



Nene and Welland Catchment Sensitive Farming Partnership Spring 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to the spring edition of the Nene and Welland CSF newsletter, the first of 2017. We hope that you will find the content of this newsletter useful and interesting.



Local news and events

Recap: CSF Events through the winter months

2nd December 2016 was the date of our sustainable use of organic materials event at Glooston Village Hall, Leicestershire. This was an event focussed on the use of compost, digestate, manure and other soil additives. Anna Becvar of Earthcare Technical spoke about the pros and cons of each option, and discussed the best recipes for healthy soils. We also heard from Barney Parker of Ashfield Farmed Environment Services around NVZ compliance and manure management. George Stanley from the Anglian Water Biosolids team also gave an update. The event was well received, thank you to our speakers who gave interesting talks. You can read more about compost on page 3 of this newsletter.

On the 21st February we delivered a pesticide handling and LERAPS workshop in Newton near Kettering, discussing best practice advice around pesticide handling and usage, providing new ideas and refreshing memories on best practice. We also looked into the LERAP regulations and advised farmers on how to remain compliant. We received good feedback and will be running similar events in the future. Thank you to our speakers Jo Gass from the Environment Agency, Tom Edmondson from Anglian Water and Chris Tolley, who all gave fantastic presentations. You can view Chris's presentation by visiting www.riverneneregionalpark.org/news/csf/leraps-pesticide-workshop/.

The 22nd February saw a joint event with CSF and the Forestry Commission. The focus of the event was discussing how woodland creation can benefit water

quality. If you are interested in the possibilities of woodland creation, please contact [Richard Pearce](mailto:Richard.Pearce@nrp.org) on 07827 239259

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Your local CSF Team

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Countryside Stewardship (CS) in 2017

The third year of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme has opened for applications. As of Friday 10th March, farmers and land managers can apply for the Mid Tier and Higher Tier of Countryside Stewardship. Catchment Sensitive Farming is focused on providing advice and guidance on Mid Tier, which offers 5-year agreements for environmental improvements on agricultural land, such as reducing water pollution or improving the environment for birds, pollinators and farm wildlife. There are also a number of capital grants available. Mid Tier applications need to be submitted by 30 September 2017, you will need to request a Mid Tier application pack by 31 July. Through engagement with Catchment Sensitive Farming, you may be eligible for a 20% increase in application score, which is beneficial given that Countryside Stewardship is competitive. For more information on Countryside Stewardship in the Nene and Welland catchments please call Georgina Wallis on 07921 941734. You can see more at

www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-get-paid-for-environmental-land-management

About your Catchment

Both the Nene and Welland catchments are wonderful catchments to work and live in. Both rich with SSSI sites, including Pitsford Reservoir and Salcey Forest, whilst Achurch Meadows is one of the most important meadow SSSIs in the Midlands.

The Welland catchment demonstrates a stunning, semi natural remote rural landscape of small villages and scattered farms which has survived with little modern development apart from small-scale village housing. Local SSSI's include Eyebrook Reservoir, Seaton Meadows and Rutland Water which is a major drinking water supply and recreational area; Anglian Water as members of the CSF Partnership have recently had great success with their new Slug-It-Out project working with farmers within the natural catchment of the drinking water source.

Both catchments have a wealth of ancient landscapes. The Rockingham Forest Woodland can be found within the Nene catchment. Likewise, the Welland catchment is abundant ancient woodlands comprising oak and ash trees such as Owston Woods and Laune Big Wood – these woods are of national nature conservation significance and mark the remnants of the medieval royal hunting area of Leighfield Forest (SSSI) and represent one of the highest concentrations of ancient woodlands in the Midlands.

