

Arun & Western Rother catchment update

September 2018



working with farmers to improve water and air quality

New focus on ammonia

Since 2006 the Catchment Sensitive Farming Team has worked with over 20,000 farms across England on reducing water pollution from agriculture. CSF is now expanding its work to include good ammonia management. Our offer will remain simple – providing bespoke advice to farmers to improve practices and reduce running costs.



Code of Good Agricultural Practice launched for ammonia emissions

New guidance has been released to help farmers address ammonia emissions. This can also reduce costs. Your local CSFO can organise manure/slurry sampling and discuss nutrient management planning with you. The new CoGAP is available at <http://bit.ly/CoGAPammonia>



Slug control

Slug pellet application season is around the corner and moderate-to-high slug pressure is anticipated for the season, especially following this year's cracked soils which provide refugia for slugs.

An article in South East Farmer - available at <http://bit.ly/SEFarmer-slugs-03092018> - recommends that growers adopt a risk-based Integrated Pest Management approach, including controlling slugs using several different techniques. This can be more successful than relying on pellets alone. Read more about how to adopt this approach in an ADHB Information Sheet available at <http://bit.ly/integratedslugcontrol>

Metaldehyde-based pellets pose a risk to drinking water quality. If you use them, please ensure you adhere to the **Metaldehyde Stewardship Guidelines**, which set out best practice for their use. These are available at <http://bit.ly/metaldehydeguidelines>

Pellets containing ferric phosphate are a very effective alternative to metaldehyde-based pellets. Southern Water is subsidising ferric phosphate pellets, slug pelletter calibration and PA1 and PA4s training. Contact your local CSFO to find out more about these financial incentives.



Soils

Dry weather this summer caused widespread cracking. When rain falls, these cracks fast-track the flow of pesticides or nutrients dissolved in runoff from the field to watercourses. Please be mindful of this when you make pesticide or fertiliser applications whilst soils are cracked. Tried & Tested have issued useful advice on avoiding nutrient losses after a long, dry period, available at <http://bit.ly/avoidnutrientlossesfromslurry> Legal requirements and new guidance on milk and slurry applications to land is available at <http://bit.ly/exceptionalweather1>

A new series of short, practical videos has been produced to help farmers improve soil health. 'Learning from the Land' shows how healthy soils help improve crop productivity whilst reducing nutrient losses and pollution and can help reduce cracking in future droughts. This video series is a collaboration between CSF, Innovation for Agriculture and Ernest Cook Trust and is available on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/LearningFromTheLand>

As a reminder, avoiding bare soil in autumn and winter improves belowground soil structure – great for productivity and the environment. New research with x-rays shows how this benefits the underground structure of soil – see <http://ow.ly/UWUUh30lvJEM>.

We offer free specialist soil husbandry visits to holdings that have made soils their priority. Get in touch with your local CSFO to discuss options available to help you.

Take part in the **#30minworms** farm survey before 30th October to help improve our understanding of the impact of the summer drought on soil health and earthworm populations – visit <http://www.wormscience.org/> When you input your results, please add 'CSF-SE' as your group identifier.

OSR herbicides campaign

Five herbicides critical to weed control and growing a successful oilseed rape crop - metazachlor, propyzamide, carbetamide, quinmerac and clopyralid - are increasingly being detected in surface water. The Voluntary Initiative's latest Stewardship Scheme provides advice and tools to help you minimize the risk. Visit <http://bit.ly/VI-OSRherbicides> to find out more. A webinar on the topic is also available at <http://bit.ly/OSRherbicides-webinar>.

A graphic for the 'OSR Herbicides? Think Water' campaign. At the top is a logo of two overlapping water droplets, one yellow and one blue. Below it is the text 'OSR Herbicides? Think Water'. Underneath are three blue square icons with white text and graphics. The first icon shows a road with a white line and text: 'Manage tramlines, pathways and gateways to minimise compaction and reduce the risk of surface water run-off'. The second icon shows a field with a 6m buffer strip and text: 'Ensure all surface water adjacent to OSR fields is protected by at least a 6m vegetative buffer strip'. The third icon shows a magnifying glass over a document labeled 'WPAS' and text: 'Before making applications, always refer to product specific labels and the VI Water Protection Advice Sheets (WPAS)'.

Grants

The RDPE **Countryside Productivity Scheme** has two funding streams available to farmers, providing 40% of eligible costs – details at <http://bit.ly/CPSgrants>

- The **Improving Farm Productivity** scheme offers grants of £35,000 or more to support investment for more efficient use of livestock slurries, manures and digestate (deadline: 3rd December).
- The **Small Grant Scheme**, expected to re-open in autumn, offers grants of £3,000-£12,000 for equipment to improve farm productivity such as GPS for precision farming, yield mapping equipment, trailing shoe, cattle and sheep handling equipment.

Funding to improve water quality is also available through **Countryside Stewardship**. Get ahead by getting in touch with your local CSFO this winter to discuss which options are best for your farm business – specialist advice is available.

Local news

Farm Manager David Hamilton Fox aims to solve soil erosion problems on the vulnerable greensand soils at the **Cowdray Estate**. He has adopted a seven-point sustainability plan that provides the framework for all farming activities carried out on the 1,370ha mixed dairy and arable farm in the South Downs National Park. The plan includes practices such as no-till establishment, cover crops and grass waterways to help keep soils in place and improve soil health and structure. Find out more in the Farmers Weekly article, available at <http://bit.ly/CowdrayFWarticle>



The **Rother Valley Farmers Group** is focused on working together and sharing knowledge to benefit farming and the environment to improve the Rother Valley landscape. A total of 29 farms have signed up to the RVFG covering almost 8000 hectares along the Rother Valley. The Group would like to continue to welcome new farmers who might like to become involved. For more information contact Colin Hedley at cjhedley@btinternet.com

Natural England takes looking after your data as seriously as we take looking after the environment. Your data is only used by us so we can email, call, write or text you about our Catchment Sensitive Farming work. This includes advice, access to grants, events and campaigns. We hope you want to hear from us, but you can change your preferences at any time by emailing us at catchmentsensitiefarming@naturalengland.org.uk Natural England's Information Charter is available at <http://bit.ly/naturalenglandinfo>

For more information: <http://bit.ly/csprivacy>

Events

- West Grinstead & District Ploughing & Agricultural Society ploughing match – 15/09/2018 – Priors Byne Farm, Bines Road, Partridge Green RH13 8EQ
- Petworth & District Agricultural Association ploughing match – 22/09/2018 – Ridlington Farm, Duncton GU28 0QR
- Petworth AHDB Monitor Farm meetings – 18/10/2018, 06/12/2018 – Medhouse Barn, Blackhouse Lane, Petworth GU28 9NZ <http://bit.ly/PetworthMonitorFarm>
- Sussex County Ploughing Association ploughing match – 20/10/2018 – Strood Farm, Petworth GU28 0JN
- West Sussex Growers Association conference, 'Innovation, Automation & Robotics' – 26/10/2018 – University of Chichester www.horticonference.co.uk
- Soil & Water Management Centre conference – 07/11/2018 at Harper Adams University, Shropshire and 14/11/2018 at Throws Farm, Essex <http://bit.ly/SWMCconferences2018>
- CSF workshop, 'Making Blackgrass History' by Dr Stephen Moss – 23/11/2018 – Billingshurst Centre, Roman Way, Billingshurst RH14 9QW

Connect with CSF

Arun: Marc Redmile-Gordon | 0207 8955414
Marc.Redmile-Gordon@naturalengland.org.uk

Western Rother: Tom Edwards | 0208 0261396
Thomas.Edwards@naturalengland.org.uk

CSF pages on gov.uk: <http://bit.ly/CSFonline>

Twitter: @naturalengland, @NESussexandKent
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YouTube: <http://bit.ly/CSF-YouTube>