



A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Little Ouse North West Priority Catchment Targeting Summary March 2012 – March 2014

River Basin District: Anglian

Catchment: Little Ouse North West

Total Area: 1292km²

Reasons for designation

The Little Ouse catchment was designated as a priority catchment in 2006 when the CSF initiative began. Water quality issues within the catchment include nitrates and phosphates contaminating both ground and surface water. In addition, high concentrations of metaldehyde and clopyralid have been recorded in the lower Wissey at Stoke Ferry. The Environment Agency and Anglian Water are aware of the problems in the Wissey. Anglian Water Services are hosting the Wissey Catchment Based Approach Pilot Catchment and with the help of other stakeholders and partner organisations are developing a catchment plan to tackle the issues in the catchment.

Priorities

North Pickenham borehole (Source Protection Zones 1 & 2 – covering the airfield and surrounding area) – constituting a Groundwater Drinking Water Protected Area. High groundwater nitrate concentrations, pesticides and Faecal Indicator Organisms (FIOs) – particularly cryptosporidium.

Surface Water Drinking Water Protected Area and Safeguard Zones – 465km² in the Wissey and its tributaries upstream of Stoke Ferry, high surface and groundwater nitrate concentrations, phosphate and pesticides – including metaldehyde and clopyralid

Upper reaches of the Wissey and the Gadder - an area for partnership working as this is the main focus area of the Wissey Pilot Catchment Group and is central to the majority of the WFD failures.

Good Ecological Status of the Wissey and its nine primary tributaries in the catchment, eight of those fall below the WFD good ecological status, being at Moderate or Poor status. This is for varying reasons but the most common factors are usually linked to high phosphate, resulting in low dissolved oxygen and low/absent diatoms.

Objectives

- Reduce sources of FIO from poultry manures in the vicinity of the North Pickenham borehole via a range of measures, e.g. reducing run-off, and promoting best practice for manure storage and spreading; maintaining good soil structure and using cover crops to ensure that ground cover is at a maximum, particularly on slopes; accurate and effective nutrient and manure management planning; and slurry and muck testing.
- Reduce sources of nitrate and pesticides leaching to groundwater and run-off to surface waters via a range of measures, e.g. promoting best practices measures relating to manure and fertilizer use, promoting good soil management, effective and accurate nutrient and manure management planning and use of cover crops.
- Reduce sources of sediment and phosphate loss to surface waters via a range of measures, e.g. promoting regular soil & manure testing, ensuring phosphate applied in manure is taken into account when planning fertilizer applications, and maintaining good soil structure.

Delivery

North Pickenham and surrounding area – Bespoke one to one farm visits; soil, muck and slurry testing, and manure and nutrient management planning by specialist advisers to identify sources of FIO's, nitrates and pesticides from farms; provide the farmers with a range of practical options to reduce the contaminant sources. Follow up telephone calls and visits to keep the farmers engaged with CSF and to continue to foster good working relationships.

Upper reaches of the Wissey and the Gadder – One to one farm visits and group events to promote best practice with regard to nutrient management, soil and manure analysis and machinery calibration. Also, workshops on biobeds and biofilters and encouragement for interested farmers to take up help via the Capital Grant Scheme (CGS) to install these.

Thompson Stream Project – joint project with Natural England Land Management staff. Trying to improve the status of Thompson Water, Carr and Common SSSI, which is at risk of being designated as in unfavourable condition due to becoming eutrophic. This is a pilot project which if successful will be applied to other 'at risk' SSSIs and vulnerable land across the catchment. One to one tailored farm visits to the surrounding farms, also those upstream and group events to encourage good soil management, reducing run-off, the use of cover crops, improving soil structure, effective nutrient and manure management planning and farm infrastructure audits of nearby intensive pig and poultry units. Help will be offered via the CGS and in some cases HLS funding.

Lower reaches of the Wissey upstream of Stoke Ferry – One to one farm visits and group events focused on nutrient and manure management, reducing run-off and erosion, farm infrastructure audits, encouraging the uptake of biobeds and biofilters with assistance from the CGS and accurate calibration of spreaders and sprayers.

Remaining catchment area – A care and maintenance approach will be offered to farmers in the rest of the Little Ouse North West catchment meaning that farmers will be welcomed to group events and offered one to one farm visits where the need is identified by the CSFO and farmer.

Map of Target Area