The Nene Valley is one of the most important freshwater wetlands in the Midlands, with internationally significant numbers of overwintering birds (ducks and waders) including Golden plover, Lapwing and Mute swan alongside nationally important breeding bird assemblage

such as Heron, Cuckoo and Great crested grebe, as well as many other birds of lowland waters and their margins. There are also locally important associated wetland habitats, mainly meadows, grazing marsh and reedbed, which are home to rare plants such as tubular water dropwort and insects such as the scarce chaser dragonfly. The river Ise and Meadows SSSI is important for grayling and white clawed crayfish. The Rockingham Forest is important for barbastelle bats, black hairstreak and red kites. (Matt Johnson, Wildlife Trust)

The Welland, in its upper reaches, supports a wild brown trout population. Chub and perch dominate the middle reaches around Stamford, with pike and perch inhabit the lower lengths around Spalding, with many other species seen. Osprey roam the area and it is not uncommon to see water voles and otters in the river. Ground nesting birds including skylark and grey partridge are also present in the area as are brown hares.

The River Nene is a key water resource for the Ruthamford Water Resource Zone, failing drinking water standards due to high levels of pesticides, in particular metaldehyde, has seen the whole of the Nene catchment designated as a Drinking Water Surface Water Safeguard Zone. This is a similar case for the upper Welland Catchment.

If you would like to know more about the priorities in your catchment, please call Georgina Wallis using the contact details at the start of this newsletter.

Forthcoming CSF Events Near you:

CSF will be running a series of FREE events over the coming months. Events will include a Cross Compliance update, ditch management, grassland management and others. Keep an eye out for invites in the post. Booking is essential for all events – please contact Georgina Wallis to book your place.

Woodland Carbon Fund

You could receive up to £6,800 per hectare to create new woodland, or up to £8,500 per hectare if you provide permissive access across the woodland (dependent on its location). The Woodland Carbon Fund is a simple, demand-led grant scheme to boost the rate of woodland creation and to visibly demonstrate how, by taking a natural capital approach, woodland creation can help to meet government's future carbon targets alongside delivering other benefits.

Successful applications will be for large-scale (>30 ha with a minimum block size of 10 ha), predominantly productive woodland and, where possible, have sought opportunities to improve public access and achieve wider environmental outcomes in line with the UK Forestry Standard. Partnership landscape-scale, woodland creation applications where the land may be held by multiple ownerships are welcome. For further information see

www.forestry.gov.uk/england-wcf

Using Compost to Boost Soils

Now more than ever for farming, managing and enhancing soil structure and fertility is critical. Sustainable farming must avoid soil degradation and in doing so will increase productivity levels and yields. A soil productivity action plan might include:

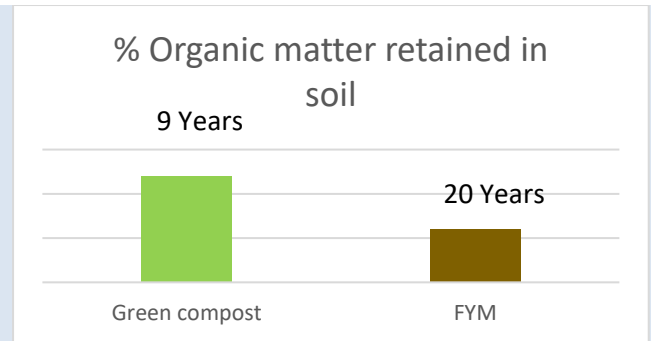
- ✓ Incorporating organic manures
- ✓ Incorporation of straw/crop residues
- ✓ Including Cover crops in the rotation
- ✓ Careful selection of break crops
- ✓ Conservation tillage
- ✓ Protecting soils within the field boundary – headlands
- ✓ Testing and assessing soils
- ✓ Mapping characteristics and reacting to in-field variation

Top of the list is good a good supply of soil organic matter which is critical to achieving productive, well-structured healthy soils. Soil organic matter (SOM) is the organic fraction of soil, consisting of three primary parts: small (fresh) plant residues and small living soil organisms, decomposing (active) organic matter, and stable organic matter (humus). Building and maintaining SOM is vital for sustainable soil management. The amount of inherent organic matter in soils depends on soil texture, climate, the inputs of organic materials and their rate of decomposition, the rate at which existing organic matter is mineralised, and the type of farming system used.

