Supporting guidance for Hard Standings for Troughs and Gateways

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Gateways and areas around troughs are particularly prone to erosion due to constant use by livestock and / or machinery. This poses a significant risk of pollution if run-off from the area can enter watercourses etc.

The ideal solution for gateways is usually to move the gate to another location where any run-off cannot directly reach a watercourse. Where this is not possible, the risk of pollution can be reduced by creating hard standings around the gateway. Hard standings around troughs can also help to reduce pollution risks.

What needs to be done

The first step is to prepare a simple plan to identify the risks posed by existing gateways and troughs on the farm.

Note: Where an assessment has been carried out as part of the diffuse pollution audit there is no need to carry out the assessment noted below.

Identify high risk gateways and sites

Using a map, highlight all ditches, burns and rivers on the farm or area of land plus the sites of all existing gateways and troughs.

The next step is to assess the risks these sites pose to the water environment. This assessment should consider the following:

- proximity to watercourses – the closer the area is to a watercourse, the greater the risk. Sites which are located within 10 metres will pose the highest risk
- slope of the land will be a significant factor – the steeper the downward slope towards a watercourse the greater the risk. Slopes of over three degrees (1 in 14) should be considered moderate risk and those above eight degrees (1 in 7) considered high risk
- past experience – sites where polluting run-off has occurred in the past should always be considered as high risk
- frequency of use – those sites which are used most often or are used during the wetter months are more likely to be prone to poaching and erosion.

Once the assessment has been completed, identify on the map those sites which pose a potential pollution risk. Where there are opportunities to relocate sites lower risk areas, this should be indicated on the map together with their new proposed location. Similarly, all sites where hard standings are to be installed should also be identified.

Re-locating gateways

This option will provide a contribution towards the cost of a new gate and towards the cost of labour to create the new gateway.

There is a separate option available for fencing to stock proof the original gateway where required.

In some circumstances, such as where gateways act as an exit route for run-off from the field, it can be beneficial to block off the old gateway using a bund and / or a sediment trap to help capture eroded soil. There is a separate capital option for creating bunds and sediment traps.

- Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Sediment Traps and Bunds

Creating hard standings

This will typically involve excavating the area, installing a permeable geotextile membrane and filling with a well compacted layer of aggregate.

The depth of excavation required will depend on the particular site but a depth of 200 millimetres should be the minimum considered. The required dimensions of the hard standing area will vary from site to site, but should be primarily based on the extent of the current erosion.

When creating the hard standing ensure that the run-off from the area will not directly enter a watercourse or ditch etc. This may be achieved by ensuring the slope sheds run-off into the field, away from the adjacent burn or ditch etc.

Alternatively, run-off could be diverted to a swale or other rural sustainable drainage feature. There are separate capital options for creating these.

- Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Sediment Traps and Bunds
- Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Swales

Further information

- The Prevention of Environmental Pollution From Agricultural Activity (PEPFAA) Code of Good Practice
- Farm and Water Scotland Know the Rules Guide

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