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UISCE ÉIREANN : IRISH WATER

Water Conservation on the farm

Part of ervia group

Contact details

Please have your 10 digit Irish Water account number to hand when you phone. If you have any questions or need more information please contact us.

Web: **www.water.ie**
Twitter: **@IWCare**
Email: **business@water.ie**

Irish Water
PO Box 448
South City Delivery Office
Cork City

Billing and general queries
9am–5.30pm Mon-Fri
Telephone: **Callsave 0818 778 778** or **+353 1 707 2827**

Water supply queries and emergencies
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Telephone: **Callsave 1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**

Please note that the rates charged for 1850 (Callsave and 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary across different service providers. Calls made using mobiles may be more expensive.

Safeguarding our water for our future

Water Conservation on the farm

Just as water is crucial to everyday life, it is also key to the operation of a thriving agriculture industry in Ireland.

With water shortages reaching critical levels and water restrictions in place across many of our farming regions, there is an urgent need to manage water effectively and sustainably.

We want to support the farming community to conserve water in order to protect the local water supply to farms and livestock while also making savings on annual water bills.

Here are some simple ways to help conserve water on the farm and reduce water bills:

Detect leaks

Check your water meters (including remote ones) on a regular basis to identify possible leaks. Do an overnight test using your meter when little or no water is being consumed and if the night usage is unusually high or the counter is still running when everything is turned off, you may have a leak.

Carry out visual checks along your private pipework on the farm to detect leaks regularly. Inspect the ground above your pipes for visible signs of leaks such as unusually damp ground, lusher than expected vegetation (sign of recent leak) or reduced community / rush vegetation (consequence of a long-term leak).

Suspect a leak on your pipework? You can further investigate by shutting off sections of your network to assess the change in flow. Wet drains after a period without rain can indicate blockages or water from a leak may be flowing into them.

Take action to conserve water

Watch out for overflowing drinking troughs as they waste significant amounts of water. Adjust the ball valves to lower the float or replace faulty parts. Drain and cover troughs when they are not being used during the winter to avoid frost damage.

Fix dripping taps and hosepipes around the farm promptly by replacing washers and repair overflows to avoid water wastage.

Do not leave taps and hosepipes unattended when

running or fit automatic shut-off valves. The higher the water pressure, the more water is wasted when a leak develops. Where possible, use control valves at strategic points across your water network.

Save water when cleaning the yard by using dry-cleaning techniques, such as scrapers and brushes to remove solid waste from yards and pens before hosing. You can also use a small amount of water (e.g. one bucket) to pre-soak waste before cleaning.

Consider Rainwater Harvesting - rain from the roofs of farm buildings can be used for a variety of activities such as washing down yards. Consider the level of rain water quality required for specific water uses on the farm (e.g. plant nurseries and field irrigation) and the surfaces and contamination risks before you consider installing appropriate rain water harvesting, treatment (filtration and UV) and storage systems.

Recycle clean plate cooler water on dairy farms - you can divert it to a tank and use it for parlour washing.

Water your crops efficiently by irrigating at the right time of day to meet crops needs and reduce losses through evaporation; use the correct pump/pipe size, do not irrigate when it is windy and consider irrigating at night to reduce further losses through evaporation.

Take action to protect water

Avoid contamination of surface waters by reducing or eliminating access to livestock by fencing off watercourses. Pollution containing animal faeces can affect the water environment, nutrients and soil. Destroyed bankside vegetation can also contribute to flooding.

Be aware of the risk of the Cryptosporidium parasite contaminating water - it is very high when animals have direct access to water – which can cause severe diarrhoea in humans and animals. Provide

livestock with alternative drinking arrangements such as pasture pumps and troughs.

Avoid risk of soiled water runoffs to surface waters when placing troughs. Keep troughs 20m away from boreholes and wells, avoid placing them near fissured limestone and prevent poaching. In addition, establish buffer zones alongside all watercourses during crop production.

Maintain slurry tanks and ensure adequate storage throughout the closed period, ensure effluent is collected and stored from silage pits and that bales are stored 10m away from a watercourse.

Be mindful of regulations around the spreading of chemical fertiliser, pesticides, livestock manure, other organic fertilisers and soiled water. Avoid land spreading during prohibited periods, unsuitable weather conditions (e.g. waterlogged, flooded and frozen land) and keep within overall maximum fertilisation rates for nitrogen and phosphorus.

Make sure pesticide/fertiliser stores are secure and located more than 10m away from watercourses and/or drains. Do not apply herbicides, pesticides and chemical fertilisers within 1.5m of waterbodies/ watercourse.

Reduce pesticide risks

Take these simple steps to reduce any risks with pesticide:

- Choose the right pesticide product
- Read and follow the product label
- Determine the right amount to purchase and use
- Don't spray if rain or strong wind is forecast in the next 48 hours
- Make sure you are aware of the location of all nearby water courses
- Comply with any buffer zone specified on the product label to protect the aquatic environment. Mark out the specified buffer zone from the edge of

the river or lake or other water course

- Never fill a sprayer directly from a water course or carry out mixing, loading or other handling operations beside a water course
- Avoid spills, stay well back from open drains and rinse empty containers 3 times into the sprayer.
- Store and dispose of pesticides and their containers properly.

For more helpful tips and advice, please visit **https://www.water.ie/businessconserve**

If you would like to know more about Irish Water please contact us:

Telephone: 0818 448 448
Twitter: @IrishWater
info@water.ie

Please note that to maintain the highest level of service we may monitor and record calls.

Irish Water
PO Box 860,
South City Delivery Office,
Cork City