

NAP Webinar

Thursday 6 August 2026

6pm – 7pm

Subject	Presenter
Introduction	Fiona Dickson - Deputy Director Natural Environment Policy DAERA
Overview of the NAP Stakeholder process	John McLenaghan - President Ulster Farmers Union Max Bryant - Chief Executive Officer Northern Ireland Environment Link
High level overview of NAP Measures	Brian Ervine - Environmental Farming Branch DAERA
KT and Support	Judith McCord – Senior Dairying Adviser, CAFRE
Grants & Funding	Fiona Dickson - Deputy Director Natural Environment Policy DAERA
Q&A	All



NAP Task and Finish Stakeholder Group

- Proposals developed through Collaboration and Evidence
- Collaborative, Fair and Evidence-Based
- The most comprehensive review of the NAP since 2007
- Representatives from Farming, Environmental Groups and Agrifood industry

Outcome: A co-designed plan aimed at delivering real-world environmental improvements while facilitating sustainable productivity



NAP Webinar

Overview of NAP Measures

Thursday 6th August

6pm -7pm

Brian Ervine



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

Phosphorus (P)

- NI Agricultural P Surplus and background context
- P reduction measures:
 - Chemical P Fertiliser
 - P Balance requirements



Phosphorus - context

- The Northern Ireland agricultural sector is operating at a phosphorus surplus. This surplus is a key driver of agriculture P reaching waterways
- Wastewater Treatment is another main source of P in waterways
- Manure P alone exceeds crop needs (123% in Lough Neagh Catchment)
- Excess soil P in c. 40% of land increases diffuse pollution risk

