



A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Priority Catchment Targeting Summary March 2011 – March 2014

River Basin District: North West Catchment: River Keer Total Area: 67 km²

Reasons for designation:

The River Keer was designated as a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) priority catchment in 2012 in order to address actual and projected non-compliance of bathing waters at Morecambe Bay and Heysham under the EU's new revised Bathing Water Directive (rBWD) and reduce bacterial loading to the Morecambe Bay East Shellfish Water. The River Keer is a predominantly rural catchment and contributes to the loading of faecal indicator organisms (FIOs) to local bathing waters impacting on their quality and also the quality of Morecambe Bay East Shellfish Waters. Voluntary uptake of advice could make a significant difference to the improvement of the water quality.

Priorities:

- **Bathing waters:** Morecambe North – current and projected status is poor. The River Keer catchment (together with the nearby lower Lune catchment) has been identified as contributing elevated bacteria counts to the local bathing water areas
- **Shellfish waters:** Coastal modeling shows that loads from local rivers to Morecambe Bay East Shellfish Water are significant sources of bacteriological pollution, primarily the Rivers Kent, Keer, Winster and Bela. In the offshore area to the north east of Morecambe, modelling shows that the River Keer is the dominant source (almost 70% of the bacteriological load to the Shellfish Water).

Objectives:

The primary objective will be to reduce the amount of fresh slurry & manure run-off from farm yards and fields into the River Keer and its tributaries through increasing awareness of diffuse water pollution from agriculture, encouraging and promoting:

- Improvement of farm yard infrastructure to improve clean and dirty water separation and risk of run-off to clean water drains and streams
- Exclusion of livestock from watercourses
- focusing on better manure/slurry management by:
 - Encouraging installation of adequate manure and slurry storage to prevent manure applications to fields during unsuitable times.
 - Promoting more efficient ways of applying manures to maximise nutrient uptake and reduce run-off.
 - Promoting better understanding of nutrient management planning to reduce manure run-off and improve the use of fertiliser and manure for increased nutrient use efficiency
- Increased understanding of soil issues and management techniques to improve soil structure and reduce surface run-off.

Delivery:

- This is a new catchment for 2012 and the Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer (CSFO) will promote the Capital Grants Scheme by contacting farmers early for the March 2013 application start date to encourage quality applications.
- Whole farm appraisals and specialist advice will also be targeted as a tool to improve the farm infrastructure to reduce slurry / manure runoff and rain water contamination of dirty water areas.
- The CSFO will give sound advice to farmers in helping them to reduce the amount of fertiliser used by means of soil sampling and nutrient management plans - making best use of organic manures and improvement of application methods/timings.
- The CSFO will work with Environment Agency (EA) officers to have an agreed approach, signposting farmers as appropriate.

Targeting Map

The entirety of the River Keer catchment is targeted for advice

