

Farm Environment Assessment

This is an old version of the page

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

Introduction

You will need to prepare a Farm Environment Assessment if you are proposing to apply for any Agri-Environment Climate Scheme management options or capital items, unless you are only applying for the following options:

- [Improving Public Access](#)
- [Coastal Embankment Breaching, Lowering or Removal](#)
- [River Embankment Breaching, Lowering or Removal](#)
- [Restoring \(Protecting\) River Banks](#)
- [Slurry Storage](#) (as standalone capital item)
- [Organics Farming: Maintenance](#)
- [Organics Farming: Conversion](#)

In addition, all applications – apart from Improving Public Access – must undertake a diffuse pollution field-based risk assessment – [see below](#)

If you wish to apply for certain options relating to water quality, you must also prepare a diffuse pollution stabling assessment – [see below](#).

[Funding](#) is available to help you to complete the Farm Environment Assessment.

Farm Environment Assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to identify opportunities for beneficial environmental management through a review of all the main habitats and species on the farm.

The assessment will also highlight any key diffuse pollution risks on the land.

You will need to produce a:

- Farm Environment Map
- Farm Environment Table
- Farm Environment Management Map

To complete the Farm Environment Assessment effectively you will need to recognise basic habitat types and produce a Farm Environment Map showing these.

While mapping the habitats you will also need to consider the impact of current management and the needs of the key species present in these habitats, and any key diffuse pollution risks.

This information can then be added to the Farm Environment Table where you can provide more detail about habitat condition.

The process of collecting this information should help you to identify the priorities for management and the best options to apply for, both for the benefit of the habitats and species, and to manage any diffuse pollution risks.

You will need to show your chosen scheme management options and capital items in a Farm Environment Management Map.

Depending on the size and nature of your land and the risks identified, you may either identify and map the diffuse pollution risks within the general Farm Environment Assessment, or prepare a separate Diffuse Pollution Field Assessment.

You may subsequently have to prepare a specialist management plan to meet the application requirements of some of the management options and capital items, which will require you to go into further detail at that stage.

Farm Environment Map

The map should clearly show the following:

- farm boundary
- existing habitats, using the habitats listed in the [Farm Environment Table template](#) , and the recommended map colourings as far as possible
- boundaries of the following protected places for nature: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and boundaries of protected places for history, e.g. a Scheduled Monument. If you find this makes the map too complex, you may wish to provide a separate map but this must also show the farm boundary
- any diffuse pollution risks identified (unless showing them on a separate map). These should be identified on the map as a dot, line or shape as appropriate showing their location together with a number

The map below is an example of a Farm Environment Map.



[Farm Environment Map \(PDF, Size: 430.1 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Farm-Environment-Map---December-2015.pdf> An example of a Farm Environment Map

Farm Environment Table

The supporting table should begin with a short summary paragraph describing the farm. This should include details, such as farm type, size, agricultural activities, livestock numbers and type, crops grown and tenure.

Each habitat present should be described in a separate row, with details of habitat type, use, condition, and the presence of any species of interest, together with any issues, risks or opportunities.

Where diffuse pollution risks have been found you should list them in the table using the corresponding numbers on the map and give a brief outline of the risk (unless identifying them separately in a separate table).

If no diffuse pollution risks have been found, just state that 'no diffuse pollution risks identified'.

You can download a template for the table and an example of how to complete it below.



[Farm Environment Table \(MS Word, Size: 136.8 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Farm-Environment-Table-template-AECS-Dec-2015.docx> An editable template for the Farm Environment Table



[Farm Environment Table - example \(PDF, Size: 218.5 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS---Review-2015---FEA-example-table---Feb-2016.pdf> An example of how to complete the Farm Environment Table

Farm Environment Management Map

The management map should clearly show where the proposed management options and capital items are to be undertaken on the farm.

Each piece of management activity should be individually labelled with a map letter for identification purposes and shown using a clear coloured map key. These map letters should be used in the online application.

For example, **HM1** could be used for existing hedgerow management under the Management or Restoration of Hedgerows option and **HC1** could be used to reflect new hedgerow creation under the Creation of Hedgerows option.

