



Circular 26 of 2023

27<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES)  
Reminder about LESS declarations & Submission of Scorecards**

To ACRES Advisor

As you know, farmers admitted to ACRES must submit a payment claim annually as part of their annual BISS application. The Department is currently progressing those payment claims. In order to facilitate the making of payments to as many ACRES participants as possible, the Department wishes to remind you about the importance of submission of 1) the annual declaration in respect of the Low Emission Slurry Spreading Action and 2) any outstanding ACRES scorecards. Please see further information on each of these below.

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

As advised in Circular 25 of 2023, dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023, LESS forms are now available on your AgFood Account to complete for the relevant herdnumbers who were linked with you for ACRES and who were approved into ACRES with this action. As also advised, the Annual Declaration for LESS can be completed on an online portal on their AgFood Account by either you, their ACRES Advisor, or by the ACRES participant themselves. The requirements for claiming LESS are as set out in that Circular. Please note that the accompanying Appendix shows how the online form can be completed.

**This is a reminder that the LESS return must be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.** Failure to complete and submit the LESS return by this date will result in a delay in making the 2023 ACRES advance payment. Any further delays will result in financial penalties – as outlined in ACRES Circular 14 of 2023 dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

Please note that all ACRES participants with the LESS action have also been notified individually by either text, email or letter of the deadline in relation to the submission of their online LESS form.



## **2. Submission of any outstanding Scorecards for ACRES**

Advisors are reminded of the requirement to immediately submit any outstanding scorecards. Please note, in this context, that those which have identified as having technical issues which prevent their submission by advisors are being worked on by the Department. Please let the Department know if there are any outstanding scorecards, assigned to you, which fall into this category so the associated technical issue can be resolved.

You are also reminded that penalties are applicable for the non-submission of scorecards, as follows:

- For scorecards for Low Input Grassland (LIG), Low Input Peat Grassland (LIPG) and scorecards for ACRES Co-operation (CP) parcels declared as rented or leased on a participant's 2022 BPS – the penalty is that the parcels will be deemed ineligible for payment in the current year and any future years of the ACRES Contract.
- For Scorecards for CP parcels declared as owned on a participant's 2022 BPS – the penalty is a 20% penalty to apply to all results-based payments for that year.

Full details of the penalties to be applied for the non-submission of scorecards are available on the Department website under Circular No. 14/2023. [72838c22-d08a-4302-ab0c-de48c020aa87.pdf \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/publications-and-statements/publication/72838c22-d08a-4302-ab0c-de48c020aa87)

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