

Upstream Thinking Newsletter

for the

Fowey Catchment



What's on offer in the Fowey catchment?

Upstream Thinking 3 offers free and confidential advice to farmers and landowners to identify areas of support both in the farmyard and in the field. Grants up to £20,000 are available to improve compliant farmyard infrastructure to reduce any risk of pollution to rivers and watercourses.

Additionally, Upstream Thinking promotes Nature Based Solutions to alleviate flood risk on farm e.g., increase storage capacity (wetlands/ ponds), run-off management (rough ploughing, deviators, leaky dams), slow the flow, tree planting (including productive tree planting), reduce soil and sediment erosion by improving natural drainage and reducing compaction, and identifying new areas for water storage in high rainfall events and to combat droughts from heatwaves.

Upstream Thinking also promotes regenerative farming practises such as herbal leys.

Confidential Farm Advice and Farm Plans

Free visit from a farm advisor to offer advice on management of nutrients, soil, pesticides, yard infrastructure, watercourse management, and habitats.



Soil Samples and Soil Health Pits

As in previous years, WRT are offering free soil samples for 6 fields, this includes P, K, Mg, pH and Soil Organic Matter. We can also offer some soil health pit analysis, if you would like to ascertain if you have any compaction issues on the farm. Please contact wendy@wrt.org.uk if you would like to book in for this, we carry out this work during the autumn and spring. We are keen to see new faces for soil sampling but may be able to return and re-sample your farm if we haven't done so for 2-3 years.

Free Trees

Upstream Thinking Catchment Advisors are offering **FREE** native tree species to those in the catchment. If you are interested in receiving some free trees, please contact your advisor. These can be for new areas of woodland, or 'gapping' up hedges.



**PESTICIDE
AMNESTY**
WHAT'S IN YOUR BARN?
FREE DISPOSAL
OF BANNED AND OUT OF DATE ON-FARM PESTICIDES
  

Pesticide Amnesties

Find out if you are eligible for our free and confidential farm Pesticide Amnesty scheme in the Dart, Exe, Fowey, Otter, Roadford, Tamar & Tavy UpstreamThinking catchments.

Contact melanie@wrt.org.uk (or your WRT farm advisor if known)

ELMS – Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) Improved Grassland Soil Standard

The SFI (Sustainable Farming Incentive) scheme is now open to applications. SFI is the first of 3 new environmental schemes being introduced under the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS). SFI aims to help farmers manage land in a way that improves food production and is more environmentally sustainable. In 2022, SFI aims to encourage actions that improve soil health, and for the new SFI Improved Grassland Standard payments will be made at either an Introductory level of £28 per hectare, or £58 per hectare for those joining the Intermediate level.



As part of the scheme you are expected to:

- Complete a soil assessment and produce a soil management plan
- Test soil for organic matter
- Minimise bare ground over winter
- Establish and maintain herbal leys (Intermediate level)

Upstream Thinking Catchment Advisors can help with:

- Assist with SFI applications
- Help with completing a soil assessment
- Help with producing a soil management plan
- Assist with soil organic matter testing
- Advise on herbal ley establishment and management
- Calculate the % of BPS reductions that can be made up by joining the current SFI standard

Slurry Infrastructure Grant

DEFRA have recently announced that they will be accepting applications to the **Slurry Investment Scheme this Autumn (2022) as part of the Farming Investment Fund**. This is for farmers interested in providing six months of slurry storage to improve the use of manures on agricultural land and to reduce the risk to watercourses from dilapidated storage facilities or being applied when conditions are poor such as when fields are saturated, or before heavy rain. Improved storage should reduce the use of artificial fertilisers.

Current Silage Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil regulations (SSAFO) require all stores to have a minimum of 4 months storage. There are exemptions to those store built before 1991 and so the Slurry Investment Fund is for an increase in storage capacity. **Grants will be available at 50% of costs for projects between £25,000 and £250,000**. The grant can be for new stores, extensions i.e. extra rings on a tank, lagoons and can be combined with onsite SAAFO compliant stores to ensure 6 months storage. Non-compliant or exempt stores must be decommissioned. All grant funded stores must also be fitted with an impermeable cover. This to prevent rainfall entering stores increasing storage capacity and to reduce air pollution.