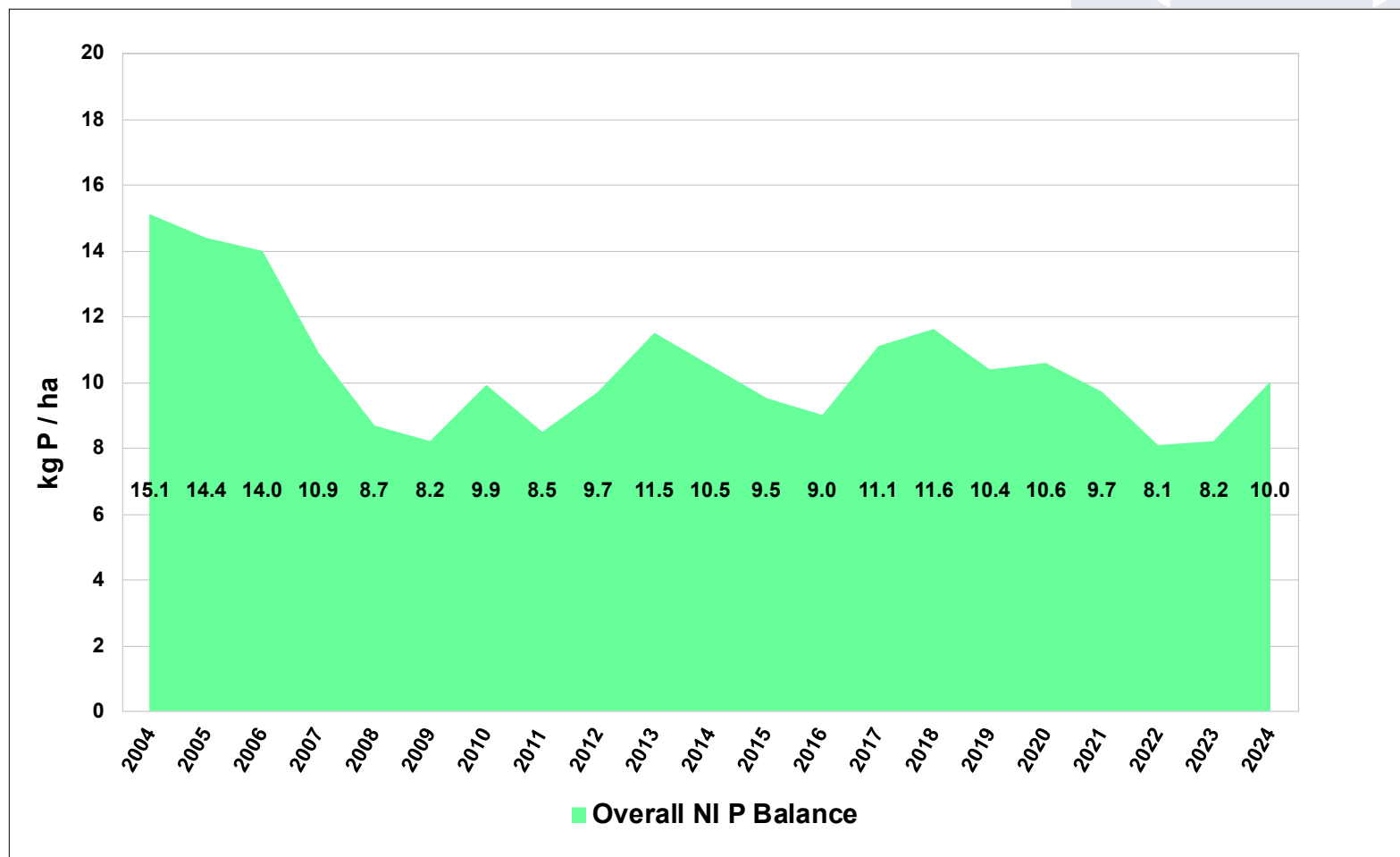


Phosphorus - context

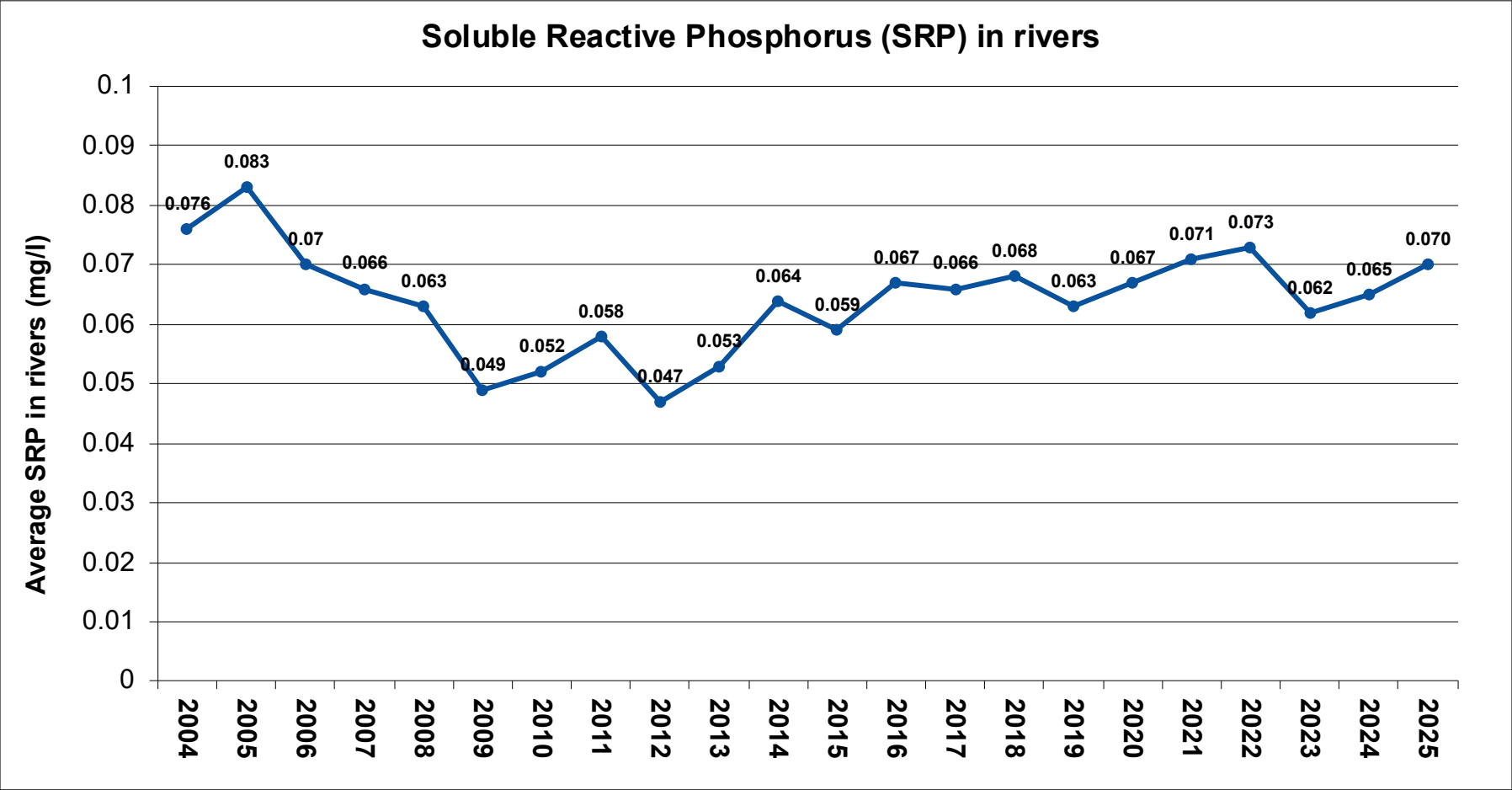
- Research has shown a direct link between the surplus soil test P in a catchment and SRP concentrations in rivers (Scott et al, 2024).
- Where soil P is above the agronomic requirement for a crop some of the P not taken up by the crop is available for loss to water
- Therefore, excess soil P is a significant source of diffuse nutrient pollution.



