

In the Air Lasham

Fast Communication for Lasham Members

BGA LIFTS BAN OUTSIDE FMD INFECTED AREAS

As of the 8th of June the cross-country ban imposed by the BGA has been lifted for all non-infected areas. A statement by the BGA is re-produced below.

The BGA is pleased to announce that on Wednesday 6th June the BGA Executive Committee decided to lift the mandatory cross country restrictions for the whole of the area East of a line drawn through the following points: Lyme Regis, Bristol, Cheltenham, Coventry, Nottingham, Ashbourne, Halifax, York, Scarborough. This modification will be effective from 06.00 on Saturday 9th June. This notice applies to England, Wales, Southern Scotland and N.Ireland. Scotland north of the Clyde-Forth valley remains the same status as advised at the beginning of May.

Infected Areas

Landings should not be made off-airfield in infected areas. Pilots who do so may incur a fine of up to £5000, impounding of the glider and / or detention of the pilot. Pilots are also advised that in addition to the legal consequences there is the risk of physical confrontation together with the long-term negative effect on our relationships with the agricultural and land-owning community.

Some clubs in infected areas may still be subject to local restrictions imposed by MAFF or by their landlord and should abide by those restrictions. Other clubs in, and particularly on the edge of infected areas, but well away from FMD infected sites, may seek local advice from MAFF offices as to the possibility of flying cross country into adjacent non-infected areas. Unless such advice is positive, cross-country flying from gliding sites in infected areas continue to be subject to the ban announced in February.

Gliders located at airfields in infected areas, but at least 5km from an infected site, may now be taken in trailers to other clubs providing, (a) appropriate precautions are taken with respect to disinfecting trailers, tow vehicles and footwear etc., (b) the agreement of the destination club's officials has been obtained and (c) return of the trailer to the home airfield would not breach any agreement with local MAFF officials or the club's landowner.

Outside the Infected Areas

Outside the MAFF designated infected areas there are still risks of adverse reaction from landowners towards pilots who land out. However the risks are considered to be far less than in the infected areas. For the rest of the UK, West and North of the line and outside of infected areas, the conditions for cross-country flying remain as stated in our previous modified restrictions of 2nd May.

General and retrieves

We urge all pilots to act responsibly and to continue to avoid outlandings where possible within the bounds of safety and good airmanship. In particular it is stressed that if you are in a situation where you should land out, then do so safely. Avoid the temptation to try and stay airborne too long with the increased risk of leaving proper field selection too late.

Pilots are responsible for ensuring that all reasonable measures are taken, prior to launching, to minimise any risk of infection. In the event of retrieval of a glider from any land out (including a non-infected area) then again all reasonable precautions must be taken over disinfection as required by the landowner. Clubs should have appropriate equipment available and display a notice specifying the procedure for disinfecting retrieval crews, their footwear, retrieve vehicles and trailers. It is advisable for crews setting out on a retrieve to have with them the minimum necessary disinfecting equipment.

Competitions

In areas outside the infected areas it is proposed to allow BGA competitions to go ahead. Separate guidance will be provided to competition organisers and task setters regarding risk assessment and management during competitions.

Insurance

Pilots are also advised that standard aviation insurance policies carry an exclusion clause in respect of pollution and contamination caused by the insured aircraft.

Feed back

It is important that the BGA receives feedback - preferably by email - on land outs that do occur so that reactions of farmers and land owners is monitored.

Future developments

The BGA's Foot & Mouth Liaison Group will continue to review the situation regularly and any further changes will be advised through this website. A meeting of all airport-governing bodies with the NFU, CLA (Country Landowners Association) and MAFF is scheduled for 21st June in London. Any changes to the information in this notice, resulting from that meeting, will be communicated to clubs as soon as possible after the meeting.

I am endeavouring to find out from the BGA what the 'separate guidance' for competitions organisers is and how they will be affected, but on the whole it would appear as if competitions can go ahead as normal.

I have had discussions with members of the BGA's working group for F&M and it would seem that individual farmers do not know that we have had a ban imposed. Nor do they know that we have now resumed cross-country activities. Unless individual clubs have contacted their local farming community, farmers are unaware of any of the precautions and guidance clubs and pilots have been exercising. Lasham contacted its local farmers in March and we will do so again to inform them of the resumption in activities, but on a National scale nothing has yet been done.

I would still be very cautious about landing in a field. At the moment things are still somewhat sensitive in the country-side. I would recommend you continue to fly in such a way as to minimise the risk of an out-landing, assume that farm strips are closed unless you definitely know otherwise and avoid landing on horse-training gallops.

If you do land out please bear in mind the difficult times the farming world has been through and act accordingly. Stress that you have come from an infection-free area, that you are aware of the extent of the infected areas and agree if necessary to allowing your aircraft and yourself to be disinfected. Avoid at all costs, landing within a designated infected area and pay special attention to the demarcation line as defined in the BGA guidelines. Airfields are good places to land and those strips that we know are open are displayed on the notice boards. I will continue to up-date the map in the restaurant to keep you all informed of where the infected areas are.

We have experienced some very good weather in the last week or so. Several large tasks have been flown in June, quite a number over 500km, all within gliding range of airfields at all times, if you are careful it is easily possible. The task-week was a great success with some interesting and challenging weather producing, on several days cloud-bases of 5500ft and 7kt climbs. Some very good flying for the few that ventured out.

Compass flying has started and weekend weather and task briefings are scheduled for 10:00 am each Saturday and Sunday morning. The grid is up and running with lots of tugs, ready to launch you off at the first hint of a cumulus. In fact everything is in place, including the weather so don't be shy, come and fly.

Graham McAndrew
CFI
June 18th 2001