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## Nifty Nutrient Planning!

Farmer feedback from the inorganic fertiliser workshop held on 5<sup>th</sup> December, showed that the event was very valuable to farm businesses in the Chelmer and Blackwater catchment. Selwyn Richardson and Mel Holloway provided us with an informative and entertaining insight into crop nutrient requirements, ways of working out the calculations for nutrient supply from manures and sewage sludge and the savings that can be made from accurate calculations using RB209 or your own soil sampling results.

The tour of Chelmsford Sewage Treatment Works with Ellie Pluck gave us all an insight into the different ways our waste is treated, the challenges they face and how the sewage sludge, which many of you use, is formed.

John Bucknell from Gingrigh Hall, Blackmore said the event was “a great help, with explanation from competent advisers, providing the knowledge to prepare the farm’s nutrient management plan”.

If you missed this one, we will be running another workshop in March!



## Upcoming Events in the Catchment:

**Pesticide Application (PA) Training** – for those who are operating under ‘Grandfather Rights’ or who are starting spraying or pelleting:

- PA1 Pesticide Foundation Module: 27<sup>th</sup> January, 9:30-15:30 – Essex YF Barn, Chatham Green, Chelmsford
- PA2 Ground Crop Sprayer: 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 9:30-15:30 – Radwinter Park, Radwinter, CB10 2UE
- PA4s Slug Pellet Applicator: 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 9:30-13:00 – Sandon Lodge, Sandon, CM2 7SG

**Biobed and Biofilter Workshop** – come and see the first Essex biobed on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> February! Our Chelmer and Blackwater demonstration biobed is now up and running...keep an eye out for an invite in the post.

## Free one-to-one advice visits available:

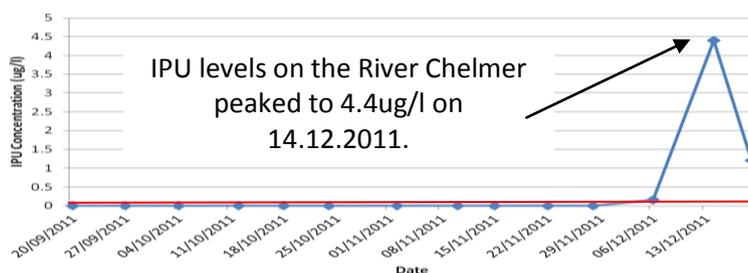
- Pesticide filling area/biobed/biofilters
- Nutrient management plan and soil analysis
- Fertiliser, manure, slug pellet spreader and sprayer calibrations.

To book onto any of the above, please contact Teresa on 01268 664403 or 07792 169545.

## What has been found in the rivers of the catchment last autumn?

Water quality in the Chelmer and Blackwater catchment was very good from September to December, when compared to previous years. This can be attributed to your employment of best practice when spraying (thank you!) and the low rainfall levels.

However, the end of December, saw levels of propyzamide (Kerb), CTU (Dicurane) and bentazone (Basagran) in the Rivers Chelmer, Sandon Brook, Can, Wid, and Roxwell Brook exceed the 0.1ug/l limit.



**Don't forget...the EU Drinking Water Standard is just 0.1ug/l or parts per billion. This is the same as just one grain of wheat in 390 tonnes!** Although there are no health implications at this level, we are working to reduce pesticide levels at source. This aids their removal in the treatment process, which is difficult for some pesticides, such as metaldehyde.



**PLEASE TAKE CARE WHEN FILLING AND SPRAYING USING THESE PESTICIDES.**

## Would you be interested in knowing how much nitrate and phosphate is being lost from your farm?

You are invited to participate in a project in the Chelmer and Blackwater to look at nutrient loss from farm and improve your nutrient management and efficiency. What does it involve?

- Use a simple testing kit to measure the nitrate and phosphate levels of 6 of your drains, once a week for 6 weeks.
- Report the results back to Teresa, which will then be discussed anonymously in a meeting at the end of the project.

**Interested? Give Teresa a ring on 01268 664403 or 07792 169545.**



### Metaldehyde in Drinking Water Catchments

The Chelmer and Blackwater Catchment was the focus of a recent study into metaldehyde. It investigated both farm and catchment scale data collected since the beginning of the Catchment Partnership in April 2009. It was completed by Beth Cooper, who now works for Masstock Arable (UK) Ltd, as part of a Masters degree at Harper Adams University College in Shropshire.

One of the main findings from the study, was the where the main source of metaldehyde in watercourses on the farm was comes from. This study highlighted the importance of where metaldehyde is handled, filled and stored and also how and where spreading equipment is cleaned and stored. The study found that **higher levels of metaldehyde were found in the catchment even when land drains were not running**. This meant the pesticide was coming from somewhere other than the field and therefore suggesting **farmyard activities are of significant importance** as a source of metaldehyde. This finding was also true for the farm scale investigation where the farmyard gave consistently higher metaldehyde levels than anywhere else on the farm.



This study shows that by ensuring operators using metaldehyde slug pellets are keeping to best practice in the farmyard and whilst spreading, a big difference can be made to water quality in the catchment and therefore the treatment process at the water treatment works.

If you'd like ideas on ways of improving your farmyard best practice, ring Teresa for more information or a visit.

**The Capital Grant Scheme application window is nearly here!**

**The final target areas and details for our Capital Grant Scheme are currently being finalised and those who farm within the target catchments will shortly be notified and sent through the details.**

**Two information events have been arranged for February (more information in the letters)...come along and find out how to apply for a 50% grant up to £10,000 for items such as biobeds, biofilters, pesticide handling areas, watercourse fencing and roofing.**

Look out for the next catchment newsletter: Spring 2012

The Chelmer and Blackwater Catchment Partnership is supported by:

