

# Farming Newsletter



## WELCOME!



Welcome to the April 2026 edition of the Mersey Rivers Trust farming newsletter! Read on to find out more about farming news and what's on offer this month, you can also keep up to date with our [Farming Hub](#) online.

## FARM RESILIENCE THROUGH SOIL AND WATER MANAGEMENT - PODCAST

This Defra podcast highlights how strong soil and water management is essential for farms to survive and thrive amid increasing climate challenges.

It brings together a Catchment Sensitive Farming adviser and two practical farmers who share their real experiences tackling both floods and droughts.

The discussion focuses on building healthier soils through simple techniques like cover crops, reduced tillage, and diverse rotations to improve water retention and cut costs.

Farmers are encouraged to take action now by making gradual improvements that boost resilience, lower expenses, and benefit both their business and the environment.

For more information, to listen to the whole podcast and for support available click [here](#).

Defra regularly updates their [Farming Blog](#). To subscribe to the blog and ensure that you receive their latest farming updates click [here](#).





## MORE TIME TO APPLY FOR FARMING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY FUND

The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF) application window is now open until midday on Tuesday 12 May.

If you have already started your application, you may use this time to review and finalise your submission. If you have not yet applied, there is still time to consider how the fund could support your business. FETF supports farmers, growers, foresters and contractors to invest in equipment and technology that can improve:

- productivity
- animal health and welfare
- slurry management

For more information click [here](#).

## WATER SUPPLY PROBLEMS? A GUIDE FOR LIVESTOCK FARMS

Water supply failures can strike livestock farms without warning and cause serious welfare and production issues. This AHDB guide provides practical advice on how to prepare for and manage interruptions from extreme weather, burst pipes, or failing water sources.

Farmers should calculate their herd's daily water requirements and install adequate emergency storage.

It also recommends registering as a priority customer and preparing alternative supplies such as boreholes or rainwater harvesting before problems occur. For more information click [here](#).





## FREE WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS IN THE RIVER BOLLIN CATCHMENT

Farmers in the River Bollin and Dean catchments (including Mobberley, Sugar, Birkin, Pedley and Marthall Brooks) are all eligible for a FREE farm water management plan produced by Mersey Rivers Trust. To chat to a Farm Advisor about this, please contact us via our farming mailbox - [farming@merseyrivers.org](mailto:farming@merseyrivers.org) or call Amber on 07837098293

## UPPER WEAVER SMALL GRANTS SCHEME 26/27

For farmers with existing water management plans in the Upper Weaver Catchment. We have small grants of up to £5,500 available to help with capital works on farms to reduce water pollution.

We can fund capital works including:

- Guttering & downpipes
- Rainwater harvesting tanks + pumps & filters
- Water course/body fencing
- Ditch maintenance
- Trees, Hedge creation/gapping up
- Soil Aeration & sward lifting
- Pond/wetland creation/maintenance
- Buffer Strips
- Cover Crops/winter cover for maize

Please note this year these grants will be tailored towards more water efficiency items rather than concrete items.

To register interest and discuss your chances of securing funding for capital grant items in 2025/2026.

Email us at [farming@merseyrivers.org](mailto:farming@merseyrivers.org) or call Amara on 07554900045.





## DATES FOR THE DIARY

**JANUARY**

**16th** - For any land located in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), this is the date from which you can apply manufactured nitrogen fertilisers to grassland and tillage land if conditions are suitable.

**FEBRUARY**

**1st** - For any land located in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), you can apply organic manure with a high, readily available nitrogen content to grassland and tillage land on all soil types if conditions are suitable and you adhere to the quantity application restrictions.

**MARCH**

**31st** - If you hold a winter or all-year-round water abstraction licence (authorising abstraction outside the period April to October), the Environment Agency will ask you to submit your record of actual abstraction. You have 28 days to submit your record of actual abstraction to the Environment Agency.

**APRIL**

**1st** - This is the end of the burning season for heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium. The burning season is from: 1 October to 15 April in upland areas & 1 November to 31 March in other areas.

**28th** - Applications for the **Farming Equipment and Technology Fund** closes at midday on 28 April 2026. - **NOW EXTENDED TO MIDDAY 12<sup>th</sup> MAY**

**30th** - If your farmland is located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), by 30th April each year you must make a record of: the numbers and type of livestock you kept in buildings or on hard standing during the previous slurry/manure storage period & the dates for the start and end of use and locations of any field sites you use for storing solid manure.

**JUNE**

**SFI 2026** application window 1 opens exact date TBD - and will remain open for around 2 months – although it may close sooner if demand is high and the Window 1 budget is fully allocated.

**JULY**

**Capital Grants 2026** applications open (Date TBD)

**SEPTEMBER**

**SFI 2026** application window 2 opens

**1<sup>st</sup>** - in NVZs, closed period starts for high-nitrogen organic manure on grassland (shallow/sandy soils); manufactured nitrogen on tillage land.

**1<sup>st</sup>** - You may now cut and trim hedges until the 28<sup>th</sup> of February.

