

News story: £3m support scheme launched to reduce air pollution from farming

A scheme, backed with £3m of funding, to help farmers reduce ammonia emissions from agriculture has been officially launched today (18 September, 2018).

The [Catchment Sensitive Farming](#) partnership between Defra, the Environment Agency and Natural England will support farmers to take action to reduce harmful ammonia emissions.

Farming is responsible for 88 percent of all UK emissions of ammonia gas which can travel long distances, be damaging to the environment, and combine with other pollutants to form particulates, which are harmful to human health.

The money will fund a team of specialists who will work with farmers and landowners to implement the measures to reduce their ammonia set out in the new [Code of Good Agricultural Practice \(COGAP\) for Reducing Ammonia Emissions](#).

The team will provide training events, tailored advice, individual farm visits and support with grant applications, all funded by the programme.

Bob Middleton, Programme Manager, Catchment Sensitive Farming said:

As custodians of the land, farmers have an important role to play in protecting the environment. But reducing ammonia emissions can also bring real business benefits.

The UK loses £138m of nitrogen per year from ammonia emissions, so by taking action to reduce them, farmers can get more value from their manure and fertiliser and save money.

This new initiative adds to the existing, popular programme of advice to improve water quality and prevent flooding from farmed land and a new guidance video which sets out simple steps all farmers can take to reduce ammonia emissions, such as the way they handle livestock feed, and manure and fertiliser spreading.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

There is growing evidence that ammonia emissions can have significant impacts to parts of our environment so we want to help farmers play their part in reducing them.

The specialist team of advisers leading this project can advise farmers on steps they can take, such as improved slurry handling facilities, and grants are available where investment is required.

Reducing emissions from farming is a key element of the government's ambitious new Clean Air Strategy, which has been welcomed by the [World Health Organization](#).

The announcement comes less than a week after the introduction of the government's landmark [Agriculture Bill](#) which sets out ambitious proposals to protect and enhance our environment.

To replace the Common Agricultural Policy, a new system will reward farmers for "public goods", which includes taking action to improve air and water quality and soil health.

Press release: Colson Transport pay £70,000 for violating environmental permit

A company director and his company have been sentenced to fines of £38,000 and costs of £33,000 in Nottingham Magistrates Court today after breaching conditions of an environmental permit over a 19 month period. The breaches led to a significant impact on the lives of local residents.

Ryan Colson, of Westfield Avenue, Heanor, Derbyshire, is the director of Colson Transport Limited, a waste transfer company on Bulwell Lane in Old Basford, Nottingham. Colson and his company Colson Transport Ltd took over the site from the previous operators and the volume of waste passing through the site increased significantly. This led to dust escaping from the site and odour problems developed. This had a significant impact on the lives of the local residents, businesses and the primary school, located close to the site.

Tim Pole, Prosecution Counsel on behalf of the Environment Agency, told the court that the failure to comply with the environmental permit and storing waste on site in inappropriate ways led to the significant impact on the community. In addition, Mr Colson had stored combustible waste on site. The consequences of a fire on site would have reached beyond the company itself, and could have impacted on other businesses as well as a primary school situated nearby.

The Court was told that the nature, number and frequency of the complaints to the Environment Agency demonstrated the negative impact that the Mr Colson's

poor management of the site had on the lives of local residents.

Colson Transport Ltd and its owner Mr Colson had a history of non-compliance and had received a written warning from the Environment Agency prior to the commencement of the Prosecution. However Mr Colson failed to consistently operate the site in compliance with the Permit.

Mr Colson and Colson Transport Ltd cooperated with the investigation and showed evidence of taking steps to remedy the problems on site. There was investment of approximately £350,000 into the site and there was an acceptance of responsibility.

In sentencing the case District Judge Spruce found that the local residents had suffered because of the dust and odour problems emanating from the site, but there was no finding by District Judge Spruce that this created a risk to human health. The length of time that the breaches spanned was an aggravating feature and as was the history of non-compliance. However in mitigation the District Judge had noted the character references provided and found that Colson Transport limited was a responsible waste management operation. The District Judge found that there was no financial gain to Colson Transport Limited or to Ryan Colson as a result of the permit breaches.

Commenting after the hearing, Environment Officer Everal Burrell said:

The Environment Agency works hard to protect people and the environment while supporting the vast majority of businesses that operate responsibly. This case demonstrates that we will take action against those who do not operate their business within the confines of relevant regulations.

We hope this case will serve as an example and a warning for other operators to take their responsibilities seriously. We are determined to take actions against those who don't.

ENDS

Press release: Over £14,000 pollution penalty for Staffordshire farm

In a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency, B&M Elkin & Son Ltd (the Company) of Hall Farm, Hilderstone, Staffordshire pleaded guilty to three charges of breaching environmental regulations following two pollution incidents and failing to provide adequate effluent storage.

The first incident occurred in Sept 2015 following a report of farm effluent

discharging to the Gayton Brook, Milwich for several days. Investigators discovered that farm slurry had escaped from a gap in the storage pit. The incident caused effluent to run across the farm and into the brook, which was found to be green/brown in colour with a white foam, with a foul odour present. Approximately 3000 fish were killed in this incident.

A second incident occurred on 30 June 2016, when effluent entered Wheatlow Brook, which was found to be brown and frothy in appearance.

Hall Farm is within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone which means the farm must comply with strict slurry storage capacity. Environment Agency officers advised the company that there was insufficient storage capacity and that they were in breach of the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2010.

