



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 a single 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.

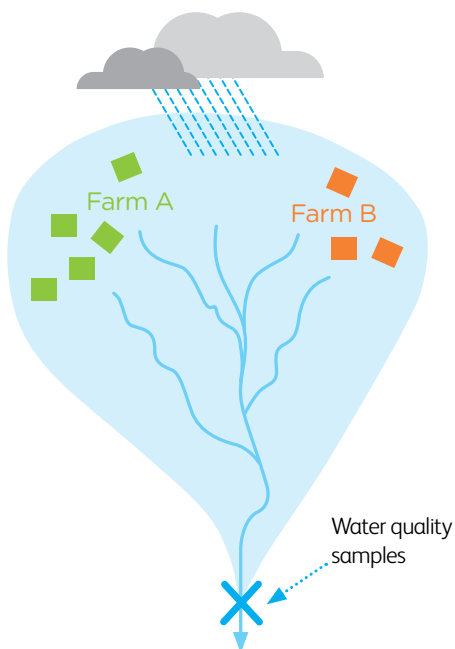
The status of metaldehyde

In September 2020, Defra announced a withdrawal of all outdoor use of metaldehyde slug pellets from 31 March 2022. The withdrawal has been introduced based on advice from The UK Expert Committee on Pesticides and the Health and Safety Executive about the risks metaldehyde poses to birds and mammals. Metaldehyde is legal to use until 31 March 2022, so our metaldehyde mitigation projects will continue to run for one final autumn this year.

After the withdrawal, metaldehyde should no longer need to be the focus of our projects and we can move towards solutions for other issues. But we'll always continue to work with the agricultural community to protect drinking water sources.

A collaborative solution

Preventing pollution is more sustainable than using expensive and energy-intensive treatment processes to clean water. So, this year we're running 25 projects across our region to help keep water metaldehyde-free. We collaborate with rural communities to encourage the use of alternative slug control, targeting key areas where rivers have historically had high levels of metaldehyde. 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

You decide what works best for your farm to reduce the levels of metaldehyde in local rivers. We'll then reward you with a payment based.

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 24 September 2021. 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 2022.

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 27 September to 19 December 2021, 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 up to £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.
- 5 And if it's the first time you've taken part in one of our projects, you'll receive £100 for enrolling.

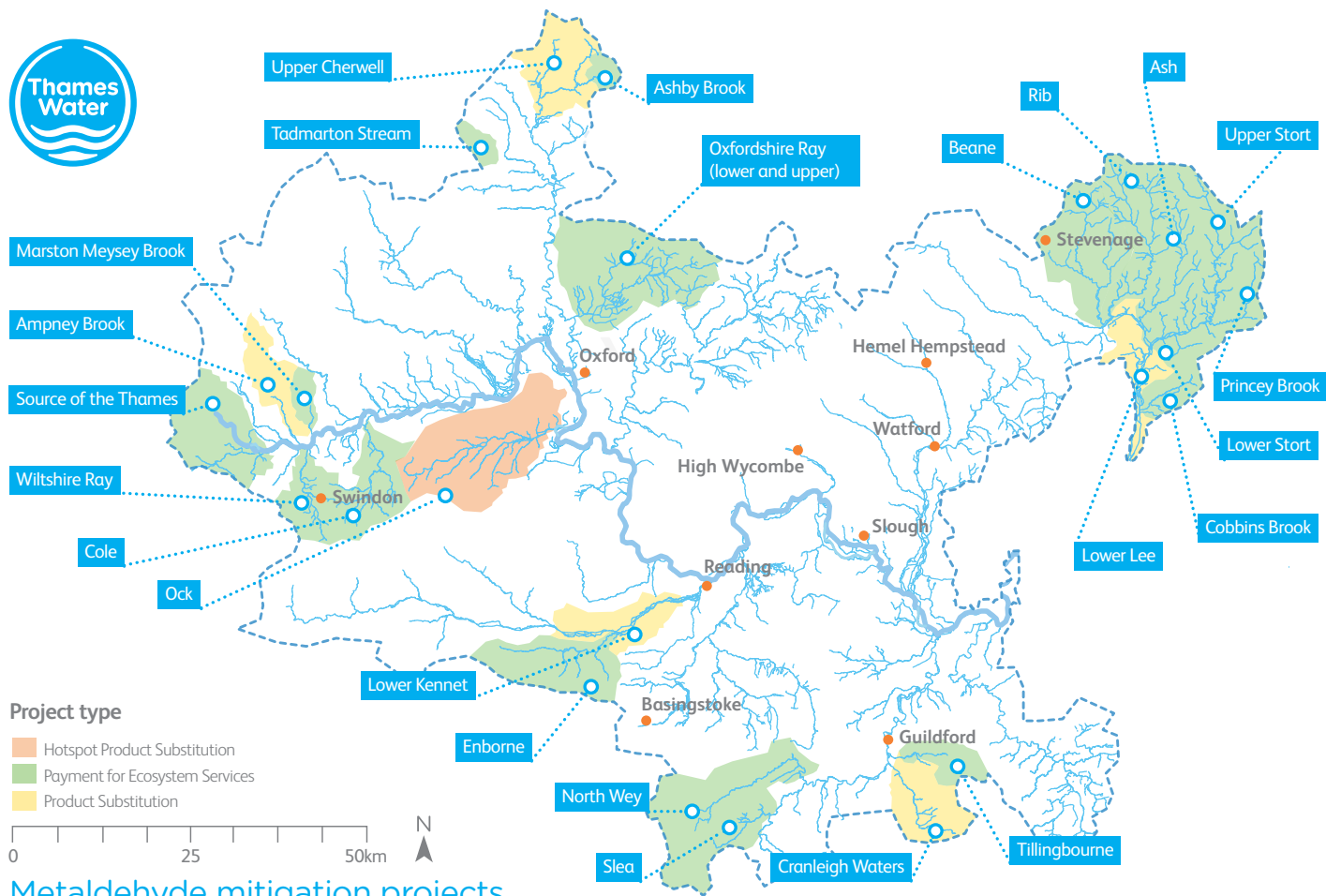
*Defined as per BPS, i.e. including temporary grass

Apply today

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

 catchment.projects@thameswater.co.uk

 07747 641 581



Metaldehyde mitigation projects Autumn 2021



catchment.projects@thameswater.co.uk

14908-03 06/21