



A farmer's guide

Payment for ecosystem services

Helping to keep your
drinking water clean

Metaldehyde in water

Metaldehyde is the active ingredient in many slug pellets. Unfortunately, it's also detected in local rivers because rain washes it off surrounding fields and farmyards.

The problem

By law, a litre of drinking water can only contain up to 0.1 micrograms of metaldehyde – that's the same as one grain of wheat in 390 tonnes. Since we began analysing river water for metaldehyde in 2007, we've frequently recorded concentrations higher than this level.

We use complex water treatment processes to keep drinking water clean, but metaldehyde is particularly difficult to remove.

The metaldehyde status

In December 2018, Defra announced a withdrawal on all outdoor uses of metaldehyde which was due to come into force on 30 June 2020, but this decision was challenged and formally overturned in July 2019. The legal challenge was based on how the decision-making process was conducted and Defra indicated they would review this decision.

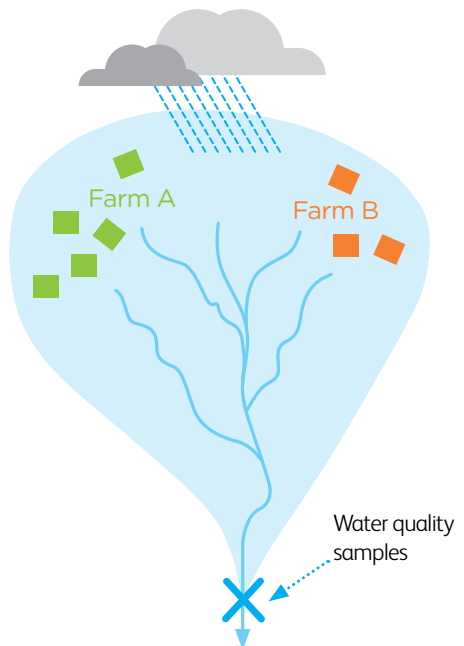
This has taken the metaldehyde status back to pre-December 2018, with metaldehyde based pellets once again available to both buy and use on your farm. At the time of writing (March 2020) the deadline for the sale and distribution of existing stocks is 31 December 2020, and the deadline for the disposal, storage and use of existing stocks is 31 December 2021.

Despite the long-term future of metaldehyde remaining uncertain, our catchment projects will continue as long as the current situation continues. We remain committed to working with the agricultural community to keep pesticides on the field and out of watercourses.

A collaborative solution

Preventing pollution is more sustainable than using expensive and energy-intensive treatment processes to clean water. That's why we have 25 projects across our region this year to help keep water metaldehyde-free.

Targeting key areas where rivers have historically had high levels of metaldehyde, we collaborate with rural communities to encourage the use of alternative slug control. In some areas, we offer subsidies to farmers who use ferric phosphate slug pellets. In others, we incentivise farmers based on water quality results, meaning the decision of how to keep water clean is in their hands.



How you can help improve water quality

To reduce the levels of metaldehyde in local rivers, you decide what works best for your farm. We'll then reward you with a payment based on water quality.

Am I eligible?

You're eligible if you run a non-organic farm with land in arable rotation inside our project area (marked on the map overleaf). If you're unsure, please check with us or our project partner in your area.

What steps could I take?

- Implementing cultural controls e.g. using a Cambridge roll to consolidate seed beds
- Switching to spring cropping
- Implementing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to slug control
- Switching to ferric phosphate pellets

What happens next?

Please sign up by Friday 25 September 2020. Our local project partner will get in touch for a brief chat on how you plan to keep water clean. You'll receive your payment by spring 2021.

Anything else I need to know?

We'd like to keep you up to date with the latest sample results from your local river. After signing up to take part in the project, you'll receive a newsletter and monthly water quality updates during the autumn. At the end of the project, we'll ask you to take part in a short survey so you can tell us how things went. Please take part, as this helps us to interpret the results of our water quality sampling and understand if our projects are working.

How it works

- 1 From 28 September to 18 December 2020, we'll take weekly river samples at the downstream end of the catchment to measure the concentration of metaldehyde in the water (12 samples in total).
- 2 If the concentration of metaldehyde in the river remains below 0.1 micrograms per litre, you'll earn a maximum of £1 per hectare of arable land* you own within the catchment.
- 3 Any time the concentration is recorded above 0.1 micrograms per litre, a twelfth will be deducted from your final payment.
- 4 If every weekly sample stays below 0.1 micrograms per litre, you'll get an additional £250 bonus. Furthermore, if it's the first time you've taken part in one of our projects, you'll also receive £100 for enrolling.

