A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Priority Catchment Targeting Summary
March 2011 – March 2014

River Basin District: North West
Catchment: River Ellen, West Cumbrian Catchments Total Area: 193 km^2

Reasons for designation

The West Cumbrian Catchments include the Rivers Ellen, Ehen and Keekle. They were introduced to the Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) project in phase 3 (2011). The River Ellen Catchment is a distinct area and detached from the other rivers and therefore managed separately.

The River Ellen Catchment has been targeted in order to reduce the loading of faecal indicator organisms (FIOs) impacting on the local bathing waters of Allonby and Allonby South. The catchment includes Brunsow Beck, Allonby Beck and a Hazel Mount tributary which enter the Solway close to the designated bathing waters at Allonby and Allonby South. Without intervention the bathing waters are at risk of failing European standards.

Priorities

Bathing waters – Under the revised Bathing Water Directive of 2015 a large proportion of bathing waters in the North West are projected to be poor, including Allonby. Allonby South is projected to achieve sufficient status. Evidence gathered by the Environment Agency has identified the Ellen Catchment as contributing to elevated bacteria counts on the Solway.

Shellfish Waters – Silloth Shellfish Water meets mandatory standards, but not the guideline standard for faecal coliforms in shellfish flesh.

Where there is overlap with the above priorities, CSF will also address:

Waterbodies failing to achieve Good Ecological Status
Under the Water Framework Directive, the majority of the catchment is classified as moderate status. A small number of stretches are classed as poor or bad.

Objectives

- Work with farmers and Environment Agency officers to identify sources of pollution.
- Endeavour to produce workable solutions to mitigate sources of pollution, utilising the Capital Grant Scheme where applicable.
- Reduce the transmission of FIOs through encouraging appropriate changes to slurry and manure management
- Reduce the transmission of FIOs through encouraging fencing of watercourses on farms identified by the CSF and West Cumbria Rivers Trust collaborative fencing project.
- Increase the capacity for storage of slurry through the redirection of clean water.
- Continue to train farmers within the catchment to appreciate the benefits of nutrient management planning.
- Highlight the importance of working together to achieve the Water Framework Directive Standards by 2015.

Delivery

The aim is to improve the quality of the Allonby and Allonby South bathing waters to meet the European standards, and improve the quality of the Silloth Shellfish Water. Therefore intervention in the form of training and capital grants will initially be targeted in sub-catchments and on watercourses adjacent to the Coast.

The Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer will visit farmers in the target area to discuss the bathing water problems. The Catchment Officer will work with farmers to ameliorate any potential pollution issues, through encouraging good management of stock, slurry, manure, soils and nutrients. They may be able to suggest improvements to the infrastructure and will promote capital works grants where appropriate.

Whole Farm Appraisals may be carried out to provide an overview of the key issues around the farm. More detailed follow-up training will be offered as required including infrastructure, slurry/manure handling & storage, and manure and nutrient management.

Local events will raise awareness of local issues. The events aim to inform farmers of measures that they may be able to implement on their farms to reduce diffuse water pollution from agriculture. Events will be in the form of farm walks, presentations and workshops. The intention is to run CSF events and also to join other organisations hosting appropriate topics to get the message across to a wide audience within the catchment i.e. The Farmer Network, Dairy Co, West Cumbria Rivers Trust and the National Farmers Union.

Targeting Map