A clear solution for farmers
CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Partnership Catchment Targeting Summary
March 2011 – March 2014

River Basin District: Anglian
Catchment: Upper River Great Ouse Total Area: km² 61,000Ha

Reasons for designation

The Upper Great Ouse Catchment area extends from Roxton lock on the River.Gt.Ouse in Bedfordshire upstream through Milton Keynes to the headwaters around Brackley.
Sediment, nitrate and phosphate risk maps of the whole River Great Ouse catchment show that the headwater sub-catchments of the River Great Ouse, the Claydon and Padbury Brooks; and the River Tove flow are most susceptible from sediment ingress and associated high phosphate levels.
The soil type across most of these sub-catchments is a very low permeability clay soil type and therefore suffers from surface run off. Routine chemical sampling has shown elevated concentrations of Phosphate and sediment in the water bodies.
Phosphate affects water quality and biodiversity in the watercourses and the high levels have resulted in them failing to meet the EU's Water Framework Directives 'Good' ecological status.
Diffuse water pollution from agriculture (DWPA) is a contributor to these high phosphate levels and the Upper Gt.Ouse CSF partnership is focusing its work on farmers and landowners within the target area in an effort to reduce nutrient and sediment levels.

Priorities

In the river Great Ouse catchment there are three Drinking water protected areas (DrWPAs):

- Offord intake (to Grafham reservoir)
- Clapham (Bedford) intake
- Foxcote (Buckingham) intake (to Foxcote Reservoir)

Foxcote DrWPA is the only area within the Upper Ouse CSF project area. The Reservoir was removed from public water supply in the 1990s due to high nutrients and algal blooms while the other two areas suffer from high levels of nitrates and pesticides - especially metaldehyde and clopyralid.

Anglian Water is to investigate bringing the reservoir back into commission for water supply in the future.

There are 11 SSSI's in the catchment which are designated due to their land type and bio-diversity but only one has direct connections to the Upper Great Ouse river.
Syresham Marshy Meadows SSSI consists of two wetlands of contrasting character situated in narrow valleys drained by the upper headwaters of the river Great Ouse.
Improvements in water quality in the catchment will contribute to improvements in quality of the SSSIs.

Objectives
Reduce the loss of sediment and associated soil-bound phosphate particles, through appropriate changes in land management following provision of advice or use of ELS/HLS options.
Reduce sources of nitrate and pesticide leaching to groundwater and run-off to surface waters by promoting adoption of best practice measures.
Raise awareness of the Catchment Sensitive Farming project and it's principles to all farmers and landowners in the Upper Gt Ouse Catchment

Delivery
Initially advice on nutrients will be targeted at holdings which lie upstream of Milton Keynes, however, should the need arise then the whole of the Upper Gt. Ouse catchment can be targeted
Workshops and one-to-one farm visits will focus on the prevention of phosphates and sediments polluting the watercourses from diffuse agricultural sources with emphasis on good soil management practices and livestock handling schemes etc.
Nutrient Management Planning to reduce excess nitrate available for leaching, and best practice pesticides advice, will be available to the whole catchment, particularly with regard to installing biobeds and slug pellet applicator accuracy.
CSF Capital Grant and advice on Environmental Stewardship options, including Entry Level Stewardship resource protection options and Higher Level Stewardship where appropriate, will be available to holdings throughout the target areas along with other workshop topics.

Targeting Map