

Top tips for meeting the rules and passing an inspection

You could be inspected to check you're following the cross compliance rules.

In most cases, you'll be doing these things anyway but here are some reminders of the most important things to remember:



- make sure your maps and records are accurate, up to date, and well organised – if you're inspected, you'll be asked for them



- if you keep cattle, make sure they are tested for bovine tuberculosis (TB) by the required deadlines
- make sure your animals are identified correctly (for example, with ear tags), are housed safely and that you report their movements on or off the holding within the relevant timescales



- check that public rights of way on your land aren't obstructed
- only apply fertiliser to certain areas and protect watercourses from run-off

For more information search for 'cross compliance' at www.gov.uk.

More information

The Farming Advice Service (FAS) is funded by Defra to provide free, confidential advice to farmers and farming industry advisers to help them understand and meet requirements for cross compliance, 'greening', water protection and the sustainable use of pesticides.

Call their helpline on 0345 345 1302 or search for more information about the Farming Advice Service online.



www.gov.uk/rpa



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Cross Compliance 2016

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The cross compliance rules are on GOV.UK

We've published 'The guide to cross compliance in England 2016' on the GOV.UK website. We're not sending a paper copy of the guide to claimants this year.

To find it, go to www.gov.uk and search for 'cross compliance 2016'. Or go to www.gov.uk/rpa and click the 'cross compliance' link.

We've made some improvements to the guide since last year:

- it's in a new format on GOV.UK, with a 'search' box to help you find what you need
- you can read, save or print the whole guide or just the individual sections you need
- we've combined the 'soil protection standards' with the cross compliance guide for 2016
- we've tried to explain some of the rules more clearly, to make them easier to follow.

You must follow the cross compliance rules if you are claiming for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), a stewardship scheme or the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) in 2016.

What's new since last year's guide?

These are the main changes to cross compliance since last year's guide:



SMR 7 - Cattle identification and registration

Cattle keepers must still record (in their holding register) the dam's ear tag number for animals born on their holding. However, they no longer need to record the dam's ear tag number for animals arriving on their holding. This changed on 6 April 2015 and is now updated in the cross compliance guide.



GAEC 7c - Trees

We have clarified that not only fruit or nut trees in orchards, but also other trees acting as windbreaks in an orchard, vineyard, hop yard or hop garden are exempt from the 1 March to the 31 August (inclusive) cutting and trimming rules. This applies from 1 January 2016.



GAEC 1 - Establishment of buffer strips along watercourses

From **1 January 2017**, land parcels of 2 hectares or less will have to comply with the need to protect watercourses against pollution and run-off from agricultural sources by maintaining buffer strips. Therefore, for all land:

- within 2 metres of the centre of a watercourse or field ditch
- from the edge of the watercourse or field ditch to 1 metre on the landward side of the top of the bank

both of the following apply:

- you must take all reasonable steps to maintain a green cover
- you must not cultivate or apply fertilisers or pesticides

This change does not apply to GAEC 7a.

Key dates in 2016

These are some of the things that claimants should (and shouldn't) do throughout the year to meet the rules. For more key dates read the full guide on GOV.UK.

Cross compliance

	January 1st	The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2016 year starts. You must start to follow the rules in the cross compliance 2016 guide from this date.
	March 1st	You mustn't cut or trim hedges or trees from this date, but you can carry out hedge and tree coppicing and hedge laying from 1 March until 30 April. Fruit and nut trees in orchards, or trees acting as windbreaks in orchards, vineyards, hop yards or hop gardens aren't included in the ban. (GAEC 7a and 7c).
	March 31st	If you hold a water abstraction licence, expect to receive your annual bill (or first part charge if you hold a two-part tariff agreement) for the forthcoming financial year from 31 March. (GAEC 2)
	April 1st	If you hold a winter or all year round water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction outside the period April to October), the Environment Agency will make actual abstraction return forms available to you from 1 April. You then have 28 days to send your readings to the Environment Agency. (GAEC 2)
	May 1st	You must not carry out hedge or tree coppicing or hedge laying from this date. (GAEC 7a and 7c)
	August 1st	If you have been granted a derogation by RPA, you may be able to cut or trim hedges throughout August, to sow oilseed rape or temporary grassland. (GAEC 7a)
	September 1st	You can cut or trim hedges and trees from this date. (GAEC 7a and 7c)
	October 31st	If you hold a summer water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction wholly within the months of April to October), the Environment Agency will make actual abstraction return forms available to you from 31 October. You then have 28 days to send your readings to the Environment Agency. (GAEC 2)
	November 31st	If you have a two-part tariff agreement for your water abstraction licence, expect to receive your second part charge after 30 November. (GAEC 2)
	December 1st	You need to carry out your annual inventory of sheep. (SMR 8)