



Circular 25 of 2023

13<sup>th</sup> October 2023

## **Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES)**

### **ACRES Annual Declaration for Low Emission Slurry Spreading (LESS) 2023**

To ACRES Advisors

Under previous Department Agri-Environment Schemes, including GLAS, the Annual Declaration for Low Emission Slurry Spreading (LESS), was completed by filling in and returning a paper form with the details of slurry spreading under the LESS action.

For ACRES, the Annual Declaration for LESS will be completed on an online portal on the AgFood system and can be completed by either the ACRES Advisor acting for an ACRES participant or can be completed by the participant themselves.

The LESS form, in respect of 2023, is now available on your AgFood Account to complete for the relevant herdnumbers who were approved into ACRES with this action and to whom you are linked.

In relation to ACRES, the following requirements apply to the LESS action:

- Holdings must have a grassland stocking rate of less than 100Kg Nitrogen per hectare from grazing livestock manure prior to export of livestock manure.
- Pig slurry is not eligible for payment under this action. Only slurry produced on the holding (excluding pig slurry) is eligible for payment.
- All the slurry applied on the farm (produced and/or imported) must, for each year of the contract, be spread by one or a combination of:
  - Band spreading
  - Injection systems
  - Trailing shoe
- Participants must retain and provide if requested documentary evidence to confirm the spreading method used and the volumes spread on the holding. For example, a calculation of slurry produced, imported, spread and/or a receipt from the contractor or other evidence as required.
- The minimum volume of slurry that must be applied on the holding each year of the contract using one of the above listed methods is 50 cubic metres.



- Participants or their ACRES adviser must submit a completed annual slurry declaration return to the ACRES Section of the Department via the online portal, as outlined above.
- Only parcels with an eligible hectare >0 claimed on BISS 2023 will be available on the drop-down menu.
- Volume produced and volume imported must be entered in separate sections on the screen and at least one of the sections on the online form must be filled in.
- Multiple spread events on the same parcel can be input.

As mentioned above, to be eligible for the LESS payment, the minimum volume of slurry to be applied annually is 50 cubic metres. For ease of calculation, 1 cubic metre is equal to 1,000 litres (220 gallons).

The LESS return must be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. Failure to complete and submit the LESS return will result in a delay in making the 2023 ACRES advance payment, financial penalties and ultimately, may result in the rejection of the LESS action from a participant's ACRES contract.

Please note that the last spread date is 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Closed period begins on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

You are not required to submit receipts when completing the form. They must be kept by you with your record sheets and be made available for any inspection.

An Appendix is attached to this Circular with screenshots and instructions on how to complete the LESS return online.

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