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## **Don't let Ammonia leave you in the slurry!**

The Clean Air Strategy, released in 2019, includes significant points relating to how slurry is stored and spread. The focus of the strategy is to reduce the level of ammonia emitted from Agriculture, alongside other industries across the UK.

Ammonia is emitted from farming in many ways but handling and storing of slurry in particular could require significant investment in the next 6 years.

For instance, the strategy suggests that ALL slurry will have to be applied using either trailing hose, trailing shoe, or injector by 2025; effectively banning the use of splashplates. Recent grants such as the Countryside Productivity Scheme, have offered 40% funding for some of this equipment.

The main issue will relate to slurry storage. The strategy suggests that by 2027, all slurry stores will have to be covered. The implications of this are significant. Many old stores are not structurally capable of taking a cover, and in these situations a new store might be required. Some older stores that might be able to take a cover could then fall foul of the SSAFO regs (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oils Regulations).

Any new store, OR substantially altered older store must comply with the SSAFO regs which amongst other things requires a store to hold at least 4 months storage. So, older stores that could take a cover but do not provide 4 months storage would be in breach of the regs, and a new store would be needed.

Where farmers are currently looking at new stores, another hurdle is lurking. The country has been split into Impact Risk Zones for Ammonia, and the closer a business is to a sensitive habitat such as a SSSI the more risk there is of an impact upon that habitat.

Where a business falls within an IRZ, the planning process to achieve a new slurry store could take an additional twist, with the business needing to demonstrate an understanding of the ammonia emissions from the farm steading, and potentially be required to show that they are actively trying to reduce emissions before planning will be granted.

This could mean that open yards need to be covered, or how the slurry is scraped and managed within sheds is altered. This is a new subject that many farmers have not fully appreciated as yet.

All of the above suggests that the next 6 years could see a lot of head aches for farmers in the North West of England. DEFRA publications have suggested a Slurry Investment Scheme will be made available sometime after 2021, but as slurry remains an issue on most livestock holdings it is highly likely that any scheme will be over-subscribed.

Taking the time now to look at the options and plan what will be needed to comply with the Clean Air Strategy and Impact Risk Zones will ensure that as and when any funding becomes available, your business is prepped and ready to go.

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