

AGRICULTURE AND WATER QUALITY

It may take many years of improvements before changes in the status of a river, lake or groundwater can be achieved. Agriculture has made significant improvements in recent years, including:



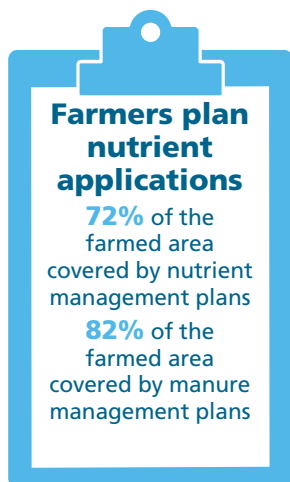
Fertiliser application rates have been decreasing since the 80's

42% less nitrogen fertiliser
69% less phosphate fertiliser
But achieving similar crop yields



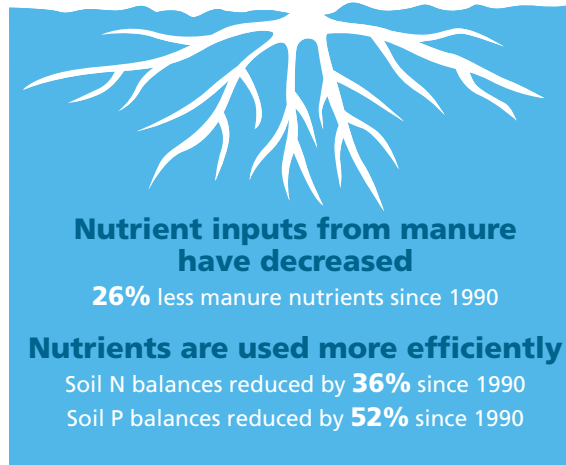
Farmers protect water voluntarily

CFE options that directly or indirectly benefit water cost farmers **£53 million** in 2014/15



Farmers plan nutrient applications

72% of the farmed area covered by nutrient management plans
82% of the farmed area covered by manure management plans

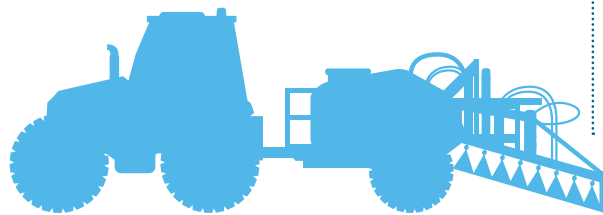


Nutrient inputs from manure have decreased

26% less manure nutrients since 1990

Nutrients are used more efficiently

Soil N balances reduced by 36% since 1990
Soil P balances reduced by 52% since 1990



Pesticide use is highly targeted

2 million hectares of farmed land covered by Integrated Pest Management plans

Pesticide stewardship is highly professional

20,000 pesticide users undertaking Continuing Professional Development with the National Register of Sprayer Operators

16,000 sprayers and application equipment undergo National Sprayer Testing Scheme tests



Catchment Sensitive Farming reduces agricultural pollution

4-12% reduction in pollutant losses on average
Farmers implement 60% of measures recommended by CSF
Over 20,000 farm holdings have received CSF advice

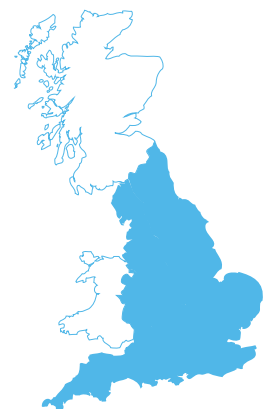


Championing the Farmed Environment role in water quality

Since 2014 around 7000 farmers have engaged in soil & water protection through CFE co-ordinators and events

A recent CFE survey found:

- three-quarters of farmers have made changes to improve soil health and reduce runoff.
- 81% have buffer strips next to watercourses.
- 40% of respondents voluntarily utilise cover crops.
- 36% have fenced watercourses or ponds.



Soil and water stewardship

Farmers invested more than **£182 million** on farm infrastructure, match-funding CSF or Countryside Stewardship capital grants to improve water quality