



WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU ARE SELECTED FOR AN INSPECTION UNDER THE SINGLE PAYMENT SCHEME/DISADVANTAGED AREAS' COMPENSATORY ALLOWANCE SCHEME

(Note this leaflet is not a legal interpretation and should be read in conjunction with the Terms and Conditions for the Single Payment and Disadvantaged Areas' Schemes, the Guides to Cross-compliance issued in March 2005/August 2006 and the Explanatory Handbook For Good Agricultural Practice Regulations November 2006. All these publications are available on the Department's website at www.agriculture.gov.ie).

Introduction.

The 2003 reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) introduced a new system of payments for farmers and cut the link between support and production. In 2005, the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) replaced the direct payments to farmers that were previously in place. Farmers whose land is situated within a Disadvantaged Area are also entitled to the Disadvantaged Areas' Compensatory Allowance Scheme (DAS) if they meet the eligibility criteria. The annual value of these two schemes to Irish farmers is about €1.55 billion. With effect from 2007, the Cross-compliance checks also apply to farmers getting the Disadvantaged Areas' Compensatory Allowance Scheme and/or the Rural Environment Protection Scheme payments.

What kind of inspections are carried out annually?

There are two types of checks carried out for the purpose of implementing the Single Payment/Disadvantaged Areas' Compensatory Allowance Scheme: eligibility checks and Cross-compliance checks.

What are the eligibility checks for the Single Payment Scheme/Disadvantaged Areas' Scheme?

These checks are carried out to:

- Verify that the actual area declared in the Single Payment Scheme/Disadvantaged Areas' Scheme application form corresponds with the area farmed by the applicant and to ensure there are no overlapping claims, or duplicate claims.
- Verify that the lands declared for set-aside purposes are maintained in accordance with the provisions of the EU Regulations and that the set-aside obligations are observed.
- Verify that the lands declared as permanent pasture have not, in fact, been ploughed and used for the growing of arable crops.
- Verify that the eligible hectares declared in the application form do not include land used for fruit or vegetable or potato production in the year of application.
- Verify that lands declared as eligible hectares have not been afforested or used for the production of other permanent crops in the year of application.
- In addition a stocking rate of 0.15 livestock unit/hectare is required to be eligible for the Disadvantaged Areas' Scheme payment unless a stocking rate derogation under a commonage framework plan or other environmental regulations has been accepted.

There is a requirement to check 5% of farmers (about 6,750 annually) for both the Single Payment Scheme and Disadvantaged Areas' Schemes. The checks for both schemes are generally carried out during the same inspection. However, about two-thirds of these checks are carried out by way of remote sensing without the need for an on-farm visit.

What is involved in Cross-compliance checks?

Cross-compliance involves two key elements:

- A requirement for farmers to comply with 19 Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) set down in EU legislation on the public health, animal and plant health, animal welfare, and the environment.
And
- A requirement to maintain the land in good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC).

You should note, in particular, that the vast majority of Cross-compliance penalties that were applied in 2005 and 2006 resulted from non-compliance with the cattle identification and registration requirements.

How many farms are inspected annually under Cross-compliance?

Some 1,350 farmers (or 1% of SPS applicants) will be inspected annually for GAEC and all SMRs that are applicable to them. However, 5% of farmers (about 5000) who have cattle must be inspected under Cattle Identification and Registration requirements and 3% of farmers (about 900) who have sheep.

Are all these inspections carried out in one farm visit?

The policy of the Department is to minimise the number of inspection visits and to move towards a situation where, in most cases, all eligibility and Cross-compliance checks will be carried out during a single farm visit. This approach will minimise the level of inconvenience to farmers. However, in certain instances it may not be possible to avoid more than one visit to the farm.

What does the inspector look at when checking compliance with animal identification and registration (SMRs 6, 7, 8, 8a)?

