

Are you up to speed on SSAFO regs?

What are SSAFO regulations?

These are the main rules which cover silage, slurry and oil storage on farms.

They stipulate the size and design of storage and measures to reduce the risks of pollution. They are enforceable by the Environment Agency.

All farmers, but particularly livestock farmers need to know these rules. These are the basic requirements for pollution prevention for all farmers and apply to everybody including those outside Nitrate Vulnerable Zones.

The regulations apply to all Silage and Slurry Facilities built after 1991. Pre 1991 structures are exempt, but the Agency can serve notice for you to take action if there is a risk of pollution.

What's changing?

A MAJOR change to the regs is that now you must inform the Agency at least 14 days BEFORE YOUR START construction on a silage or slurry store.

Another major change is that In England, From January 2014, the SSAFO regs (excluding Fuel Oil) will be linked to Cross Compliance in NVZ areas. Rural Payments Agency inspectors will report breaches of the SSAFO regs which could mean a 3-5% Single Farm Payment penalty, if it is an unintentional breach, or considerably more if it is deemed to be intentional. Under all circumstance you will be required to rectify the problem.

It's worth looking at the most common areas that may cause a breach in the regulations:

- Having too little slurry storage by getting the calculations wrong
- Reception pits maybe too small.
- Leaking gutters mean that excess water gets into the store reducing its overall capacity creating extra slurry
- All stores for slurry / FYM and silage clamps which allow uncontrolled seepage is pretty common especially with older structures
- Fuel Tanks are often overlooked

The simple approach is that if there is a chance of pollution you are likely to be liable. To avoid penalties, the first step is to know what the regulations require, take the right advice and, make a realistic assessment of where you might have a problem and then put it right.

For further information contact

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