

# LMC

Livestock & Meat Commission



# SLURRY STORAGE

Importance of Properly Maintained  
Slurry Storage Facilities

[www.lmcni.com](http://www.lmcni.com)



Above ground slurry store



Lagoon slurry store



Underground slurry tank

# SLURRY STORAGE

## Importance of Properly Maintained Slurry Storage Facilities

**Incidents involving slurry have claimed many lives including those of children. Over the past 10 years a total of 8 people have lost their lives in an incident involving slurry, 1 of these was a child.**

There have also been many other serious incidents and near misses on farms and unfortunately hundreds of animals have been killed as a result of slurry related incidents in the past decade.

Please take a few moments to read this leaflet as it may well save your life and those of others.

### STOP & THINK

- **STOP & THINK** - about the job and plan to do it safely.
- **THINK** - cover all openings & importance of regular maintenance.
- **THINK** - keep children, animals & pets well away when working.
- **THINK** - stay out for at least 30 minutes after mixing starts.

Health and safety forms an important part of the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBLFQAS).

In relation to FQAS the most common health and safety related non-conformances include those relating to:

1. **Slurry Lagoons** (most common)
2. **Above Ground Slurry Stores**
3. **Underground Slurry Tanks**

Standard 7.2 of the NIBL FQAS Standard and Rules (2014) states that *'The storage and use of animal manure and farm effluents must be in such ways as to prevent environmental pollution and ensure human and animal safety.'*

When non-conformances relating to the 3 slurry storage facilities above are totalled they account for almost 10% of the total FQAS annual inspections.

On farms, drowning or being injured because of a fall into slurry or liquid store is an obvious risk. Simple precautions (surrounding such areas with fencing/gates which cannot be climbed) will largely reduce this risk on most farms.

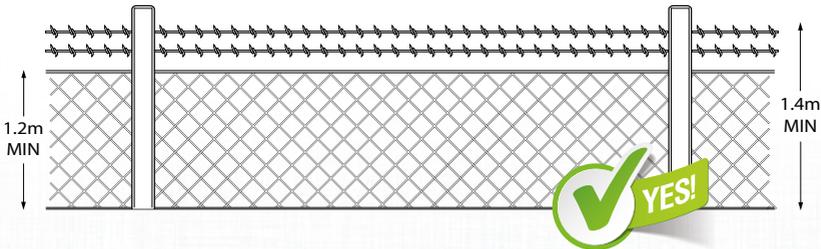
However many accidents have occurred where these simple precautions are not properly taken or maintained. Accidents have happened when tractors scraping slurry have passed over the end of the ramp into the store.

# SLURRY LAGOONS

## Fences & Walls

Improperly fenced-off slurry lagoons represent the biggest cause of FQAS non-conformances relating to health and safety. The risk of a child drowning in a slurry lagoon is magnified significantly if the store is not fenced off to the required standard.

(Figure 1)



## What is a suitable fence/wall?

- Fence erected and maintained consisting of chain link mesh at least 1.2m high topped by a minimum of two strands of barbed wire (Figure 1) or suitable alternative (Figure 2) spaced between 100mm and 150mm apart and with an overall minimum height of 1.4 metres.
- Walls should be at least 1.4m high with no access to the top of the wall.
- Any access point in a wall for the filling pipe must be securely covered when not in use.



(Figure 2)



(Figure 3)



(Figure 4)

## Gates

- All entrances to a store including scraping points, should be protected by doors or gates constructed to the standards described below.
- Gates should be metal sheeted or otherwise clad on the outside to render them unclimbable and be topped with barbed wire. (Figure 4)
- All gates should be chained and padlocked. Keep all gates securely closed except during mixing, filling or emptying. (Figure 5)
- Swinging flaps attached to a tractor stop rail at the scraping in point may be used if they are properly designed, constructed and maintained to provide full protection.
- Remember, if they are damaged, they may not provide protection to the required standard.



(Figure 5)

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## Scraping Ramps

- Fit scraping ramps with a barrier of suitable strength and at an appropriate height to stop tractors passing over the end where there is a drop greater than 600mm. Gates should be kept closed and locked so children/animals cannot enter when not in use. (Figure 6)
- Barriers should not be constructed from wood or fragile material. (Figure 7)



**DO NOT** stack materials/objects  
or machinery close to a lagoon fence



(Figure 8)

## Maintenance

- Check all fencing regularly and maintain as necessary, e.g. every few months.
- Check the bottom of the fence to ensure that there are no gaps through which a child could crawl.
- Do not stack materials or objects against the fence or wall in such a way that they provide a means of climbing over it. (Figure 8)

# ABOVE GROUND SLURRY STORES



- Ladders must only be in place when mixing, emptying or filling the above ground store. When not in use ladder must be removed. (Figure 9)
- The trap door must always be closed when not in use. (Figure 10)
- From 2003 slurry storage outlet valves must have two separated valves that shut off the flow of slurry. The valves are locked when not in use. (Figure 11)
- Reception tank must be adequately protected. Openings must be appropriately covered. (Figure 12)





(Figure 11)



(Figure 12)



# UNDERGROUND STORES

## Mixing points for underground stores

- These should be able to withstand all foreseeable traffic loads, e.g. humans, tractors, machinery and livestock (cattle/sheep).
- There should be no gaps greater than 75mm between slats, or alongside slurry pumps or manhole covers.
- Secure slurry pipes in position so that they cannot fall into the tank.

## If covers have removable sections they should be:

- Large enough to allow access for rescue purposes e.g. 600mm square.
- Hinged or otherwise attached so that they cannot fall into the store. (Figure 13)
- Always replaced when access is not required.
- Heavy enough to prevent children from opening them, or fitted with a padlock.
- Make sure with gang slats that there are secondary grids in place. (Figure 13)
- It is good practice for the Pump/Mixer secondary grid to be visible and the manhole fully covered, with no gaps for persons to fall in. (Figure 14)



## Useful Contacts

### Farm Quality Assurance Helpline/Advice

Email: [fqas@lmcni.com](mailto:fqas@lmcni.com)

Tel: 028 9263 3024

### Livestock & Meat Commission

[www.lmcni.com](http://www.lmcni.com)

Tel: 028 9263 3000

### HSENI

[www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)

Tel: 0800 0320 121

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