



# **Agri Climate Rural Environment Scheme**

**(ACRES)**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Tranche 1**

**10 oct 2022**

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## ACRES Frequently Asked Questions

### ACRES Actions to improve water quality

#### Management of Intensive Grassland Next to a Watercourse

##### **How do I know which watercourses can be selected for management of intensive grassland?**

Applicants must select this action on a parcel(s) contiguous to any watercourse(s) marked on GLAM as OSi Water line or Water single stream line.

##### **If farmers undertake Management of Intensively managed grassland along a watercourse as they are over 100 kgs organic N per ha – must they maintain a Stocking Rate over 100 kgs per ha for the 5 years of ACRES?**

No, only applicable to 2021 for Tranche 1.

### Riparian Buffer Strips

##### **Where can Riparian Buffer strips be created?**

Riparian buffer strips or zones-grass

and can only be created adjacent to small streams, surface drains, rivers, lakes or ponds

It is recommended that they should be targeted to areas on the farm identified in the EPA Pollution Impact Potential-Phosphorus (PIP-P) maps as high risk (Rank 1-3) and verified on the ground as a flow delivery point or pathway for surface runoff to an adjacent watercourse.

##### **Can a number of watercourse lengths of at least 10 m be selected for Riparian Buffer Strips, with livestock drinking access allowed on other lengths?**

Yes, partial watercourse allowed but Where a Riparian buffer strip or Riparian Buffer zone - SP is being created along an OSi Water line and/or a Water single stream line in a parcel, bovines are not permitted to access the watercourse at other locations in the parcel (drinking points are not permitted).

**Can a farmer over 170kg of organic nitrogen per hectare who has fenced their watercourses 1.5m under the Nitrates Derogation Scheme select a 1.5m Riparian Buffer strip and get paid for the existing fence.**

The farmer selecting the 1.5 m Buffer strip must fence off and additional 1.5m to any mandatory baseline requirements to be eligible for payment in ACRES.

**Can existing riparian grassland margins from REPS/AEOS/GLAS transfer automatically into ACRES by completing a strip?**

Yes, if it meets the specifications for ACRES.

The Riparian buffer strip width is measured from the top of the bank or the edge of the existing vegetation (if scrub or hedge is present) into the field.

#### Planting Trees in Riparian Buffer Zone

**Can Planting Trees in Riparian Buffer Zones get Tier 2 access where the watercourse is not High status or Vulnerable?**

Yes, they will be considered for Tier 2 access.

#### Extensively Grazed Pasture

**Which watercourses need to be fenced for Extensively Grazed Pasture?**

The applicable Watercourses for exclusion of bovines in Extensively Grazed pasture and some other area actions is the OSI Water Line (purple) and Water Single Stream line (Green) in GLAM. This is clarified in final specification.

**Is a temporary fence sufficient to fence the watercourse when bovines are present for Extensive Grazed Pasture action?**

Yes, once bovines are excluded from the watercourse and fence is required distance back.

**Do Extensively Grazed Pasture parcels need to be fenced?**

All Parcels must have a defined field boundary from the commencement of the contract i.e. hedgerow, drain, watercourse, fence etc. If no natural boundary in place to verify area a fence will have to be erected.

Where a split parcel is created on GLAM, these split parcels must have a defined field boundary from the commencement of the contract.

In Natura parcels, split parcels can only be created where an existing defined field boundary is already present, as erecting new fences in a Natura area may be prohibited.

**Can Extensively Grazed Pastures be selected on a LPIS exceeding 8ha?**

Yes. However, the farmer will only be paid for 8ha as this is the maximum area for payment

**Is there any limit to the presence of heather on Extensively grazed pasture?**

No.

**Is extensively grazed pasture acceptable on heath or boggy area and/or cut away bog?**

Yes, once its eligible under BISS and remains eligible for the remainder of the contract and also has an MEA greater than zero in 2022 BPS.