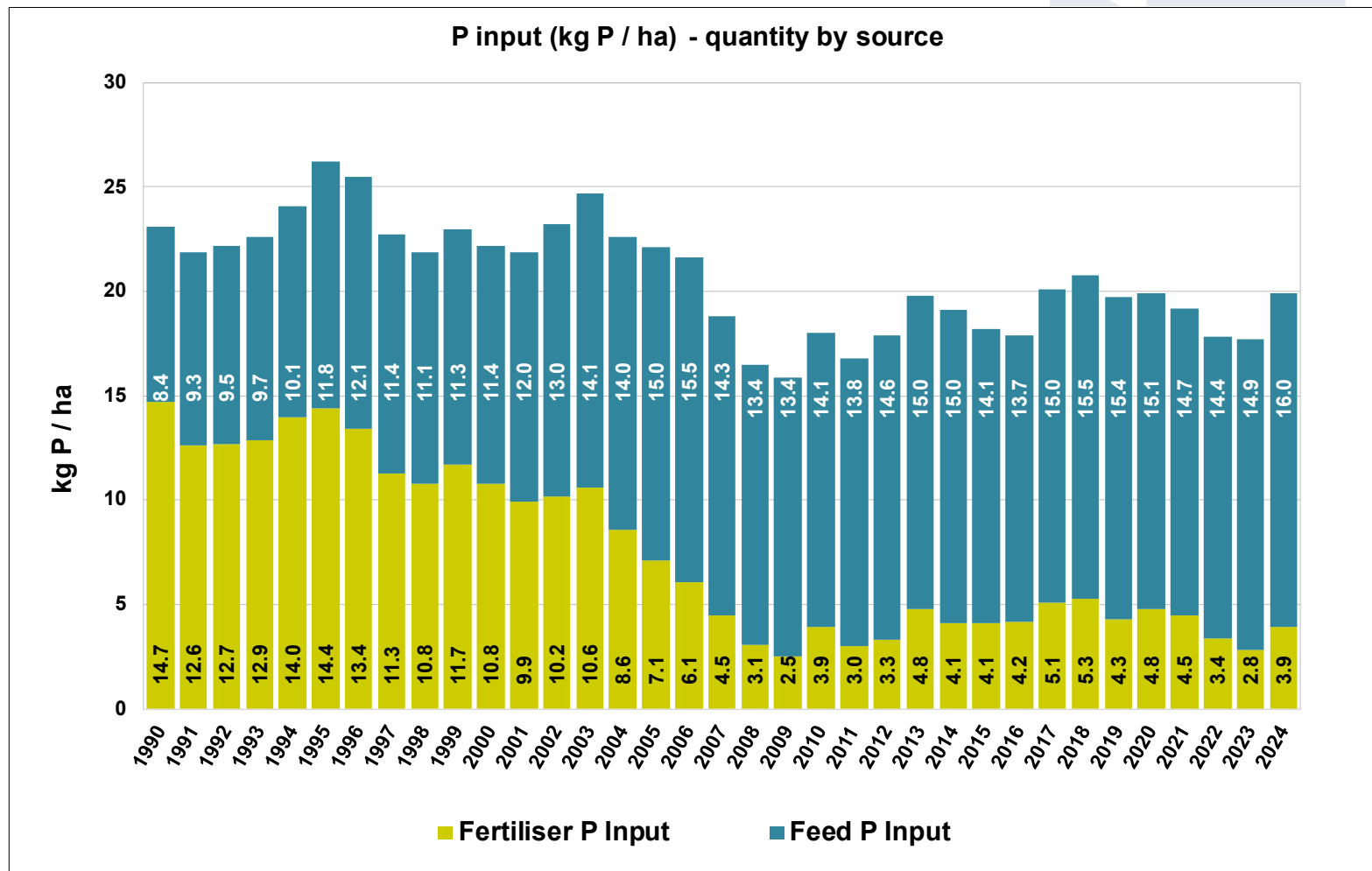
Overall NI Agricultural Phosphorus Balance