The company was fined £7,000, and ordered to pay £7,100 costs and a victim surcharge of £120.

In mitigation, consideration had been given that the business has been operating for 30 years without incident. The company had also cooperated with the Environment Agency and pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity. In addition, B&M Elkin & Sons Ltd had voluntarily paid £1,000 to the local wildlife trust and had spent over £20,000 in improvements and remediation at their site.

The Environment Agency Officer leading the investigation said:

These were entirely preventable serious incidents, which led to pollution of farmland and watercourses in the area, resulting in the death of thousands of fish. The fact that the first incident was subsequently repeated gave us little choice but to pursue a prosecution.

" I hope this case sends a strong message to the farming industry that their activities have the potential for serious environmental impacts, and we take action when necessary.

If farmers need help understanding the regulations that apply to them, the Environment Agency are available to help and can give advice on how to prevent farm pollution, just give us a call on 03708 506 506.

[Press release: Royal approval for](#)

Kielder Salmon centre

Kielder Salmon Centre rears and releases around 360,000 juvenile salmon into the River Tyne catchment each year.

It was built in 1978 to compensate for the building of Kielder Reservoir – the biggest man-made lake in Northern Europe – which cut off around 7% of the River Tyne catchment including some of the best spawning streams for salmon.

On Wednesday 12 September the Prince of Wales was given a tour of the facility, including the new £100,000 visitor centre which is due to open to the public later this month.

The three-month refurbishment has created a more interactive experience for visitors and allows them to get up close with the salmon and other species the centre aims to protect – including the critically endangered freshwater pearl mussel.

The new visitor centre includes:

- a natural North East river environment aquarium showcasing salmon and other local river species
- videos revealing the behind the scenes work at the centre to protect iconic species
- a prehistoric salmon fossil dig
- a quiz and brass rubbings to unveil interesting information about the salmon
- new and improved outside spaces and pearl mussel breeding beds
- a circular salmon walk around the local area



The Prince of Wales unveils a plaque to commemorate his visit

The Environment Agency's Richard Bond, who has been Manager of Kielder Salmon Centre since 1995, said:

We were absolutely delighted to be able to show the Prince of Wales around our conservation centre which aims to protect this incredible, iconic fish.

We also explained the innovative work we are doing to hand rear one of the UK's most endangered species, the freshwater pearl mussel, which is absolutely vital to our river systems and in great decline.

He was interested to hear about the improvements to the River Tyne, which has gone from a heavily polluted industrial river to one of the best salmon rivers in the country thanks to improvements to water quality and conservation efforts from ourselves and our partners.

The new visitor centre has a wealth of information about the aquatic life of Northumbria and is a great way for people to understand the fascinating world that lies below the surface of the

river.



The Prince of Wales is shown the adult pearl mussels housed at the salmon centre.

[Press release: Significant progress and a setback for flood reduction work in a Lancashire town](#)

A £1million flood alleviation project which will provide vital protection to 91 homes and 17 businesses in Earby is now likely to be delayed.

The project has been set back due to a major obstruction being discovered whilst drilling the new culvert beneath the disused railway embankment just under halfway along the route.

The Environment Agency's contractors, JBA Bentley, are on site working hard to find a solution so that the culvert repair can be completed as quickly as possible. The work started on Monday 23 July and was expected to take 13 weeks.

To reduce the impact on local residents the current temporary traffic lights on the A56 will be removed on Friday (14 September). They will be reinstalled for a shorter period of time when a solution has been agreed.

Next week new temporary traffic lights will be installed for around two weeks at the junction of the A56 and Victoria Road, near the Co-op food store, so that further sections of Victoria Clough culvert can be repaired.

Other elements of the project are progressing well with the completion of 43m of structural re-lining of Victoria Clough culvert from the junction of Valley Road and Victoria Road. The road is expected to be re-instated and re-opened by Friday 21 September.

Paul Swales, flood risk advisor for the Environment Agency, said:

We would like to thank residents and businesses for their patience and understanding while we carry out this essential work to reduce flood risk and protect their properties.

Whilst the work is carried out there will be some disruption to motorists using the A56 and Victoria Road. There will also be some parking restrictions on Victoria Road.

The flood alleviation project involves making Victoria culvert structurally sound. Culverts are structures which carry water underground. They were often built to allow development to take place around them such as roads, homes and businesses. Many people live and work near culverts and may not even know they are there.

A new culvert will be installed beneath the disused railway embankment to replace the existing one which has collapsed. The team will also re-line or replace a number of sections along the length of the culvert at locations under Victoria Road and the A56 Skipton Road.

A new and improved trash screen will also be fixed at the inlet of the culvert, to help reduce the risk of it becoming blocked with debris and making it easier and safer to clear when water levels are high.

The Environment Agency continues to explore other options to reduce flood risk from all sources in and around Earby. Over the next 12 months, the team will investigate the options in more detail, which include flood storage areas on Earby Beck, the New Cut and Victoria Clough and installing a flood defence wall at Boot Street.

The Environment Agency is looking for volunteer flood wardens to play a key part in keeping Earby prepared and informed before, during and after a flood. Anyone interested in becoming a flood warden can email heather.cottrill@environment-agency.gov.uk to find out more.

By signing up to the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning service residents and businesses can receive flood alerts and flood warnings for

Earby Beck and/or Earby New Cut directly to their phone and emails, 24/7. To find out if you're at risk and register for Flood Warnings please visit:
www.gov.uk/flood