



# A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

## Keeping rain out for better Manure Management

Brook House Farm, Terrington, York

### Yorkshire Derwent Catchment (21)

CSFO: David Rees

### Farm Description

Brook House is a 600 acre dairy, sheep and cereal family farm owned by Chris and Pauline Sowray and son John. Situated within an NVZ under the Howardian Hills close to York, the soil type is classified as 'slowly permeable, seasonally wet, basic loam and clay'. This provides a moderate level of fertility with seasonally wet pastures than can suffer from impeded drainage. The 180 cow dairy herd is housed in winter in a roofed barn on straw. The solid manure handling system has an adjacent dirty water storage tank under an unroofed collecting yard.

The farm has a ground water borehole affected by sulphur contamination and has switched to abstracting water for farm use from an adjacent beck.

This gives them a vested interest in maintaining good quality water courses on their farm.



### Pollution Issues

Rain from an unroofed collecting yard, with dairy and parlour washings collect into a slatted dirty water holding tank under the collecting yard. This dirty water currently has a dry matter content of 7.4% and creates 2 diffuse pollution issues:-

- 1 a considerable amount of clean rain water would fill the dirty water holding tank and reduce intervals between emptying storage capacity.
- 2 slurry from cows standing in the collecting yard would seep through the slats above the dirty water holding tank, increasing the nutrient value of the dirty water and also reducing dirty water storage capacity.



Collecting yard at Brook House Farm



## Pollution Solution

### **Roof over the collecting yard to improve clean/dirty water handling.**

Brook House Farm was sited within the 2009 CSF Capital Grant Scheme priority target area for the Yorkshire Derwent catchment. As roofing of livestock gathering areas was the top priority capital item, Chris & John Sowray made a successful application to the scheme to fund roofing (and associated rainwater goods) for the dairy cow collecting yard.

### **Fill in the slats to reduce slurry contamination of stored dirty water. Small quantities of slurry from cattle in the collecting yard would then be added to the solid manure in an adjacent storage area.**

At their own expense, the Sowray's are replacing the slats over the dirty water storage tank in the collecting yard with a solid floor. This will eliminate slurry contamination from cows standing in the collecting yard.

## Farmer Engagement and Motivation

The Sowray's have understood the benefits of improving infrastructure to separate manure/clean/dirty water within their milking arrangements.

- Reduced cost of dirty water handling.
- Reduced slurry contamination of dirty water.
- Better utilisation of existing dirty water storage capacity.
- Improved solid manure/dirty water handling arrangements in an NVZ area.

They have also appreciated grant aid assistance towards the cost of making improvements which could not be entirely funded out of income from current milk prices. Positive engagement was further demonstrated by hosting a farm walk for local farmers on 21 September 2009 to highlight catchment sensitive farming.

Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer (CSFO)

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