DAFM Nitrates Div. Circular No. 01/2018 - FAS Advisers

Subject: Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters Regulations (S.I. No 605/2017)

A. Soil Phosphorus Build-Up Programme

Under article 16(5) of the Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters Regulations (S.I. No 605/2017), effective from 1 January 2018, grassland farmers now have the option of using increased Phosphorus (P) build-up levels to rectify soil phosphorus deficiency. This new provision applies only to the more intensively stocked grassland farmers, with stocking rates of 130+ kg N/ha.

1. Farmers wishing to avail of increased P build-up levels must ensure that a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) is submitted to DAFM using the Teagasc on-line NMP, prepared by a Farm Advisory Service (FAS) advisor. Soil analysis is required including for soil Organic Matter (OM) content unless it is certified that soils on a holding are mineral soils, or the advisor certifies they are organic soils and build up rates will not be used. The P build-up programme shall be valid for a period of 4 years.

2. For those farmers applying for a Nitrates Derogation in 2018 and who wish to use the new P build-up rates (as contained in table 13B of S.I. 605/2017), the on-line NMP submitted satisfies DAFM notification requirements.

3. For non-derogation farmers who wish to use the new P build-up rates, a copy of the Teagasc on-line NMP must be emailed to DAFM at buildup@agriculture.gov.ie by 31 Dec 2018.

4. To ensure the protection of the environment, farmers using the increased P build-up rates are required to participate in a dedicated KT programme, delivered by a FAS advisor, by 31 December 2018.

Teagasc is providing training for FAS advisors who wish to deliver the P build-up KT programme to farmers. This training will include nutrient management planning for best environmental outcomes, phosphorus loss risk & mitigation, maximising organic manures. The dates for delivery of this training for FAS Advisers are -

- Tuesday 20 February 2018 - Firgrove Hotel, Mitchelstown, Co Cork
  Click here to register

- Friday 23 February 2018 – Abbeyleix Manor Hotel, Abbeyleix, Co Laois
  Click here to register

- Tuesday 6th March 2018 at Athlone Springs Hotel, Athlone
  Click here to register

FAS advisors wishing to participate in this KT programme must register, this is done by clicking on the above relevant link.

FAS advisors are required to deliver this training module to farmers by 31 December 2018. Please note that farmers will not receive payment for attendance at this course.
B. Soil Organic Matter Testing in Designated ‘Peaty’ Areas

Article 16(3)(d) of the Regulations requires that from 1 January 2018 where a soil test is being carried out in a designated ‘peaty’ area (soil OM content of 20%+), as defined on the Teagasc/EPA Indicative soils map, the test must include soil organic matter analysis.

1. Farmers and advisors can determine if a land parcel is in this ‘peaty’ area by means of the DAFM LPIS mapping system and applying the OM layer.

2. Soil OM analysis is not required where a FAS advisor certifies that soils are mineral soils. This declaration must be provided to the herd-owner stating relevant details i.e. herdowner name, address, herd number, LPIS parcel number(s), signed and dated by the advisor.

3. Soil OM analysis is not required where a FAS advisor certifies that the soils in question are ‘peaty’ soils and build-up rates will not be used.

4. The P fertilisation rate for soils with 20%+ OM content must not exceed the amounts permitted for Index 3 soils as per footnote 2 of Tables 13A and 13B of S.I. No 605/2017.

Dated 12 February 2018