



# A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

## CSF success in the Kennet and Lambourn Catchment

### Kennet and Lambourn Catchment (33)

CSFO: Andrew Russell

#### Descriptions

When river keepers noticed turbidity in the River Kennet they feared the poor water quality would hit their income. The Kennet is a designated SSSI deemed 'unfavourable' for a number of reasons including turbidity possibly from diffuse pollution from agriculture.

#### Pollution Problems

Run-off from the upper fields of an outdoor pig farm was getting into the river. There was no green cover in the fields and vehicle tracks channelled water to the lowest point in the field. The water was able to erode soil from the field below the pigs. This dirty water then flowed onto the road. Road side gullies directed the water straight into a channel of the Kennet. When it rained heavily the Highways Authority had to alert drivers to the muddy water pooling on the road. Robert found anecdotal evidence of ammonia in the river and had reports that cars driving through the puddles smelt of manure!



Some of the stones carried by the water



Material washed out by channelled water

The problem was only apparent during wet weather. The issue had arisen due to the two fields being farmed and owned by a landowner, tenant pig farmer and contract arable farmer who had recently changed hands.

#### Pollution Solutions

On the basis of meetings between the landowner, the tenant, the contract farmers and an agronomist, the CSFO advised:



Main Image - One of the 12m buffer strips from the road. Inset - 12m Buffer strip sown with mixed grass species alongside the arable field below the pigs.



Sediment from field runoff entering the Kennet Channel seen after only a very light shower



Signs on the road to warn drivers

1. Establishing two 150 metre long, 12 metre wide, buffer strips along the sides of a wood. He advised the species mix include drought hardy species and species suitable for calcareous soils.
2. The CSFO advised on grassing – rather than naturally – a 50meter buffer of set aside below the field where the pigs are kept. He also suggested keeping the pigs in the top of the field and restricting vehicle access in the field to stop compaction.



Field run-off. The Kenett is beyond the hedge.

### Farmer Engagement and Motivation

Credit needs to be given to both the pig farmer and The Co-operative Farms, both have shown a willingness to tackle the issue and have taken swift voluntary action to rectify the issue once it was identified.

The advisory approach of CSF can be summed up by the comments made by the farm manager of The Co-operative Farms, who said that the approach taken by the Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer was to discuss and tackle the issues together as a joint effort rather than finger pointing.

Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer (CSFO)

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