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Emergency Action Planning

With the Christmas period now behind us, our thoughts turn to the months of January and February and what they might bring with them this year. Being prepared for an emergency is crucial at any time of year, but the natural elements can make this even more important during these months.

The Environment Agency is asking us to be Flood Aware this year and to prepare for flooding, especially pertinent given the devastation we have seen in other parts of the country over the last couple of years. The EA have three simple steps you can take to help protect your farm business from flooding:

- Use the Environment Agency's maps to find out if you're at risk from flooding. Go to www.wiyby.co.uk and choose the "Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea" option.
- Sign-up for free flood warnings for your area by phoning the Floodline on 0345 988 1188.
- Create a flood plan to keep with your Emergency Action Plan.



Emergency action planning is an important part of any farm business and some farm assurance schemes, such as Red Tractor, require their members to complete a plan and have it available at all times. These should be kept relevant and updated if any changes are made to personnel or the yard infrastructure. If you need to do one or update yours, then do request a free template from Teresa on: teresa.meadows@nwl.co.uk.

Chelmer & Blackwater Catchment Partnership																	
Emergency Action Plan																	
<p>DO NOT PUT YOURSELF AT RISK!</p> <p>1. RAISE THE ALARM</p> <p>2. INFORM OTHERS OF THE INCIDENT</p> <p>3. SUMMON IMMEDIATE AND APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE</p>																	
FIRE OR EMERGENCY																	
DIAL 999 and give the following information:																	
<table border="1"> <tr><td>Farm Address</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Farm Contact</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Farm Telephone</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Farm Map Reference</td><td>Sheet No: East: North:</td></tr> </table>	Farm Address		Farm Contact		Farm Telephone		Farm Map Reference	Sheet No: East: North:									
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the nature of the incident (including remaining hazards) Agree a meeting point Move any staff, livestock or machinery away from the danger area without endangering anyone. Inform the brigade of the location of any gas cylinders and chemicals/substances that may be highly flammable, explosive, corrosive, poisonous, oxidising agents, or give off noxious fumes. 																	
POLLUTION RISKS AND SPILLAGES																	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether water (surface or ground), soil, or air are at risk. Contain spillages whenever possible but without compromising safety. Call the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60 and pass on information as above. If severe also dial 999. 																	
OTHER IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS																	
<table border="1"> <tr><td>Doctor</td><td></td><td>Local Police</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>HSE</td><td>0845 300 9923</td><td>Electricity Company</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Gas Company</td><td></td><td>Water Company</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Fire Farm Watch</td><td>0900 333 6444</td><td>Emergency Waste Disposal Company</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Doctor		Local Police		HSE	0845 300 9923	Electricity Company		Gas Company		Water Company		Fire Farm Watch	0900 333 6444	Emergency Waste Disposal Company		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the emergency services by clearly signposting your premises from the road. Ensure staff are trained in the safe operation of all tanks on the farm including the emergency procedures identified. Ensure machinery and equipment is regularly maintained and safeguarded. Ensure that all emergency standby equipment and controlled environmental systems are properly maintained and keep important spares available. Regularly service and test alarms. 																	

Top things to check you have included:

- ✓ **Emergency numbers** including EA Incident Hotline (0800 807060), hospitals, gas, electricity, water company
- ✓ **Directions** to farm, grid reference and postcode
- ✓ **Map** showing the location of pesticide stores, fire extinguishers, gas cylinders, fuel tanks and any highly flammable substances (for example fertilisers)
- ✓ **A contingency plan** of what you would do in the case of a fire, flood, extreme weather, failure of a water/electricity/gas supply, equipment failure.

CASE STUDY – Pesticide Store Farm Fire

The importance of emergency planning is brought home when an emergency happens, for example a fire near Ormesby St. Margaret, Norfolk, which resulted in a major pesticide pollution incident and threatened the water supply from Ormesby Water Treatment Works.

The intense fire, caused by arson to a potato store, also engulfed the farm's pesticide store containing about 400 litres of chemicals, including 120 litres of Roundup. Although the store was adequately bunded, the volume of fire fighting water used meant that the chemicals entered into a drainage ditch and a watercourse leading to the nearby Ormesby Broad. In order to

prevent contamination to the Broad and drinking water supply, the ditch was bunded and abstraction from the Broad was stopped on the first day of the incident. The contaminated water was removed by tankers and mobile carbon filters were installed to remove the last of the chemical from the watercourse. This quick action meant that it was effective at preventing pollution to the Broad and the potential impact on drinking water quality. However, this farm fire did result in 3 months of water control measures at the treatment works and an estimated incident cost of £1.5million.



Mill Farm's damaged chemical store with absorbent matting surrounding it.