**Are there any limitations on topping for Extensively Grazed Pasture?**

Extensively grazed pastures cannot be topped before July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Low Input Grassland

**Do Low Input Grassland parcels need to be fenced?**

All Parcels must have a defined field boundary from the commencement of the contract i.e. hedgerow, drain, watercourse, fence etc. If no natural boundary in place to verify area a fence will have to be erected.

Where a split parcel is created on GLAM, these split parcels must have a defined field boundary from the commencement of the contract.

In Natura parcels, split parcels can only be created where an existing defined field boundary is already present, as erecting new fences in a Natura area may be prohibited.

**Are there any limitations on topping for Low Input Grassland?**

There are no restrictions to topping for Low Input Grassland. However, the scorecard assessment will be affected if the farmer tops too early

**Which watercourses need to be fenced Low Input Grassland?**

There is no mandatory fencing of watercourses required in LIG parcels. Damage to watercourse is addressed in the scorecard.

**Can current LPIS plots be split to facilitate silage cutting and Low Input Grassland?**

Yes, LPIS parcels can be split to create separate parcels for area based actions. All Split parcels will then digitized as a new LPIS in BISS 2023. Silage can be cut in the split that does not contain LIG.

Where a split parcel is created on GLAM, these split parcels must have a defined field boundary from the commencement of the contract.

In Natura parcels, split parcels can only be created where an existing defined field boundary is already present, as erecting new fences in a Natura area may be prohibited.

**If a farmer applies to ACRES for LIG but changes their mind next year, can they revert to Extensively Grazed Pasture(EGP)?**

No.

**Is the 3% heather assessed on the Claimed area or the Total Digitised area of a parcel?**

The Digitised area of the field must not contain more than 3% heather.

**Why have small umbels - pignut, yarrow and wild carrot been excluded from the LIG Scorecard?**

All Scorecards were updated after consultation between DAFM, NPWS and representatives from the CP teams

## Watercourse Definitions and additional Information

### **How can advisors identify vulnerable water areas?**

Vulnerable water areas can be identified on GLAM using the EPA Reference Layers

### **What is the criteria for identification of the high status objective waterbodies?**

High Status Water Objective catchment mapped areas were received from the EPA. These are also known as Blue Dot Catchments.

Over 50% of High Status Water Objective catchments are located within the CP zone

### **Does a farmer with bovines only have to fence off watercourses on parcels with an area-based action?**

Yes.

### **Do advisors have to use the PIP maps for Nitrate and Phosphate when creating an ACRES FSP**

Advisors do not have to use the PIP maps. However, it is advised to use them to identify areas at risk to nitrate and phosphate pollution and to assist in applying appropriate measures to limit potential run off.

## Tree planting and Hedgerow Actions

### **Is it ok to plant a new hedge alongside but just outside a Riparian margin?**

Yes, but the riparian buffer margin must be fenced and there must also be an additional fence outside the new hedgerow. One fence cannot be used for 2 actions

### **Where a farmer splits a field to create a fence for an area e.g. riparian zone and erects a permanent fence and a gate into it for maintenance, can the farmer plant a hedgerow on the other side of this fence (permanent pasture side) and erect a another fence to protect the hedge and receive full payment on it all?**

Each action requires a separate fence. If the new hedgerow has an additional fence on one side to protect it in addition to the fence that is in place for the Riparian zone, this would be acceptable.

**Can farmers undertake Coppicing and Hedge Laying under ACRES on hedges planted / laid or coppiced as an option in:**

- **REPS?** Only if they are suitable hedges
- **AEOS?** Only if they are suitable hedges
- **GLAS?** Only if they are suitable hedges
- **REAP?** No, these hedges would not be suitable

**Can an applicant select coppicing, laying and planting a new hedgerow up to the scheme limits and not select any other actions in the scheme?**

Yes, if in ACRES General, farmers can just choose these 3 actions.

**Where planting a new hedgerow on a boundary, the farmer must have control of and access to maintain both sides – does this automatically rule out boundary hedges between farmers? If so, how can farmers prove they have control and access to both sides of a hedge without owning the land on the far side.**

It is allowed once applicant has control of and access to maintain both sides. A letter of consent from the neighbouring landowner to maintain the boundary hedgerow would satisfy requirements.

**Can you plant a hedge in a field where you are doing Catch Crop?**

You cannot choose planting a new hedgerow as an action in a parcel where a Catch Crop has been selected in the application for the year 1 commitment. However, Catch Crop is rotational so it can rotate to another parcel in years 2-5 where a new hedge has been planted as long as the total contracted area for Catch Crop is delivered in each year of the contract.

**Can the Tree Planting action and Winter Bird Food Plot action be carried out on the same area?**

No, however you can split the parcel and select Winter Bird Food Split parcel in one part of the parcel and Tree planting in the remaining split parcel.



**Why can't trees be planted in mineral/good quality soils along rivers and watercourses where the lands are designated SAC?**

Validations in ACRES to block these actions in Natura lands are to ensure that any action requiring consent is not allowed or any activity that may have a potential negative effect on designated lands are blocked.

**Planting trees 'parkland' states '12m between trees'. Is this a minimum, or a maximum or has it to be exactly 12m between trees?**

This is only guidance for best practice, the minimum spacing requirement is 4 m.

**When selecting Tree belts for Capturing Ammonia from the Farmyard, does the farmyard have to be an active yard with cattle present through the winter?**

No, but ideally it would be.

**Geese and Swans**

**When choosing the parcels for geese and swans from within the potential Geese and Swan area on GLAMS – can chosen fields be scattered throughout the farm rather than contiguous?**

Yes, but only parcels that intersect the Geese and Swans Layer can be chosen for this action.

**Where the Geese and Swan layer crosses a field – can a farmer choose any part of the LPIS where the Geese and Swan layer intersects? If the farmer can only choose the part of the field covered by the Geese and Swan layer they will have to split the LPIS and fencing will be required which may not be good for the geese and swans?**

The Geese and Swans mapped layer must be included in any split parcel that is being selected for the Geese and Swans action.

All Parcels must have a defined field boundary from the commencement of the contract i.e. hedgerow, drain, watercourse, fence etc. If no natural boundary in place to verify area a fence will have to be erected.

Where a split parcel is created on GLAM, these split parcels must have a defined field boundary from the commencement of the contract.

In Natura parcels, split parcels can only be created where an existing defined field boundary is already present, as erecting new fences in a Natura area may be prohibited.

**If a farm has Geese and Swans area on the farm - does the farmer have to take the specified Geese and Swans action or can they choose other actions only knowing they won't get Tier 1 status for Geese and Swans?**

The applicant can choose not to take up Geese and Swan in the knowledge that won't be considered for Tier 1 entry. All Tier 1 actions are optional with the exception of commonage.

**There are large new areas in the Breeding waders and geese/swans shapefiles Are these maps correct?**

Yes.

#### [Environmental Management of Arable Fallow](#)

**What is the minimum and maximum area to be delivered for Environmental Management of Arable Fallow?**

The minimum area to be delivered is 1.5 hectares and the maximum area for payment is 5 hectares.

#### [Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance](#)

**Is there a reduced payment rate if you only have control of one side of the dry-stone walling action? It is not clear in the draft spec or do we assume it is half the payment rate?**

External farm stone walls entered for this action are payable at half rate except for external stone walls that front onto a public roadway, private laneway or water body where the farmer has control over both sides of the wall for maintenance.

Internal wall lengths must only be counted once and must be maintained on both sides.

To claim the full rate for any external stone walls, the farmer must have control over both sides and these must be selected as Traditional Dry Stone Maintenance-Internal on GLAM.

## Winter Bird Food

### **Can you sow Winter Bird Food in the same LPIS that Wild Bird Cover was sown in for GLAS?**

Yes, if the site is suitable to grow the crop.

## ACRES Co-Operation (CP)

### **How are ACRES Co-Operation applications submitted?**

If after applying the Ring Fencing Rule there is no funding available for general actions, there will be no requirement to select General Actions in the FSP on GLAM. The only exception to this is if the farmer is applying for the Conservation of Rare Breeds Action.

The FSP can be submitted with no actions selected in GLAM. The advisor must then proceed to the ACRES application system in AG Schemes to complete the application.

Any General actions that are being selected must be included in the FSP that is created and submitted on the GLAM system.

### **If a farmer has 30ha of non-CP land their 2021 BPS and then adds in 20ha of rented commonage in a CP area in their 2022 BPS. Will they be removed from ACRES if they lose this commonage land during the 5 year contract even though they were accepted into the scheme for having a vulnerable water area?**

If a farmer has no land located in the CP zone on their 2021 BPS application they will only be eligible to apply for ACRES General. If commonage land is declared in an applicant's 2022 BPS application then the Commonage action will be mandatory in their ACRES contract. The Terms and Conditions and Penalty schedule will set out the penalties for failing to comply with any action. Where a farmer loses control of a rented or leased parcel of commonage during the contract period, clawback won't apply.

This farmer would not have gotten Tier 1 access to the scheme for commonage if the commonage was not declared in their 2021 BPS. If the farmer got Tier 2 priority access to the scheme due to choosing an action in a vulnerable water parcel, once that action is maintained and delivered no penalties will apply.

### **Can a farmer lose part or all their CP land during the contract and still get paid on the remainder of their actions?**

ACRES is a five-year commitment, so a farmer applying for ACRES should ensure they have

control of the any lands entering the scheme for the full 5 years of the contract, if during the contract a participant loses a portion of their contract lands recoupment and clawback may apply, they can still continue in scheme if they have remaining actions.

### **Where can I access contact details for Co-Operation teams?**

Contact details for Co-Operation teams are available our website Gov.ie/acres website.

### **Who is responsible for scoring any commonage lands?**

CP teams will score commonages >10Ha that are located within the CP zone, advisers will prepare CFP for all commonages <10Ha. For commonages greater than 10 ha that are located outside of the CP Zones, these will be scored by approved commonage assessment team, which will be clarified at a later date by DAFM.

### **When will CP farmers know what their payments will be?**

ACRES CP participants may or may not have selected General Actions. Their core payment will be made up of payments for General Actions (if applicable) and CP results-based payments. The CP lands that will receive results-based payments will be scored in the summer of 2023 for year 1. The score achieved will determine the payment they will receive.

**If a farmer has 80ha in his 2022 BPS consisting of 30ha of non-CP land, 15ha of permanent pasture in a CP Zone and 35ha of commonage in a CP Zone but will have to take out 15ha of permanent pasture and 15 ha of commonage in CP Zones in 2023 BISS leaving the farmer with 50ha in total. Will the farmer be allowed to submit an ACRES plan based on having 50ha or will they be tied to making a plan based on 80ha?**

ACRES CP application is based on parcels declared on 2022 BPS, ringfencing rule based on Claimed Area of Owned CP forage lands declared on 2022 BPS and all commonage(owned, leased , rented) declared on 2022 BPS. If the 15 ha of permanent pasture land located within the CP zone is declared as owned, then this farmer will not be paid for any General action other than commonage and Rare Breeds(if applicable).

This farmer could choose to wait and apply for Tranche 2 if they wish or they can apply for Tranche 1 with the limitations of getting paid for General actions based on the ring fencing rule.

Rented or leased CP forage lands (non-commonage) do not have to be entered into an ACRES contract. Owned CP forage parcels in 2022 BPS that are also declared in their 2023

BISS application will have to be scored and included in ACRES contract. Any lands not declared in their 2023 BISS would not be eligible for payment in ACRES.

