Guidance for farmers and contractors

**Slurry spreading after prolonged wet weather**

January 2016

### This guide is provided to help both farmers and contractors manage slurry following the recent wet weather, which is hampering both storage and spreading of slurry.

### **You are strongly advised to contact our Customer Service line - 0300 065 3000 - to notify us in advance of any actions you are intending to undertake**

In NVZ areas it is a legal requirement to not spread slurry on water-logged or frozen land. **Therefore, all requirements as stated in the “Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in Wales - Guidance to farmers”, still apply. If your slurry store is at risk of overflowing you are strongly advised contact our Customer Service line – 0300 065 3000 – and further advice will be provided.**

Section 5.2 of The Code of Good Agricultural Practice contains advice on slurry spreading. It includes the need to avoid spreading onto land which is water-logged or frozen hard

If slurry is spread in unsuitable conditions, the nutrients in the slurry will be mainly lost, the run-off causing water pollution and loss of fertiliser values to farmers. It can also damage soil and create problems for future crops.

A requirement of cross compliance is no trafficking by machinery on water logged land unless it meets specific requirements; the spreading of slurry is not one of these requirements.

If your store is full and your land is unsuitable for safely receiving slurry, first consider the options of providing temporary storage, as outlined in our Temporary Slurry Storage Guidance.

If you then feel there is no alternative but to spread slurry, it is very important that you:-

* Produce and follow a written contingency plan on how the risks will be minimised. The plan will need to be flexible, to reflect changing conditions, but can still be simple. For example you can use the risk map in your Manure Management Plan. Identify 'lower risk land'. Here the impact of slurry spreading will be less than on the "high risk land", which is still likely to be un-suitable.
* Spread as thinly as possible; no more than 30m3/ha. If possible allow three weeks between each spreading and target lighter land.
* Use as much land as safely possible, whilst maximising the no-spreading distance on down slope field edges and targeting land with good grass cover.
* Walk the fields before spreading to assess the risks of water pollution from slurry run-off and from soil damage.
* In NVZ areas, with sandy or shallow soils, it is a legal requirement to spread no more than 30m3/ha of slurry and to allow 3 weeks between each spreading until the end of February. On all other soils, the NVZ closed period remains in place until 31 January. Only after that date is spreading allowed and then the above guidance applies.
* Keep records of the quantity, date and field location of each application- this is a legal requirement in NVZ areas.

Do not import any organic material, such as sewage sludge, food processing wastes, or slurry/manure from other farms, unless you know you will be able to safely manage all materials safely through the 2016 growing season.

### **Regulatory Position.** It is an offence to cause or knowingly permit water pollution, with contractors also liable for legal action. We do not want to take enforcement action, but proof that you have followed this guidance would be a strong mitigation if pollution were then to arise. So please take the opportunity to speak to us before acting in a way which carries a high risk of pollution.