

# Cross Compliance-FAS Organic Matter Report for land under Continuous Tillage

Applicant Name _____	Applicants Signature _____	Herd No _____		Analytical Laboratory _____	Sample Year <b>20</b> ____
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<b>Soil Organic Matter Analysis</b>	Remedial action Required (Y/N)	<b>DETAIL OF ANY REMEDIAL ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN WHERE NECESSARY</b>
<b>Parcel ID</b>	<b>% Organic Matter</b>	<b>Date of analysis</b>

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Confirmation that annual remedial action completed where required	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n
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Confirmation that annual remedial action completed where required	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n
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Confirmation that annual remedial action completed where required	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n
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Confirmation that annual remedial action completed where required	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n	Year	y/n
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**Certification by FAS advisor and Applicant**  
 I certify that soil sampling was conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in the SI No. 101 of 2009 and that the analysis was conducted in an approved laboratory.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ CC-FAS AGENCY Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved Cross Compliance - FAS advisor

I certify that that I will undertake any remedial actions outlined above.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Single Payment Applicant

Note : This organic matter report together with the soil organic matter analysis reports from the laboratory must be retained by the applicant and be available for inspection. A value of 2% organic carbon (3.4% SOM) is the threshold value below which remedial action may be necessary. Details of any remedial action to be applied should be recorded for the relevant plots and confirmed by the applicant each year. Where remedial action is not necessary for plots below the threshold value, the scientific basis for this should be recorded for each such plot. Further soil sampling may be conducted on inspection.

## Maintenance of soil organic matter

### Introduction – The Importance of Soil Organic Matter

Soil organic matter comprises all living soil organisms and the remains of previous living organisms in their various degrees of decomposition. Soil organic matter plays a major role in maintaining soil quality as it positively influences a wide range of soil properties such as the provision of nutrients, water retention and release, as well as reducing the risks of soil compaction, surface crusting and soil erosion. The practice of continuous tillage, (i.e. tillage for six years or more), tends to reduce the organic matter content of the soil unless appropriate management practices are implemented to reverse this trend. This decline is a gradual process. In like manner the process of replenishing soil organic matter is slow, but can be achieved through adapted agricultural management practices and the addition of organic materials to the soil.

Increasing soil organic matter will result in a ‘win-win’ situation with respect to positively influencing soil fertility and quality and maintaining the physical, chemical and biological conditions necessary in sustainable continuous tillage practices.

A number of factors influence the rate of decline of soil organic matter levels including soil type and physical properties, climate, topography, vegetation and land management practice. Soils with organic matter levels above 3.4% are not considered to be vulnerable. This equates to a soil organic carbon content of 2%. The conversion factor from soil organic carbon to soil organic matter is approximately 1.72 (i.e., Soil Organic Matter (SOM) = 1.72 multiplied by Soil Organic Carbon (SOC)).

### Requirements under Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition

Applicants for the single payment scheme (SPS), the disadvantaged area scheme (DAS) and REPS 4 are obliged to comply with the provisions of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition, one of which is the maintenance of organic matter levels in the soil<sup>1</sup>. While the levels of organic matter in Irish soils are in general satisfactory, there is evidence that there are areas of the country where organic matter levels could be considered to be low, i.e. below 3.4% organic matter (2% organic carbon content). Ireland is obliged to put controls in place to monitor soil organic matter levels in the case of the SPS, DAS and REPS 4 applicants. Such controls will only apply on land under continuous tillage.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will identify land that is in continuous tillage for six years or more in vulnerable areas and notify the applicants that declare this land on their 2009 SPS application form. Applicants who are notified must determine the actual organic matter levels in these continuous tillage parcels in 2009 by arranging to have soil samples taken in accordance with the Statutory Instrument 101 of 2009. Should the organic matter percentage be below the threshold value of 3.4% it will be necessary to seek Cross Compliance – Farm Advisory System (CC-FAS) advice on any remedial action as may be considered necessary. Depending on the soil type or ongoing practices, either no further action will be required or remedial action will have to be undertaken. The CC-FAS report must set out in detail any remedial actions as may be required.

Applicants in other areas who have not been written to but are also undertaking continuous tillage must also monitor soil organic matter levels from 2010 onwards. Where organic matter levels are found to be below the threshold values of 3.4%, the farmer must again seek the advice of a CC-FAS advisor and where appropriate follow the programme of remedial actions. Where necessary these remedial actions must commence in the year following the organic matter sampling.

Remedial action may have to be applied each year until a soil organic matter level of 3.4% or a level deemed appropriate by the CC-FAS advisor has been achieved. Failure to have the samples taken and to provide the results of the analysis or where appropriate failure to contact a CC-FAS advisor and to follow the recommended remedial programme set out in the CC-FAS report may incur a sanction in accordance with the single payment cross compliance rules. Sampling must be repeated every 10 years. All sampling should be conducted in accordance with SI 101 of 2009 and using approved laboratories. One sample must normally be taken for every 4 Ha. However where soil type, cropping history and fertiliser treatment can be shown to be similar, the sample area may be increased to a maximum of 8 Ha per sample.

### Inspections

Inspections for this requirement will be conducted as part of the normal GAEC Cross Compliance requirements. On inspection, applicants will be required to provide the soil analytical report showing the organic matter levels and where it is less than 3.4% they must also show the CC-FAS report setting out, where applicable, the programme of remedial actions. From 2010 onwards, the inspecting officer will check that the remedial actions listed in the CC-FAS report are being implemented. DAFF reserves the right to take soil samples and have them analysed where it deems it appropriate.

### CC-FAS Advisor

A CC-FAS advisor is a Teagasc advisor or a private agricultural consultant that has been approved by DAFF to deliver cross compliance advice in accordance with Articles 13 to 16 of Council Regulation 1782/2003. The names of the approved FAS Bodies are listed on the DAFF website at [www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie).

### The CC-FAS Report

The CC-FAS report is a report prepared and signed by a CC-FAS advisor. It is required when the soil analysis shows one or more samples have an organic matter level below 3.4%. Such sample areas must be dealt with separately in the CC-FAS report. The advisor must take into account the organic matter levels, soil type, soil condition, climate and the intended future cropping including crop rotation where deemed necessary. The advisor should consider if the land use is agriculturally and environmentally sustainable and whether there is a need or not for a change of practice. As the process of building up organic matter in the soil is very slow, the report must set out the remedial action to be taken for a 10-year period at the end of which the organic matter level will again have to be determined by soil sampling. An exception to this requirement is where a soil sample taken before the end of the 10-year cycle shows that the OM levels have recovered to greater than 3.4% or to a level deemed acceptable for that soil type by the CC-FAS advisor. The remedial action can be suspended in this case.

A template report sheet, ‘GAEC OM’, is available on the DAFF cross compliance web page and from the Cross Compliance Unit in Portlaoise. These reports must be available for inspection.

The applicant must confirm each year that the recommended remedial action was carried out by entering the year and a ‘Y’ in the box provided for each sample area.

<sup>1</sup> Helpsheet/Terms & Conditions for the 2009 EU Single Payment Scheme and for the 2009 Disadvantaged Areas Scheme and other 2009 Area-Based Schemes