



## A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

### Priority Catchment Targeting Summary March 2011 – March 2013

**River Basin District: South West**  
**Catchment: Somerset Levels & Moors**

**Total Area: 2,535 km<sup>2</sup>**

#### Reasons for Designation:

- Water Framework Directive (WFD) failing water bodies in the catchment primarily due to levels of phosphate which exceed targets. All are classed as priority 1 and 2 catchments by the Environment Agency to achieve good ecological status by 2015. Currently recorded as Poor to Moderate with diffuse agricultural sources accounting for approximately 1/3 of the total phosphate load (data from the Environment Agency).
- Parts of these catchments lie within designated Nitrate Vulnerable Zones.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the Somerset levels are currently classified as unfavourable due to elevated phosphate in feeder rhynes which supply the ditch network. Sites at risk from diffuse water pollution from agriculture (DWPA) include Curry Moor, Wet Moor, Hay Moor, Kings Sedge Moor, West Sedge Moor and Brue Valley. Elevated phosphate promotes undesirable aquatic flora, limiting diversity leading to algal blooms and oxygen depletion in slow moving water courses.
- Wessex Water's surface water abstraction sites on the Taunton and Wellington Canal, Clifton Maybank, Hele Bridge, Durleigh, Sutton Bingham and Luxhay Reservoir are at risk from elevated levels of pesticide due to DWPA. Bristol Water's Cheddar Reservoir is also at risk from elevated nutrients and algae.
- DWPA abstraction failures for nitrate at Bradley Head and Milborne Wick due to DWPA.
- Burnham Jetty and Uphill Slipway are predicted to classify as 'Poor' under the revised 2014 Bathing Water Directive. Bathing beach quality at Berrow and Brean is also at risk. River-borne sources of contamination from livestock farming in the catchment are likely to add significantly to the total burden of faecal bacteria.

#### Objectives

- Reduce the loss of sediment, and associated soil-bound particulate phosphate through changes in land management together with practical solutions that promote best practice.
- Reduce connectivity between the land and surface water, through improved track and run-off management and promotion of practical solutions.
- Minimise the risk of dirty water run-off from soiled yard areas through improved infrastructure.
- Reduce inputs of fertiliser to reduce leaching to groundwater and run-off to surface waters through promoting good practice and the calibration of machinery.
- Improve nutrient and manure management from storage to application.
- Reduce risk of pesticide pollution through promotion of better pesticide handling, including dedicated filling, wash down areas and bio beds to treat wash water.

## Delivery Mechanisms

- Raise awareness of water quality issues in the catchment to encourage change through voluntary measures.
- Promotion of the Capital Grant Scheme in 2013 to ensure high quality applications which help deliver CSF objectives
- Provide funding for specialist Infrastructure and Water Management advice.
- Promotion of bio beds and better handling of pesticides at target farms.
- Make funding available for specialist advice in the form of Manure and Nutrient Management Plans together with PLANET training for targeted farms.
- Promote and fund sampling of soils and manure together with calibration of fertiliser spreading equipment.
- Promote local best practice through events and groups of influential farmers within the catchment.

## Catchment 12: Somerset Levels & Moors Target Area

