new regulations came into effect on 1 January 2021. The graphics on these pages will help guide you through the requirements. Contact your Teagasc advisor for additional information.

Course requirements

If you are one of the 2,500 farmers who recently completed the Environmental Module (Farming Sustainably and the Environment) as part of the mandatory derogation training courses with Teagasc, rest assured that the course you completed will satisfy the derogation course requirements.

Appendix 1

Terms	Whole Farm Stocking Rate excluding N exports $\geq 170 \text{ kg N/ha}$	Grassland Stocking Rate (GSR) excluding N exports
Definition	Organic N produced by grazing & non-grazing livestock/ holding area (grassland + arable).	Organic N produced by grazing livestock on the holding / grassland area
Use of LESS	Yes	
Liming programme	Yes	
CP 15%	Yes	
Fencing watercourses	Yes	Yes
Setback water troughs	Yes	Yes
Farm roadways	Applies to all farm (if farm roadways present on farms)	

Source: DAFM FAQs

Find out more For additional information, see DAFM Frequently Asked Questions located at <https://assets.gov.ie/99153/ab347c89-9723-4397-9391-9d60d6e180b8.pdf> and Statutory Instrument 529 of 2020 located @ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2020/en/si/0529.html>