



For issue, 28 August 2012 by the Fertilizer Association of Ireland.

Fertilizer Association requests Ministers to extend chemical fertilizer application date deadline.

The Fertilizer Association of Ireland has written to the Ministers for the Environment and the Minister for Agriculture to request an immediate decision on an ad-hoc application for an extension to the closing date for chemical fertilizer application in 2012. Without an extension, no chemical nitrogen or phosphorus fertilizer applications would be permitted from the 15th September onwards.

In a letter to the Ministers today, The Fertilizer Association of Ireland have highlighted the impact of the persistent inclement summer weather conditions on reducing grass growth rates and silage quality, and on delayed crop harvest dates and reduced yields. The letter explained the fact that farmers will need to take full advantage of any opportunity to extend the grazing season given that both silage quantity and quality this winter is expected to be below average. In the absence of grazed grass, a reliance on increased use of purchased concentrate feedstuffs will be very expensive for farmers given the continuing increases being seen in the price of these feeds, which have risen by approximately 25 % in recent months. The effect of the delayed harvest of grain crops on the establishment and fertilization of winter cereal crops was also highlighted.

The temporary extension to the closing date is being requested to give greater flexibility for farmers to target their fertilizer applications to weather conditions that will maximise the uptake and response to the nutrients applied, rather than having to compromise on weather conditions in order to adhere to a calendar deadline. The extension would be fully consistent with the overall objective of the Nitrates Regulations of protecting water quality, given that the existing conditions would still preclude fertilizer application in conditions of waterlogged soils or expected heavy rainfall.

The Association asked that such an extension should be announced as soon as possible to give farmers sufficient flexibility to plan fertilizer applications this autumn.

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