

# **Explanatory Booklet for the Colebrooke & Strule Soil Testing and Training Initiative**



<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Introduction	3
2. Contact Information	3
3. Definitions	4
4. Overview of the Initiative	5
5. Support Available	6
6. Eligibility	6
7. How to apply	6
8. Selection	7
9. Successful applications	7
10. Unsuccessful applications	7
11. Declaration and Fraud	8
12. Compliance and Monitoring checks	8
13. Amending the Initiative	8
14. Data Disclosure & Privacy Notice	9
15. Map showing targeted regions in the Colebrooke and Strule catchments	10

## 1. Introduction

This document is the Explanatory Booklet for the Colebrooke & Strule Soil Testing and Training Initiative (the Initiative). It provides information on the Initiative and explains how to complete your application form.

**Please note that the deadline for online registration for the Soil Testing and Training Initiative is at 12 noon on 17 August 2018.**

Research has shown that by optimising pH and applying slurry, manure and chemical fertiliser in line with crop need, farmers can maximise crop yields, increase soil fertility and increase farm profitability, with further potential to improve water quality and reduce greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions.

All farmers within the designated regions of the Colebrooke and Strule river systems in Northern Ireland are being offered a free, whole-farm (for land within the designated areas) soil sampling and analysis service. The service will provide farmers with detailed information on their soils, such as pH level and nutrient requirements for Phosphate ( $P_2O_5$ ) and Potassium ( $K_2O$ ).

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), and their appointed agents, will deliver the Initiative on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The Initiative will sample and analyse up to a maximum of 10,000 fields on a first-come-first-served basis, limited by the available budget:

Successful applicants will be provided with a free soil sampling and analysis service, to include sample collection by AFBI's appointed agent, and sample analysis performed to a UKAS accredited standard. Individual soil analysis results, which include recommendations on lime and nutrient applications, will be sent to participants. Training in nutrient management planning and interpretation of soil analysis results will be offered by CAFRE during the Initiative.

**To apply, please complete the online registration form [HERE](#)**

## 2. Contact Information

If you have any queries you should contact the delivery agent for the Initiative, namely the **Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI). Telephone: 028 9052 5791.**

### 3. Definitions

For the purpose of this explanatory booklet and the claim form:

**“AFBI”** means Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute;

**“Applicant”** means the farm business owner who has signed the claim form, claiming assistance under the Initiative;

**“Business ID Number”** means the unique identification number allocated to the legal owner of the business by the Department;

**“CAFRE”** means the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise

**“DAERA”** means the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;

**“Delivery Agent”** means an organisation that has been appointed by DAERA for the purposes of delivering the Initiative;

**“K”** means potassium

**“pH”** means potential of hydrogen as a measure of the acidity level

**“P”** means phosphorus

**“UKAS”** means United Kingdom Accreditation Standard

#### **4. Overview of Initiative**

The Initiative will offer a free soil sampling and analysis service to farmers within the specified 10 water bodies in Colebrooke and Strule. The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), and their appointed agents, will deliver the Initiative on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). A maximum of 10,000 fields will be analysed in the Soil Testing and Training Initiative, limited by the available budget.

Subject to a successful tender and Initiative uptake participants in the Initiative will be contacted by AFBI's appointed agent who will collect the soil sample at a suitable time. All successful applicants will receive a free soil sampling and analysis service and individual soil analysis results, together with recommendations on lime and nutrient applications. All analysis will be undertaken to a UKAS accredited standard by a laboratory to be appointed through open competition.

Training will also be offered by CAFRE during the Initiative. Successful applicants will be invited to attend two workshops on nutrient management planning to help them understand what their soil analysis means and how to use it to plan lime, manure and chemical fertiliser applications.

AFBI will subsequently use the information gathered in the Initiative to help develop and demonstrate practical strategies to manage nutrients. Individual farmer data will be protected (see Section 14 for more information). In order to maximise the effectiveness of the Initiative, AFBI may continue to recruit farmers within the target catchment areas beyond the registration date depending on initial uptake levels, subject to the agreed maximum limits of the Initiative (see Section 5).

Soil sampling will take place from November 2018 to February 2019 (primarily during the closed period for application of organic manures) in line with best practice. AFBI, or their appointed agents, will contact participants to arrange a suitable time to collect the samples from your land. A minimum of 25 soil cores will be taken from each field to a depth of 7.5cm (15cm in arable land) using a 2cm diameter soil corer, and following a GPS-referenced W-shaped sampling tour. The sampling tour will avoid dung and urine patches, gateways, headlands and areas where livestock congregate and excessive non-representative levels of manure may have been deposited. Sampling will not take place in fields recently spread with slurry/manure.

Samples will then be sent to an accredited UKAS laboratory where they will be tested for soil pH, Olsen-P, ammonium nitrate or ammonium acetate extractable K (potassium) and Magnesium (Mg).

Results will be sent to participants in the Initiative, along with recommendations on lime and nutrient ( $P_2O_5$  &  $K_2O$ ) requirements.

## 5. Support available

The Initiative will:

- Provide a free whole-farm (within the designated areas) soil sampling and analysis service, to include field sample collection by AFBI, or their appointed agents, and analysis performed by an accredited laboratory;
- Provide individual soil analysis results, together with advice on lime and nutrient applications, sent to participating farmers;
- Provide training on nutrient management planning and interpretation of soil analysis results during the Initiative.

