



May 2020



**A clear solution  
for farmers**

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

# Catchment Sensitive Farming

## Arun & Western Rother Newsletter

### Local CSF update

The last couple of months have been a challenging time both in terms of weather, the usual suspect, but also a pandemic which we have all had to adapt to very quickly. In light of Covid-19 restrictions Catchment Sensitive Farming are currently not visiting farms and specialist advice delivered through the Farm and Land Management Advice programme has been postponed until restrictions permit otherwise. As your local Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers we are committed to continue supporting farmers however we can remotely. For the time being, Countryside Stewardship is our focus so please get in touch if you would like any advice on how the scheme can support a healthier environment and sustainable farming practice. For Countryside Stewardship options/capital items that require endorsement from CSF there is now a process in place to do this remotely, please contact us before the end of May if you require this.

We have begun to develop a catchment campaign which we are hopeful to progress through events and 1:1 visits once restrictions allow. This includes getting to know equine holdings and promoting the importance of how a healthy environment can support horse's health. Nitrate efficiency as always is a large focus of our advice which has clear financial and soil health benefits. You may have heard CSF are now also working to improve air quality through reducing ammonia emissions, for which we are keen to support pig, poultry and dairy farms in particular to achieve this.

### Get in touch with your local Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers



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## Events

Due to the Covid 19 restrictions as I am sure you are aware, many of our events have been postponed or cancelled for the year. However please see list of proposed events – Further details to follow:

- CFE Virtual Workshop - May 28<sup>th</sup> 2020 (details below)
- Petworth Monitor Farm Summer Meeting: Moor Farm - **Provisional Date 2nd July 2020**
- Petworth Monitor Farm: Moor Farm - 22nd October 2020
- **Weekly Webinar - Transforming the Future of Land Management** hosted by Tim Hopkin - The Land App, and Matthew Morris Land Steward at The Duchy of Cornwall, with guest speakers and a live Q&A.

Bringing together key stakeholders from across the land management sector to present their thoughts on how we can collectively shape best practice for the future of land management. Find out more at:

<https://landmanagement20.squarespace.com/>

## Difficulties with Existing CS agreements

If you are having difficulties/issues implementing or fulfilling some elements of your existing Countryside Stewardship agreement due to Covid19, the RPA have requested that you should submit a [Minor Temporary Adjustment \(MTA\)](#) to the RPA. This is designed to allow for situations where customers temporarily can't fulfil the requirements/prescription of their agreement.

## Innovative Farmer Trial: No-till with living mulches

There is an Innovative Farmer Trial commencing which will be investigating the effectiveness of a permanent living clover mulch understory within a winter and spring wheat crop to help suppress weeds, cycle nutrients, protect and enhance soil health, as a means to achieving organic and low-input no till systems. To avoid the mulch overtaking the cash crop it will be knocked back through grazing or topping to then direct or strip till wheat therefore eliminating unnecessary soil disturbance.

Living mulch systems have the potential to convert conventional tillage systems to a min/no till system, therefore helping to address key challenges conventional systems present through lowering carbon emissions, improving soil organic matter and fungal networks. Additionally the key barrier living mulches can help to address are reducing reliance upon glyphosate, and with an ever decreasing chemical store, methods to reduce dependence on these will become more critical. If you are interested to see how this trial progresses over the next few years you can stay updated through the [Innovative Farmer Trial website](#). Additionally if you are interested in setting up your own trial with a group of farmers, you can apply through the Innovative Farmer Trial, and if successful the cost to implement and investigate will be covered.

## Undersowing maize with grass

Maize is often associated with run off due to the late harvest date, however if grown responsibly the runoff risk can be significantly minimised. One of the best ways to achieve this is through establishing additional ground cover. It is now common place to sow a grass ley/cover crop immediately following harvest, however as proved last year this is not always practical or responsible if conditions do not allow. There is now a growing interest to undersow maize with grass so cover is established before harvest, thus meaning the risk of run off and nutrient leaching is significantly reduced, additionally there are benefits for promoting soil health. Undersowing maize is also subsidised through Countryside Stewardship, option SW5 Enhanced Management of Maize Crops at £133/ha.

There are a variety of techniques to undersow maize ranging from undersowing at the same time as maize planting, the simplest method due to not requiring specialist kit, however there are potential yield penalties. Alternatively you can choose from a variety of techniques to undersow at the 4-6 leaf stage therefore avoiding yield penalty. Farmer Brian Chandler in Dorset has been working with Wessex Water trialling various techniques such as their home-built band-sowing rig which produced the greatest establishment rates and the slurry dribble bar mixed with grass seed which also proved successful.



Sowing grass with slurry



Drilled undersown grass in maize



Sowing grass with Brian's front mounted broad casting machine

If you are a contractor/farmer and have equipment you believe could undersow maize please get in touch so we can try to support farmers to adopt this approach.

Acknowledgement to Brian Chandler, Catchment Sensitive Farming in partnership with the Maize Growers Association and Wessex Water

## Stay connected:

### CFE Virtual Workshop – An Introduction to Farm Carbon Calculators

Championing the Farmed Environment is running an evening webinar of talks and discussion on getting started with carbon calculations on your farm

**Thursday May 28th from 7pm - 8pm**

As well as improving farm efficiency and accessing future carbon sequestration opportunities, getting to grips with using farm carbon calculators will be vital to reach the NFU target of reaching net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2040. Our panel will set the scene and lead you through the basics of using the tools available to you.

Followed by an open discussion session with NFU vice president Tom Bradshaw, NFU livestock adviser Harriet Henrick and Catchment Sensitive Farming's Owen Standen.

This is a FREE event but booking is essential. Online registration is open at:

<http://www.cfeonline.org.uk/our-work/events/cfe-virtual-workshop-farm-carbon-calculators/>

Or email [paul.cobb@fwagsoutheast.co.uk](mailto:paul.cobb@fwagsoutheast.co.uk)

### AHDB farm videos:

The South East AHDB knowledge exchange manager Paul Hill has encouraged farmers across the south east to post some short videos on current challenges that farmers are and/ will be facing over the coming months:

- [Mark Chandler](#) (Monitor Farmer Moor Farm Petworth) – Spring drilling update, innovative measures and Water Company grants
- [Andy Bason](#) (Ex MF Newhouse Farm, Nr Winchester) – Spring barley, spring beans and canary seed
- [David Miller](#) (Wheatsheaf Farming, Nr Basingstoke) – Conservation Farming methodology using Cross-slot drill.

You can access more individual farmer updates via the [AHDB Youtube channel](#)

It would be great to see and hear your stories, if you would like to share a video of your experiences over the spring and summer periods please get in touch.

### Buglife launches the Landscapes for wild pollinators survey

Would you like to help deliver wildflower-rich habitat for pollinators across the countryside? Buglife's Landscapes for wild pollinators survey asks farmers for their opinions on the best way to deliver habitat for wildlife in the new Environmental Land Management Scheme Defra are developing.

Please complete Buglife's Landscapes for wild pollinators survey by clicking [here](#) by May 29th

### How do we use your data?

Your data is only used by us so we can email, call, write or text you about Catchment Sensitive Farming. This will include advice, access to grants, events and campaigns.

You can change your communications preferences by emailing us on [catchmentsensitivefarming@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:catchmentsensitivefarming@naturalengland.org.uk)

Our Information Charter is at: [bit.ly/naturalenglandinfo](https://bit.ly/naturalenglandinfo) Privacy Notice is at: [bit.ly/privacycsf](https://bit.ly/privacycsf)

We get your data from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). You can update your contact details held by them by emailing [csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk) with your SBI.

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) is delivered in partnership by Natural England, the Environment Agency and Defra.



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