For cattle

- A check will be made to determine that animals are tagged and registered.
- That the Bovine Herd Register is up to date.
- That the animals on the farm match the animals on the Department's Herd Profile.
- That all movements, births and deaths are notified to the Cattle Movement Monitoring System (CMMS) Database.
- That there is a passport for each animal on the holding and that it is signed by the keeper.

For Sheep

- A check will be made to determine that sheep are tagged in accordance with the requirements.
- That the Flock Register and dispatch dockets are up to date.
- That a flock reconciliation is completed at the end of the year.

For Pigs

- A check will be made to determine that pigs are tagged in accordance with the requirements.
- That records are being kept.
- That movement notifications have been made to the National Pig Identification and Tracing System.

What will the inspector look for in a Cross-compliance check for nitrates (SMR4)?

The inspector will check that:

- Livestock manures and other organic fertiliser storage facilities are constructed and managed in a way that prevents pollution.
- There is sufficient storage capacity for livestock manure and other organic fertilisers.
- Livestock manures, other organic fertilisers and chemical fertilisers are spread in accordance with the Regulations.
- Buffer zones from water are maintained when spreading livestock manure and other organic and chemical fertilisers.
- Fertilisers are not spread in the prohibited spreading periods.
- Farmyard manure is only stored in the field during permitted spreading periods.
- Green cover is provided where land is ploughed or sprayed with a non-selective herbicide after July 1st.

- Grassland is not ploughed between 16th October and 30th November.
- Maximum fertiliser rates for nitrogen and phosphorus are not being exceeded.
- Soiled water is minimised by ensuring clean water is diverted to a clean water outfall.
- Records are being maintained and retained.
- A maximum of 170 kgs/ha of nitrogen from livestock manure is applied in any calendar year or a maximum of 250 kgs/ha of nitrogen from grazing livestock where a derogation was applied for.

What about the groundwater SMR2? Is that similar to the check for nitrates?

The groundwater SMR is applicable to all farmers. It is concerned mainly with the protection of groundwater, an important resource for drinking water.

The inspector will check that:

- Farm chemicals and waste oil are stored and managed in a way that prevents pollution.
- Sheep dip is managed and disposed of in a way that prevents pollution.

What is involved in checks on SMRs 1 and 5?

These two SMRs are concerned with the conservation of wild birds and the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) SMR1

All lands outside an SPA will be checked for unauthorised hunting/shooting/snaring/trapping or poisoning of birds or animals being practiced at anytime with regard to protected species or in closed season with regard to other species. Where a farmer has land designated as SPA the inspecting officer will check compliance with the list of “notifiable actions” applicable to that SPA.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) SMR5

All lands outside an SAC will be checked to ensure the applicant is not removing or damaging protected plant species or deliberately introducing non-native species, which may damage protected plant species. Where a farmer has land designated as SAC, the Inspecting Officer will check compliance with the list of “notifiable actions” applicable to the habitat(s) in that SAC.

What about use of sewage sludge (SMR3)?

Checks under SMR3 will only be carried out where the farmer uses sewage sludge.

The inspector will check:

- That the farmer has a Nutrient Management Plan that was prepared within the last 5 years.
- The quantity of treated sewage sludge being imported to the farm annually.
- That records of landspreading of treated residual sewage sludge are being maintained on farm.
- That restrictions on land usage following application of treated sludge are being observed.
- That the quantity of treated sewage sludge used does not exceed the amount permitted under the current nutrient management plan.

What are the requirements under SMR9 relating to plant protection products?

This statutory management requirement necessitates good farm practice whereby treatments with plant protection products are undertaken in conformity with the conditions of their approved uses. The inspector will check that:

- Only authorised or registered plant protection and biocidal products are stored and used on the farm.
- Plant protection and biocidal products are stored, handled and used properly as specified on current approved product labels.
- Plant protection products are used in accordance with the principles of good plant protection practice on approved crops.
- Records of acquisition, use and disposal of plant protection and biocidal products are maintained and available for inspection.
- Plant protection and biocidal products that are no longer approved for use are not being retained.

