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## Three Top Tips

### Keep to Best Practice whilst dealing with Pesticides

1. Take great care when filling and handling pesticides in the farmyard, small spillages can have large impacts downstream of the farmyard drain.
2. Wash/brush off pesticide residues from farm machinery in the field before returning to the farmyard.
3. Keep at least 12 metres away from a watercourse when spraying or spreading pesticides, this includes ditches. This is a paid option in the Entry Level Scheme and a preferred option by the Campaign for the Farmed Environment.

## Get Help to avoid Cross Compliance Failures

The **Soil Protection Review (SPR)** has been reported as a risk for up to ten per cent of farmers losing up to five per cent of their Single Farm Payment (Farmers Weekly).

This is largely because of the 2009 continuation sheet which many people have misplaced due to it being a single sheet of paper sent in December last year. This is however available to download so if you are one of the ten per cent please download it at:

[www.crosscompliance.org.uk/cms/assets/SPR2009\\_continuationsheet.pdf](http://www.crosscompliance.org.uk/cms/assets/SPR2009_continuationsheet.pdf) and then ensure you fill it in retrospectively.

The Chelmer and Blackwater Catchment Partnership has already provided advice and guidance to farmers and contractors who farm almost **twenty per cent** of the catchment hectareage.

Help given to these farmers has varied from the topical **SPR, farmyard infrastructure and Nitrate Vulnerable Zone record keeping**.

If you have not yet got in touch and benefitted from a free farm visit, please do so, there is a limit of one free visit per holding.

To be compliant with your SPR in case of an inspection:

- Keep the old soil protection review (2006–2008). This includes the original review plus the 2009 continuation sheet, these are all still being inspected this year if you claimed in 2009 or earlier
- Keep the completed and signed 2009 continuation sheet (downloadable if you have lost this)
- Fill in the SPR 2010 remembering to note down if you had to access waterlogged soil and the remedial action taken

To get help with your Soil Protection Review as well as other cross compliance elements you may have concerns about, get in touch with Beth to get a free farm advisory visit. The partnership has guaranteed funding up to March 2011, don't miss your chance to get some free help.

## Dates for the Diary

- **24 November, 10am – 2pm** – Controlling flows to land drains: An event on cracking clays and the Soil Protection Review – Essex YFC Centre, Chatham Green, Chelmsford (NRoSO/BASIS points available)
- **2 December, 10am – 2pm** – Voluntary Initiative Pesticide Update at Langford Water Treatment Works, Maldon (NRoSO/BASIS points available)

\*BOOK NOW\* by calling Beth Cooper on 07792169545

## Catchment Poll

Slug pellet applicators – inaccurate spread pattern and hard to calibrate.

**We would like to know your thoughts on whether using a fertiliser spreader to apply slug pellets would give a more accurate spread pattern?**

Email your experiences or comments to [beth.cooper@nwl.co.uk](mailto:beth.cooper@nwl.co.uk) or call on 07792169545

### Survey carried out on Pesticide Handling and Filling Areas

A survey has been carried out by the AIC (Agricultural Industries Confederation) for the VI (Voluntary Initiative) on pesticide handling and filling areas.

The survey was carried out last autumn/winter revealing that 78 percent of farmers did not rate pesticides in water as a problem in their region. Yet 90% identified improvements to their sprayer filling and handling practice, mainly around farm yards.

The good news:

- Spills and poor handling whilst filling were recognised as major sources of pesticide losses.
- Almost all of the farmers disposed of interior tank washings to crops or in a few instances a designated area approved by the environment agency.

The room for improvement:

- Almost half of the farmers still fill on compacted hardcore and a further 39 percent fill on unmanaged concrete both circumstances pose a great threat to watercourses.
- 59 percent of farmers did not use a portable bund or drip tray under induction bowls to catch drips and spills.

So although there is some awareness of the issue around the sources of pesticides in watercourses there is plenty of scope to make improvements in farmyard activities. Do you want any help with this? If so, please contact Beth Cooper.

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

- **Metaldehyde** has been found to be particularly high (peak of 0.43ug/l on 5/8/10) at **River Can at Chignal St James** from June to present, there has also been levels above 0.1 ug/l at **River Can at Writtle** since July.
- **Propyzamide**, the active ingredient in Kerb, has seen a marked improvement in the levels found in surface water.
- **Mecoprop-P** has been found at many sample points, the worst points are along the **River Can at Chignal St James and Writtle** which have shown high concentrations (0.5ug/l on 7/9/10 and 0.31 ug/l on 30/6/10 respectively) since April to now and **Roxwell Brook** since March.
- **Bentazone** has shown to be consistently above 0.1ug/l at the **River Can at Chignal St James** (0.55 ug/l on 1/9/10) and the **Pant at Bocking**.

**To receive the data update email please send Beth your contact details.**

When filling in the yard, use drip trays to catch accidental spills to prevent pollution of farm drains which ultimately drain to the Chelmer and Blackwater.

If you, like most of the farmers in this survey, are filling sprayers on unmanaged concrete or compacted hardcore, a rethink is needed. Best practice is to fill up in the field only or on managed concrete which drains to a sump or biobed. This clearly requires a capital investment and some planning. While this catchment is not eligible for capital grants, we can offer advice and guidance to help you make the right decisions for your situation, so please do get in contact.