

The Andersons Centre – Latest News Update

16 March 2009

NVZ Livestock Manure Loading Derogation Confirmed

The EU has agreed to the NVZ derogation on whole-farm livestock manure limits. This will allow farmers in Great Britain to have a maximum whole-farm livestock manure application limit of 250 kg/Ha of Nitrogen rather than the existing 170 kg N/ha limit. *This will be of particular benefit to all-dairy farms which generally tend to struggle to meet the lower limit. They faced either the prospect of exporting manures, moving to more extensive systems, reducing cow numbers, changing cow types or ceasing dairying altogether.*

It is not all good news, as farmers wishing to make use of the derogation will have to apply to the Environment Agency (EA) on a yearly basis. It appears that this will not just be a simple request, but will require evidence to be presented and additional conditions met. Precise details will not be known until DEFRA issues a Guidance booklet on how to apply later in the year. However, it is thought that the requirements of the derogation are likely to include;

- a phosphate plan for every field
- regular sampling of the land for nitrogen and phosphates (once every 4 years)
- a requirement that 80% of the holding must be in grass (*potentially a problem if a large area of maize, wholecrop, or protein crops are grown*)
- restrictions on certain cultivation practices – for example requiring a crop with a high N usage after grassland has been ploughed-out, grassland on sandy soil only to be cultivated in the spring, no manure spreading on grassland that is to be ploughed in the autumn
- the crop rotation cannot include leguminous or other nitrogen-fixing plants (this does not include clover in grassland as long as it is below 50% of the sward).

It is likely that the rule change will be introduced in the autumn. Please contact us for further information and advice on the NVZ rules.

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