



# A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

## Priority Catchment Summary March 2011 – March 2015

<b>River Basin District: South East</b>	<b>Catchment: Eastern Rother</b>
<b>Total Area: 582 km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>N° of Target Farms: 30</b>

### Reasons for designation

The Eastern Rother catchment was designated a CSF priority catchment in 2006 (phase 1) due to the poor quality of some surface river stretches. Some waterbodies showed the following in the EA's General Quality Assessment programme:

- Raised nutrient levels, for example, nitrates and phosphates
- Low dissolved oxygen levels - this may occur as a result of raised water temperatures or nutrient enriched runoff over fertilising water plants and bacteria, which in turn utilise large quantities of oxygen thus depleting the overall levels.

During the catchment review of 2008 it was re-affirmed that the main concern within the catchment was the achievement of the good surface water quality status standard under the EUs Water Framework Directive (WFD). The primary pressures within the catchment were:

- Inputs from sewage treatment works, including Hawkhurst North & Iden Green, and septic tanks
- Abstraction regimes
- Dredging regimes
- Fish passages due to heavily modified or artificial channels, including at priority sites: Tillingham, Udiam & Scots Float
- Diffuse water pollution from agriculture (DWPA)
- Invasive non-native species, esp. at Glottenham Stream

During the last catchment review, in 2011, it was decided that, as no WFD Protected Areas (e.g. Bathing Waters, Drinking Waters, SSSIs) were considered to be at risk of diffuse water pollution from agriculture and the desired farmer engagement had been achieved, the delivery approach within this catchment should move from a pro-active targeting approach to a care and maintenance programme.

The objectives of this care and maintenance programme were as follows:

- To maintain the momentum and general DWPA awareness achieved within the first and second phase (2006-2011), e.g. through newsletters, advisory leaflets and events,
- To be able to provide reactive advice where specific needs and demands occur, including events and 1:1 on farm visits by both Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer (CSFO) and contracted specialists.

### 2012 Update:

The Environment Agency are currently reviewing whether there are DWPA issues around any drinking water abstraction points / drinking water protected areas (DrWPAs) within the catchment. Under Article 7, it is likely that Safeguard Zones may be designated, for example, around the Crowhurst Bridge DrWPA, due to recent metaldehyde issues. In 2012 new target areas have therefore been assigned to reflect this emerging evidence and likely new designation.

The overall approach within this catchment must therefore remain flexible in order to react to emerging evidence and new designations whilst also retaining the care and maintenance approach across the remainder of the catchment.

## Priorities

1. General diffuse water pollution advice, especially relating to nutrients, in order to maintain catchment awareness of DWPA, embed change driven by historic engagement and to aid achievement of good WFD surface water quality status.
2. Metaldyhyde levels especially around Crowhurst Bridge and the Headwaters, i.e. in 2010 and 2011 South East Water reported spikes above the drinking water standard at this site.
3. Any other re-active work depending on emerging evidence, weather and evolving farm practices.

## Current Objectives

- Reducing inputs of pesticides, especially Metaldyhyde, to water-bodies by:
  - Promoting best practice in pesticide machinery in-yard activities, including loading and washing down facilities,
  - Promoting appropriate use of products and application timing,
  - Encouraging correct calibration of sprayers and spreaders,
  - Encouraging the use of buffer strips next to watercourses where appropriate,
- Reducing inputs of nutrients to water-bodies by:
  - Reviewing farm infrastructure to improve dirty water, muck and slurry management,
  - Ensuring best practice regarding in-field manure storage.

This focus is more towards the yard as in previous phases advice was more focused around field areas.
- Facilitating access to other advice being delivered via events to neighboring catchments

## Delivery

Where there is a recognized risk or “farmer generated” demand a range of group events and farm specific 1:1 visits can be delivered, including:

- Pesticide handing and Bio-bed demonstrations
- Farm infrastructure on-farm walks
- PA4 Pelleter applicator training
- Spreader and sprayer calibration
- 1:1 Pesticide Facilities and Biobed visits
- 1:1 Farm Infrastructure visits

These services will be supported by a capital grants scheme and regular updates through catchment newsletters. Activity will also be undertaken within Natural England to ensure that resource protection options within Environmental Stewardship are used to reduce water pollution where appropriate.

## Targeting:

