

PROTECTING OUR WATER QUALITY GOOD FARMING PRACTICES IN KILKENNY



Introduction:

As a farmer in Kilkenny, you play a crucial role in protecting our water quality. The recent introduction of the EU's Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Irish Government's National Water Policy have emphasized the importance of good farming practices to maintain healthy rivers, lakes, and groundwater.

If you are in the Single Farm Payment Scheme, the Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water Regulations 2022 are also part of cross compliance. Poor practises put your payment at risk.

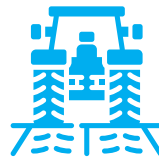
What is water quality?

Water quality refers to the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of water. In Kilkenny, our water bodies are an important source of drinking water, recreation, and wildlife habitats. Good water quality is essential for maintaining these benefits.



How can farmers contribute to good water quality?

Store slurry in covered tanks and apply it at the correct rate to minimize soil erosion and runoff.



Ensure no direct effluent run off to ground water or surface waters.



Only apply nutrients as per the Agriculture Regulations



Regular soil nutrient testing can help prevent over application, reduce fertiliser costs, and ensure efficient use of onsite slurry and manure.



Check soil for aeration and compaction. Breaking up compaction adds to better absorption of nutrients and water and greater yields.



Handle manure responsibly, avoiding spills and leakage, and ensure it is properly stored and disposed of.



Use fertilisers responsibly and considering soil type, crop requirements, and weather conditions.



Use pesticides only when necessary and ensuring proper application rates to minimize drift and runoff.



Implement soil conservation measures such as contour farming, terracing, and buffer strips to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation.



Consider riparian buffers along rivers and streams.



Protect the riparian areas along rivers, lakes, and streams. Maintain a buffer zone of at least 10 meters around watercourses, keeping them free from agricultural waste and pollution.



Only undertake instream works during July to Sept following engagement and agreement with Inland Fisheries Ireland.



Keep guttering and downpipes in good condition and consider harvesting rainwater as an alternative for cleaning.



Consider the use of solar/nose pumps and cattle drinkers as an alternative to water access.



EXAMPLES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Slurry running into drainage ditches/groundwater/surface water.	✘
Inadequate storage of slurry and soiled water	✘
Clean and Soiled Water not properly segregated. Broken and/or blocked gutters and downpipes	✘
Organic fertiliser spread during closed season/ too soon after adverse weather/before adverse weather events.	✘
Silage effluent seepage and/or discharges to surface water or ground water.	✘
Inadequate management of silage pit.	✘
Direct piped contaminated discharge to surface water.	✘
Land poaching which results in direct runoff of soiled water to waterbody.	✘
Inappropriate sheep dipping areas/ dip disposal.	✘
Issue with supplementary feeding point.	✘
For those in derogation, cattle access to waterbody.	✘



BENEFITS OF GOOD FARMING PRACTICES

Shared knowledge.	✓
Improved water quality for drinking, recreation, and wildlife habitats.	✓
Reduced risk of pollution fines and reputational damage.	✓
Reduced risk of water pollution and protection of the Single Farm Payment.	✓
Increased crop yields and improved soil health through sustainable farming practices.	✓
Compliance with EU's WFD and Irish National Water Policy.	✓



Conclusion

As a farmer in Kilkenny, you have a vital role to play in protecting our water quality. By adopting good farming practices, you can contribute to maintaining healthy rivers, streams, and groundwater for future generations. Remember to follow the latest guidelines and regulations from DAFM, EPA, and Kilkenny Local Authority to ensure compliance with EU's WFD and Irish National Water Policy.

Additional tips:

- Consult with your local agricultural advisor, the Environmental Department of Kilkenny County Council or DAFM for guidance on best farming practices.
- Consider participating in farm inspections or audits to identify areas for improvement.
- Engage with local community groups or environmental organizations to promote good farming practices.

More information and resources:

Kilkenny Co.Co
Environment Section,
County Hall,
John Street,
Kilkenny R95 A39T

Opening Hours:

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (Closed Lunch Time 1pm - 2pm)
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Email: environment@kilkennycoco.ie



Department of Agriculture,
Food, and the Marine (DAFM):
www.agriculture.gov.ie



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):
www.epa.ie



Local Authority (Kilkenny County Council):
www.kilkennycoco.ie