There were many lessons learnt from this fire, including the location of pesticide stores on-farm. This store was in the corner of one building, which was adjacent to another containing the farm's waste oil, other flammable liquids and a gas cylinder store. This caused a delay in fire fighting as fire crews assessed the risk posed by the gas cylinders. This location could possibly be re-considered for the future and the knowledge of the farm yard drain network would also have helped in this situation, particularly as a portable drain cover could have been placed over the main surface yard drain or a bund put into the ditch to stop the fire water from going any further. If you have one New Years Resolution this year, make it completing your Emergency Action Plan!

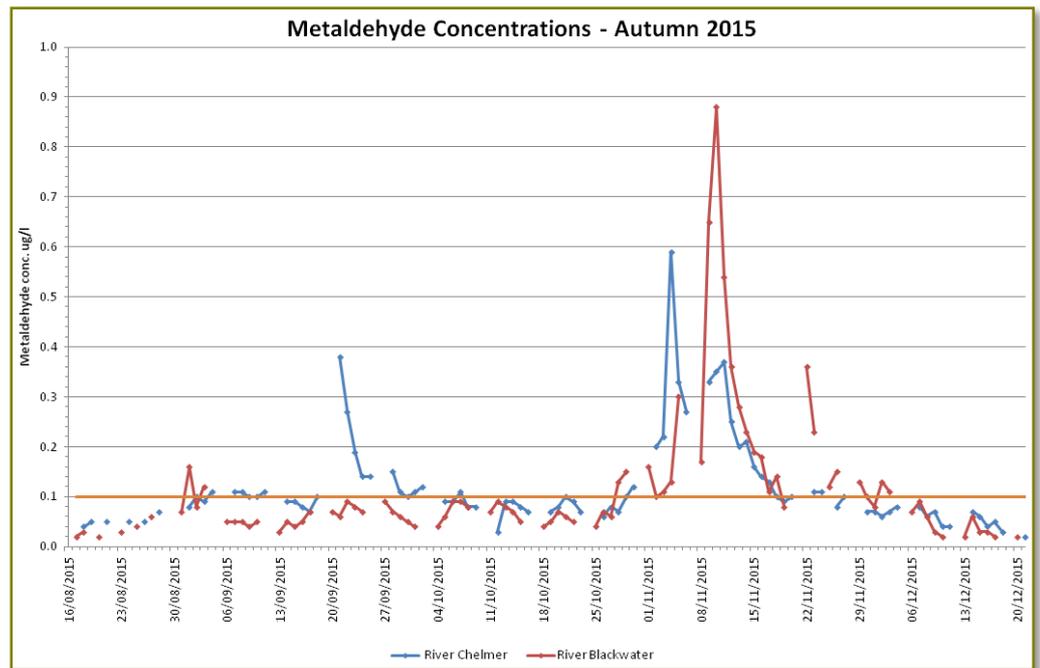
Catchment Water Quality

Catchment water quality over the autumn has mainly focused around metaldehyde and propyzamide, with other pesticides remaining below the 0.1µg/l limit with the exception of a couple of incidences of bentazone and carbetamide in the Pant at the end of October. Propyzamide levels started to increase across the catchment at the end of November in line with applications.

Metaldehyde levels have remained lower this autumn than in previous years, with a peak of 0.88µg/l on the River Blackwater and 0.59µg/l on the River Chelmer. The graph to the right shows the sample results for metaldehyde concentrations.

Levels were sufficiently elevated to require Essex & Suffolk Water to temporarily cease abstraction from the Rivers Chelmer and Blackwater into Langford Water Treatment Works (WTW) and Hanningfield Reservoir.

This meant that in order to preserve high water quality, the abstraction management decision was taken to stop pumping from the Rivers Chelmer and Blackwater into Langford WTW on 14 days and to Hanningfield Reservoir on 7 days. This management and your on-farm changes with regard to slug pelleting practice have resulted in no compliance failures for metaldehyde so far this autumn/winter – thank you. Please continue to think about pesticides and watercourses for spring applications, particularly the products containing the active ingredients of bentazone (Basagran), clopyralid (Shield) and MCPA.



FREE ON-FARM ADVISORY VISITS AVAILABLE

A reminder....if you are farming in the Chelmer and Blackwater catchment, you are eligible for a free farm visit of your choice from the Chelmer and Blackwater Catchment Partnership. Choose from: Confidential and Independent Farm Compliance Check (including records and soil GAEC compliance), Nutrient Management Planning help (great for NVZ records) or Sprayer Filling Area Design Visit...phone Teresa Meadows on 07792 169545 to make the most of this offer now.

Look out for the next catchment newsletter: Spring 2016

The Chelmer and Blackwater Catchment Partnership is supported by:

