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*Chelmer and Blackwater Partnership– the first fertiliser spreader calibration at Spains Hall Farm, Willingale*

## Good response to free equipment calibration in the catchment

Since the last newsletter in November 2009 a number of you have got in contact and successfully had equipment calibrated by Chris Thomas on behalf of the catchment partnership project.

It is not too late to get in touch with Beth to arrange your free farm visit; these include topic choices such as sprayer/spreader calibration, help with the soil protection review, nitrate vulnerable zone advice and many more.



*Fertiliser spreader calibration*



*Slug pellet applicator calibration*



## Words of Wisdom for the Chelmer and Blackwater Catchment

By Graham Brooks of Prime Agriculture LLP

Although early autumn applications of residual herbicides were applied on time and in good conditions, subsequent post emergence sprays to cereals and oilseed rape have proved more difficult.

Either wet soils or strong winds mean there are still some autumn recommendations of Kerb and Carbetamex in oilseed rape and Dicurane in wheat to be completed. Writing this looking through the window at a covering of snow which we have had for three weeks does not give much confidence that these are likely to be ticked off the list quickly.

Indeed some recommendations may have to be changed, with the label cut-off for propyzamide (Kerb) on the 31<sup>st</sup> January and carbetamex (Crawler) the end of February, time is against us.

When applying these chemicals and others, such as clopyralid (Dow Shield/Galera), used on rape when the weather warms up in spring, there are some best practices to remember.

These practices will keep them on the field where they can do their job and out of watercourses.

Spraying on a frost keeps you on top, but if the ground stays frozen to depth after application the chemical can get washed off the surface by rain, so only use on a shallow frost that will come out during the day. When the frost and snow has gone, wait until the drains have stopped running before using chemicals on the land. Don't apply if rain is forecast in the next 48 hours.

Remember to spray headlands last so you are not driving through the chemical and taking it out onto roads and hard surfaces, and clean wheels and booms in field where appropriate. See this link for more helpful tips

[www.hgca.com/publications/documents/IS09.pdf](http://www.hgca.com/publications/documents/IS09.pdf)



### 2010 Soil Protection Review Workshop

Monday 22 February

9am–12.15pm or 1pm–4.15pm

at the Essex Young Farmers Centre,  
Chatham Green

### Catchment Events



\*BOOK NOW\*

Stop Losing Nutrients from Soil!  
with Selwyn Richardson  
Wednesday 10 March

9am – 12pm or 1pm – 4pm

at the Essex Young Farmers Centre,  
Chatham Green

By calling Beth Cooper on 07792169545

## Soil and Water – Protect your resources



by Alex Dinsdale from the NFU

The Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE) is a voluntary, industry response to Defra proposals to introduce compulsory set aside in England.

The campaign's aims include encouraging farmers to:

- join Environmental Stewardship schemes
- renew expiring Entry Level Scheme (ELS)
- or adopt voluntary conservation measures where it makes sense to do so

More information on the 15 CFE measures can be found in the *Farmer's Guide to Voluntary Measures* which you should be receiving through the post any day now.

A number of CFE measures have been designed to improve resource – soil and water – protection, whether such options are voluntary or a part of an ELS scheme.

These include buffer strips alongside watercourses and management of field corners, both of which may also make sense for other reasons, such as LERAPs, or making better use of damp, shady or awkward land. The focus is on looking at the best options in the right locations that make the most sense for the environment and for your existing farm business.

Look out for CFE events in and around your catchment from this spring onwards. For more information, please visit [www.cfeonline.org.uk](http://www.cfeonline.org.uk).

## Lessons Learnt from Catchment Farm Visits

From farm visits undertaken in the last few months a lesson to be learnt is brushing down slug pellet applicators before leaving the field, away from field gateways and away from adjacent watercourses.

It takes as little as one 5% metaldehyde pellet in 10,000 litres of water to exceed water quality limits – this is a very small amount and dust on machinery does contribute.

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

- Isoproturon (IPU) has been found at high levels along the River Can at Writtle in mid November – this pesticide is banned.
- Propyzamide, the active ingredient in the product kerb, has been found above the pesticide limit along the Rivers Wid, Can, Pant, Blackwater and Sandon Brook.
- Chloroturon, an IPU replacement, has been found at the River Wid at Writtle and the River Pant at Bocking.
- Nitrate levels are in high amounts at the Rivers Ter, Brain and Pant.
- Phosphorus is high at all our sample points.

Look out for the next catchment newsletter: April 2010