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Guidance

# Rules for farmers and land managers

What you must do when you keep livestock or manage land.

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From: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#)

[\(/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs\)](#), [Environment Agency](#) [\(/government/organisations/environment-agency\)](#), [Rural Payments Agency](#) [\(/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency\)](#), [Forestry Commission](#) [\(/government/organisations/forestry-commission\)](#), [Food Standards Agency](#) [\(/government/organisations/food-standards-agency\)](#), [Health and Safety Executive](#) [\(/government/organisations/health-and-safety-executive\)](#), and [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#) [\(/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency\)](#)

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**Applies to England**

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This is a new page – give your [feedback](#) to help us improve it.

There are legal requirements in English law around certain farming activities to protect people, livestock and the environment. Government agencies and local authorities inspect farms and land to make sure you follow the rules. This page does not contain all the rules but can help you find the ones that apply to you.

## Keep livestock

What you must do to keep livestock and protect the public from cattle.

[Register to keep poultry](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/poultry-including-game-birds-registration-rules-and-forms)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/poultry-including-game-birds-registration-rules-and-forms>)

[Funding for farmers, growers and land managers](#)  
([/guidance/funding-for-farmers](#))

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## Collection

[Future of farming in England](#)  
([/government/collections/future-of-farming-in-england](#))

## [Keeping cattle, bison and buffalo in England and Wales](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-cattle-bison-and-buffalo-in-england-and-wales)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-cattle-bison-and-buffalo-in-england-and-wales>

## [Protect the public from cattle kept on land](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais17ew.htm)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais17ew.htm>

## [Keeping sheep and goats in England](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-sheep-and-goats-in-england)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-sheep-and-goats-in-england>

## [Keeping pigs in England](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-pigs-in-england)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-pigs-in-england>

## [Keeping deer in England: tagging, movement and record keeping rules](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/deer-keepers-tagging-deer-and-reporting-their-movements)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/deer-keepers-tagging-deer-and-reporting-their-movements>

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# Protect animal health and welfare

What you must know about animal welfare, food safety, disease and use of medicines.

## [Protect animal welfare on farm and in transport](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare>

## [Produce safe-to-eat food for humans or animals](https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/farming-animal-feed)

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/farming-animal-feed>

## [Report notifiable diseases in animals](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/notifiable-diseases-in-animals)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/notifiable-diseases-in-animals>

## [Bovine TB: get your cattle tested in England](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bovine-tb-getting-your-cattle-tested-in-england)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bovine-tb-getting-your-cattle-tested-in-england>

## [Responsible use of animal medicines on the farm](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsible-use-of-animal-medicines-on-the-farm)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsible-use-of-animal-medicines-on-the-farm>

## [Keeping horses](https://www.gov.uk/keeping-horses) (<https://www.gov.uk/keeping-horses>)

[Keeping horses commercially](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-horses-commercially)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-horses-commercially>)

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## Protect the environment if you keep livestock

What you must do to avoid pollution from animals, manure and silage.

[Pigs and poultry intensive farming: environmental permits](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pigs-and-poultry-intensive-farming-environmental-permits) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pigs-and-poultry-intensive-farming-environmental-permits>)

[Make sure animal activities do not damage soil](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution#manage-livestock)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution#manage-livestock>)

[Store organic manures in nitrate vulnerable zones](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/storing-organic-manures-in-nitrate-vulnerable-zones)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/storing-organic-manures-in-nitrate-vulnerable-zones>)

[Store slurry, silage and agricultural fuel oil safely](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/storing-silage-slurry-and-agricultural-fuel-oil)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/storing-silage-slurry-and-agricultural-fuel-oil>)

[Fallen stock and safe disposal of dead animals](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fallen-stock)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fallen-stock>)

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## Manage land that you own or occupy

What you must do to protect your land and manage public access.

[Manage farming and horticultural activities to prevent soil erosion and water pollution](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution#prevent-erosion-manage-livestock-and-soil)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution#prevent-erosion-manage-livestock-and-soil>)

[Public rights of way: landowner responsibilities](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-rights-of-way-landowner-responsibilities)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-rights-of-way-landowner-responsibilities>)

[Open access land: management, rights and responsibilities \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-access-land-management-rights-and-responsibilities\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-access-land-management-rights-and-responsibilities)

[Coastal margin: management, rights and responsibilities \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-your-land-on-the-england-coast-path\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-your-land-on-the-england-coast-path)

[Sites of special scientific interest: manage sites you own or occupy \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest)

[Heather and grass burning: rules and when you need a licence \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/heather-and-grass-burning-apply-for-a-licence\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/heather-and-grass-burning-apply-for-a-licence)

[Change or improve rural land: check if you need to apply for an Environmental Impact Assessment \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eia-agriculture-regulations-apply-to-make-changes-to-rural-land\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eia-agriculture-regulations-apply-to-make-changes-to-rural-land)

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## Use pest control products

What you must do when you buy, move, use or store pesticides.

