



Diffuse Pollution – Reducing the Risk

“Every loss of soil and nutrients is a loss to the farm business”

Clean and healthy water is an integral part of Scotland’s culture. We need to ensure its protection for our drinking water, the success of our world-renowned products, our important wildlife, and our tourism and leisure industry. Diffuse pollution has been identified as one of the key impacts to our water environment.

Reduce pollution risk at source by:

- Timing fertiliser application to avoid heavy rainfall.
- Planning fertiliser application using Risk Assessment for Manures and Slurries (RAMS) and PLANET Scotland. This could save you money.
- Minimising soil erosion.
- Minimising dirty water around the steading.
- Ensuring contractors and farm workers are aware of the rules.

Reduce the risk of run-off by:

- Managing soil structure and compaction.
- Managing tramline and farm track run-off.
- Keeping clean and dirty water separate on the farm steading.
- Providing an adequate vegetated buffer zone.
- Creating bankside woodlands, shelter belts, hedges and wetlands.



Examples of good (L) and poor (R) soil structure.



Vegetated buffer zones can protect water quality.



Applying slurry to meet crop demand can make best use of nutrients on the farm.

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Farming and other industries in Scotland are dependent on clean and plentiful water. Diffuse pollution, driven by rainfall and land management, can damage our water quality.

Good practice to protect water quality

Most pollutants only become a problem once they leave the field or stading. There are key steps you can consider to reduce pollution risks and keep on the right side of the regulations, for example:

- Making best use of inputs, e.g. nutrients from manures and fertilisers.
- Identifying high pollution risk areas on the farm.
- Managing drainage appropriately.
- Protecting watercourses through buffer zones or changes to current practice.
- Protecting soils; land management affects the speed water runs off the land taking soil and nutrients to watercourses.
- Understanding threats to water quality in your area. Are you within a bathing water, drinking water or catchment important for wildlife?

How can you benefit?

Reducing diffuse pollution risks from your farm can:

- Make your business more efficient; for example, nutrient planning optimises fertiliser use.
- Improve water quality on your farm.
- Improve efficiency. Better use of resources could increase the resilience of farming to climate change, floods and droughts.
- Keep you on the right side of the regulations and help to protect your farm payments.

Need more information?

More detailed guidance is available, for example The 4 Point Plan (contains RAMS), the Farm Soils Plan and PEPFAA code. PLANET Scotland is a free nutrient management tool that also ensures you comply with NVZ Action Programmes.

For additional information about reducing pollution risks and benefitting the farm business, see www.farmingandwaterscotland.org Alternatively speak to your agricultural consultant.



This fact sheet is intended to act as a reminder of the rules. To see the rules in more detail, see www.farmingandwaterscotland.org