

## A monthly briefing for UK farmers - January 2018

- In England the **Growth Programme** has been given a further £45m of funding. The Programme tends to fund larger projects (min. grant £35,000) and is delivered through 37 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). For those looking to fund smaller items, the **Countryside Productivity Small Grant Scheme** is expected to open in January. Similar to the Welsh Farm Business Grant Scheme, there will be a set list of eligible items and a fixed grant payable on each. Funding of 40% for grants of between £3,000 and £12,000 is expected. The application process will be much simpler than other grants.
- Four new packages will be available in England under the **Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)** this year to try and boost uptake; Arable Offer, Lowland Grazing Offer, Upland Offer and Mixed Farming Offer. These will be in addition to the classic Mid and Higher tier agreements already available. The application process will be shorter and simpler, and (importantly) the packages will be non-competitive, making it more like the old ELS scheme. In addition, the CSS **Hedgerow and Boundaries Grant** will also be available again in 2018. It is expected to open in January, individual grants have risen from a £5,000 limit to £10,000. *Contact your TAC consultant to discuss making an application.*
- It is looking increasingly likely that the whole of Wales will be designated as a **Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ)**. Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs has said she is *'minded to introduce a whole Wales approach to tackling nitrate pollution from agriculture'*. However, it is unclear what the new rules will be under the new designation and whether they will be as stringent as they currently are in the areas of Wales (and England) already designated as NVZs. The Welsh Government has said over the coming months it will *'work with stakeholders to get the right balance of regulatory measures, voluntary initiatives and investment'*.
- New **'Farming Rules for Water'** will be introduced in England as from 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018. The rules aim to; keep soil on the land, match nutrients to the crop and soil needs and keep livestock manures out of water. *It is not exactly clear how they interact with the current NVZ and Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) rules, but if farmers are adhering to SMR 1 (NVZs) and GAECs 4 and 5 it looks like they will already be compliant.* To this end the new **'Guide to Cross Compliance in England 2018'** has been published online. Paper versions will not be sent out. There are no new rules for 2018. Copies can be downloaded from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/668684/Cross-Compliance\\_2018\\_guide\\_v1.0.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/668684/Cross-Compliance_2018_guide_v1.0.pdf)
- **The Early Bird Survey** undertaken by The Andersons Centre for the AHDB, suggests that there will be a small decline in the wheat area (-2%) for GB harvest 2018 compared with 2017. Spring barley is expected to continue its rise (+3%). The OSR area is forecast to see a strong rebound (+9%), with pulses, hit by the change to pesticide usage on Nitrogen Fixing Crops for EFA, down by 6%.
- Member States have agreed on criteria for identifying **endocrine disruptors** in pesticides. The effect on PPP availability is still uncertain, depending on the precise definition, up to 30 currently-available active ingredients could be removed from farmers' toolkits. The vote on **neonicotinoids** has been delayed until March, this would see the current ban extending to non-flowering crops such as sugar beet and cereals.
- Rising **milk production** in the EU and globally is putting downward pressure on the dairy markets. Muller had already announced a price cut from 1<sup>st</sup> January and now others have followed suit including Meadow Foods, Glanbia and Sainsbury's cost tracker. Dairy Crest has said it will be holding its price until February.

## Spotlight on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)

Get NVZ compliant for the New Year. In 2016 29.5% of NVZ inspections failed, resulting in BPS penalties. How familiar are you with the regulations? Do you know what records to keep to be compliant?

Those who farm within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone must comply with the regulations which are contained in SMR1 of the Cross Compliance Guidance. Not only are there a lot of rules to follow, but farmers must also maintain a number of records which need to be available on inspection. These include:

- A farm Risk Map, for all those who spread organic manures (including digestate and compost)
- Field records – crop type, sowing date, area & quantity of Nitrogen spread, date & method of spreading, type of manure & N content and the amount of N available to the crop
- Number and category of livestock on the holding throughout the year
- Calculation of whole farm Nitrogen limit
- Calculation of the amount of Nitrogen produced by livestock
- Sampling and analysis of manures and soils
- Plans of Nitrogen applications from organic manures and manufactured fertilisers for each crop in each field (arable and grassland)

For a number of other rules, although records do not have to be produced on inspection, you must be able to show that you are compliant, which by its very nature requires calculations to be undertaken and the 'logging' of N applications, these include;

- Not exceeding the N-Max limit for each crop type
- Not exceeding 170kg/Ha of nitrogen from livestock manure on the holding in a calendar year
- Manure storage capacity

At The Andersons Centre we appreciate that these rules are not only complicated but it also time consuming to maintain the required records. We therefore offer The Andersons Centre **NVZ Manager** to our clients. This removes the stress and helps to avoid any cross compliance breaches from NVZs by ensuring that records conform to the latest requirements. The NVZ Manager uses PLANET which was developed in conjunction with DEFRA and is therefore respected by inspectors. If you think your records would not stand up to scrutiny under inspection, or are baffled by all the red tape, give your TAC consultant a call and put your mind at rest.

For further information please visit our website:

[www.theandersonscentre.co.uk](http://www.theandersonscentre.co.uk)

Or contact a member of our team: 01664 503200