



A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Tonne of success for award winning pesticide amnesty

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) has been working together with farmers since 2006. In partnership with South East Water, CSF tailored an award-winning pesticide amnesty scheme for farmers, protecting the quality of the water we drink.

Most farmers use pesticides safely and manage their storage to ensure it's secure and kept up to date. **Out-of-date and banned pesticides and other chemicals can pose a real threat to the environment and to water resources**, if they are stored or disposed of incorrectly.

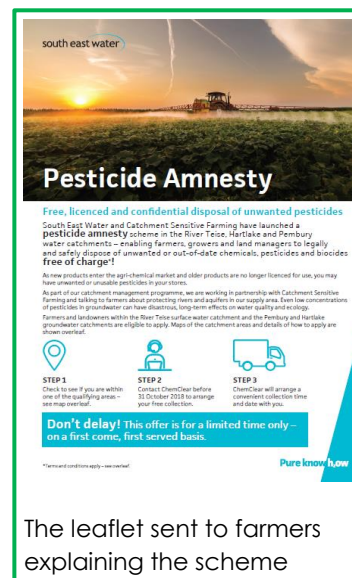
The cost of tackling the impact of contamination on raw water sources can run into millions, and some pesticides and chemicals are so persistent in the environment the affects can last decades.

Working in partnership with South East Water

Between October and November 2018, South East Water, with the support of CSF, pioneered a new pesticide amnesty scheme. The amnesty facilitated the anonymous safe disposal of pesticides from farmers and land managers **free of charge on a confidential basis**.

The scheme was devised as a way of raising awareness and engaging farmers on the topic of surplus chemicals and reducing risks to the environment. This covered the River Teise surface water catchment and Pembury and Hartlake groundwater catchments in Kent.

CSF worked with South East Water to design and administer the scheme, producing a leaflet for promotion. The leaflet explained the scheme objectives, contained a map showing the area covered, and included contact details to arrange collection.



The leaflet sent to farmers explaining the scheme

CSF and South East Water made sure the scheme was made as simple as possible for farmers to access. Farmers checked the map to see if they were in the area covered - or contacted the local CSFO using the details on the leaflet. They could then phone to arrange a convenient time for collection.

To promote the scheme, the local Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer (CSFO) emailed farmers using the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) database. **The local CSFO used existing trusted networks within the farming community to promote the scheme to farmers and land managers.**

It was also included in the regular printed catchment newsletter sent to farmers.



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Ben Thompson – Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer, said:

“By helping farmers to safely dispose of these chemicals once they are redundant, we’re ensuring they won’t ever find their way into watercourses which could affect drinking water quality and damage the environment.”

A good result for the farmer and the environment

During the amnesty, **more than a tonne of agricultural chemicals were collected from 23 farms across the three catchments.** 901kg of chemicals handed over were pesticides or other agricultural substances. 57kg of these were no longer approved for use in the UK.

Debbie Wilkinson - South East Water's Groundwater Manager, said:

“Although we remove chemicals from raw water before it's put into the water supply, it's much more sustainable and cost-effective to work with farmers to reduce the chances of pesticides entering our water resources in the first place.”

If these chemicals had been released into the environment there would have been a significant risk to water quality, requiring the water company to either use expensive treatment processes to remove the contamination, or potentially close a vital drinking water source.

The cost of the pesticide amnesty was £9.40 per kilo – a small price to pay for removing a significant risk to water quality, especially when compared to the cost to biodiversity and treating raw water contaminated with this quantity of pesticides.

Winning gold at the Green Apple Awards



Some of the CSF and South East Water team receiving the Gold Award at the Green Apple Environment Awards

In November 2019 **the ground-breaking scheme won a gold award** at the internationally recognised Green Apple Environment Awards for Environmental Best Practice 2019. The awards recognise, reward and promote environmental best practice around the world.

Get in touch with your local CSFO for advice, support or access to funding. Search GOV.UK for Catchment Sensitive Farming.

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



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