The Initiative will provide participating farmers with detailed information on their soils in order to apply nutrients in line with crop requirements.

A maximum of **10,000** individual soil samples, limited by the available budget, will be taken by AFBI or their appointed contractor.

## 6. Eligibility

In order to be eligible for entry into the Initiative, the applicant must:

1. Be registered with DAERA and have a valid Business ID number
2. Provide all mandatory information requested on the registration form

## 7. How to apply

The on-line registration form is available [HERE](#)

**Online registration will close at 12 noon on 17 August 2018.**

**Please note that the completion of the Soil Testing and Training application form does not mean that DAERA is under any obligation to make an offer through the Initiative.**

AFBI may also continue to recruit farmers within the target sub-catchment areas beyond this date depending on initial uptake levels. AFBI or their

appointed agents may contact individuals in the target areas directly to encourage participation in the catchment Initiative.

## **8. Selection criteria**

To be eligible for this scheme you must have:

- A valid DAERA Farm Business ID number;
- Land within the 10 selected sub-catchments of the Colebrooke and Strule Waterways. (see Section 15, or the location of the sub-catchments can be found [here](#) ).
- Provide all mandatory information requested on the online registration form.

## **9. Successful applications**

Successful applicants will receive a confirmation letter detailing the delivery process for the soil sampling and analysis Initiative. Applicants should keep a copy of the confirmation letter for their own records.

Farms may be subject to site visits for monitoring and evaluation both during and after the Initiative. This work may be carried out by either AFBI or a third party.

## **10. Unsuccessful applications**

If an applicant fails to provide required information or does not agree to the conditions of the Initiative, the application for the Initiative will be unsuccessful. An application for the Initiative will also be unsuccessful if the application submitted does not meet the eligibility criteria of the Initiative. You may also be unsuccessful if the Initiative is over-subscribed and selection criteria are applied.

If your application is not approved, AFBI will provide you with a written explanation of the reasons why the application was unsuccessful. If you have reason to believe that the facts have been misinterpreted or an error has occurred in processing your application, you may seek a review.

A request for a review should be submitted by the applicant, in writing, to AFBI within 14 working days of the date on your letter advising that your application has not been approved. You should set out the reasons why you feel that an error was made in determining the eligibility of your application. The applicant will be informed of the outcome of the review in writing.

## **11. Declaration and Fraud**

By signing and submitting the application, an applicant is declaring that to the best

of their knowledge all information provided is true and complete. You are confirming that you have read and understood the Initiative guidance as set out in this Explanatory Booklet and are agreeing to participate in the Initiative.

False declarations may lead to disqualification from the Initiative.

AFBI and DAERA will take steps to identify and pursue any suspected incidence of fraud.

## **12. Compliance and Monitoring checks**

To enable the delivery agent and/or DAERA to verify the accuracy of information submitted by applicants, all applications will be subject to systematic administrative checks and controls, which may include:

- Review and cross-checking of information held by DAERA
- On-farm verification visits to verify the delivery of the service.

## **13. Amending the Initiative**

AFBI, on behalf of DAERA, reserve the right to amend or alter eligibility criteria and Initiative rules, and to close the Initiative at any time.

AFBI, DAERA, or their appointed agents, shall not bear any liability to Initiative successful applicants where, as a result of *force majeure*, it is not possible to provide the free soil sampling and analysis service by 28 February 2019.

*Force majeure* is defined as any circumstance not within the reasonable control of AFBI and/or DAERA including, but without limitation, acts of God, severe and adverse weather conditions, natural disasters, epidemic or pandemic, an agricultural or environmental emergency as determined by DAERA or other competent UK statutory authority which requires an emergency response by AFBI, terrorist attack, civil commotion, armed conflict, imposition of sanctions, embargo, nuclear, chemical or biological contamination, any law or any action taken by a government or public authority, collapse of buildings, fire, explosion or accident, any labour or trade dispute, strike, industrial action or lockout or interruption or failure of utility service.



## 14. Data disclosure & Privacy Notice

Information provided in your application will be shared by AFBI with DAERA and subcontracted partners. All information will be processed in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. We will make sure that only staff who are fully trained and need to see your personal data as part of the initiative will do so. Your data will be held securely within a computerised and/or manual filing system.

If we transfer any data to DAERA or sub-contractors, we shall make sure that your personal data are kept separate from test results so that your field results cannot be attributed directly to you. To ensure the privacy and security of your personal data, any electronic information that is to be transferred will be password-protected and/or encrypted.

You may be contacted in the future and asked to give feedback about your experience of using the Initiative. This information will be used to DAERA to assess its effectiveness and to improve the design of any future initiatives.

Information relating to the Initiative may also be used for the compilation of statistics and evaluation, and may be disclosed to other organisations for this purpose, but **will not identify any individual**.

The AFBI Privacy Notice for the Initiative can be found [here](#).

15. Map showing targeted regions in the Colebrooke and Strule catchments



Figure 1. Targeted areas within the Colebrooke and Strule river system for the Soil Testing and Training Initiative.