

FARMING RULES FOR WATER

Organic and manufactured fertiliser management, storage and management

Rule 1.

- a) Application of organic manures and manufactured fertilisers to cultivated land must be planned in advance to meet soil and crop nutrient needs and does not exceed these levels
- b) Soil testing must be carried out for Phosphorus, Potassium, Magnesium, pH and Nitrogen levels at least every 5 years, for cultivated land.

Compare farm fertiliser records with crop nutrient requirements. Farmers can demonstrate compliance after visit by providing soil test results, cropping plans and evidence of nutrient application.

Rule 2.

Organic manures must not be stored on land:

- a) within 10 metres of inland freshwaters or coastal waters,
- b) where there is significant risk of runoff* entering inland freshwaters or coastal waters
- c) within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole

Verify distances from stores to surface waters, springs, wells or boreholes. Check area around stored organic manures for potential pathways where runoff could flow into inland freshwaters and coastal waters.

Rule 3.

Organic manures or manufactured fertilisers must not be applied:

- a) if the soil is waterlogged, flooded, or snow covered
- b) if the soil has been frozen for more 12 hours in the previous 24 hours
- c) if there is significant risk of causing environmental pollution from soil erosion and run-off

Check the condition of the soil and current and previous weather conditions. Assess the risks in a field of run off and soil erosion should anything be applied (slope, soil conditions such as compaction, soil structure etc). Check for any signs that polluted soil erosion and/or run off has occurred.

Rule 4.

Organic manures must not be applied:

- a) within 10 metres of any inland freshwaters or coastal waters, except, if precision equipment is used within 6 metres of inland freshwaters or coastal waters
- b) within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole

Check calibration records. Verify any buffer strips. Check distance from any spread material to water and look for signs of associated water pollution. Check for any signs of manures deposited onto the surface within restricted distances.

Rule 5.

Manufactured fertiliser must not be applied within 2 metres of inland freshwaters or coastal waters

Check for obvious visual signs of fertiliser prills (pellets) or granules within the restricted zone. Excessive growth of marginal vegetation may indicate fertiliser encroachment. Soil may be tested for nutrients in the 2 metre zone and the remaining field if appropriate.

Soil management

Rule 6.

Take all reasonable precautions to prevent significant soil erosion and runoff from: (a) seedbeds, tramlines, rows, beds, stubbles (including harvested land with haulm), polytunnels and irrigation, and (b) poaching by livestock

*Check to see that reasonable precautions to prevent erosion and runoff over a single area of 1 or more hectares caused by cropping or livestock have been taken. Take into account that the correct crop for the inherent field risk has been planted and that pollution risks from the activity have been minimised by taking appropriate steps to minimise soil pollution.
Where soil erosion or soil runoff causes pollution and evidence of erosion is found to be coming from an area over 1 hectare or more, the source, pathway and receptor need to be identified.*

Rule 7.

Any land within 5 metres of inland freshwaters or coastal waters must be protected from significant soil erosion by preventing poaching by livestock.

*Verify the distance of any livestock poaching identified along a continuous stretch of a watercourse to see if it exceeds 20 or more metres long and 2 or more metres wide.
Any poaching measuring this distance within 5 metres of any inland freshwater or coastal waters is a breach.*

Rule 8.

Livestock feeders must not be positioned

- a) within 10 metres of any inland freshwaters or coastal waters,
- b) where there is significant risk of runoff from poaching around the feeder entering any inland freshwaters or coastal waters

Verify the distance of livestock feeders from an inland freshwater or coastal water. Also check to see if livestock feeders pose a risk to water quality by being located in high risk areas that will act as a pathway.

* In assessing whether there is “significant risk of runoff” a person must take into account the following factors: the slope of the agricultural land, especially if the slope is greater than 12 degrees; any ground cover; the proximity to inland fresh waters and coastal waters, proximity to wetlands; the weather conditions and weather forecasts; the soil type and condition; and the presence and condition of agricultural land drains.