How are checks for hormones under SMR10 carried out?

Controls for this SMR are based on routine sampling and follow-up farm inspections and are not included in the standard Cross-compliance farm inspection.

What is required to be undertaken for the feed and food hygiene measure under SMR11?

Farmers must ensure that relevant food and feed safety requirements of food law are met at all stages of production, processing, and distribution and that food or feed is withdrawn from the market if it is not in compliance with food or feed safety requirements. Procedures must be in place to:

- Prevent contamination of food or feed from any source.
- Ensure that feed is sourced from registered operators.
- Ensure that milking facilities are in a good state of repair, are clean and the dairy is isolated from sources of contamination.
- Ensure that the milking process is carried out hygienically. In the majority of cases this will not require an inspection during the actual milking process.
- Ensure that cow housing is managed in a manner that keeps cows sufficiently clean.
- Ensure that dairy cows are in good health and that the stipulated withdrawal periods are complied with in respect of cows under treatment.
- Ensure that adequate controls are in place to prevent the introduction and spread of contagious diseases.
- Ensure that vermin is adequately controlled.
- Ensure that records e.g. animal remedies, feed records etc., are properly maintained.

SMR12 concerns the control of spongiform encephalopathies such as BSE. What must a farmer do?

It is a requirement under this SMR:

- Not to feed to ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats and deer) protein derived from mammals.
- Not to store feed, which contains protein derived from mammals except for feeding to cats and dogs.
- To report any animal suspected of being infected by a Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (e.g. BSE) to the competent authority.

How are the requirements under SMRs 13, 14, 15 on the control of notifiable diseases checked?

Farmers must notify the Department of Agriculture and Food if they know or suspect animals or carcasses to be infected with notifiable diseases, such as Foot and Mouth, Swine Vesicular and Bluetongue. Details of such diseases are available at the local Department of Agriculture and Food office. These inspections will only be conducted where such disease outbreaks may have occurred.

What is involved in a GAEC inspection?

You are obliged to maintain your land in good agricultural and environmental condition.

The inspector will check that:

- There is no evidence of soil erosion. For example finely tilled soils not sown, severe poaching by livestock, overgrazing of all lands, both enclosed and commonage, and sand dunes.
- There is no evidence of soil structure being damaged by machinery. For example misuse of machinery in waterlogged conditions.
- That the minimum level of maintenance has been complied with. For example that the management regime for permanent pasture (grazing, cutting, topping) is adequate to allow agricultural production to take place the following year.
- That tillage crops are grown under normal husbandry conditions and land under set-aside is managed in accordance with Single Payment Scheme Terms and Conditions.
- That there is no damage to habitats designated as NHA (Natural Heritage Areas), SPA (Special Protected Area) or SAC (Special Areas of Conservation) or to monuments or archaeological sites.

- That there is no encroachment of invasive species, spread of noxious weeds, burning of growing vegetation between 1st March and 31st August and that external farm boundaries are stockproof where stock are present on the holding.

What are the additional Cross-compliance checks for 2007?

There are three additional SMRs dealing with welfare issues for animals/calves/pigs being introduced under Cross-compliance for 2007. These are the final three SMRs under the Single Payment Scheme. As this is the first year a more detailed checklist is being provided here. What are the main issues?

SMR18 deals with the welfare of animals in general while SMR16 and SMR17 deal with some additional welfare requirements for calves and pigs respectively. All animal welfare checks are based on the following general principles.

Farm animals must be free:

- From thirst, hunger and malnutrition.
- From discomfort.
- From pain, injury and disease.
- From fear or distress and be able to express normal behaviour.

Animal welfare checklist for Cross-compliance applicable from 2007 onwards.

What are the requirements in respect of SMR18 concerning all animals kept for farming purposes?

