

# Update from NRW to the Wye NMB

## December 2022

### 1. Statement from the Minister for Climate Change

Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change, set out a [statement on water quality](#) on 15 November 2022.

### 2. Wye catchment activities

We report to HSE every year on information on pesticides to go into their annual report. Most years we have no, or maybe one Environmental Quality Standard (EQS) failure for any pesticide. But this year we reported 14 from the 2021 classification, mostly cypermethrin or diazinon, with one for Heptachlor. Of those 14, 9 are on the Wye. We are gathering further information on these failures now to identify likely sources as they are commonly used as pour on products to control a range of pests in both arable and livestock farming.

12 poultry units operating under an Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) have been inspected on the Wye since mid-September. NRW have inspected 9, for compliance with EPR permit conditions, with 3 inspected for us by the site's chosen Certifying Body under the EPR Pig and Poultry Assurance Scheme [Natural Resources Wales / Pig and Poultry Assurance Scheme](#) where inspection outcomes are relayed to NRW for enforcement if required.

We have started a series of visits to registered sewage discharges in the river Lugg catchment to check on how these household septic tanks and sewage works are performing and whether they are being maintained correctly. There are over 350 permitted or exempted (registered with NRW) discharges across the catchment with hotspots for these discharges being Llangunllo, Discoed and Evenjobb. Households can register their sewage discharge for an exemption if it is less than two cubic metres to ground or 5 cubic metres to a stream.

### 3. Incidents

Only 7 incidents on the river Wye have been reported to NRW since Mid-September which is a very low number. Please encourage your neighbours and friends to report incidents of any kind on the Welsh Wye to our 24 hour incident centre on 0300 065 3000 as soon as possible so they can be assessed and investigated.

### 4. NRW's SAC Rivers project

A project has been running in NRW for the SAC rivers water quality issues we first reported in 2020. This project is required to enable NRW to fulfil its statutory obligations for the sustainable management of natural resources and our wellbeing duties with respect to

the 9 riverine SACs listed in the Habitats Directive. Tackling water quality problems in Wales is also a key priority for the Welsh Government.

### Latest update

- The first full 8-week installation of the sonde network in the Wye has come to an end and the sondes have been removed, replaced and the data extracted. The full dataset for each location is available on NRW's Z drive. An open data solution has been developed to visualise the data and make it available and accessible internally and externally. That solution is awaiting approval. Data obtained so far has been used to track the effects of the summer heatwave and drought and the measures put in place to mitigate its effects. Opportunities for installing telemetry to access data in real time are being investigated.
- We have published [nutrient neutrality principles](#) on our web site.
- Citizen science - NRW have written to the various groups undertaking citizen science initiatives on the River Wye explaining our position following closure of the Cardiff University coordination project and how we hope to use the data collected. [NRW Wye Citizen Science Advice](#).
- In October we published the revised water quality targets in the Core Management Plan (CMP) for each of the nine SAC rivers. SAC Core Management Plans outline the site vision, features and what is required to bring the features into favourable condition. Each feature has a set of conservation objectives which are an expression of the conservation aspiration for each site in the context of favourable conservation status. The new targets form part of the conservation objectives and targets are included for a range of water quality attributes including phosphate, total ammonia, unionised ammonia, dissolved oxygen and biochemical oxygen demand.
- You can now view the full list of updated water quality targets for the [127 water bodies within SAC rivers on our website](#). The core management plans are available to view in full using the filters on our [designated sites page](#).
- For all SAC rivers in Wales, NRW will be requiring a backstop permit limit of 5mg/l of phosphate, in line with the default concentration used within the SAGIS modelling, for all sewage works exceeding 20m<sup>3</sup> per day dry weather flow, unless modelling has specified a limit tighter than 5mg/l. Our expectations will be for Welsh Water to plan and cost for all works exceeding 20m<sup>3</sup> per day to achieve 5mg/l as part of their PR24 business planning submissions to Ofwat. Where modelling indicates the requirement for tighter limits, costs to achieve this should replace the backstop limit and be included in the business plan.

## 5. The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 (CoAPR)

These regulations came into force on 1 April 2021 and are subject to transitional periods until 1 August 2024. As measures are transitioned into law become a requirement of Cross Compliance. All farmers and landmanagers in Wales who are claiming the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and/or Welsh Government Rural Development land based schemes must adhere to Cross Compliance requirements.

Any identified failure to meet the Cross Compliance standards would result in payments being reduced, recovered or withheld by Rural Payments Wales. NRW is obliged to report Cross Compliance breaches to Rural Payments Wales under a Service Level Agreement since 2005 and continue to do so..

Measures coming into force from 1 January 2023

- a total nitrogen limit per hectare for applications of organic manures from plant, animal or human sources,
- a written nitrogen plan and record subsequent applications
- storage requirements for solid organic manures including temporary field heaps.
- risk maps

In October Welsh Government announced a delay in the introduction of the 170kg/ha total nitrogen holding limit from livestock manures and a consultation on [Nutrient management: managing the application of livestock manures sustainably | GOV.WALES](#). Where it is proposed to allow farmers who can meet the licence conditions to apply up to 250kg/ha total nitrogen from livestock manures. The proposed conditions include full nutrient management planning and associated records. Consultation closes 17 February 2023.

NRW is progressing with discussions with WG on the Draft Service Level Agreement in relation to the delivery of the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations. We continue to enforce the regulations when non compliances come to light.

Communications continue to promote compliance with CoAPR at the Royal Welsh Winter fair where NRW had a stand and also had a presence on WG stand, at farmer events in the Wye catchment.

An event is planned in early January for Farming Connect, WG farm Liaison staff and Farming Connect technical advisors to ensure clarity of the limited delay in implementing the regulations is understood by the farming community.

The COAPR requirements applies to agricultural land in Wales and the definition of organic manures includes plant animal and human sources so applications of other sources of nitrogen eg PAS digestate must comply with CoAPR as well as Anaerobic Digestion Quality Protocol (ADQP) when spreading material to land in Wales. This will enable a protective regulatory control of all organic manure applications in Wales eg livestock manures, digestate and biosolids.

It is important to remember that manures and slurries can only be applied to land where there is a requirement for them ie used to improve soil or support crop growth. When manure or slurry are applied to land with no demonstrable benefit to the soil or crop growth or when they exceed the nutrient requirements of the crop, they are considered waste materials and would risk the activity falling under waste regulatory controls. [Natural Resources Wales / How to use manures and slurries appropriately](#)

## 6. Wye Restoration Programme

- NRW is preparing a £10M, 5 year programme of works on the Upper Wye (from Hay upstream) to address ecological issues and risks in the Upper Wye, and improve the rivers long-term resilience to Climate Change. The main focus is on the Wye SAC but the project area also incorporates tributaries of the Upper Lugg to provide a catchment approach.
- The Programme will have workstreams covering respectively: Targeted farm visits and partnership working with farmers to reduce pollution and the risk of pollution; In-river, riparian and floodplain habitat restoration works; Improving fish access; Invasive species management. There will also be monitoring and reporting workstreams.
- The Programme will work collaboratively and share information with other initiatives across the Wye catchment, as well as wider initiatives such as the Sustainable Farming Scheme.
- All of the above is subject to approval by the NRW Executive Team and Board, and funding from Welsh Government.