What's new for 2015?

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Under the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) some of the Cross Compliance rules are the same as in previous years – but some have changed.

The main changes to the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) and Statutory Mandatory Requirements (SMRs) are listed below, however you should read all guidance to make sure you understand all the rules and how they apply to your business.

Main changes:

- all GAECs and most of the SMRs have been renumbered
- some GAECs have been split or merged into other areas such as Greening
- what were the following rules are no longer part of Cross Compliance:
  - SMR 3 (sewage sludge)
  - SMRs 13, 14 and 15 (control of foot and mouth disease, certain animal diseases and bluetongue)
  - GAEC 2 (wind erosion)
  - GAEC 3 (soil capping)
  - GAEC 5 (functional field drainage systems)
  - GAEC 7 (arable crop rotation)
  - GAEC 8 (arable stubble management)
  - GAEC 9 (appropriate machinery use)
  - GAEC 10 (undergrazing)
  - GAEC 11 (overgrazing)
  - GAEC 12 (ploughing pasture of a high environmental / archaeological value)
  - GAEC 14 (application of lime and fertiliser on rough grazings / semi natural areas)
  - GAEC 18 (encroachment of unwanted vegetation)
  - some rules have been removed from the SMR 2 (Conservation of wild birds) and SMR 3 (Conservation of flora and fauna)
- under GAEC 1 (Establishment of buffer strips) a new rule has been introduced preventing cultivations and the application of pesticides within two metres of the top of the bank of watercourses
- under GAEC 6 (Maintenance of soil organic matter) a new rule has been introduced preventing the burning of arable stubbles
- under GAEC 7 (Retention of landscape features) a new rule has been introduced preventing the cultivation and the application of fertilisers and pesticides within two metres of the centre line of hedges. In addition, the restriction on cutting hedges has been extended by one month from the end of July to the end of August (no cutting from 1 March to 31 August) to cover the rearing as well as the bird nesting season
- **in order to help safeguard Scotland's TB-free status, the 30-day tolerance which has been applied for overdue TB tests has been removed. This means if a TB test becomes overdue by one day or more it will be considered to be a breach of Cross Compliance**

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