



A farmer's guide

Metaldehyde product substitution

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

We'll provide a subsidy of £1/kg of ferric phosphate slug pellets, to help make it easier to switch and reduce the amount of metaldehyde reaching local rivers.

Ferric phosphate

- Is as effective as metaldehyde
- Can be used around vegetable crops
- Is easily removed by drinking water treatment processes

Am I eligible?

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

What happens next?

You can claim your subsidy for ferric phosphate slug pellets applied to your crops sown in the autumn until the deadline of Friday 3 December 2021.

You'll receive your subsidy in 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 fill in a short survey so you can tell us how things went.

Please take part, as this helps us interpret the results of our water quality sampling and understand if our projects are working.

Apply today

1 **Sign up in advance**
Complete a registration form* to receive the project newsletter and monthly water quality updates throughout the autumn.

2 **Claim your subsidy**
Submit your completed claim form*, along with proof of purchase for ferric phosphate slug pellets. The claim form includes details of where to send them.

* You can get registration and claim forms by contacting our local project partner or contacting us using the details below.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with our local project partner, or contact us using the contact details below.

 catchment.projects@thameswater.co.uk

 **07747 641 581**

