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The Sustainable Use Directive and Grandfather Rights – by Steve Warr, Independent Training Provider

Implementing the Sustainable Use Directive in the UK will necessitate us losing Grandfather Rights for sprayer operators. The Europe-wide directive which seeks to try and “level the playing field” between ourselves and

Europe requires mandatory certification of all sprayer operators from 26th November 2015. This means that if you currently spray professional plant protection products without a Certificate of Competence because you were born before 31st December 1964, you will need to become certificated by 26th November 2015. In order to become certificated you may need to complete training courses and subsequent assessments for, The Safe Use of Pesticides (PA1) and any other application modules appropriate to the type of application equipment you use. This is most commonly boom sprayers (PA2), granular applicators (PA4G), slug pelleters (PA4S) and knapsack sprayers (PA6).



At present, City & Guilds Land Based Services (formerly NPTC) are investigating whether it might be possible to certificate existing Grandfather Rights users, on the basis of previously gained skill and experience with

possible use of the evidence from NRoSO. We will find out if this is likely to be an option in due course. Whatever the options might be in the future, they will all cost money, so making use of the Catchment Partnership’s offer must be worth considering.

Do you or one of your farm workers need your PA training?

We are running **FREE** training sessions and continuing the **£25 subsidy** towards the cost of your assessment...now is the time to do it!

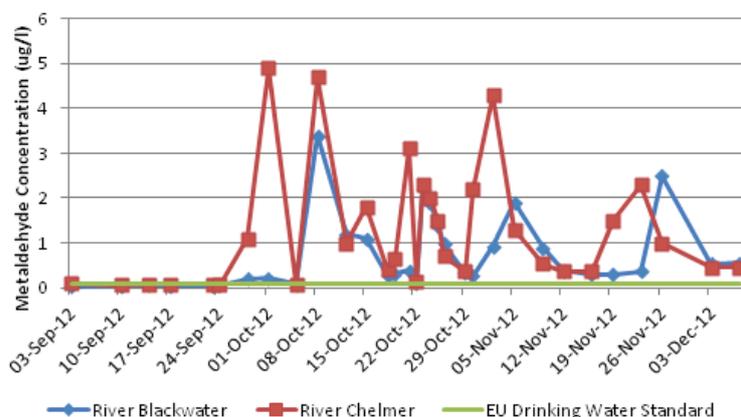
Tuesday 22nd January – Pesticide Foundation Module (PA1) – 9am-3pm; Young Farmers Barn, Chatham Green, CM3 3LQ

Thursday 24th January – Slug Pellet Applicator (PA4s) – 9am – 1pm; Kind permission of Fingrith Hall, Blackmore, CM4 0JN

Wednesday 13th March – Ground Crop Sprayer (PA2) –9am – 12pm; Venue TBC

What has been found in the rivers of the catchment since October?

Metaldehyde has been the headline over the last few months, given the very high slug pressure, saturated land and heavy rainfall. This has resulted in the highest recorded levels of metaldehyde in the river water (see below – River Blackwater and River Chelmer at Langford). These elevated levels have resulted in failures above the EU Drinking Water Standard. While there is no risk to health from the levels of metaldehyde being detected, current drinking water treatment methods are not effective at removing metaldehyde. We are continuing to monitor the situation and will keep you updated.



Other pesticide levels have remained low, with the exceptions being **carbetamide (Crawler)** in the River Chelmer and **propryzamide (Kerb)** across the catchment with over 0.4µg/l in December in the River Ter, Pant and Sandon Brook.





How many of your fields look like the one below?

The conditions of the last few months have taken their toll on our fields – would you be interested in finding out how much? We have a Dickey-John Soil Compaction Tester (pictured) for you to borrow. It is quick and easy to use and will show how deep your compaction goes and the differences between your tramlines, headlands and across the field.

Remedial action will need to be taken this year and we will be running an event before harvest in June to give you practical solutions for your farm.

Please call Teresa on 07792 169545 to arrange delivery of the Tester.



Have you benefited from the Partnership yet?

Farmers covering nearly **50%** and **40 000 ha** of the land area in our catchment have now been involved with the partnership –through our farming events, technical training courses and individual farm visits. Many have benefited from our advice, grants as well as free maps and free services ...have you? If not, you could well be missing out!

What are the benefits to you and your farm business?

Here are two for starters:

- The next round (and potentially the last round!) of Capital Grant Scheme applications is going to run from 1st March – 30th April 2013....if you have been to one of our events or had a visit, not only will you have your designs ready for the application, but you will also have a much higher chance of success.
- The Rural Payments Agency has now taken over from the Environment Agency as the inspectors of the NVZ regulations....to date these inspections have revealed multiple failures across the board. Would you like to have your records checked independently, professionally and confidentially? We can do this for free and it could save you money in deductions!

And if we still haven't convinced you, talk to your neighbour as they have probably been involved or ring your Catchment Advisor for an informal chat on 07792 169545.

And finally....

A man is driving down a country road, when he spots a farmer standing in the middle of a huge field of wheat. He pulls the car over to the side of the road and notices that the farmer is just standing there, doing nothing, looking at nothing.

The man gets out of the car, walks all the way out to the farmer and asks him; "Ah excuse me mister, but what are you doing?"

The farmer replies, "I'm trying to win a Nobel Prize."

"How?" asks the man, puzzled.

"Well, I heard they give the Nobel Prize . . . to people who are out standing in their field."

Essex Farming and Rivers Event – Your river needs you!

Wednesday 30th January at Writtle College

Soil, nutrients, grants, lunch, BASIS and NRoSO points

Keep your eye out for your invite in the post!



Look out for the next catchment newsletter: Spring 2013

The Chelmer and Blackwater Catchment Partnership is supported by: