

## ACA ACRES QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023

### Q1. ACRES GLAMS: please list your questions and/or issues here.

1. When will we get a facility to print out a pdf if all the score cards that have been submitted so we can give it to the farmer, need 1 pdf for all cards.

There will be a pdf created for each participant that will display the score and management advice for all scorecards submitted. This will be available in Q4 2023/Q1 2024.

2. If a farmer has changed his parcel usage from LIG to MMS in his BISS application, do the parcels still have to be scored?

If a farmer applied for LIG as a general action and that action was approved in TRANCHE 1, the parcel would have been displayed in BISS screens with LIG as the default crop use. A scorecard request would have been sent for the LIG action. If the farmer wants to get paid for that LIG parcel, then it would need to be claimed as LIG in the BISS application and a scorecard would need to be submitted before the deadline. If no scorecard is submitted by the deadline then this parcel will be withdrawn from the LIG action and it may lead to a penalty.

3. My private phone number is appearing on all the CP Farm Plans (the new PDF facility recently released) It must have been got from the Acres training day. My work phone number is on the FAS list and I would have assumed this data would have been used. I do not want my personal phone number going out to farmers. How do I change this?

This issue is being investigated.

4. When will GLAM be updated to match the 2023 BISS applications?

GLAM for Tranche 2 FSP will be based on 2023 BISS parcels.

5. When are the department going to reopen problem files that they have got emails about, many of these have now gone beyond 14 days, are the department going to cancel the penalties where the delays are due to them not responding to requests? Remove the 14-day rule where once we start a scorecard, all scorecards for the applicant have to be done within 14 days. Due to various ongoing IT issues with this scoring, it would be so unfair to penalise a farmer for this. Some issues were not

emailed to the Dept due to the large volume of issues that were occurring and it's very easy for one or two applicants to go over the 14 days.

DAFM are currently working through the backlog of requests, advisors are being contacted when IT fix is in place. Farmers will not be penalised for Late submission of scorecards for the period between the notification of the issue to DAFM and the date advisor is notified issue is resolved by DAFM.

6. Submitted applications correctly to ACRES last year under CP, as the majority of them had their entire farm in the CP area(s). Subsequently, these farmers were approved as General ACRES participants but there are no lands for scoring on GLAMS now. I'm told these can't be changed which is exceptionally poor form by the DAFM – there are only small numbers, and this was no fault of my client or me. Please allow these to be rectified.

When approval letters issued, farmers were informed that if they did not want to accept the contract as presented in the letter to contact DAFM with 14 days. Where these cases were brought to the Department's attention within a reasonable timeframe, stream change amendments were applied. At this point the farmers in question may wish to withdraw their existing contract and apply under Tranche 2.

7. Scorecards are locked in GLAMS after submitting draft in fields – what do I do?

All scorecards can be submitted as draft through the app, If they are submitted as draft then they are editable on GLAM. If they are fully submitted through the app then they are not editable on GLAM. This was explained on the webinar delivered to advisors on 31<sup>st</sup> May.

8. ACRES plan was on BISS and now is not available – when will these plans be back as farmers keep looking for them?

ACRES approval summaries have been posted to all ACRES farmers with general actions. If a farmer or advisor want a replacement copy issued, email should be sent to [acres@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:acres@agriculture.gov.ie) stating the herd number.

9. Scorecards should be allowed to be amended after submission - it is unreasonable to expect advisors to never have the need to amend their work from time to time. This is a new concept and advisors are learning all the time. So, allowing amendments like BISS would be in everyone's interest. Also, a summary of the scores should be shown beside the list of scorecards in the 'Mapped Actions Section'.

All scorecards can be submitted as draft through the app, If they are submitted as draft then they are editable on GLAM. If they are fully submitted through the app then they are not editable on GLAM. This was explained on the webinar delivered to advisors on 31<sup>st</sup> May.

10. LIGS that score 35, made up mainly from structure and boundary. Advisor could score moderate under-graze and on day of inspection by department, field could be after cut etc. Will inspector go on what advisor has put down, or will inspector score, thus parcel may be 30 or less? What tolerance is being permitted here? Also, if this happens, will there be back payment of monies from previous years?

DAFM will deal with these cases on a case-by-case basis. Please see penalty schedule for appropriate penalties and information on when clawback may apply.

**Q2. ACRES Agrisnap: please list your questions and/or issues here.**

11. The herd number needs to be on the AgriSnap photo request. When all the scoring is completed, we as advisors need to be able to identify which AgriSnap requests are left undone. At the moment, it shows us the plot on the map. But advisors with quite a lot of scorecards to complete need to know the herd number that each request is linked to - so we can figure out which ones remain undone. There should be no GDPR issue with this. As I say it's at the end of the season that we will need to know this.

The advisor can and should check the status of each scorecard on the GLAM home screen for each of their clients to ensure they have submitted all the required scorecards.

12. Why can't the agriSnap be designed to show when a score card has been sent without having to log out and back in again to the AgriSnap in areas of poor coverage? Also, why in some cases does the camera not function in AgriSnap - again this can be problematic in areas of poor coverage. Logging out and in is fine but not if you have to sit into the car and drive to get connection.

It is not possible to make updates to AgriSnap in current year but DAFM will endeavour to make improvements to the app functionality for future years.

13. Cannot use AgriSnap on an island with historical parcel slippage. Have sent numerous emails to dept but no response. When will I be told?

If you have emailed the details to the correct email address and all the required information as outlined in ACRES Circular No. 15/2023 then it will be dealt with and you will be notified when the issue is resolved.

14. 3 of my farmers are not coming up on AgriSnap – what do I do?

Ensure that the online links have been made between you and your client farmers. Details of what is required can be found at [gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - [Agfood and other Online Services offered by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie). If links are in place you should contact either [acrescp@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:acrescp@agriculture.gov.ie) or [acres@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:acres@agriculture.gov.ie) with the details as soon as possible.

**Q3. ACRES CP: please list any technical questions/issues here.**

15. Can land selected for LIG or EGP be subsequently let out for a grazing agreement with a third-party, non-ACRES participant or even an ACRES participant?

A record 5 rental/grazing agreement can be submitted for this land but the ACRES participant declaring the land in their BISS must at all times be in control of the management of the land.

16. There's AgriSnap issues where the herd number has changed recently - with 'Invalid herd number' appearing. What needs to happen?

Ensure that the online links have been made between you and your client farmers. Details of what is required can be found at [gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - [Agfood and other Online Services offered by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie). If links are in place email the herd number and details to [acres@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:acres@agriculture.gov.ie) for follow up.

17. Some parcels are in as LIG peat and they are mineral soils. We have no way in changing them. This needs to be sorted as the farmer is not scoring when parcel is classed as a LIG peat.

If these are ACRES General Actions LIG or LIPG then the advisor selected the action when submitting the FSP so the scorecard or action cannot be changed.

18. I called to a client recently with 17 parcels to be scored under CP. One of them was basically a small hardcore area / somewhat disused area beside the farmyard. I basically scored it as a 0 /100 on the day to avoid the possibility of it picking up any payment. Would it be possible to remove this parcel from the CP list of parcels altogether?

You should contact the relevant CP Team with details

19. When will we have to do the CMPs for the commonages under 10 Ha?

A Circular will be issued in due course setting out the requirements.

20. When will the Spec and T&C for NPI's be available?

It is planned to issue a draft specification for the NPIs in September/early October 2023.

21. Could we please have a list of the CP team members scoring the commonages and their qualifications? Who is overseeing the CP teams? Can we get the name, email and phone number to be given to all Advisors so that they can discuss participant matters directly with someone?

CP Team	Email	Phone
ACRES Donegal	info@acresdonegal.ie	074 937 308
ACRES Breifne	info@acresbreifne.ie	091 9856508
ACRES West Connacht	info@acreswestconn.ie	097 82696
ACRES West Connacht	info@acreswestconn.ie	097 82696
ACRES Burren Aran	info@acresburrenaran.ie or oileainarann@acresburrenaran.ie	065 708 9000 or 083 152 3930
ACRES Munster South Connacht	info@acresmsc.ie	091 792865
ACRES Kerry West Cork	pdeane@skdp.net	098 203 1034
ACRES Leinster	info@acresleinster.ie	091 792865

All scorecards submitted, both commonage and non-commonage scorecards, are subject to inspection and oversight by DAFM and a sample of cases that are selected for an on-the-spot control, are inspected each year by DAFM's Inspectorate. This sample is selected using both risk analysis and random selection.

**Q4. ACRES General: please list any technical questions/issues here.**

22. Can vegetation in Riparian Zone be left to grow wild?

Yes.

23. Can drains and scrub encroachment be removed outside the closed period e.g. now in September?

Drains cannot be removed, they can however be maintained as can encroaching scrub during allowable period

24. Is the farmyard exempt from the 30m hedgerow question on LIG scorecard?

Where the worst 30m occurs on the boundary with a private dwelling fence (e.g. a wooden or wire fence or a garden hedge) or farmyard sheds, the score should relate to the condition of the worst 30m excluding the dwelling/sheds boundary only.

25. Many LIGs are only being cut this week due to weather all summer. Can they still be paid if a photo is submitted?

There is no extension to the Late Meadow Bonus submission date that is outlined clearly in the specifications.

26. Where mixed farm (cattle & sheep) are on a farm, what type/standard of fencing is expected for the sheep for a) Riparian Zone and b) riparian strip, considering that sheep do not enter watercourses. In reps a farmer could state the fields were sheep only and be exempt from fencing. Is that allowed in ACRES?

Fencing must be fit for purpose to exclude all livestock from the parcel/strip. All livestock must be excluded from the parcel/strip as well as the watercourse, this includes sheep.

27. What defines Inappropriate Herbicide Use?

Question does not give enough detail to be answered, which action are you referring to?

28. The riparian zone spec states access points must be in place. A farmer will erect 2 gateways and move cattle through the rip zone (with temporary fence) to get them to grazing land the other side of the zone? Is this permitted?

No. Livestock must be excluded at all times from the Riparian Buffer Zone/Strip. Access points are permitted for access of machinery for maintenance/management purposes only.

29. Turlough flooding is making plots inaccessible for scoring. How do we deal with these?

If a scorecard is not submitted for any parcel during the allowable period then they will not be eligible for payment. Details of these parcels should be submitted as outlined in ACRES Circular No. 15/2023 to the relevant email address: [acrescp@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:acrescp@agriculture.gov.ie) or [acres@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:acres@agriculture.gov.ie)



30. I found a LIG parcel yesterday that was turned out to be a small corner of a larger parcel that was also in LIG i.e. there was no boundary whatsoever between both parcels, yet both must be scored. Is there a way that we can make a submission to merge these two LIG parcels?

No, they will always have to be scored separately.

31. 2 fields in a LIG parcel, the larger LIG parcel comprises of one field that was grazed and managed in a normal way and a second field that wasn't managed nearly as well and quite infested with docks etc. Is there a way to suggest a more appropriate divide of LIG parcels based on the situation on the ground?

This should have been done at the time FSP was submitted. There is no way to split these into separate scorecards at this stage.

32. Catch Crop Seed Rates. - Where sowing 2 + species, I assume you can drop the prescribed minimum seed rates of each species? For example - 2 species 50:50 mix would be 50% seed rate for each. 3 species at 1/3:1/3:1/3 would be a 33% seed rate for each etc.

The Catch crop mix must contain at least two species from the prescribed list using the minimum seed rates as outlined in the specification document. If a three-way mix is selected, the above applies for two of the species (i.e. minimum seed rates apply) while the third species can be used at whatever rate is deemed appropriate.

Also - is there a minimum % of any one species required and must seed labels and invoices be kept?

There is no minimum percentage of any one species required. Seed labels and receipts must be retained.

Also, can home saved seed for oats, peas or beans be used, and if yes what is the situation here with regard to proof of purchase and seed rates?

Home-saved seed is not permitted.

Grass Margins Arable: Where existing GLAS AGM's are being continued into ACRES - the earliest a margin can be cut is Sept 1st, but margins must be established/resown by 31st Aug. How do we reconcile these two dates in the practical sense as they suggest we must sow the new seed before we can cut the existing grass in the old margin?

The date for establishing Grass Margins – Arable has been extended to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

33. We have a client who has 180m of hedgerow to do in one parcel but where it is marked he can only fit 140m due to sightlines needed when leaving the property, can our client plant the other 40m of hedgerow leftover in the same field and still get paid?

All actions must be delivered in the location that they were drawn at in FSP, advisors should have walked farms and carried out field assessments to ensure the right action was being applied for in the right place. The farmer can contact [acres@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:acres@agriculture.gov.ie) and reduce the claim for this action to 140m.

34. It states in the Spec that *'only samples taken on or after the 01/01/2022 will be considered valid for Tranche one participants'*. Samples taken in 2021 should be permitted (as they are for all other DAFM regulations/programmes) and they can be retaken in 2025/2026 as required.

These requirements are clearly stated in the ACRES Specifications and need to be complied with in full.

**Q5. Other issues: please list any additional queries/suggestions here.**

35. If we find peatland in a LIG General parcel, we have to now score using the peatland score card. The facility is not on the app to change the score card. When will this be available?

It won't be available. Grassland scorecard must be used for all LIG parcels. Advisor should not have chosen LIG in a parcel that was not suitable for the Grassland scorecard.

36. Must be allowed to address issues/omissions which were notified to DAFM prior to ACRES application closing date of 29<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023.

If you have emailed the details to the correct email address and all the required information as outlined in ACRES Circular No. 15/2023 then it will be dealt with and you will be notified when the issue is resolved.

37. Field boundary question needs more detail for worst 30 meters. e.g., farmyard that has separate LPIS but leads onto field with no defined boundary separating. Please



advise here. Guidance says wire fence only as poor. Thus, is block wall be classed as moderate?

Where the worst 30m occurs on the boundary with a private dwelling fence (e.g. a wooden or wire fence or a garden hedge) or farmyard sheds, the score should relate to the condition of the worst 30m excluding the dwelling/sheds boundary only. Block walls should be classed as poor and the farmer should consider planting a hedge in front of it to increase the score.