### **Why are hedgerows and trees excluded from CP plans?**

These are activities that will need to be screened by the CP Teams to ensure they will not be planted in inappropriate sites. CP lands were selected for high nature value, therefore their core payment will be results based payment, however farmers will have the option to select from a list of NPI's/Landscape Actions which the CP teams will screen and approve. Tree and hedgerow planting are included in the draft list of Non-Productive Investments that will be available to CP farmers.

### **Who will have the final say in relation to the Co-Operation plans, the people appointed from CP team members or the advisor? What if the farmer or advisor cannot accept the conditions imposed by the CP teams? Can the plan be withdrawn without any penalties?**

The scheme is voluntary, a participant can withdraw from the scheme at any point in time. If no monies have been paid then there would be no monies to recoup, and no penalties applied. If payments have been received and a participant withdraws from the scheme, then clawback/recoupment may apply. All Local Action Plans developed by the CP teams for their CP zone will be reviewed by DAFM before being approved.

### **Why is the CP Commonage payment lower than the general Commonage payment?**

Commonage payment are the same for both ACRES CP and ACRES General applicants.

### **Is the ring fenced €145 / ha for commonage (€300/ ha for non commonage) set regardless if the farmer knows that his/her commonage will score e.g. 3. Is there any point in a farmer applying for e.g. stone walls / rare breeds if he/she has 50 ha commonage (50 x €145 = €7250) knowing that the commonage will only return €1000 in year 1 (score 3 = €50 x 20 ha max)?**

Where the ring fencing calculation shows that there is no funds available for General Actions, there is no point in applying for General actions other the Conservation of Rare Breeds as they won't be paid for in any case. Farmers that don't score 8 and therefore don't reach the €7,000 will be able to make up the shortfall by applying for additional NPIs. There will be NPIs available to CP farmers that will be similar to General actions such as Tree planting etc.

## ACRES and the Organic Farming Scheme

### **Can you get payment on grass margins if you are receiving an organic payment on that LPIS?**

The Organics Division will adjust the payment to cater for ACRES actions where necessary. They will deduct the area under the ACRES Grass Margins in the parcel when calculating the eligible area for payment in OFS.

### **If a farmer chooses to join the Organic Farming Scheme during their ACRES contract, will they have to repay the money they received from ACRES on action that the OFS will now be paying on?**

Contract under ACRES shall be for a minimum period of 5 years. Where there is risk of double funding, the payment under OFS will be reduced accordingly to avoid a double funding situation. All ACRES General actions are also for a minimum 5 year commitment. If during the ACRES contract period an applicant does not deliver or wishes to withdraw an action, this may result in penalties/clawback of monies paid.

### **Can I get paid for LIG in ACRES if I am in the Organic Scheme?**

If LIG is chosen applicant is paid for LIG and foregoes OFS payment on that parcel.

## Natura

### **Is it mandatory for a farmer to carry out LIG or Extensively grazed pasture on a Natura area?**

No, it is not mandatory, but if they want to use this to be considered for tier 1 access then they need to choose LIG or EGP. The only mandatory General action is commonage.

### **Is the area on Natura limited to 10 ha in the Non Co-operation Zones?**

The maximum areas for payment for each area based General action chosen applies regardless of whether the action is chosen in Natura lands. Potentially a farmer could be paid on 8ha of Extensively Grazed Pasture and 10 ha of LIG.

## What is the Natura dissolved layer on GLAMS?

Natura Dissolved is the applicable layer for SAC, SPA. On the summary of Priority Environmental Assets it shows the parcels that intersect with the layer and the gross area in the SAC/SPA.

## GLAM

### Are there user videos/ manuals for GLAM?

Yes, there are user videos and a GLAM manual on the DAFM website in the advisors section for ACRES.

