

Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Swales

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For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#).

Aim

The aim of this item is to improve water quality by creating a strategically placed swale to slow, treat and control run-off that currently discharges direct to a watercourse or freshwater drain and to direct flow to a point (e.g. a pond) where it can be safely discharged.

Eligibility

Any land is eligible, provided that it meets all of the requirements set out below.

Where a swale receives run-off from a steading, you must combine this option with at least one of the following associated capital items (except where the swale only accepts roof run-off or is located on an intensive pig or poultry unit):

- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems - Pond](#)
- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems - Wetland](#)
- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems - Sediment, Traps and Bunds](#)

Spatial targeting



[Map of target area – Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Swales \(PDF, Size: 1.9 MB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/95559---AECS---Target-Map-Review-for-2021---Swales.pdf> This item is available within the target area shown on this map.

You can check if this item is available on your holding using the search targeting tool which can be found on any of the following AECS guidance pages:

[AECS Home](#)

[Eligibility](#)

[How to Apply](#)

[Management Options and Capital Items](#)

[Capital Items](#)

Application requirements

You must prepare a plan which must include a map of the relevant fields / steading identifying the location of the rural sustainable drainage system feature and the point to which it discharges.

For rural sustainable drainage system features receiving run-off from a steading, the plan must include a calculation of the size of the rural sustainable drainage system feature(s) based on the amount of run-off draining to it (treatment volume).

You must also produce a [diffuse pollution steading assessment](#).

It is important that the assessment clearly identifies the source of the run-off to be collected, where it currently discharges to (e.g. river) and the pathway - how the run-off gets from where it originates to the watercourse.

Requirements

- only run-off which currently discharges direct to a watercourse or freshwater drain and which does not fall within the definition of slurry or silage effluent may be conveyed to a swale *
- run-off from pesticide handling or washdown areas must not be conveyed to a swale

* Unless the run-off is being conveyed to a constructed farm wetland designed in accordance with the Constructed Farm Wetland Design Manual – Scottish Environment Protection Agency / Northern Ireland Environment Agency – 2008.

Payment

You can claim £21.75 per square metre (excluding fencing).

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- the location and extent of the swale
- that only run-off which does not fall within the definition of slurry or silage effluent is conveyed to a swale *
- that run-off from pesticide handling or wash-down areas is not conveyed to a swale

* Unless the run-off is being conveyed to a constructed farm wetland designed in accordance with the Constructed Farm Wetland Design Manual – Scottish Environment Protection Agency / Northern Ireland Environment Agency – 2008.

Additional guidance

[Supporting guidance is available for this item.](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change
Application Requirements	Insertion of link to Diffuse Pollution Risk assessment and Diffuse Pollution Steading Assessment web page

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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