

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)



In October 2008 Defra confirmed details regarding the 'New Regulations' for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) in England. The New Regulations revise the rules for NVZs designated in 2002, but also extend the area of land designated as NVZs across England.

A key requirement of the New Regulations is the storage of organic manure on the farm, which is as follows:-

- 6 months (1 October to 1 April inclusive) storage capacity for pig slurry and poultry manure; and
- 5 months (1 October to 1 March inclusive) storage capacity for other livestock slurry, e.g. cattle slurry.

In order to establish what the on farm storage needs are, and if additional storage will be required to meet the New Regulations, all farmers must complete a calculation detailing slurry production and the existing slurry storage capacity.

For farmers with an existing NVZ area these calculations must be completed by 30th April 2009, for newly designated NVZ areas the deadline is

30th April 2010. For all farms within NVZs sufficient storage to meet the New Regulations must be in place by 1 January 2012.

A series of leaflets have been produced by Defra (nine in total) in respect of the new NVZ regulations. Leaflets three and four are the key documents regarding farm slurry production and slurry storage.

As a means of assessing the farming system in respect of the slurry storage requirements Acorus can undertake the following:-

- A farm visit to collate information regarding the types and numbers of livestock on the farm to calculate the farm's current slurry production.
- Discuss with the farmer any proposed changes to the farming system in the near future, e.g. expansion of the dairy herd, which may increase (or reduce) slurry production.
- Undertake a farmyard survey to measure the slurry storage facilities on the farm and any yard areas which discharge into the slurry storage facilities.





- How will the farm expansion proposals be affected?
- Can the farming business afford the investment required in the new slurry storage facilities?
- Would now be the time to cease the livestock enterprises and consider alternative uses for the farm buildings?

Ultimately Acorus can undertake the following:-

- Discuss with the farmer the possibility of yard areas (and roofs) being kept clean and directed away from the slurry storage system.
- Produce calculations regarding slurry production and slurry storage for the current farming system.
- The calculations produced will satisfy the initial requirement of the regulations. However, where there is a deficit in the slurry storage facilities the farmer will then need to consider the options for the farming business to ultimately meet the storage requirement.

- Design of new slurry handling facilities.
- Prepare and submit planning applications for new slurry handling facilities.
- Undertake pre-application consultation with Local Planning Authorities regarding the potential change of use of farm buildings.
- Planning and design work for farm diversification projects.

When the calculations have been completed the following are points to consider for the farming business:-

- Can the existing farming system be modified to reduce the amount of slurry produced (i.e. re-directing clean water) and hence reducing the need for additional storage?
- Can new slurry storage facilities be adequately accommodated within the existing farm complex?



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