

Fencing (Sheep Wire)

Specification extract · Pages 74–76

What this document is

This is an extract of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) document “ACRES Co-operation Non-Productive Investments Specification”, Version 2.2, July 2026. It contains the pages covering the Fencing (Sheep Wire) action (pages 74–76 of the full specification).

Because the specification runs each action straight into the next, the first and last pages of this extract may also show the end or beginning of a neighbouring action. The section for this action starts on page 74 (the printed page number matches the page number in the full document).

Always check the current version

DAFM updates the specification from time to time. The full document is the authoritative version and should be consulted before undertaking any work. It is available from:

Full specification (PDF, opens at this action):

https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/f8e2ccf8/NPI_specifications_July_2026_2.pdf#page=74

ACRES NPI page on gov.ie:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/f5a48-agri-climate-rural-environment-scheme-acres/#non-productive-investments>

About this action on the ACRES CP website

<https://acresireland.ie/action-projects/npi-fencing-sheep-wire-2/>

Fencing -

7. Where a fence is along any watercourse or drain it must be located at least 1.5 metres back from the top of the bank of the watercourse. The 1.5m set back distance for the fence must be in addition to any mandatory baseline requirements for applicable watercourses on the holding.
8. Only one claim for payment is allowed per approved NPI-Annual Works Plan. This action can only be claimed for payment once delivered in accordance with NPI Specification.

Additional Guidance

- Soil disturbance should be minimised in all cases and, where the fence line crosses exposed bedrock, no rock breaking or drilling should be undertaken.
- Removal of scrub/vegetation should be minimised and, if prior scrub/tree removal is required to prepare the fence site, this removal may not take place during the bird nesting season (1st March-31st Aug)
- In cases where a new electric fence is installed on an existing boundary which runs close to or alongside an established recreational access route, suitable warning signs should be attached to the electric fence at regular intervals to ensure public safety.
- Where the fence is near an archaeological monument, use as few fence posts as possible, ensuring that posts are cleanly driven with no requirement for excavation.

Sheep Wire

Objective

To increase farmers capacity to manage grazing pressures by providing stockproof boundaries.

Background

The lack of investment in field boundaries, particularly internal boundaries, has led to a decrease in the capacity to targeted grazing within a parcel. This can lead to very uneven distributions in grazing pressure, often resulting in overgrazing at entrances, near watering points and in areas of more palatable vegetation. This in turn leads to the over dominance of rushes and brambles in less favoured areas.

Improved fencing permits the adoption of management techniques like conservation or rotational grazing that can deliver sward improvements.

Site Suitability

- This action can only be selected on parcels with an Eligible hectare > 0.
- This action is available on CP parcels only that will be claimed by the participant for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
- This action can only be selected on fields that have a scorecard submitted and is available on any scorecard.

Requirements

- Fencing in general does not require planning. However, if the proposed new fencing is in a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area (SPA), a National Heritage Area (NHA) a Proposed National Heritage Area (pNHA), or any open upland or coastal (scenic) area that have not been previously fenced or enclosed, then planning permission or a declaration of exemption from the relevant local authority is required. Evidence of planning permission or a declaration of exemption may be requested before approval is issued or at the time of inspection.
- NPI Fencing Sheep Wire is restricted to existing field boundaries to make them stockproof and manage grazing in that way. It is not permitted to use this NPI to divide an existing field into two or more parts. Existing field boundaries may include, watercourses, earth banks, drains, hedgerows, stonewalls, treelines, roadways, existing fences, or a combination of these.
- This action may be selected on Winterage scorecard fields to divide areas with different grazing requirements (subject to planning requirements if applicable).
- Permanent fencing is not appropriate for sub dividing previously unenclosed areas.

Note 20: Where an investment has been grant aided under TAMS or any other National/EU funded Agri-environment or Capital investment Scheme from 01 January 2018, this cannot fulfil part of the requirement for this ACRES NPI action.

The provision of fencing to protect certain NPIs is a requirement of those NPIs. It is not permitted to use the Fencing-Sheep Wire NPI to fulfil a fencing requirement of another NPI action.

It is not permitted to have two separate Fencing NPI actions claimed along the same length unless they are on either side of a roadway, field boundary or watercourse.

1. Erect sheep wire fencing which must be stockproof and be undertaken with new permanent stakes and wire.
2. To be eligible for this action, the minimum continuous length to be delivered is 10m.
3. The location and length (metres) must be identified on the LPIS parcel(s) and marked on the map submitted. Each length applied for is only eligible for one NPI payment and once claimed must be retained for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
4. Fencing posts must consist of timber or alternative metal/PVC/concrete posts, it is not permitted to attach sheep wire fencing directly to trees.
5. A sheep fence requires sheep mesh topped with a single strand of wire. Each length of wire must be strained tightly between posts. The lowest line of the sheep wire mesh must be 100mm above ground level to allow adequate clearance for wildlife.
6. Where a fence is along any watercourse or drain it must be located at least 1.5 metres back from the top of the bank of the watercourse. The 1.5m set back distance for the fence must be in addition to any mandatory baseline requirements for applicable watercourses on the holding.
7. Only one claim for payment is allowed per approved NPI-Annual Works Plan. This action can only be claimed for payment once delivered in accordance with NPI Specification.

Fencing -

Additional Guidance

- On permanent watercourses the CP team may require the fence to be up to 5 m from the top of the bank where this is needed for conservation of Otters or other wildlife.
- Where the fence is near an archaeological monument, use as few fence posts as possible, ensuring that posts are cleanly driven with no requirement for excavation.