

Dated; 10/06/2022

DAFM Nitrates Division. Circular No. 01/2022 - FAS Advisers

Subject: Training Requirements for New and Existing Nitrates Derogation Applicants 2022

Under the terms and conditions of the Nitrates Derogation 2022, all derogation applicants in 2022 must have completed all elements of a training programme in nutrient use efficiency, the protection of waters and grassland management (as per training guidelines issued in 2021, available here: [DAFM training guidelines](#)).

Training requirements were as follows:

- 1. Nutrient Use Efficiency Training (1 day);**
 - a. Increasing nutrient use efficiency by getting the most from fertiliser and slurry
- 2. Farming Sustainably Under Derogation Training (1 day)**
 - a. Reducing the impact of emissions, water and biodiversity
- 3. Grassland Management (1 day)**
 - a. Sustainable grassland management practices to improve nutrient use efficiency **OR**
 - b. Record through appropriate software technology, the grass produced annually on the farm.

New Nitrates Derogation Applicants

- For any new applicants (who did not apply in the previous 3 years) this training must be completed by the end of 2022. If applicants record, through the appropriate software technology, the grass produced annually on the farm, the grassland management training is not required.

Existing Nitrates Derogation Applicants

- In order for those Nitrates Derogation applicants who applied in 2020 and/or 2021 to be eligible to apply in 2022 the training as outlined above must be completed.
- Those farmers who recorded at least 20 grass measurements in 2021 must continue to record at least 20 grass measurements in 2022 with a minimum of one week between each measurement.
- Note; the requirement per month in 2021 was February (1), March (2), April to September (14), October (2) and November (1). In 2022 a minimum of 17 measures between March and September and a minimum of 3 measures recorded between October and November will also comply with the requirement.
- Those farmers who completed a grassland management training course in 2020/2021 will be required to get set up on appropriate software technology (as accepted by DAFM) in 2022.
- These farmers have two options for grass measuring in 2022 as follows:
 - Record a minimum of 20 grass measurements on appropriate software technology (as accepted by DAFM) with a minimum of one week between each measure, **OR**
 - Attend two workshops and take a minimum of 3 grass measurements in 2022 with a minimum of one week between each measurement.

One workshop must be on using the software technology to record and interpret grass measurements **AND** one workshop must be on grass measuring. Workshop A or Workshop B (as described below) can be completed in any order. This is at the discretion of attendee based on experience/knowledge of each workshop content.

General workshop requirements

- Delivery of the workshops can take place at any time of year but should take place prior to grass measuring.
- A maximum participant group size will normally be under 30 or increased to a maximum of 50 in the case of online courses (other than in the case of practical breakout sessions where 125 is permitted with 30/breakout session).
- A minimum of 2 hours should be allocated for each workshop with a total of 5 hours between the 2 workshops. Additional question and answer time should be allowed as required.
- An applicant can nominate a person involved in the management of the farm business to attend the course on their behalf. Details of the nominated person must be submitted and preapproved to DAFM in advance of attending the course.
- Trainers can apply for DAFM approval for any variation in course delivery model.
- Training to farmers can only be provided under the guidance of a FAS advisor.
- Relevant subject matter specialists (who may not be FAS accredited) can be included as part of the programme delivery team.

The objective for **Workshop A** is to ensure that all participants can record a grass cover for their farm and can access the resulting reports. The following key areas should be covered

- Overview of the session- the benefits of measuring grass (10 mins)
- Setting up the farm profile (paddock profiles, stock numbers, intake) (30mins)
- How to record an individual paddock cover on the PBI system (using laptop or App) (30mins)
- Generating and interpreting the grass wedge report using the software (30 mins)
- Summary and clarifications (20 mins)

Attendance and completion of Workshop A will be verified by confirmation of attendance of the registered participants during the workshop. Follow up in-office consultations should be facilitated to assist clients who require additional support in setting up profiles/Apps and using the software. These will not qualify in lieu of participation in the on-line workshop.

The objective for **Workshop B** is to provide participants with the practical skills necessary to complete a whole-farm grass measurement. This element will be conducted on-farm. A maximum of 30 participants per training group is permitted, however individual scheduled events can run multiple training groups concurrently on the day.

Four key areas will be addressed:

- Demonstrating the physical measurement of grass
 - Estimating grass dry matter cover per hectare, calculating grass available per paddock, measuring residual covers, assessing grass quality
- Introducing key grass measurement concepts
 - Average farm cover, rotation length, herd feed demand, grass wedge

- Recording grass measurements using appropriate software
 - Entering grass measurements taken, recording paddocks grazed, marking paddocks for silage, generating a grass wedge
- Discussing how to use grass measuring metrics for decision making on-farm
 - Allocating grass, Removal of surplus silage, use of supplements, fertilizer application, reseeding

Duration will be a minimum of 2 hours. Attendance and completion of Workshop B will be verified by confirmation of attendance of the pre-registered participant at commencement of workshop

Verification by Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)

DAFM to be notified at least one week in advance of the workshop for preapproval. A batch notification of a number of proposed courses can be included in one submission.

The following is required in the email of notification to grasstraining@agriculture.gov.ie;

- Contact details of the FAS approved workshop organiser.
- Location/online details, dates and times of the workshop.
- Agenda and details to be retained by FAS advisor for Inspection.

DAFM to receive confirmation of completion of training course following completion. The following is required in the email of confirmation to grasstraining@agriculture.gov.ie;

- Contact details of the FAS approved workshop organiser.
- Location/online details, dates and times of the workshop.
- Attendance sheets to contain printed name and identifier (eg. Herd Number) of each participant

For any workshops that have already taken place the required details from these courses must be emailed to grasstraining@agriculture.gov.ie

Approval applications, attendance sheets and queries must all be submitted to the relevant email address: grasstraining@agriculture.gov.ie