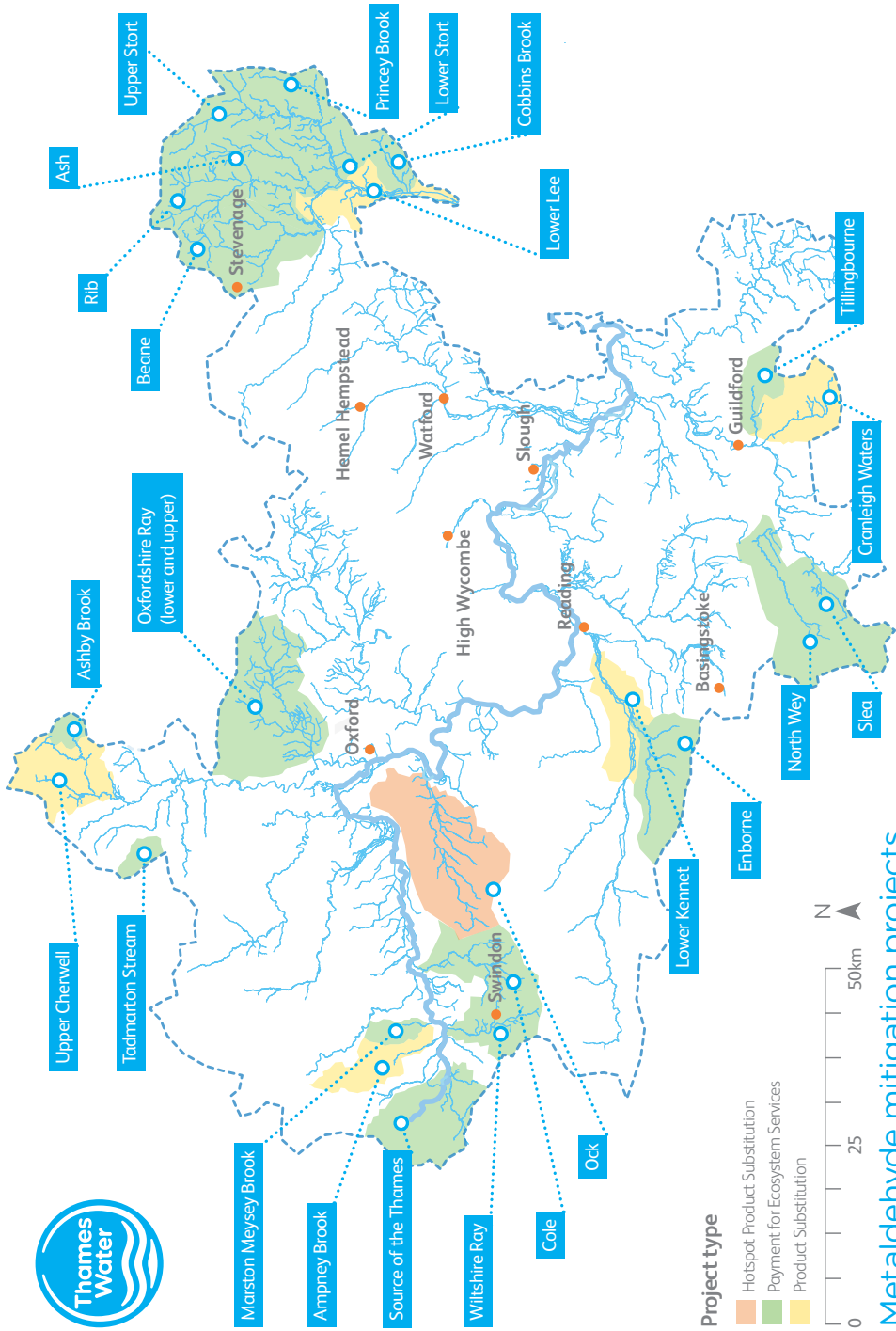
*Defined as per BPS, i.e. including temporary grass

Apply today

Please get in touch with our local project partner or contact us using the details below.

 catchment.management@thameswater.co.uk

 07747 641 581



Project type

- Hotspot Product Substitution
- Payment for Ecosystem Services
- Product Substitution



Metaldehyde mitigation projects

Autumn 2020