SRP levels in NI rivers



P inputs from Fertiliser and Feed



NI Phosphorus Balance - 2024

Inputs	
Fertiliser	3,426 t
Feed	13,957 t
Total Inputs	17,382 t

Outputs	
Grass-based livestock, beef, sheep and milk	4,710 t
Pigs, poultry & eggs	3,261 t
Arable	682 t
Total Outputs	8,653 t

P Balance	
Inputs	17,382 t
Outputs	8,653 t
Balance	8,729 t

P Surplus = 8,729 t

Livestock Feed – average P content = 0.43%



Phosphorus (P) reduction measures

- Chemical Fertiliser P reduction measures
- Manure processing and nutrient export inc. SULS, SULM
- P Balance - Farming Practice to increase nutrient use efficiency

Supported by Nutrient Efficiency Roadmap, mandatory labelling of P content of Feed.

Responsible Phosphorus Management (RPM) campaign.



Chemical Phosphorus (P) Fertiliser on grassland

2025 Proposal	2026 Proposal: Key Changes	Rationale	Risks and Opportunities
Restrict chemical fertiliser containing phosphorus on grassland to defined criteria. Criteria included reseeded, clover establishment, deficit and animal health.	Shift to limiting availability of compound chemical P fertiliser products plus strengthened advice and support. Existing NAP measure limiting Chemical P application to clear crop need, soil levels and a Nutrient Management Plan continues.	Science and Technical Groups tested practicality and unintended consequences. Avoids unnecessary P inputs where soils are already sufficient or high.	Needs robust advice and product controls, not just guidance. Depends on buy-in from fertiliser merchants for Point-of-Sale advice and "Responsible Phosphate Management" (RPM) information campaign 2-year review built in with agreement to revert to 2025 proposed system if chemical P fertiliser use does not reduce.