### How do I delete a parcel on GLAM?

Click on the action you want to delete. It will bring up a pop-up box to choose the action or the parcel. Choose that action and select delete from the list of options down the left-hand side of the map.



### Can a parcel be split into 3+ areas if the farmer chooses and complete different actions on each of the created areas?

Yes, there is no limit to the number of split parcels that can be created in an existing LPIS parcel but each split parcels must have a minimum width of 20m for them to be digitized.

### **Can a parcel be split to accommodate 2 area based action.**

Yes. All Parcels must have a defined field boundary from the commencement of the contract i.e. hedgerow, drain, watercourse, fence etc. If no natural boundary in place to verify area a fence will have to be erected.

Where a split parcel is created on GLAM, these split parcels must have a defined field boundary from the commencement of the contract.

In Natura parcels, split parcels can only be created where an existing defined field boundary is already present, as erecting new fences in a Natura area may be prohibited.

### **Can a parcel be split to accommodate an area based action and Riparian Margins/Grass or Arable Margins**

Any LPIS parcel(s) that is split for area based actions will receive a new LPIS number once digitised in the 2023 BISS application. Several split parcel actions can be selected on each existing LPIS and other actions can be selected in the remaining area. **Note: When splitting parcels, do not create a parcel that is less than 20 metres wide. Parcels less than 20 metres wide will not be digitised and consequently will not be deemed eligible as split parcels (all actions on the parcel may also be deemed ineligible). Participants should note that where a fence is erected to delineate the boundary of a split parcel, this fence cannot be used as part of the fencing requirements for the follow actions: Coppicing of hedgerows; Grass margins – Grassland; Laying of hedgerows; Planting a new hedgerow; Planting a traditional orchard; Riparian buffer strip/zone – Grassland; Tree belts for ammonia capture from farmyards and Tree planting.**

### **Will the Stocking Rate figure be available on GLAM?**

It is planned to include the 2021 whole farm stocking rate figures for each applicant on GLAM once they are finalised and available.

## **Farm Partnerships**

### **Can a multi herd registered farm partnership double / treble actions to avail of additional monies?**

Yes partnership may attract the max ACRES General Payment (€7,311 ) multiplied by the number of holdings up to a maximum of 3. Maximum areas for payment for partnerships shall be the maximum as outlined in the specification multiplied by the number of holdings up to a maximum of 3.



## Forestry

### **Can land that has been clear-felled be considered for Agroforestry in ACRES if client applies for it?**

Parcels declared as Forestry under 2022 BPS are not eligible for ACRES actions.

### **Can the land where the agroforestry is, be considered for grassland acres options? Such as grass margins.**

Parcels declared as Forestry under 2022 BPS are not eligible for ACRES actions.

### **Is Forestry land in Hen Harrier with a 0.00 ha claimed area , will this forestry eligible for Tier 1?**

Hen Harrier is not one on the criteria for qualifying for Tier 1 priority access. The only General action that can be selected in a LPIS with a zero MEA is Barn Owl Nest Box.

## TAMS

### **Can farmers get TAMS grants on any fencing requirements in ACRES?**

No. Where a fence has been grant aided under TAMS II or any DAFM Capital investment Scheme from 01 January 2018, this fence cannot fulfil the fencing requirement for the following ACRES actions: Coppicing of hedgerows; Grass margins – Grassland; Laying of hedgerows; Planting a new hedgerow; Planting a traditional orchard; Riparian buffer strip/zone – Grassland; Tree belts for ammonia capture from farmyards and Tree planting.

### **Can a farmer use a TAMS granted fence as a boundary where splitting parcels.**

A fence that has been grant aided under TAMS II or any DAFM Capital investment Scheme from 01 January 2018 can used as a fence for splitting a parcel for an area based ACRES action except for the area based actions Riparian buffer zone – Grassland or Tree belts for ammonia capture from farmyards.

