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What we will look at

- What is CFE, a quick recap
- Review of the legislation to protect soils & water
- Voluntary management to protect the soil and water resource
  - Retaining ES options
  - Enhancing Greening

Maybe a bit about delivering for pollinators and wildlife
What is CFE?

- CFE is the industry led farm environment campaign. It’s about balancing a **productive farm business** with environmental management and protection.
- It demonstrates how the industry collectively takes responsibility for addressing environmental issues.
- Evolved from the Set Aside debate......but still very much relevant today.
- New challenges under things like WFD, Biodiversity 2020, Pollinator Strategy will continue to face the industry.
- Defra recognises value of voluntary management and monitors its uptake when considering legislation and regulation.
Protecting the Environment

• Agri-environment
• Funded schemes/projects
• Capital grants etc

• Voluntary measures
• Best practice
• VI, CFE, T&T advice

• GAEC/SMR
• Greening
• NVZ/SUD/EIA

Compliance
Diffuse pollution from agriculture is a real issue with many watercourses suffering from elevated levels of nutrients and pesticides.

- Progress has been made but there is still a lot to do.

- Water Framework Directive drives the agenda, targets have to be met soon.

- If not achieved through existing regulation and a voluntary approach Defra are likely to bring in more stringent legislation.
Current legislation to protect water

- Cross Compliance
- GAEC 1 Establishment of buffer strips along watercourses.
- SMR1 Nitrate vulnerable zones
- GAECs 4, 5 & 6. Minimum soil cover, erosion, organic matter
- GAEC 2 Groundwater
- SMR 10 Plant protection products

- Other initiatives
- V.I, Sustainable Use Directive, LERAP, product buffer zones, metaldehyde stewardship
Current legislation to protect water

• Cross Compliance GAEC 1 – Establishment of buffer strips along watercourses. All fields from January

• You must take all reasonable steps to maintain a green cover on land within 2m of the centre of a watercourse, with a minimum 1m from the top of the bank.

• If you spread organic manure, produce a map of your holding showing all watercourses and land within 10m of them, all springs, wells and boreholes and land within 50m of them

• You must not apply manufactured nitrogen with 2m of a surface water, apply organic manure within 10m of a surface water (6m for precision equipment) and 50m of a spring, well, borehole.

• Cultivate or apply fertilisers or pesticides to land within 2m of the centre of a watercourse, or 1m from the top of the bank
Current legislation to protect water

- **SMR1: NVZs**
- **You must** produce a risk map of your holding if you spread organic manure but much more detailed than for GAEC1. In addition to surface waters must also show slopes, land drains, sites for temporary field heaps, sandy and shallow soil........
- **Plus loads of other stuff.....** Run-off risk assessment before spreading N, closed periods, N farm loading calculation, nutrient management plan, slurry store calculation, etc
• New last year GAECs 4, 5 & 6
  • GAEC 4: Providing minimal soil cover. **YOU MUST** Take all reasonable steps to protect soil by having minimal soil cover unless there is an **agronomic justification** for not doing so, or where establishing a cover would conflict with requirements under GAEC 5.
  • GAEC 6: Maintenance of Soil Organic Matter. Essentially stubble burning rules and permanent pasture
  • **GAEC 5: Minimising soil erosion**
  • **YOU MUST** put measures in place to limit soil and bankside erosion.
  • You could lose some of your scheme payments if erosion is over a single area greater than 1 hectare, or caused by livestock trampling along a continuous stretch of more than 20 metres long and 2 metres wide of a watercourse.
  • **Inspectors will determine compliance on whether soil erosion has occurred.**
  • **Where it does occur this will be considered as non-compliance.**
  • **Where measures are in place and erosion still occurs, this will also be considered non-compliance............. but the penalty might be reduced**
Current legislation to protect water

• **GAEC 2 Groundwater** Need permit to dispose of pesticide washings, sheep dip and other hazardous substances

• **SMR 10 Plant Protection Products (PPPs)** Must follow ‘Good Practice’ meet the conditions and rules on the product label.

• Sustainable Use Directive, LERAP, product buffer zones, metaldehyde stewardship - *keeping active ingredients available*
Cross Compliance failures 2015

- Percentage of inspections failed
- SMR1 NVZs 29.4%
  - No records or incomplete records, field heaps in high risk location, not stackable
- GAEC 1 buffer strips 11.1%
  - No map, no margin or not wide enough, storage
- SMR 10 Plant protection products 4.6%
  - Product used incorrectly e.g. dose rate, harvest interval
- SMR 7 Cattle I.D 46.6%, SMR8 Sheep & goat I.D 25.3%
Margins and voluntary management

• Whilst not a solution, margins have a role to play in helping us to protect soil and water resources (and possibly BPS payments)

• They can’t prevent erosion but they can reduce the amount of sediment reaching watercourses, reduce potential for over-spreading of nutrients and pesticides

• .......as long as they are wide enough and well managed

• GAEC 1 margins aren’t wide enough for this
• Likewise EFA buffer strips
Nutrients and pesticides in runoff.
So, need to think about voluntary margins and other in-field measures.
The voluntary approach

• Voluntary management can be used to help protect soils and water and proves to Defra that farmers are taking hold of the environmental agenda.

• Opportunity to deliver this with expiring ELS agreements

• For soils and water think about retaining margins, field corners, in-field strips, low input grassland next to watercourses.

• Ask yourself, is it cost effective to bring marginal land back into mainstream management?

• Do the figures really stack-up when you factor in labour, inputs, fuel costs, on poor yielding parts of the field?

• These features also provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife and can have agronomic benefits, providing a home for beneficial insects which disperse into to the crop to eat pests.
What about Ecological Focus Areas?

- EFA buffer strip - 1m wide next to a watercourse or parallel with (and on a slope) leading to a watercourse. Can be existing GAEC 1 strip

- Is 1m really going to do the job?

- So, retain existing 6m margins, use as EFA fallow or count first metre as buffer strip and rest as fallow
Cover Crops

• Consider cover crop EFAs – a win win for the farm business and the environment
• Help to protect soils over the winter months, reducing erosion and potential BPS penalties
• Capture nutrients for next crop to use
• Increase organic matter levels – better structured soils, less prone to compaction, more soil biota, better soil health, increased yields?
• Help with the management of blackgrass?
Don’t forget the wildlife - Enhancing EFA Fallow Land

- 17 other stewardship options that can be used as EFA fallow
- Or simply be retained to provide habitat and protect environmental features on your farms
Voluntary Initiative

• OSR Herbicides Think Water initiative.
• Five key herbicides being detected with increasing frequency, could lead to restrictions
• This initiative builds on existing best practice and offers a suite of tools to ensure continued responsible use of OSR herbicides

• Sign up to ‘Bee Connected’
• Connecting farmers with local beekeepers to tell them when spraying activities are taking place

www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk
Summary

- Undertaking voluntary management proves to Defra that farmers take the environment seriously and can prevent the introduction of further legislation.

- CFE encourages you to keep some of your old stewardship measures in place and enhance EFAs with the aim of looking after wildlife and protecting water and soils.

*Remember, voluntary management is flexible – no risk of penalty if you don’t get things right.*
CFE Resources

- Soil Management
- Nutrient Management
- Crop Protection Management

www.cfeonline.org.uk