Phosphorus (P) Surplus/ P Balance

2025 Proposal	2026 Proposal: Key Changes	Rationale	Risks and Opportunities
Introduce farm P balance limits for intensively stocked farms. Phased limits proposed: 10kg P/ha/yr in 2027 and 8kg P/ha/yr in 2029.	30 percent reduction in national P levels from 10kg P/ha to 7kg P/ha over the course of NAP5. P Balance required on the most intensively stocked farms – Livestock Manure Nitrogen Production of 170kg/N/ha/year and above.	Reframed a narrow farm-balance rule into a national phosphorus reduction package, with more flexibility. Science sub-group and Technical sub-group considered modelling and a range of possible P reduction mechanisms.	Must be tracked at farm and national scale to avoid paper-only reductions. Needs robust data and consequences if reductions do not materialise.



Farm P balance and Nitrogen production

- P Balance requirement applies to all farms with **N Production** ≥ 170 kg N/Ha .
- All pig and poultry farms must operate at an **N Loading** < 170 kg N/Ha
- Farms with grazing livestock may apply to operate under the Nutrient Stewardship Programme (NSP).
- Subject to the additional Nutrient Management requirements of NSP, farms may operate at an N loading of < 250 kg N/Ha.



Potential impact of P surplus reduction

- **2024 P Surplus = 8,729 tonnes**
- 30% reduction = approx. 7 kg/P/ha National P Balance
 - 30% reduction in P surplus would remove 2,619 tonnes

Reduction to be achieved from:

- reduced Chemical P Fertiliser use
- manure processing and P export (Tully AD Phase 2, SULS, SULM, etc..),
- farm efficiencies resulting from P Balance (eg, lower concentrate feed rate per litre of milk)



Nutrient Stewardship Programme (NSP)

2025 Proposal	2026 Proposal: Key Changes	Rationale	Risks and Opportunities
Retain derogation in current form	End derogation in current form and replace with Nutrient Stewardship Programme (encompassing Tier 1 and Tier 2). This is a more nuanced and responsive system with clear objective of improving nutrient efficiency to address environmental risk.	It is unacceptable that a very large number of farms currently operate at high nutrient loading outside of derogation. The aim is to bring eligible farms into the NSP system and onto a pathway towards greater nutrient efficiency.	Close monitoring of the uptake and effectiveness of the NSP is critical (ie. farms entering the scheme in tier 2 must demonstrate progress towards tier 1). 2-year review built in – work still needed on exact metrics for review Must ensure compliance with Habitat Regulations.



Overview & Key Changes to Current Derogation Rules

- Requirements to be Retained :
- Grazing livestock requirement
- Annual nutrient planning (Fertilisation Plan & Account.
- Maximum Nitrogen loading limit ≤ 250 kg N/ha/year (ruminant only)
- Soil analysis every 4 years
- Slurry spreading rules (50% before 15 June; LESSE after)
- Cultivation timing controls



Proposed Changes : Nutrient Stewardship Programme

1. Grassland Area Requirement (80% → 70%)
2. Phosphorus Balance Reform
3. Removal of Clover & Legume Restrictions
4. Application Process Reform
5. New Inspection Regime
6. Training Requirements – mandatory for Tier 2
7. Programme Review after 2 and 4 years



Nutrient Stewardship Programme

- Two Tier structure

Tier 1:

- existing derogation farms
- new entrants meeting all criteria inc P Balance of 10kg P/ha
- one application for 4-year duration of NAP
- inspection rate 1%

Tier 2

- must meet all criteria except P Balance of 10kg P/ha
- must reduce P Balance by at least 10% over 4-year of NAP or to 10kg P/ha
- annual application each year
- inspection rate 5%



Low Emission Slurry Spreading Equipment (LESSE)

2025 Proposal	2026 Proposal: Key Changes	Rationale	Risks and Opportunities
Move to 100 percent LESSE use by 2030. Original tiering was by farm livestock manure nitrogen production per hectare.	Three-tier livestock unit (LU) approach agreed: over 100 LU by 2028 over 75 LU by 2029 over 50 LU by 2030. Final tier for smallest farms removed.	Livestock Unit basis agreed as more practical. This is current NAP approach. Census data used to test uptake and impact below 50 LU. Phased for practicality and to account for manufacture and availability of equipment. Considerations around terrain constraints. Existing NAP provision for sloping fields continues.	Needs future modelling to confirm contribution to 2030 ammonia targets. Contractor capacity is a potential risk, as well as capital cost. New Sustainable Farm Investment Scheme will provide grant aid for LESSE.

