

SCHEDULE 1

STANDARDS OF GOOD AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION

Minimum soil cover

4.—(1) A farmer shall ensure that after harvesting a crop of cereals (other than maize), oil seeds or grain legumes that from harvest until 15th January in the following year one of the following conditions is met on that land:

- (a) the stubble of the harvested crop remains in the land; or
- (b) the land is sown with a crop which will take up nitrogen.

(2) The Department shall vary or suspend any of the requirements in sub paragraph (1) where in its opinion—

- (a) the farmer has prepared the land as a seedbed but is unable to sow the crop within 10 days (because to do so would result in a breach of paragraph 5(2)) or
- (b) an area is affected by extreme weather conditions which make it impracticable to comply.

(3) Where the Department has varied or suspended any requirements under sub paragraph (2), it shall publish directions to the farmers in the area concerned stating, with reasons, the details and duration of the variation or suspension, and the farmers shall comply with the requirements as varied in the directions.

(4) The farmer shall ensure that residues of crops harvested after 1st November are not disturbed until just before sowing the spring crop on that land.

(5) Sub-paragraph (1) does not apply in relation to any land between 1 November and 15 January where:

- (i) the land is used for a ploughing match organised by the Northern Ireland Ploughing Association or any body affiliated to it; and
- (ii) that association or body has received a derogation from the Department.