



Conserving carbon-rich soils

Good agriculture and environmental condition 2 (GAEC)- Protection of wetlands and peatlands

What's it about?

Encouraging wetland & peatland preservation

Wetlands and **peatlands** are some of the most **valuable ecosystems** in Europe. They act like **natural sponges**, soaking up excess rain and slowly releasing it during dry periods. This helps **reduce the risk** of both floods and droughts. Their thick, organic soils also **prevent erosion** and help keep farmland around them in **better condition**.

Under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), **farmers are encouraged to protect these sensitive areas** when they are identified by national authorities.

What does this mean for your farm?

Guidelines for managing these special areas

If you have land designated as wetland or peatland, you'll need to:

- Avoid **draining**, deep **ploughing**, or **disturbing** the **soil**
- Do not **infill**, **convert**, or **cultivate** these areas for arable use
- Refrain from activities that damage their ecological function

The **specific areas** covered by this GAEC and the **timeline** for applying it (typically by 2024 or 2025) are determined at the **national level**, so check with your local authority or CAP advisor for details.

In some countries, implementation is still being phased in—make sure you're informed as things evolve.



Why is this good practice?

The benefits of caring for these ecosystems

Protecting wetlands and peatlands helps safeguard some of nature's most powerful climate tools. According to scientific studies, intact peatlands and wetlands:

- **Store more carbon** per hectare than forests
- **Filter and regulate water**, helping to reduce flood risk
- **Provide unique habitats** for birds, amphibians, and wetland plant species
- **Support long-term productivity** by maintaining ecosystem balance



When disturbed, especially through drainage or ploughing, peatlands can become **major sources of greenhouse gas emissions** turning carbon sinks into carbon sources.

Helpful notes

Check how this GAEC applies to your land

- Not sure if your land qualifies? **Ask your local CAP office** or advisor to confirm.
- In some cases, **existing farming practices may continue**, provided they don't intensify or harm the land.
- **Support or advice** may be available from your national authority to help you adapt your management where needed.

