

Update on the Northern Ireland Farm Advisory System

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Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**
www.dardni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland



1m. hectares of land

- 80% grassland
- 14% hill or rough land
- 6% crops & vegetables

Average farm size 39 ha

Average size of dairy herd 69 cows

Average size of suckler herd 16 cows

Northern Ireland Agriculture

% of Gross output

Dairy	34.1
Cattle	22.2
Sheep & Wool	3.4
Pigs	5.5
Poultry	14.2
Cereals	3.3
Potatoes	1.7
Horticulture	5.2
Other	10.3

Note the importance of grass based cattle enterprises and intensive pig and poultry enterprises.

Farming in Northern Ireland

- 26,000 farm businesses
- 40,000 landowners receiving Single Farm Payment
- 7,000 businesses receiving more than €15,000/year

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)

- Is the designated authority to ensure that a Farm Advisory System is provided.
- Promotes sustainable development of farm businesses through its programmes.

DARD Business Development Programmes :

- Education and training programmes,
 - Certificate to Degree courses available in a range of subjects.
 - Industry training programmes,
- Technology transfer programme,
- Benchmarking programme.

Delivered by



Farm Advisory System

- Centrally co-ordinated by a group called 'Helping Farmers Comply Forum'.
- This body has representatives from
 - Policy
 - Veterinary
 - Development Service
 - Countryside Management
 - Inspection or Control

Helping Farmers Comply Forum

- Plans the communication by DARD to farmers on FAS
- Identifies areas where there are a high no. of breaches,
- Produces two bulletins per year to inform farmers about Cross Compliance issues that are causing breaches.

Farm Advisory System

Components of FAS in N. Ireland

- Training
- Internet
- Mass media
- Advice

Training - predicted outcomes by March 2009

Workshop	No. held	No. attended
Field Boundary Management	350	3600
Cross Compliance	360	4500
Dealing with Farm Wastes	224	2238
Nitrates	173	3180
Nitrates Derogation	33	1672
Nutrient Management Planning	90	1000

Workshops

- Key features

- Small groups of farmers of approx. 12 - 15,
- Held locally throughout the country,
- Delivered by a team of 20 farmer/trainers,
- Free of charge,
- Approximately 2 hours long.

Field Boundary Management



Dealing with Farm Wastes



Cross Compliance



Nitrates workshops



Internet

Rural Portal - www.ruralni.gov.uk

- Online services
 - Farm Nutrient Management Calculators
 - Aphis Online
- Cross Compliance reference material.
- 33,196 unique visitors*
- 13,710 unique visitors* to online services

(* *have visited the website more than once*)

Calculators to help farmers comply with the Nitrates Action Programme

- Livestock Manure Nitrogen Loading Calculator
- N Max for Grassland
- Crop Nutrient Recommendation Calculator
- Phosphorus Balance Calculator
- Livestock Manure Storage Calculator

also

Aphis Online for online registration of cattle births, deaths and movement

Mass Media output in 2007

- 88 Press articles
- 8 Sets of Management Notes for press
- 5 Publications & 1 Bulletin sent to all Single Farm Payment claimants

Example of advice to farmers

- Farm Nutrient Management Scheme

This scheme gave grant-aid to farmers to construct manure storage and it was a key element in Helping Farmers Comply with Nitrates regulations.

Farmers needed help to plan the most cost effective solution for their farms.



Farm Nutrient Management Scheme

In 2007/8 28 of CAFRE's Livestock Development Advisers devoted 2900 working days to help over 2000 farmers avail this scheme.