[Register as a professional user of plant protection products \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professional-plant-protection-products-ppps-register-as-a-user\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professional-plant-protection-products-ppps-register-as-a-user)

[Use, transport or store pesticides safely \(https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/pesticides.htm\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/pesticides.htm)

[Code of practice for using plant protection products: what you legally have to do \(https://www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/using-pesticides/codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-using-plant-protection-products.htm\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/using-pesticides/codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-using-plant-protection-products.htm)

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## Apply products to your land

When you can spread fertiliser, manure or waste on your land and the restrictions that apply if you burn crop residues.

[Plan your use of fertiliser or manure to reduce water pollution \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution#assess-pollution-risks\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution#assess-pollution-risks)

[Nitrate vulnerable zones: rules when you use fertilisers or store manure \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nitrate-vulnerable-zones#rules-you-must-follow\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nitrate-vulnerable-zones#rules-you-must-follow)

[Use sewage sludge on your land \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sewage-sludge-in-agriculture-code-of-practice\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sewage-sludge-in-agriculture-code-of-practice)

[Waste exemption: spread waste to benefit your land \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-u10-spreading-waste-to-benefit-agricultural-land\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-u10-spreading-waste-to-benefit-agricultural-land)

[Burning crop residues: restrictions and rules for farmers and land managers \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/burning-crop-residues-restrictions-and-rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/burning-crop-residues-restrictions-and-rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers)

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## Produce plant varieties and seeds

What you must know about plant breeders' rights, getting seeds certified, licences, farm saved seed and selling seed potatoes.

[Plant breeders rights: national listing of plant varieties, seed certification and farm saved seed \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guides-and-forms-for-plant-varieties-and-seeds-applications\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guides-and-forms-for-plant-varieties-and-seeds-applications)

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## Protect landscape features

What you must know before you start work on hedges or sites that are legally protected because of their historical importance.

[Hedgerows: find out if you can remove or carry out work \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-hedgerows-regulation-and-management\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-hedgerows-regulation-and-management)

[Get permission before you work on scheduled monuments \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/scheduled-monuments/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/scheduled-monuments/)

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## Manage trees and woodland

What you must know about planting, felling and keeping trees healthy.

[Tree planting and woodland creation: overview \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-planting-and-woodland-creation-overview\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-planting-and-woodland-creation-overview)

[Tree felling overview \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-felling-overview\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-felling-overview)

[Tree pests and diseases \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tree-pests-and-diseases\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tree-pests-and-diseases)

[Plan woodland projects: check if you need to apply for an Environmental Impact Assessment \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessments-for-woodland\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessments-for-woodland)

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## Manage water

What you can do around watercourses and what permissions you need.

[Maintain watercourses and understand permissions you need to work around them \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse)

[Check if you need a licence to abstract water \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-need-a-licence-to-abstract-water\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-need-a-licence-to-abstract-water)

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## Manage and dispose of waste

What you must do with hazardous waste, such as chemical containers and sheep dip.

[Manage waste on land: guidance for land managers \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-waste-on-land-guidance-for-land-managers\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-waste-on-land-guidance-for-land-managers)

[Discharges to surface water and groundwater: environmental permits \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/discharges-to-surface-water-and-groundwater-environmental-permits\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/discharges-to-surface-water-and-groundwater-environmental-permits)

[Sheep dip: groundwater protection code \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sheep-dip-groundwater-protection-code\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sheep-dip-groundwater-protection-code)

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## Make compost, biogas, fertiliser or animal feed

What you must do when working with materials that come from animals but are not for human consumption.

[Guidance for the animal by-products industry \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-the-animal-by-product-industry\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-the-animal-by-product-industry)

## Get advice

Get advice from Defra or the [Farming Advice Service \(http://www.gov.uk/government/groups/farming-advice-service\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/groups/farming-advice-service).

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Last updated 1 January 2024 - [hide all updates](#)

### 1 January 2024

Removed cross compliance requirements for England. Cross compliance no longer applies in England from 1 January 2024.

### 25 October 2023

Updated the introduction to clarify the legal status of the rules in England. And that farms are inspected by government agencies and local authorities.

Updated keeping deer in England link title to match the destination page title.

Removed import, export or distribute animals and food



section. This content is covered in the farming and land management topic.

## 9 August 2023

Changed link for woodland creation and fixed broken link for advice.

## 17 July 2023

Added new sheep and goats, pigs and deer links. Removed Register land you use to keep livestock, Register livestock to get a flock or herd mark and Get a temporary land association (TLA) or temporary county parish holding (CPH) number because these are on livestock collection pages. Added descriptions under headings. Changed sentence to make it clearer it doesn't cover all rules.

## 26 June 2023

Added link for Register livestock to get a flock or herd mark because it is a new page explaining the rules.

## 19 May 2023

Changed pigs and poultry intensive farming environmental permits link. Removed organic farming link. Added sheep dip groundwater protection link.

## 27 March 2023

First published.

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## Explore the topic

[Farming and land management \(/browse/environment-countryside/farming-land-management\)](/browse/environment-countryside/farming-land-management)

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