

PRESS RELEASE

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Farmers urged to exercise caution when working with slurry

WITH the closed period for slurry spreading now past, the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) is urging farmers to exercise care and vigilance when working with slurry.

Commenting LMC interim chief executive, Colin Smith said, “The end of the closed period will have brought a welcome reprieve for those farmers facing issues with slurry storage nearing capacity. Now, as action can be taken to alleviate storage pressures, I would urge all farmers to keep safety at the forefront of their minds.

“Mixing slurry can be very dangerous, with gasses released quickly and silently. Slurry gas includes the extremely poisonous gas, hydrogen sulphide, which can prohibit sense of smell, even in low concentration, it is therefore difficult to detect and can prove fatal.”

The Commission is actively involved in promoting farm safety and is an affiliate member of the Farm Safety Partnership. Colin added that at a fundamental level LMC has demonstrated its commitment to promoting safe practices through inclusion of standards which promote best practice within the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS).

He said, “We have been proactive in encouraging farmers to store animal manure and farm effluents appropriately, taking into consideration necessary safety precautions which help safeguard both farmers, farm workers and animals. This forms a condition of membership for NIBL FQAS participants and inspectors actively check that storage facilities do not pose any risk to humans, animals or the environment.”

Concluding Colin advised farmers to take time to consider the risks before undertaking work with slurry.

He said, “By taking steps to improve safety many risks can be either eliminated or minimised. When it comes to mixing slurry, ensure that animals are out of the building and once agitating begins get out and stay out for 30 minutes.”

Further information and helpful advice on slurry has been collated by the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland and can be accessed on their website: www.hseni.gov.uk

ENDS

Photo caption

001 – LMC interim chief executive, Colin Smith

Notes to Editor

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