



# Overview of the Nitrates Action Programme

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# Nitrates Action Programme (NAP)

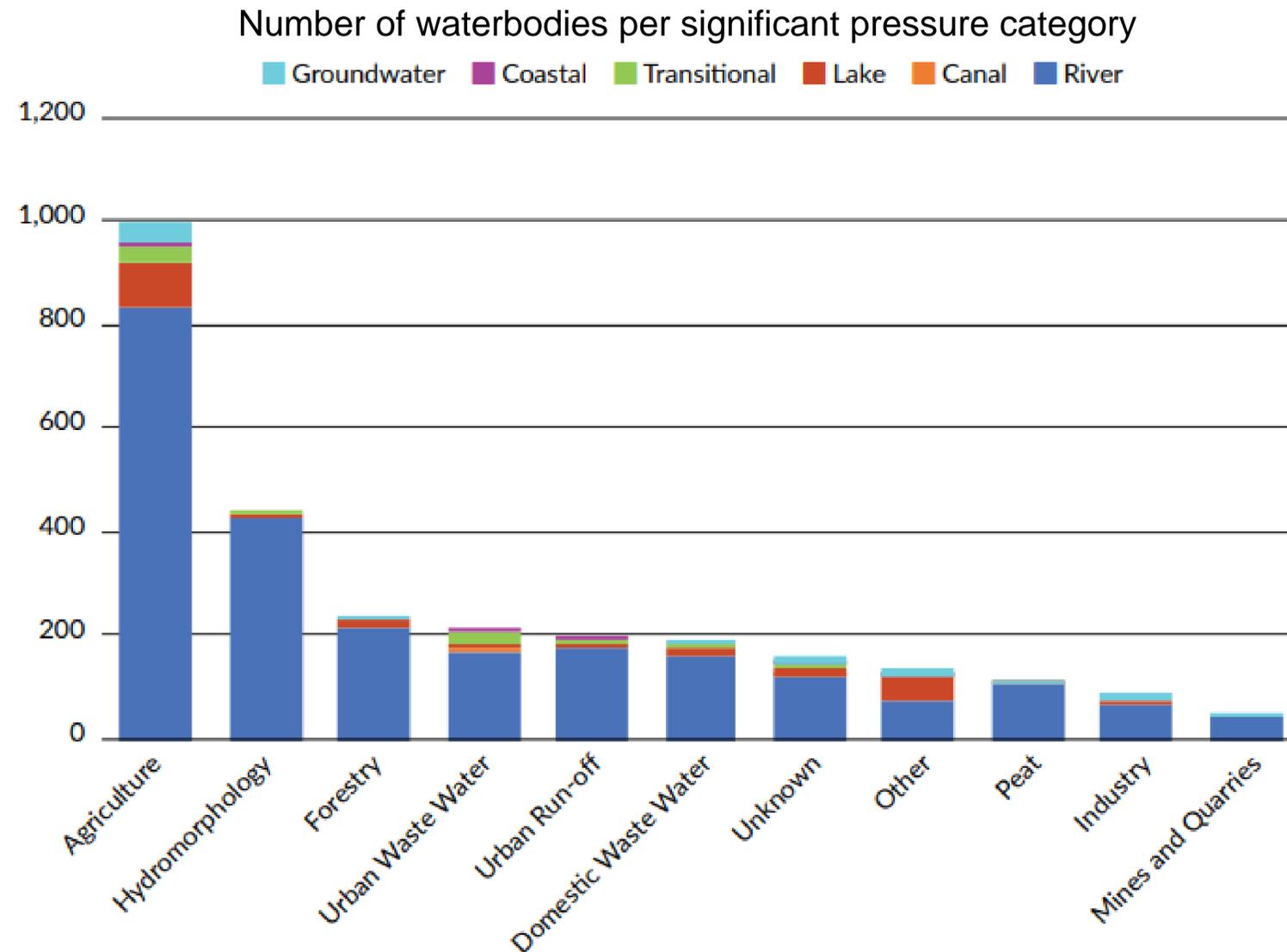


- Gives effect to the requirements of the Nitrates Directive
- Its purpose is to prevent pollution of surface waters and groundwater from agricultural sources and to protect and improve water quality.
- Ireland's Fifth NAP and Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) Regulations 2022 signed by Minister O'Brien last night
- GAP Regulations come into effect from tomorrow, 11<sup>th</sup> March
- Documents to be published on DHLGH website –
  - Overview of Ireland's Fifth Nitrates Action Programme
  - Link to GAP Regulations on Statute Book
  - Natura Impact Statement and Appropriate Assessment Determination
  - Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement

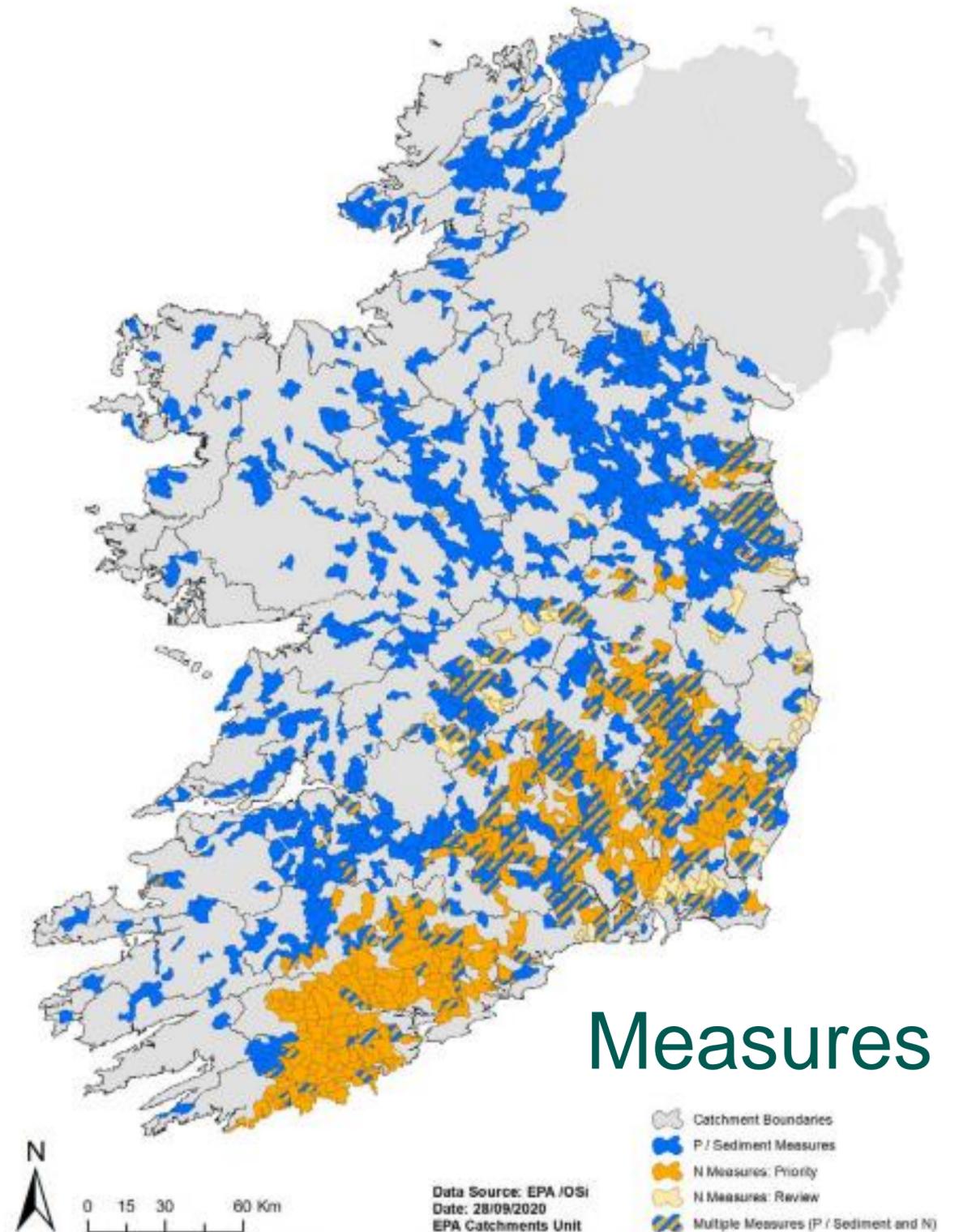
# NAP Development Context

- Declining water quality with N and P as the most significant issues

## Significant Pressures



Targeting Agricultural Measures  
WFD 3rd Cycle Significant Pressures

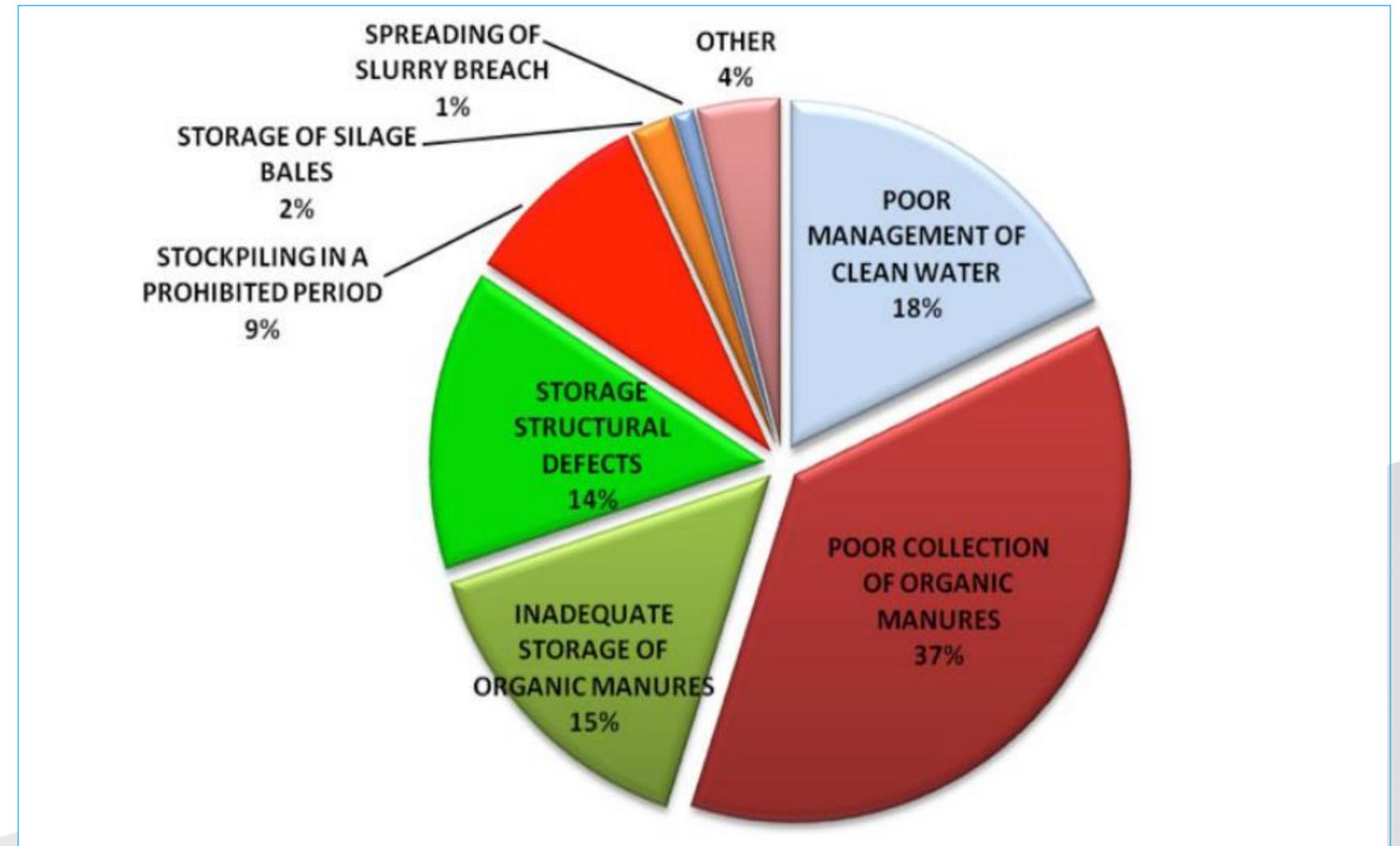


# Nitrates Action Programme



- Non-compliance levels are high
- Slurry storage deficit – 40% of dairy farms
- Critical to increase compliance by
  - Risk based inspections
  - Enhanced enforcement
  - Cross reporting
  - Awareness and training

## Most common breaches



Based on data from DAFM Cross Compliance Inspections



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- DHLGH is responsible for developing the NAP, in consultation with DAFM.
- Recommendations on measures from the Nitrates Expert Group
- Under the NAP Framework there are two types of measures:
  1. Measures outside the scope of the new Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) Regulations
  2. Measures under the scope of the new GAP Regulations



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## Proposed Non-GAP Measures

- **Improving Compliance and Enforcement –**
  - Mechanism is in the GAP Regulations but specified framework is not included
  - Commission have stated that compliance, follow up inspections, issuing enforcement notices, penalties and prosecutions, in particular in relation to Local Authority Inspections must improve
  - Risk based National Agricultural Inspection Programme
  - DAFM to increase derogation inspections from 5 to 10% per annum
  
