



A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Priority Catchment Targeting Summary March 2014 – March 2015

Catchment: Upper Lee and Stort	CSFO: Sarah Asberry	
Target Area: 23,118.42 ha	Total Area: 88,000 ha	Total N° of Farms: 541

Reasons for designation

The rivers Lee and Stort catchment is a typical lowland catchment. The Lee is sourced near Luton, Beds and the Stort near Clavering, Essex. The rivers flow across largely arable land towards North East London within the Lee Valley.

The river Lee (or Lea) follows a route through and close to both rural and large urban areas, skirting Luton, Harpenden, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Hertford, and Harlow, where it merges with the Stort and continues out of the catchment and towards London.

The Stort meanders as a chalk stream through agricultural land before reaching Bishops Stortford where it has been made navigable. Once through Bishops Stortford, the river continues through arable land until it reaches Harlow Town, just upstream of Hunsdon Mead SSSI.

Run off into the Stort is primarily from arable farms, grassland, woodland, in addition to urban runoff from Bishops Stortford and Harlow Town.

The primary diffuse water pollution from agriculture (DWPA) pressures in the river Lee relating to the SSSI include sediment, phosphate and nitrate; relating to Ground Water Protected Areas (GWPA) are nitrate; and regarding surface water drinking water protected areas (SW DWPA) include nitrate and metaldehyde.

Priorities

- Reduce sediment, phosphate and nitrate inputs to Hunsdon Mead SSSI
- Reduce nitrate input to Ground Water Protected Areas

Objectives

- Raise awareness of DWPA across the whole catchment through newsletters, events, and on-farm specialist advice.
- Reduce the loss of sediment, and associated and soil-bound phosphate particles through appropriate changes in land management

- Reduce connectivity between the land and surface water, through promotion of good management practice such as track management, buffer strips, and other appropriate measures.
- Reduce leaching to ground water and runoff to surface waters.
- To assist in achieving favourable status SSSI sites where possible.
- To encourage the use of suitable resource protection options within Environmental Stewardship schemes.

Delivery

Advice will be delivered by the CSFO and contractors via workshops, demonstrations and one to one farm visits. These will include soil husbandry and nutrient planning services, farm infrastructure audits, machinery calibration and advice on pesticide best practice. Metaldehyde use will be focused upon, particularly in the Pincey Brook sub-catchment.

The Capital Grant Scheme will also be targeted to address these issues. Land owners will also be targeted through Environmental Stewardship schemes.

Targeting Map