Proposed LESSE Tiers and Timing

- Currently All Farm Businesses over 200 Livestock Units.

Proposed

- Tier 1 : February 2028
- All Farm Businesses over 100 Livestock Units
- Tier 2 : February 2029
- All Farm Businesses over 75 Livestock Units
- All Pig Farms over 10,000 KgN/yr.
- Tier 3 : February 2030
- All Farm Businesses over 50 Livestock Units



Nitrogen

Chemical N Fertiliser limits:

- 3 production categories
- Maximum yield category – mandatory soil analysis

N excretion rates for dairy cows:

- Determined by milk yield
- 7 bands for milk yield/N excretion
- System allows for precision calculation and recognizes efficient practice – lower protein diets



Nitrogen

Chemical N Fertiliser limits:

- 3 production categories
- Maximum yield category – mandatory soil analysis

Maximum	243 – 272 kg N/ha/year
Moderate to High	223 - 242
Low to Moderate	Up to 222



N and P excretion banding for Dairy Cows



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Depairtment o'
Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers

Purpose and Rationale of N and P Banding

- **Purpose of N and P Banding**

- The banding approach improves accuracy and fairness in nitrogen and phosphorus excretion calculations for dairy farms.

- **Regulatory Impacts**

- avoiding disproportionate impacts on farms close to regulatory thresholds by multiple bands and farm specific calculations

- **Proposal**

- The proposal uses 7 broader bands (6,000–12,500 litres) and allows three routes for calculation to reflect individual farm circumstances.



Farmer Calculation Routes and Comparative Approaches

- **Farmer Options (Four Routes)**

- Four distinct routes provide farmers with choices
 - Milk Yield Banding
 - Absolute N calculation – Yield Based
 - Absolute N Calculation – Diet Based
 - Default Value

- **Comparison with Republic of Ireland (ROI) Approach**

- Northern Ireland's flexible, outcome-based system contrasts with the Republic of Ireland's prescriptive, broad yield bands approach



Focused Approach for Priority Areas

2025 Proposal	2026 Proposal: Key Changes	Rationale	Risks and Opportunities
Develop and implement focused NAP measures in high-risk areas. Initial preference was voluntary, following Sustainable Catchment Programme (SCP) model.	Develop and implement focused NAP measures in high-risk areas, with accompanying advisory support and catchment information	Stakeholder group explored Qs re measures, success criteria, data feedback to farmers and catchment water quality information. Target effort where risk is highest, building on success of existing SCP model.	Needs clear success metrics and ability to escalate if voluntary action fails to deliver the necessary improvements. Should connect to sensitive sites, catchments and water quality monitoring. 2-year review built in, looking at uptake levels.



System for recording Slurry and Manure movements

2025 Proposal	2026 Proposal: Key Changes	Rationale	Risks and Opportunities
Record slurry and manure exports/imports within 4 days, verified by receiving farm. Concern that 4 days for all movements was unworkable.	Enhanced online system with three annual notifications, importer verification. Max 5-day reporting for movements over 15 miles (in a straight line). An App will be developed for ease of use with mobile phone.	Key measure to combat the issue of 'paper acres' and enhance transparency. Threshold options explored, including volume and distance. Needs a simple, practical, enforceable online system.	This is one of the most important data measures. Nutrient movement needs to be traceable. The new system will also cover Anaerobic Digestate, separated slurry solids and other organic fertilisers movements to ensure comprehensive nutrient tracking.