- **Register of Chemical Fertiliser Sales – DAFM, 2023**
  
- **Review of the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) - RBMP**

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## Proposed new GAP Regulation Measures (1)



- Slurry and Soil Water Storage and Management
- Livestock Excretion Rates – bandings
- Chemical Fertiliser Control – Start with 10% Reduction
- Sewage/Industrial Sludges – review of management and oversight
- Green Cover on Tillage Ground
- Crude Protein in Concentrate Feeds – Stocking rate of 130kg/ha and above, max crude protein of 15% between 15 April and 30 September

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## Proposed new GAP Regulation Measures (2)



- Organic Matter Determination - all soils >20% OM are required to be soil tested for Organic Matter
- Soil Tests - compulsory above 170kg/ha by 2022, above 130kg/ha and sown arable land by 2023
- Grazing Land Management – for nutrient planning stocking rate for commonage is 50kg/ha and no chemical fertiliser
- Review of technical tables
- Phased approach for Low Emission Slurry Spreading (2023-2025) for farms above 100kg/ha - also applies to the application of pig slurry
- Interim Review of NAP after 2 years – Significant work to be done



## Next Steps

- EU Nitrates Commission Derogation Vote – 17<sup>th</sup> March
- If successful, GAP Regulations to be amended with Commission Derogation Decision
- Issue Circular to Local Authorities
- NAP is an evolving Programme
  - Significant work required between now and the Interim Review