



## Overview of key environmental issues

Agricultural and horticultural businesses impact on the environment in a variety of ways – either directly through your business’s land, building and livestock management activities – or indirectly through the upstream activities of your suppliers.

The key environmental issues affecting your sector vary depending on the holding-type, but broadly speaking the following are of most relevance: agricultural emissions to air (notably methane for livestock farming and nitrous oxide for arable); machinery and building energy use (especially in horticulture and intensive poultry and pig units); water pollution (through drift of pesticides and fertilisers); the production of agro-chemicals and feeds; and waste disposal. Where these activities are carried out by contractors it is good practice to include environmental requirements in contracts.

Listed below are links to detailed information on the most relevant pieces of environmental legislation affecting your sector and essential ‘Green Savings’ to creating a greener, more profitable, farm business. It should be noted that this list does not represent an exhaustive list of legislative requirements for your sector – for example, it does not include Single Farm Payment ‘Cross Compliance’ requirements.

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## Legislation

### Climate change agreements

The Climate Change Levy (CCL) is a tax on the use of energy in industry, commerce and the public sector. The Government permits an 80 percent discount from the CCL if certain targets for improving energy efficiency and carbon emissions<sup>4</sup> are met as part of a formal Climate Change Agreement with industry sectors or businesses. More information is available at: [www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk)

### Ozone depleting substances

Ozone Depleting Substances are chemicals that damage the ozone layer if allowed to escape and Fluorinated gases (F-gases) are a potent greenhouse gas. Both have restrictions on their production, transport, sale and disposal. More information is available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk>

### Waste storage and transport

You are responsible for storing and transporting your waste safely and legally and must ensure that your waste does not harm the environment. More information is available at: <http://www.netregs.gov.uk>

### Fuel storage

If you store any kind of oil on your premises above ground, outside in containers with a capacity of more than 200 litres then you may need to comply with the Oil Storage Regulations. More information is available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

## **Animal by-products**

Animal by-products are products of animal origin that are not intended for human consumption. The Animal By-Products Regulations contain rules for the collection, storage, handling, and disposal of animal by-products and control their marketing and export. More information is available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

## **Landfill regulations**

Certain wastes, such as tyres and some chemicals, must not be sent to landfill. More information is available at: <http://www.netregs.gov.uk>  
Fertilisers These regulations aim to prevent fertilisers to enter watercourses such as rivers, streams, lakes or drainage ditches. Defra has produced nine detailed guidance leaflets which can be downloaded from the website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk>

## **Surface water or ground water pollution**

Many substances entering surface waters or ground waters could cause pollution. Most substances that businesses use and dispose of are unsuitable for discharge to surface waters or ground waters without being treated first. More information is available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

## **Food hygiene standards**

There are several regulations that apply to all businesses in the food supply chain including caterers, primary producers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers. The regulations set out basic hygiene principles, focusing on how to identify and control food safety risks at each stage of the process of preparing and selling food. More information is available at: [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk).

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# **Green Savings**

## **Calculate your carbon footprint**

You can only make informed decisions about where to target carbon reduction policies when you have a complete view of your organisation's emissions. Plenty of business-friendly, free, advice is available on creating a simple corporate carbon footprint – highly recommended is Defra's GHG Reporting Guidelines (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/>). This document explains in clear terms how you go about creating a footprint – as well as how to report the result and set emissions targets. To help you calculate your business carbon footprint to the Defra standard we you can use the free Footprinter tool: <http://www.footprinter.com/>

## **Become energy efficient**

It doesn't capture the imagination like some environmental initiatives but energy efficiency measures can yield big savings on your fuel and electricity bills – even the simple ones. An important first step to becoming a more energy efficient business is to ensure someone in your organisation takes responsibility for monitoring energy use and pushing forward energy projects. This will require discussion with staff from across your business as their behaviour and day-to-day decisions will directly affect the energy demands of your business. Visit the Energy Savings Trust (<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk>) and Carbon Trust (<http://www.carbontrust.co.uk>) for more information on energy efficiency in business.

## **Reduce water use**

Water resources are coming under increasing pressure by the dual effects of climate change and population growth. This affects businesses in direct and measurable ways – such as the increasing cost of water supply as a result of increasing pressure on water resources. The water footprint of a business is the total volume of freshwater used directly or indirectly to run and support that business. By calculating and analysing your water footprint you can: Identify water related impacts of your operations on the environment; calculate your businesses' water consumption and water efficiency; and identify the risks in your supply chain and formulate an action plan. More information on water efficiency can be found through Envirowise 'Ripple effect' initiative.

4. Note that the 2009 Pre-Budget Report announced that, from 1 April 2011, the discount from the CCL will be reduced from 80% to 65%.