

Keeping on top of cross-compliance

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LIVESTOCK farmers have been reminded of their cross-compliance obligations during the winter months – especially related to overwintering stock and spreading sewage sludge.

Simon Draper, cross-compliance technical adviser, said cattle and sheep grazing on outlying fields or fodder crops should be provided with a dry lying area to ‘ensure their welfare meets cross-compliance regulations’.

“This can either be an area which has been strawed down or the ground beneath a shelter. For fodder crops the lying area would ideally be somewhere which has not been cropped so that poaching is kept to a minimum.

“Providing these areas allow animals to get out of wet areas, reducing the risk of health problems such as foot and leg ailments.”

Mr Draper said that plants would meet much of an animal’s water requirement, clean drinking water also needed to be supplied.

“This could be as simple as a 50-gallon drum cut in half and filled with water,” he said.

Moving onto the application of sewage sludge, Mr Draper said although water companies and their contractors took a lot of responsibility farmers still had to meet ‘rigorous standards’, both as a legal requirement and to meet cross-compliance rules.

This includes checking the following:


- The sewage sludge and field soil have both been sampled and analysed.
- Application rates mean there are no excessive amounts of heavy metals applied, and the field being treated does not have high heavy metal levels or a pH of 5 or above.
- The sludge is not applied to any field where fruit or vegetable crops are being grown or harvested at the time of application, and subsequent crops that are eaten raw must not be harvested for ten months after application.
- Animals are not grazed or forage crops harvested within three weeks of application.
- Where untreated sewage sludge is being applied it is worked into soil within 24 hours of application.


Mr Draper said nutrient needs of crops must also be taken into account, and the amount of

other fertilisers adjusted to reflect levels of elements provided by the sludge.

And in an NVZ, calculations must be made relating to the N content of the sludge to show any adjustments made to application rates.

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