

### **Tactics for safely managing slurry during current wet conditions**

*With record summer rainfall levels a large number of farmers have been forced to house cattle. Housed cattle, poor ground conditions and heavy rainfall have left many with the unusual problem of full slurry stores in September. Concerned farmers have contacted Grassland Development Centre, IBERS for guidance on how best to manage slurry this autumn and cut pollution risks to a minimum.*

If storage is full and you really have no other choice but to spread valuable slurry during this current wet period, note the following: -

Target driest fields – but avoid those that are heavily drained. Tile drains will rapidly transfer watery slurry to watercourses.

Avoid slopes as they will encourage surface run-off – it may be that only small parts of some fields maybe suitable for spreading.

Avoid any where that may be at risk from flooding

Long herbage will act as buffer to stop any run-off – for safe spreading avoid tightly grazed fields or silage aftermaths with open swards (although these would normally be your preferred choice).

Under normal conditions, a 10m buffer strip between a watercourse is recommended – with current heavy rainfall events it would be prudent to increase that to 20m.

Keep application rates low- ideally less than 1500gallons/acre (16m<sup>3</sup>/ha).

Light tankers and low pressure tyres will help avoid compaction damage

Irrigation systems will avoid heavy tractor traffic – but monitor carefully and move the sprinkler often.

Neighbouring farmers without slurry storage problems may have ground that is more suitable than yours.

Cereal stubbles – especially those that have been cultivated, may provide a suitable low risk area for application.

*If you have any doubts about the suitability of ground and conditions for spreading please contact Grassland Development Centre, IBERS on 01970 823157 or the Environment Agency on 08708 506 506*