Environmental requirements for the implementation of GAEC 8 standard are being eased

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The Ministry of Agriculture and Food publishes Guidelines for the application of the derogation from the first requirement of the Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) 8 standard "Minimum share of agricultural area devoted to non-productive areas or features". This follows the adoption of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/587 of 12 February 2024, granting a derogation from the standard, in response to requests by farmers at European level to ease the administrative burden and environmental requirements for the sector.

According to the first requirement of GAEC 8, a holding with arable land ≥ 10 ha must set aside and maintain at least 4% of its arable land as non-productive areas and features (landscape features), including land left fallow.

For 2024, farmers may meet the first requirement of the standard by allocating at least 4% of their arable land to nitrogen-fixing or catch crops, as well as to non-productive areas and features, including land left fallow. Plant protection products must not be applied on the areas declared with nitrogen-fixing crops. If catch crops are to be grown after the harvesting of the main crop, they must be present in the field from 1 September to 1 November 2024, and during this period plant protection products must not be applied.

It is important to note that this standard applies only to arable land and that holdings under 10 ha are exempt from its obligations. Exempt are also holdings where more than 75% of the area is under fodder or nitrogen-fixing crops and/or permanent grassland, and different combinations thereof.

You can find more information in the materials published on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food – **Guidelines** *and* **Manual**.

More on this topic:

The conditions for the application of the Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition Standards have been approved