

# The nitrogen derogation: what's new

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**D**erogation farmers in 2018 have several new things to comply with under the new Nitrates Action Plan (Nitrates Directive).

- 50% of all slurry produced on a derogation farm must be applied by the 15th June. After this date slurry can only be applied using low emission equipment.
- If all slurry is applied before the 15th June by splash plate or other methods; this is acceptable.
- Soiled water can continue to be spread by splash plate all year around.
- A derogation holding must have sufficient storage for all livestock manure and soiled water produced on the holding.
- Any soil samples used in a 2018 derogation plan that were received in soil laboratories from 01/01/2018 cannot be for an area of more than 5ha's.
- Soil samples taken prior to this date and used in derogation fertiliser plans can cover an area of up to 8ha's.
- A separate requirement is that there must be a minimum of one soil sample for every 5ha's.

Other derogation requirements that you need to know:

- Derogation farmers must apply each year to stay in derogation.
- The 2018 deadline for online applications is the 20th April.
- 2017 Fertiliser Accounts must also be submitted online by 20th APRIL 2018 for those who applied for a Derogation in 2017 and (also exceeded 170kg NpH in 2017).
- Where a new or amended Fertiliser Plan is submitted in 2018, only a plan produced by the Teagasc Online Nutrient Management Plan programme is acceptable.

- Fertiliser accounts for 2018, including information related to management of nitrogen and phosphorus inputs and management of soiled water, shall be kept in relation to the farm and shall be submitted online no later than 31st March 2019.

- You must be farming a holding that is at least 80% grass.
- A derogation is only available in respect of grazing livestock.
- You cannot import livestock manure onto your holding.
- Only soil analysis dated after 15th September 2014 can be used.
- You must submit
  - A Farm Map indicating location soil samples;
  - A fully labelled Farmyard Sketch showing manure storage facilities and livestock housing, that provides a link with the buildings outlined on the fertiliser plan;
  - Plan;
  - Soils.
- If fertiliser plans are subsequently amended for either new soil analysis, Farm Map and/or Farmyard Sketch, they must be submitted online.
- Soil samples must be for every 5Ha of All land declared on BPS 2016 (including owned, leased and conacre lands) where farmers are availing of soil P build-up.

- Derogation farmers are liable to a 5% DAFM inspection if in derogation.
- Full details of the scheme are available on the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Web site <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/ruralenvironment/environmentalobligations/nitrates/nitratesderogation/2017derogationforms/>

What you should bring in to your Agri Advisor when completing your 2017 Derogation Fertiliser Records:

- Feed for 2016: To complete records for 2017.
- Fertiliser for 2017: To complete records for 2017.
- Feed 2017: To prepare plan for 2018.
- Soil samples: must be dated after

15/09/2014 to be valid for 2018.

- Projected stock figures for 2018.
- Any changes to land area and crops for 2018.
- All yard measurements: e.g. new buildings, slurry storage facilities etc.
- Copy of your 2016 fertiliser records (any opening stock of chemical fertiliser in 2017).

What you should have when leaving your Agricultural Advisor:

- Maps showing the lime, P and K status of your farm so you can plan a liming campaign over the next four years, where to target your livestock manures and chemical P and K compounds (Remember 6:1 return on money spent on lime).
- A full understanding of what is in

the fertiliser plan; particularly what the soil status of your farm is (needs to be compared to previous set of soil results).

- Details about the livestock manure storage capacity of the farm and what is the limit of the stock you could keep over a winter based on your current facilities. This is one major area that will be checked if you get a cross compliance inspection.
- Updated plan for 2018 taking account of any changes in land area, stock numbers etc.
- Clarity about what your fertiliser N and P requirements and what your limits are for DAFM Nitrates Inspections. Remember there are no limits to Potash (K) or lime and these should be spread in line with soil analysis

reports.

- Information about when you will need to next take soil samples to comply with derogations.
- Completed records for 2017.
- Maps showing the possible high organic matter (OM) areas on the farm which may need to be analysed for OM.

Many farmers complete the derogation plan and records because they have to for cross-compliance, stock density reasons and to protect their Basic Payments. Having a detailed fertiliser plan allows farmers to discuss and plan nutrient management for the next few years. This includes a liming plan, where to target organic/chemical fertiliser; and maximising

grass yield and usage which is a win-win for all concerned.

Most derogation farmers take soil samples on a more regular basis to track P and K fluctuations while trying to maximise soil fertility. Discussing soil test results regularly will ensure farmers can maximise grass production and also comply with DAFM regulations.