Farmers can apply through a 2-stage process, starting with an online eligibility checker (opening in the autumn) followed by a full application (over the winter), but **demand is likely to be very high, so early planning is paramount**.

It is recommended that you:

- Start planning your storage capacity need.
- Thinking about what sort of store you might build.
- Choosing where on the farm to put your store.
- Checking if you need to apply for planning permission.
- And essentially to get early support from the Environment Agency.



Slurry Infrastructure Grant Cont.

Recent catchment inspections by the EA have shown an infrastructure failure rate of up to 95% in some catchments in the SW and combined with pressure from Red Tractor will mean some farmers will need to upgrade their slurry storage. Consider this scheme and other means of support from Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Upstream Thinking (UST).

There is free advice under the Upstream Thinking Project offering guidance on slurry storage including full infrastructure audits, calculating on farm slurry storage requirements, help with the Slurry Investment Scheme, CS Capital Grants and signposting to advice funding opportunities.

Farming Rules for Water – Update

In order to prevent manures, fertilisers and soil getting into water courses, please follow the **Farming Rules for Water**, which have been in place since 2018. Many of you will be aware the restrictions that were in place for **autumn/winter 2021 have been amended**. The details of which can be found at:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution#environmental-benefits> and
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-the-farming-rules-for-water/applying-the-farming-rules-for-water>

Please be aware most dirty water and parlour washings are now considered as slurry. All farm waste applications will require a crop need justification.

In summary, the rules are based on the following:

1. You must take steps to prevent manure, fertiliser and soil getting into watercourses
2. Assess pollution risk (ground cover, slope angle, soil type and condition, land drains and distance from watercourses/coastal waters/springs, wells, boreholes)
3. Soil test every 5 years
4. Adhere to rules about:
 - a. Applying fertiliser and reducing associated pollution, particularly on fields with high phosphate indices.
 - b. Using and storing manure
 - c. Preventing erosion – managing livestock and soil

Value of Manures & Slurries to Farm Input Costs

The current economic climate for farming appears to change on an almost daily basis, with the effects of inflation and increased energy costs impacting all businesses. The unprecedented rise in fertiliser prices we are currently seeing is also having a significant impact. This is forcing many farms to reevaluate how they will manage their crops and land in the coming years. Westcountry Rivers Trust Upstream Thinking advisors are well placed to assist with soil test analysis, nutrient management planning and manure management planning. As an example, at current fertiliser prices the nutrients in just 10 tonnes of cattle farmyard manure can be valued at over £160.00. This highlights the importance of using these livestock manures in the right place and at the right times to maximise the efficient use of the nutrient available in the manures for the growing crop. Achieving this this will bring a win-win situation which both reduces farm business input costs and improves water quality in the areas rivers.

Free Fertiliser Spreader Calibration – February 2023

WRT are planning to run a free fertiliser spreader calibration event under the Upstream Thinking Project. The event is planned for February 2023 – final date and venue yet to be confirmed. You will need to bring your machinery to the specified location where there will be a calibration contractor carrying out the service. Once we know attendance numbers, we will send out an email with dates and the location. [Please get in touch with wendy@wrt.org.uk](mailto:wendy@wrt.org.uk) to let us know if you would like to participate in the event.

We look forward to working with you over the coming years, and please feel free to get in touch.

Upstream Thinking 3 is delivered by Westcountry Rivers Trust in your area. The project will run until 2025. Its purpose is to improve water quality across the catchment and the team work with farmers in different ways to achieve this.

Visit wrt.org.uk/project/upstream-thinking-3/ or contact the advisor for your area (as below) for more information about what is available.



Fowey

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Visit wrt.org.uk/project/upstream-thinking-3/