



April 2022

Downs & Harbours update

Working with farmers to improve water & air quality

Local Catchment Sensitive Farming update

Output values and input costs have seen a dramatic change in recent weeks. The rise in fertiliser and fuel costs will no doubt result in difficult decisions for next year's cropping calendar. In an effort to help support farmers through this growing season and beyond, Defra have announced a series of updates within the Agricultural Transition Plan including the latest information on guidance for autumn muck spreading. Links to these updates are included in this newsletter.

This issue will also cover Portsmouth Water's incentives, schemes and offers, notably their Capital Grant Scheme which opened for applications on 1 April. These schemes can help get the most from your inputs and improve efficiency by, for instance, knowing how much N is already in your soil through SMN testing, or increasing N availability by using cover crops.

As always, do get in touch to discuss more.

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Your local CSF Officer



Jade Hemsley
07554 111182

jade.hemsley@naturalengland.org.uk

Portsmouth Water Catchment & Environment Team



Beth Fairley & Simon Deacon
02392 249248

catchment.managment@portsmouthwater.co.uk

Portsmouth Water's Incentives, Schemes & Offers

Portsmouth Water has several grant schemes available to farmers and land managers in the groundwater catchments across the East Hampshire and Arun & Western Streams area.

Portsmouth Water has funding for the schemes until 2025. Grants of up to £10k per financial year per holding are available.



Nitrate Intervention Scheme

This scheme provides grants for land use and/or land management measures that reduce the risk of nitrate leaching into groundwaters. The scheme aims to directly assist farmers (and other land managers) in high sensitive catchment areas to deliver measures that aim to reduce nitrate leaching and improve farming efficiency. The following measures are supported under this scheme:

- Cover cropping
- Low input grassland
- Arable Reversion
- Undersowing crops
- Grass after maize
- Soil Mineral Nitrogen Testing (SMN) & NMP Support
- Variable Nitrogen Mapping

For further information please refer to the Scheme Handbook at <https://www.cleanwaterpartnership.co.uk/r>

The Scheme is available to holdings within Portsmouth Water's Safeguard Zone groundwater catchments, to check your eligibility please contact Beth Fairley (Portsmouth Water Catchment Management Officer), contact details below.

For further information...

Please contact Beth Fairley:
Phone: 07872 108992
Email: bethany.fairley@portsmouthwater.co.uk

Capital Grant Scheme

The Capital Grant Scheme will directly assist farmers (and other land managers) in sensitive areas, namely Source Protection Zones (SPZ), by part-funding capital items to reduce the risk of nitrate (and other) losses to groundwater.

Funding is available to support a range of capital items, up to 50% of the costs as agreed for (capped at £10K per holding per year), items include but not limited to:

- Precision farming equipment
- Specialist drills
- Precision slurry applicators e.g. dribble Bar
- Pesticide Handling Areas & treatment e.g. biobeds or biofilters

Farmers and land managers can also suggest alternative capital items for reducing nitrate pollution risk. Examples of items which could be eligible for funding include GPS and other equipment to apply nitrogen more accurately.

The Application window is April- June 2022. Applications will be reviewed at the end of the application window and applicants will be informed by no later September 2022 of award of grant.

For further information please refer to the Scheme Handbook at: <https://www.cleanwaterpartnership.co.uk/r>

Please contact Beth Fairley (Portsmouth Water Catchment Management Officer) to check your eligibility and apply.

Catchment Trial Updates

Undersown maize trial workshop

Last month we ran an online workshop which introduced our catchment trial at Whitewool Farm, and highlighted the potential benefits to both water quality and maize growers.



We had guest speakers from South East Water who discussed their experience with undersown trials along with farmer testimonials, and John Morgan from the Maize Growers Association gave an overview of sustainable maize management.

- ❖ If you would like to catch up on the recording, please visit our Downs & Harbours Clean Water Partnership website – link [here](#).
- ❖ For an overview of the workshop, including key take home messages, click [here](#).
- ❖ To read the Whitewool Farm Undersown Maize Trial Report 2021, click [here](#).

Soil Carbon trial – second year data collection underway

CSF and Portsmouth Water have been working with 8 farmers that represent a diverse range of different farm management from conventional to regenerative across the East Hampshire and Western Streams catchments.

The trial has assessed a number of parameters to determine the relationship between soil carbon and nutrient retention and availability which is critical to understanding how farmers can improve soil health whilst also planning efficient nutrient applications. The ultimate aim of the trial is to determine if there is a significant link between high organic matter soils and associated regenerative practices and nutrient retention and availability. This provides a greater case for increasing regenerative practices with the potential to deliver not just carbon sequestration benefits but also water quality benefits to meet Water Framework Directives objectives, maximising the ecosystem services from these practices.

To read the first year case study click [here](#).

A second year of data collection is well underway, with Stephen Woodley (Stephen Woodley Crop Services Ltd) carrying out the soil samples and discussing results with the participating farmers last month. Becky Willson from the Farm Carbon Toolkit has been visiting the farmers to discuss results from last year's carbon foot printing as well as the soil carbon results.



South Downs Farmers Group- Meet the Farmer YouTube videos

Portsmouth Water, in conjunction with South Downs National Park and South Downs Farmers Group, have produced a series of videos from different farms in our catchment.



The short videos tell a story of each farm showing the rich farming history, biodiversity importance and some innovative schemes that Portsmouth Water have funded to reduce their impacts on the environment.

To view the videos, click [here](#).

Upcoming catchment trials

CSF and Portsmouth Water are always keen to set-up and work with partners on catchment trials to deliver both economic and environmental benefits.

We have several upcoming trials that we hope to deliver this year including:

- The benefits of Additional Available Nitrogen (AAN) testing
- ADAS cover crop destruction
- Living mulch and the associated benefits

If you have a trial idea that has potential to be beneficial to both the farming business and wider environment, then please do get in touch to discuss ideas.

Recent Defra updates (from their Future Farming Blogs)

Last month Defra released a set of updates including clarity on the Farming Rules for Water which will make it simpler for farmers in England to apply manure and slurry this autumn. The decision to restrict the use of urea fertiliser has also been postponed by at least a year.

Full information can be found in the blue links below.

[Fertiliser: updates and support](#), including:

- Guidance on the revised Farming Rules for Water (FRfW)
- Changes to the use of urea fertiliser
- Establishing a fertiliser working group
- Slurry grants

[Sustainable Farming Incentive \(SFI\): standards, payment rates, and how to prepare](#)

[Farming Innovation Pathway \(Climate Smart Farming and Large Partnership funding pots\)](#)

Subscribe for updates: if you would like to receive updates on when new Defra posts are published, subscribe to their mailing list using the link [here](#).

When was your fertiliser or manure spreader last calibrated?

If your holding sits within a high or moderate area for water quality, then CSF can commission a FREE "Machinery Testing and Calibration (fertiliser and manure spreaders)" visit. The service covers the testing of one product plus advice.

Get in touch if you'd like to find out more.



CSF works with farmers, organisations and catchment communities across England to improve the quality of air, water, and supports the use of nature-based solutions to improve sustainable water management.

Working together for a healthy environment

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) is led by Natural England, in partnership with Defra and the Environment Agency.



Natural England take looking after your data as seriously as we take looking after the environment. For more information about how we handle your data visit gov.uk/catchment-sensitive-farming.