Compost produced locally from recycling green and a small proportion of food waste is an excellent source of organic matter. In the Defra/WRAP funded DC-Agri field experiments although 9 years of green compost applications applied only half the organic matter, supplied by almost 20 years of FYM, it produced a comparable increase in retained soil organic matter levels.



(image taken from FWI).



Source: Digestate & Compost in Agriculture, Bulletin 8

This suggests green compost is more resistant to decomposition, which is further supported by the lignin content analysed within both materials where green compost contained c.70% lignin and FYM c.55%.

The true value of compost comes from increases in microbial biomass, earthworm numbers and nutrient supply (both the overall topsoil nutrient status of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, and sulphur, as well as cation exchange capacity and potentially mineralisable N), and improvements in soil structure, moisture holding capacity and improved workability.

An event was held, this month, at Material Change's Corby PAS100 certified compost site. This green/food compost contains some food waste. It is processed initially within enclosed systems, at set temperatures, and strictly monitored to ensure all the material is sanitised. Pathogen test results for the Corby green/food compost are *E. coli* <10 cfu/g and *Salmonella* absent, confirming sanitisation. Physical contaminants are well below the 0.25% of total sample and well below the 0.12% w/w plastics. Each tonne of Corby PAS100 compost is worth £7.04/t in crop available nitrogen, total phosphate, and potash. An application of 22.7 t/ha will supply £160/ha of tangible value; but the true value to soils is gained from the 6.9t/ha of longer lasting organic matter it can add annually to your soils.

"Farming for the Future"; improving riverine habitats in the Nene Valley

As part of the Heritage Lottery funded

Nenescape project we are working with farmers and landowners in the Nene Valley from Northampton to Peterborough to help restore and create meadow and wetland habitats as well as undertake vital infrastructural improvements to tackle diffuse pollution & aid water quality.

Training courses on environmental farm management will be offered to landowners via Moulton College. We also want to gather information and memories about the farming history of the Nene Valley to help celebrate its important role in shaping the heritage of the valley.

Many meadows have been lost in the past, and remaining wetland habitats can be difficult to manage. This project will offer grant funding and specialist advice to create and restore habitats and tackle diffuse pollution.

The types of project which could qualify include:

- Arable reversion to meadow
- Restoration of species poor pasture to meadow
- Wetland restoration capital projects
- Infrastructure projects to benefit water quality



We are looking for potential sites now, with grant funding for work available in 2018 -2020.

For more info please contact Matt Johnson (Wildlife Trust) on 01604 774033 or matt.johnson@wildlifebcn.org

To see what Nenescape is all about, head to <http://nenescape.org/>

No-Till Drill

Farmers in the Nene and Welland Catchments can now make use of the opportunity to use the Dales no-till drill which is available for farmers to trial at no cost (you must organise transport for the drill and provide your own seed). This is a fantastic opportunity to see how a no tillage system could work on your land and the benefits it gives without the purchase of a machine. Please contact Georgina Wallis for further details.

A Focus on LEADER Funding

The LEADER scheme is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Money from the programme is given to Local Action Groups (LAGs) so that they can award grants locally to businesses and organisations that apply for it.

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) manages the LEADER scheme nationally and will make the payments to successful applicants.

Local priorities include enhanced farm productivity, support for rural micro, small or medium-sized enterprises and farm diversification. There is also support for rural tourism, the provision of rural services, cultural and heritage activity and for increasing forest productivity.



One local farmer from South Northants recently received a grant through LEADER to help purchase a direct drill. This drill will benefit the productivity of the farm, whilst allowing for contracting work to take place across other local farms.

If you are interested in the opportunities of LEADER funding, please contact William Dallimore, LEADER programme manager on Mob: 07802 411040 or Email: william.dallimore@ngagesolutions.co.uk

Feedback

Please let us know what we can do to improve our communications with you.

Please note – we have recently changed mailing list. If you no longer wish to receive newsletter updates please email georgina@mrp.org providing your CPH number, name, full address and postcode.



River Nene Regional Park Community Interest Company



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