



Origin Rural

PROPERTY | BUSINESS

10th June 2026

Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Dear Sirs / Madam

Re: Prior approval for the formation of an earth-banked slurry lagoon at Home Farm, Hartham, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 0PZ

I enclose an application for the prior notification of the excavation of an earth-banked slurry lagoon at the above-named address.

The application is made under the provisions of Part 6, Class A of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended ('the GPDO'). The Agricultural Holding and Proposed Use.

Home Farm is a specialist dairy and beef unit based on an owner occupied area of approximately 275 acres, with a further 50 rented acres. A herd of 160 dairy cows are milked and cubicle housed for 6 winter months on straw. 50 heifers are cubicle-housed, along with young replacement stock and beef animals bedded on straw. This holding does not fall within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) at present. Presently, excreted slurry, dairy/parlour washings and fouled yard run off are spread on land on a frequent basis.

Slurry is an important natural fertiliser containing nitrates, potash and other compounds which are beneficial to soil health, fertility and crop growth. The targeted application of slurry to agricultural land can greatly reduce reliance upon oil-based or mineral-derived agricultural inputs. Slurry is a valuable agricultural commodity.

The farm is planning to increase storage capacity, for both better nutrient management and to further reduce both pollution risks from winter spreading and soil damage.

The proposed lagoon has been designed to comply with the requirements of the Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil Regulations 1991 ('SSAFO') and to allow the farm to comply with the Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations 2018 (known as the 'Farming Rules for Water'). The holding is not currently in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) however the lagoon

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has been designed to enable the holding to meet additional regulations should these be introduced in the future.

Proposed Lagoon

Initial calculations were carried out in early 2026 for the storage of approximately 6 months' slurry produced on the holding. The initial calculations are set out in the submitted Feasibility Study extract. The final size of the lagoon has been calculated utilising NVZ Guidance data and the AHDB's Slurry Wizard allowing a contingency for rainfall.

The proposed 6 months capacity (7,800m³ inclusive of projected on-farm slurry production, rainfall and 750mm free-board) will enable the business to:

- comply with SSAFO requirements
- enable the spreading of nutrients at optimal times during crop establishment to make the best use of the nutrients
- greater control over spreading periods to avoid potential soil compaction from tractor movements and to protect the water environment from run-off during wetter periods

The proposed dimensions are:

- 81 m by 59 m at the top of the banks
- 2.5 m average depth of excavation
- 1.85 m average height banks

The volume of removed topsoil will be 1,100m³ over an area of 5,550 m². The excavated material will be retained on site and used to level the site and form the earth banks alongside other material from other areas of the farm. The total area of all works (excavations and deposited material) is approximately 5,550 sqm (0.55 ha).

Permitted Development

Part 6, Class A paragraph (b) of the GPDO states that the carrying out of any excavation or engineering operations which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the agricultural unit is permitted development subject to certain criteria. These are, in brief and where relevant to excavation and / or deposit of waste materials:

- the agricultural unit must be 5 ha or more
- the parcel of land on which the development will take place is at least 1 ha
- the works are designed for agricultural purposes
- the height of any works exceeds 3m within 3km of an aerodrome or would exceed 12m in all other cases
- any part of the development would be within 25m of the metalled part of a trunk or classified road
- any excavation used for the storage of slurry must be at least 400m from the curtilage of a protected building

With regards the above criteria:

- the established agricultural unit extends to approximately 112 ha
- the parcel of land in which the lagoon is proposed exceeds 1 ha
- the works are designed for agricultural purposes
- the height of the banks above original ground level will be below the 12m.
- there is no trunk or classified road within 25m of the proposed site
- there are no protected buildings within 400m of the proposed site

Where cumulative excavations or the deposits of waste material on a holding exceeds 0.5 hectares, the agricultural business must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether its prior approval is required as the siting of the excavation or deposit (paragraph A.2 (2)(c) and D.1(4) of Part 6 of the GPDO).

Prior Approval

The proposed site area would be in the order of 0.55 hectares.

The applicants seek the Council's prior approval (if necessary) of the siting of the proposed slurry lagoon. Plans and drawings are submitted with this application, to assist the Council's review.

Siting

The proposed lagoon will be accessed via an existing farm track. The site has been chosen:

- 630m south-west of the main farmyard
- located adjacent to an existing track for ease of access without the formation of additional hardstanding private ways
- to maintain distance from any residential dwellings or other protected buildings (at least 400m)
- so that no public rights of way pass close to this site.
- where soil testing shows a 47% clay content (minimum 20% advised in CIRIA 759b) and a measured permeability of 8.1×10^{-11} meters per second, which is which is 8% of the maximum 1.0×10^{-9} meters per second recommended in CIRIA 759b (i.e. 12 times better than required). These soil layers will be very suitable for forming the lagoon impermeable liner.

The holding has a low risk of flooding and is not in Flood Zones 2 or 3.

Summary

Investing in slurry infrastructure on the holding will enable the farm business to:

- make better use of the nutrients produced on the holding
- reduce reliance upon oil and mineral based fertilisers
- improve water quality through greater control over the times at which slurry is applied to agricultural land
- become compliant with regulations
- secure the future for the long-standing dairy enterprise

The proposed lagoon is:

- reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture on the holding
- appropriately designed and scaled for its proposed uses
- appropriately sited for its agricultural purposes

The following plans and supplementary information are submitted:

- Site Location Plan
- Proposed Site Plan
- Proposed Lagoon Plan & Works Summary (MJ Church Civil Engineering)
- Proposed Sections Drawing (MJ Church Civil Engineering)
- Feasibility Study (extract from report prepared in January 2026 by Independent MIAgrE Agricultural Adviser)

Thank you and we look forward to hearing further from you. If there are any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Chris Jones MRICS

Director

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