

# The Nitrates Directive in 15 minutes



**Alan Morrow**  
**Countryside Management Branch**  
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Department of  
**Agriculture and  
Rural Development**

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# Context

- Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) – target of good status for all waters by 2015
- EC Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC)
- Nitrates Action Programme (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2006 and the Phosphorus (Use in Agriculture) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2006 – a key role in delivering an improvement in water quality



# Nitrates Directive Action Programme

- Minimum storage capacity
- Closed periods for spreading fertilisers
- Fertiliser application limits
- Spreading methods / conditions
- Record keeping











# Requirements

## **Minimum storage capacity**

- 26 weeks for pig and poultry farms
- 22 weeks for other farms

## **Closed spreading period**

- Chemical N fertiliser must not be applied 15 Sept – 31 Jan
- Organic manure, excluding FYM and dirty water, must not be applied 15 Oct – 31 Jan

## **Fertiliser application limits**

- 170 kgN/ ha/year farm limit for nitrogen from livestock manure
- Chemical N a maximum of 272 kg N/ha/year
- Chemical P can only be applied where a soil requirement can be demonstrated

## **Farm Nutrient application**

- Minimum distance from waterways
- Field and weather conditions
- Spreading methods
- Application rate

## **Records**

- Land area
- Livestock numbers
- Fertiliser details including import / export of slurry

# Farm Nutrient Management Scheme - a substantial investment by the agriculture industry and government





10 metres



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# Efficient use of farm nutrients benefits the environment and the bank balance



Irish Farmers Journal 5 April 2008

# Where is DARD when things go wrong?

- Referral following pollution incident
  - EHS
  - Loughs Agency
- Referral following farm inspection
  - NIFCC (FQAS)
- Farmer request for advice



# Aiming for efficient farm businesses alongside healthy waterways



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