Buffer Strips/Buffer Zones

2025 Proposal	2026 Proposal: Key Changes	Rationale	Risks and Opportunities
Mandatory 3m buffer along waterways in arable fields.	Buffers strips in arable fields are voluntary, and width is variable. Shift towards adaptive buffers, targeting high-risk areas and crops. Knowledge transfer and Farming with Nature (FwN) route identified. Late harvested crops – a requirement for mitigation measures at planting stage.	Reality of what type and size of buffer is most appropriate is nuanced. FwN considered an effective route to affect the behavioral change required. Range of non prescriptive mitigation measures provides flexibility and opportunity to avail of funding e.g. FwN	Important to avoid losing priority buffers in high-risk catchments. Needs scheme funding, advice and monitoring to deliver real uptake. The delivery risk is whether voluntary uptake is strong enough.

Inspections and Enforcement

- Inspections to be more targeted and efficient.
- Technical Group agreed more risk-based inspection – targeting farms and activities that present greatest environmental risk, allowing more inspections overall.
- Farms producing highest levels of livestock manure are more likely to be inspected, as well as those who remain outside of NSP, as they are deemed to represent a higher level of risk.
- Aims to balance advice with enforcement, utilising available resources most effectively.
- Needs more NIEA resource.



Governance and Review Mechanism

- Critical component of the revised set of measures and the basis on which buy-in was agreed
- Proposed measures need monitoring, governance, review triggers and transparent reporting
- NAP Steering Group will be established (close link to Technical Working Group). This group will monitor progress and make recommendations to DAERA on possible changes. DAERA will need to justify if recommendations are not followed
- Development of appropriate metrics and indicators is key to success of this element of NAP5. A set of agreed metrics and indicators will be established post consultation.