## Priority Environmental Assets (PEA's)

### **Will PEA's be shown on the front page of the ACRES application**

PEAs are available on the home screen on the GLAM application for each applicant.

## Soil Sampling

### **How many soil samples do I need to take and what land do I need to take for ACRES?**

Non-commonage land declared on the applicants **2023 BISS application** (whether owned/leased/rented) must be sampled and analysed. At least one analysis per every **five hectares** of land up to 40 hectares is required. The maximum area for any individual soil sample is 5ha. Refer to the ACRES specification for further guidance.

### **Will mandatory soil samples for ACRES still be required if sampling is selected as an action of proposed Eco Scheme?**

Yes, but soil samples taken for ECO may be submitted for ACRES if they meet the ACRES requirements regarding submission date, soil sample area etc.

## Semi Natural Grassland

### **What is the definition of 'Semi Natural Grassland'**

Advisers need to assess all parcels before selecting actions to ensure the most appropriate action is chosen. The Grassland/pasture field decision tree in the specification should be used when selecting appropriate actions in grassland parcels.

## Scorecards

### **How will I score a field for structure if it has been mown or topped?**

Question A4 on the grassland scorecard has been amended to cater for fields that are recently cut prior to scoring.

**Where LIG is chosen on extensively managed old grassland with < 30% ryegrass and in any of the five years of ACRES no positive plant indicator species are present - will the following assessment giving a score of 35 achieve a payment of €259 per ha?**

If the parcel meets the site suitability requirement and it scores 35/100. It will round to 4/10 and receive €250 per ha.

#### Other FAQ's

**Will ACRES plans be transferable if someone takes over the herd number during the term of the scheme?**

Prior approval is needed before an ACRES contract can be transferred. Advisor/applicant should contact ACRES HQ in Johnstown Castle email: ACRES@AGRICULTURE.GOV.IE.

**What happens where a farmer loses land that is in Tier 1**

This is set out in the penalty schedule of the Terms & Conditions that will be available once the scheme is open for the submission of applications.

**Is there a minimum number of options a farmer must choose? Is there minimum 'score' and 'Pass mark' to get into ACRES?**

For ACRES General there is no minimum score to be eligible but total RASS score will decide access where scheme is over subscribed.

**Will farmers who completed a BPS application in 2022 for the first time (new entrants) be eligible to join – seems unfair not be permit?**

They can apply for Tranche 2 but not Tranche 1 unless they are applying under a herd number that submitted a 2021 BPS.

**When is tranche 2 due to open?**

It is anticipated applications will be accepted in Q4 of 2023. Contracts would then commence 1 January 2024

**What is the exact closing date for ACRES?**

This will be announced in due course.

**Can a farmer receive full parcel payment for area based actions or zones where the ineligible areas (scrub etc) is less than 50%?**

Payments for Area based actions in ACRES will be paid on Eligible Hectare or claimed area whichever is the lower. (Eligible Hectare in BISS replaces MEA in BPS)

**For linear actions where there is a minimum of 10m (in a single continuous length), can they be drawn along part of a field boundary**

Yes, partial boundary allowed but refer to specs for Riparian Buffer strips for rules regarding excluding bovines from entire watercourse in parcel

**Will the DAFM automatically indicate if a farmer is over/under 100 kgs N /ha or 130 kgs N/ha especially if they have sheep.**

For Tier 2 access and for checking eligibility to apply for the action Management of Intensive Grassland Next to a Watercourse, DAFM will cross check against stocking rate figures provided by Nitrates Division after sheep numbers declared in the 2021 Sheep Census have been accounted for.

In relation to farmers that have selected LESS as an action in ACRES: DAFM will carry out pre-payment validations each year to ensure the participants have a grassland stocking rate of less than 100Kg Nitrogen per hectare from grazing livestock manure prior to export of livestock manure from the holding in the previous calendar year to be eligible for payment for this action.