SR1 could be used for Species-rich Grassland Management.

Associated capital items may have the same map letter to avoid the map becoming cluttered. For example, stock fencing and hedge planting capital items for the same new hedge could be identified by the same map letter.

Similarly, capital items associated with a management option may be shown by a line or symbol and have the same map letter. For example, fencing on a water margin, as long as the map key clearly identifies the capital items.

You can download an example of a Farm Environment Management Map.



[Farm Environment Management Map \(PDF, Size: 384.9 kB\)](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Farm-Environment-Management-Map---December-2015.pdf)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Farm-Environment-Management-Map---December-2015.pdf> An example of a Farm Environment Management Map

Diffuse pollution risk assessment

The purpose of this is to carry out a basic assessment of the diffuse pollution risks that may be present on your holding.

This will help to identify the options or actions that may be appropriate to help deal with these risks and where they should be located to maximise their effectiveness.

Field Assessment

To complete the field assessment it will be necessary to walk the fields with a view to identifying any diffuse pollution risks and to look for opportunities to reduce these risks.

Field Map

Using a map of an appropriate scale record as a line, point or shape as appropriate any diffuse pollution risks identified.

Depending on the size and nature of your land and the risks identified, you may either identify the risks on the Farm Environment Assessment map or prepare a separate Diffuse Pollution Field Map, as shown in the example below.

Each of these points can be individually numbered on the map and noted in a corresponding table which will describe the diffuse pollution risk found and what action can be taken to deal with it.

The location of all surface waters such as burns, ditches, ponds and wetlands should also be recorded.

Diffuse pollution risk factors will vary depending on the type of farm (arable or livestock) and on local factors such as, proximity to watercourses, slope of land and soil types, access of livestock to watercourses, location of gateways and tracks etc.

Guidance on factors to consider when carrying out a field diffuse pollution risk assessment can be found in the accompanying guidance for the options such as 'Alternative Watering for Livestock' and the options for 'Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems'.

[For further guidance click here](#)

Diffuse pollution steading assessment

The Farm Environment Assessment should help identify key diffuse pollution risk factors from the land.

However where water quality options are to be applied for, a slightly more detailed assessment should be carried out covering any diffuse pollution risks from the steading.

There is further guidance below on what diffuse pollution risk factors should be considered and how to identify and record them.

The purpose of this exercise is to consider the whole farm, identify potential pollution risks and select the most appropriate options which will help you to manage the risks effectively.

You must complete this if you are applying for any of the following options:

- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Wetland](#)
- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Sediment Traps and Bunds](#)
- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Swales](#)
- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Retention Pond](#)
- [Hard Standings for Troughs and Gateways](#)
- [Livestock Crossing](#)
- [Livestock Tracks](#)
- [Managing Steading Drainage and Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems](#)
- [Pesticide Handling Facilities](#)
- [Water-use Efficiency – Irrigation Lagoon](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
Introduction	Clarification on requirements for diffuse pollution risk assessments	If you wish to apply for certain options relating to water quality, you will also need to prepare a Diffuse Pollution Steading Assessment – see below.	In addition, all applications – apart from Improving Public Access – must undertake a diffuse pollution field-based risk assessment – see below If you wish to apply for certain options relating to water quality, you must also prepare a diffuse pollution steading assessment – see below.
Farm Environment Map	Amendment to requirements	• boundaries of the following protected places for nature: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and boundaries of protected places for history, e.g. a Scheduled Monument. If you find this makes the map too complex, you may wish to provide a separate map.	• boundaries of the following protected places for nature: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and boundaries of protected places for history, e.g. a Scheduled Monument. If you find this makes the map too complex, you may wish to provide a separate map but this must also show the farm boundary.
	Updated example map (PDF document)		
Farm Environment Table	Updated template (Word document)		
	Updated example (PDF document)		
Farm Environment Management Map	Updated example map (PDF document)		
Diffuse pollution steading assessment	Section moved from above 'Diffuse pollution risk assessment' to below it		

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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