

Teagasc Notes for week ending Friday 12th February 2021 **Nitrates Action Plan changes & Water Quality Regulations,** **Effective from 1st January 2021**

New measures relating to Nitrates & Water Quality are effective since the 1st of January 2021. These changes will affect all farmers i.e. those currently in EU Derogation & those who currently export slurry etc. to stay under the 170 kg N per hectare limit. The requirement to slope all farm roadways away from waters affects all farmers, regardless of stocking rate. The purpose of the new on-farm measures is to improve efficiencies and continue to reduce environmental footprint with particular regard to water, climate and air quality.

Main Changes – Summary

1. Increase in kg of organic nitrogen per dairy cow increasing from 85 kg N / dairy cow to 89 kg N / dairy cow. This will lead to more farmers needing to apply for EU Derogation in 2021. In effect any farmer operating currently at a stocking rate of 160 kg N or greater per hectare, will potentially breach the 170 kg N per hectare limit in 2021.
2. Farmers who export slurry each year to stay below the 170 kg N will now also be bound by new nitrates and water quality measures, as summarised in the flow chart below.
3. As mentioned previously, all farmers regardless of stocking rate will also have to abide by the regulations concerning farm roadways.

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 \leq 170kg organic N per hectare, these farms with a whole farm stocking rate (WFSR) of 170 kg organic N per hectare (excluding slurry exports) are now required to implement a number of additional new measures. These additional requirements remove most advantages of avoiding derogation. These additional measures are:

- A requirement to apply lime where soil analysis results show an agronomic 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 graphics on this page will help guide you through the requirements. Contact your Teagasc advisor for additional information.

To work through a few examples:

Farmer A. is not currently in derogation but has a whole farm stocking rate greater than 170kg N / ha and a grassland stocking rate of greater than 170kg N / ha. Then this farmer must follow the requirements in Box 2.

Farmer B. is currently not in derogation, whole farm stocking rate is less than 170kg N / ha but grassland stocking rate is greater than 170 kg N / ha i.e this farmer is exporting slurry to stay under 170kg N / ha. This farmer must now follow the requirements in Box 4.

Farmer C. is currently not in derogation, whole farm stocking rate is less than 170kg N / ha and grassland stocking rate is less than 170 kg N / ha. Then this farmer must follow the requirements in Box 5.