CAFRE Knowledge Transfer

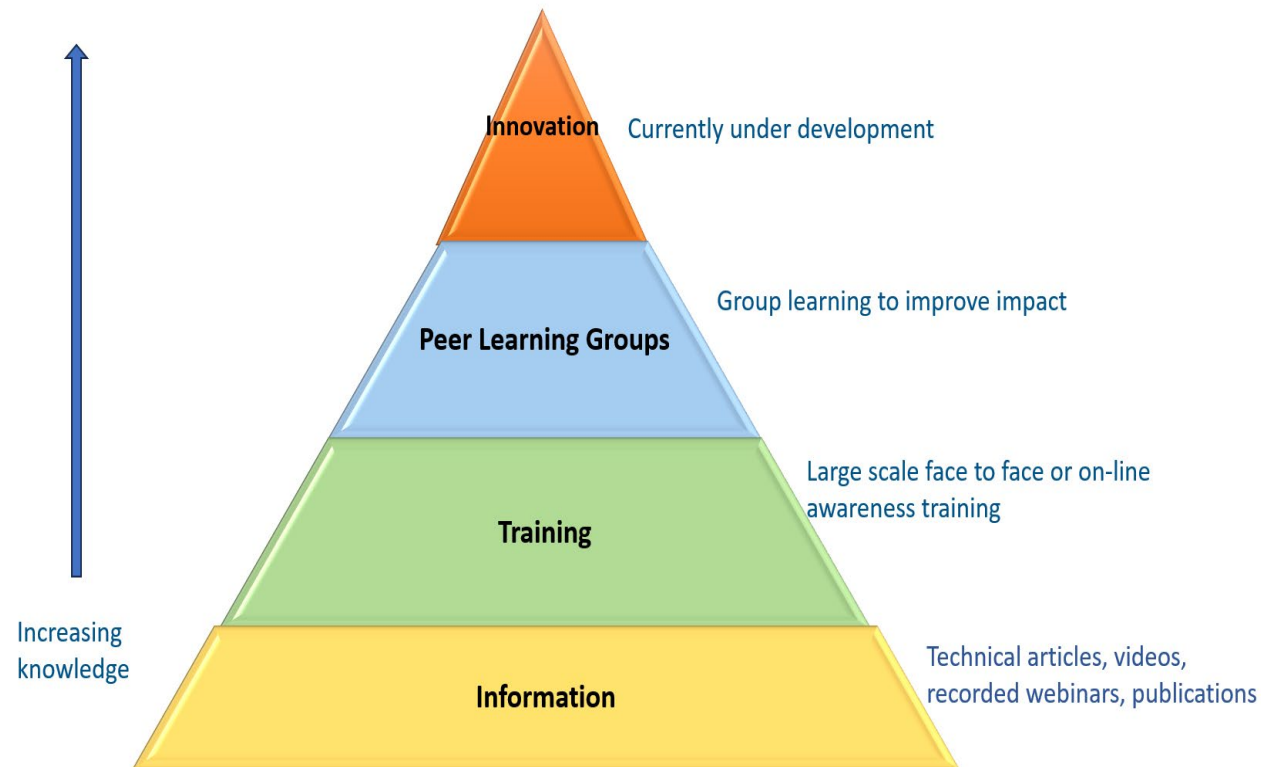


(NAP) Consultation Public Information Event

Thursday 6th August 2026

Judith McCord

Knowledge Transfer – Target audience



- Knowledge Transfer programmes will offer support to all NI farm businesses.
- Tailored to business need and resource availability.

- Provided through farming publications, digitally & large-scale events.
- This includes development of a Knowledge Hub – online resource platform.
- Target Audience:
 - Directly - All NI farmers & growers.
 - Indirectly - NI Agri industry and the wider public.



DAERA
Department of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Training

- **Face to Face**
 - Indoor formal training events (e.g. SNHS)
 - On-farm demonstration events (e.g. slurry management)
- **Webinars / Podcasts**
- **Online delivery**
 - Bespoke training with a record of achievement.
 - Online learning/information resources



Group Learning

- **Business Sustainability Groups**

- aimed at supporting larger farm businesses to become more sustainable and resilient over a number of years.

- **Themed Groups**

- shorter term - aimed at businesses impacted by specific policies.



Demonstration

Innovation Farms

- Commercial businesses demonstrating innovation and best practice sustainability across a range of sectors and production models

CAFRE Farms

- Sustainable production models following the College Estate Strategy

On Farm Demonstration events

- The application of sustainable technologies or production models

Target audience

- **Farmers and Growers**
 - Based on sectors / production systems / catchments
 - Key staff within businesses
- **Agri- professionals**
 - Industry support and advisory staff
 - Agricultural consultants
- **Supply sector**
 - Industry merchant / supply staff



Department of

**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

Sustainable Farming Investment Scheme

6 August 2026

Sustainable Agriculture Programme

Sustainable Farming Investment Scheme

- Technology and equipment scheme, with 40% grant rate
- Incentivise investment across farm sectors and sizes – must have **Category 1 Farm Business ID**
- List of pre-assessed items to ensure investments linked to benefits
- Basic agricultural equipment, replacement or maintenance items not supported
- Not scoring for age, gender, qualifications, or Value for Money (underbidding)
- Bank letter not required
- Round 1 now open – **applications must be made by 11.59pm on 3 Sept.**
- One application per round – apply for **minimum grant £1,200 per round, maximum £25,000 across the scheme**



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Depairtment o'
Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers

Sustainable Agriculture Programme

LESSE support under the scheme

- Range of 10 individual LESSE items on the list, as well as 4 small tanker / small LESSE packages
- One LESSE item per eligible farm (not previously funded under FBIS, not already required under existing NAP Regulations)
- Separate offers for Low Emission Slurry Spreading Equipment (LESSE) and Non-LESSE
 - LESSE 9 months to complete purchase after Letter of Offer; Non-LESSE 6 months
- Application score is based on score of item(s) selected:
 - Averaged for Non-LESSE items
 - Item score combined with livestock units for LESSE
- Application questions for LESSE items
 - Current spreading methods
 - Pig livestock numbers – breeding and finisher
- At claim stage, can vary LESSE item – grant paid on lowest of: amount paid, original item grant offered, or varied item grant (based on reference price)



For More Information:

- <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/sustainable-farming-investment-scheme>
- Email: SFIS@daera-ni.gov.uk
- Telephone: 028 9052 4882



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Depairtment o'
Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers

Sustainable Agriculture Programme