- Animals must be cared for by a sufficient number of competent staff and must be inspected at appropriate intervals.
- Sick or injured animals must be cared for appropriately without delay.
- Records of medicinal treatment and mortalities must be maintained for at least three years.
- Animals must be provided with adequate freedom of movement and with sufficient space for their needs.
- Materials used for accommodation and equipment must not be harmful to animals and must be capable of being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Ventilation should be sufficient to avoid harm to animals.
- Adequate natural or artificial light must be provided (minimum 8 hours).
- Feeding and watering equipment must be constructed, located and maintained so that contamination of food and water is minimised.
- Animals kept outdoors must be given sufficient protection from adverse weather conditions, predators and risks to their health.
- Automated and mechanical equipment essential for the health and well-being of animals must be adequately managed and maintained and where defects are discovered, appropriate safeguards must be put in place.
- An artificial ventilation system where used, must have an adequate backup system in the event of failure and an alarm system must be provided, maintained and regularly tested.
- Animals must be provided with an appropriate diet and must have access to feed at appropriate intervals.
- Animals must have access to a suitable water supply or other fluid source to satisfy their intake needs.
- Each animal must have access to food at the same time as others in a group where animals are not fed ad lib or by an automatic feeding system.
- A substance must not be administered to an animal that is detrimental to its health or welfare nor should an animal remedy be administered which is not in accordance with legislation.
- Disbudding, dehorning, castration, teeth clipping and tail docking procedures carried out on animals must be in accordance with requirements.
- Natural and/or artificial breeding procedures must not be practiced that are likely to cause suffering or injury to animals.
- Animals must not be kept which have a genetic or physical defect that has a detrimental effect on their health or welfare.

Welfare requirements under SMR16 for calves.

- Calves must not be tethered except for one hour while feeding milk and their use must not cause harm.
- Calves must not be muzzled.
- Calves must not be confined to an individual pen after 8 weeks of age unless under veterinary certification.
- Adequate cleaning and disinfecting of housing, equipment and utensils used for calves must be provided.
- The lying area for calves must be comfortable, clean and adequately drained and floors must not adversely affect calves.
- Appropriate bedding must be provided for calves less than two weeks old.
- Calves must not be kept in individual pens with solid walls, that prevent visual and physical contact with other calves, unless with veterinary certification.
- Electrical circuits and equipment must not pose a risk of electric shock to a calf.
- Calves must be provided with bovine colostrum within the first six hours of life.

Note: A calf is any bovine animal less than six months of age.

Welfare requirements under SMR17 for Pigs.

The requirements for pigs are extensive and are specific to the category of pig i.e. fattening pigs, sows and boars and piglets.

Further information relating to animal welfare issues including pigs is available from local Department of Agriculture and Food offices or the Department's website at www.agriculture.gov.ie

Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs)

SMR1 - Conservation of Wild Birds • **SMR2** - Protection of Groundwater • **SMR3** – Sludge
SMR4 – Nitrates • **SMR5** - Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna,
SMR6, 7, 8 & 8a - Identification and Registration of Animals (Bovine, Ovine, Porcine),
SMR9 - Plant Protection Products (Pesticides) • **SMR10** – Hormones • **SMR11** - Food Hygiene,
SMR12 – Feed • **SMR13** - Foot and Mouth • **SMR14** - Swine Vesicular Disease,
SMR15 – Bluetongue • **SMR16** - Animal Welfare (Calves) • **SMR17** - Animal Welfare (Pigs),
SMR18 - Animal Welfare (General) • **GAEC** - Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition.

Farm Advisory System.

Under Article 13 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1782/2004 each Member State is required to establish an approved Farm Advisory System (FAS) to advise farmers on land and farm management. The advice shall cover at least the Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) referred to in Chapter 1 of the Regulation (Cross-compliance). Participation by farmers is voluntary.

Ireland now has an advisory system in place and the names of the approved advisory bodies are published on the Department's website under Cross-compliance.

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