The main advantages for farmers who apply for a derogation in 2018 as there are associated benefits besides receiving the derogation itself:

- Following the recommendations in a Nutrient Management Plan will reduce costs; increase the effectiveness of nutrients; increase grass DM production/ha; improve farm sustainability and improve water quality.



- Completing the derogation plan encompasses looking at your overall farming enterprise efficiency. It takes into account stocking rates, soil fertility, feed/forage input and farm output.
- Having a Nutrient Management Plan with regular soil tests allows farmers to assess the current soil fertility status on the farm and to see how the soil fertility has changed since the last set of soil results.
- Lime status is the first key component in correcting soil fertility issues on farms and targeting this can help farms achieve the optimum pH for nutrient availability and responses.
- Home produced organic fertilisers (Slurry and FYM) can be used to target those soil samples that are low in P and K. Silage and grazing areas that's don't normally receive these fertilisers need to be identified to target optimum slurry and fertiliser applications based on land use, distance from the yard, etc.
- On the basis of soil fertility and crop use, a better mix of fertilisers can be used to balance soil requirements and farmers can manage the cost of fertiliser and lime to be purchased.

### Feed and fertiliser

While completing the derogation application with your Teagasc advisor you will also discuss feed and fertiliser purchases for the previous year, stocking rates and any plans you may have to increase this, the implication of dropping rented land/taking on extra land, the amounts and types of fertiliser you should be purchasing, fertiliser allowances for different crop types etc, etc.

On the day you come in there are three main jobs to be done: complete records for the year just gone, apply for the derogation and prepare a fertiliser plan for the coming year.

In 2018 an increased focus needs to be on slurry storage calculations as this will highlight any surpluses or deficits on farm especially where farms are in an expansion mode in that it highlights changes in stocking numbers and/or investments that will be required over time.

Derogation farmers must have adequate slurry storage each year for all livestock over the winter period. Planning additional storage requires time and as planning permission may be needed this needs to be planned well in advance.

You may be able to qualify for TAMS II grants of 40% are available, and for qualified young farmers this could increase to 60% if the young farmer is the only name on the herd number or in a partnership/company.



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## IN SUMMARY

Farmers need to be aware of new Organic Matter maps which could affect the fertiliser P allowed on their farms

Farmers whose lands appear in the map below which is an indicator map of possible high Organic Matter (OM) will need to discuss this with their Teagasc advisor or Agri Consultant. There are more detailed maps available to Agri Consultants and also on the DAFM AgFood site which bring this down to individual farm level. There are consequences for some farmers:

- Soil types in these areas could possibly be >20% Organic matter (peaty in nature).
- Soils with >20% Organic matter are considered to be "At risk for Nutrient runoff" which can affect water quality.
- The phosphorus fertilisation rates for these soils cannot be higher than the amounts allowed for Index 3 soils.
- These fertiliser rates are known as maintenance amounts, which means the amounts that are needed to replace whatever the crop takes up.
- Farmer and Agri Consultant have three options:
  - Carry out Organic Matter analysis for each soil sample in the area concerned or
  - If soils are mineral soils and the peat maps are incorrect then the Teagasc advisor or Agri Consultant can sign off on this or
  - Assume the soils are peaty and >20%OM and then only maintenance dressings are allowed.

Farmers with low soil P status on their farms can avail of extra chemical (Bag P) in 2018-2021

The new Nitrates Action Plan (NAP) has increased P build-up allowances for P index 1 and 2 soils which will allow an additional 30kg/ha on P index 1 soils and 20 kg's/ha for P index 2 soils.

This only applies to farmers with a grassland stocking rate >130 kg N/ha. Farmers wishing to avail of these P build-up allowances must submit a nutrient management plan (NMP) to DAFM using the Teagasc on-line NMP, prepared by an approved Farm Advisory Service (FAS) advisor. Soil analysis is required, including soil organic matter unless it is certified to be mineral soil by a FAS advisor.

To ensure the protection of the environment, farmers using the increased P build-up rates are required to participate in a dedicated short training programme in the first year of the P build up programme, which is delivered by a FAS advisor.

Teagasc advises any farmers with a grassland stocking rate >130 kg N/ha to discuss this with their Teagasc advisor or Agri Consultant as these new allowances

could allow substantial increases in the amount of chemical P permitted on some farms over the next few years when applied to P index 1 and 2 soils. This will address the low P index soils which are affecting 60%+ of Irish soils.

