Responsible Phosphate Management on grassland farms - a joint initiative to improve farmers’ awareness of the phosphate problem and relevant corrective action
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Responsible Phosphate Management

Report Summary

The Responsible Phosphate Management campaign was organised jointly by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), the Fertiliser Manufacturers’ Association (FMA), the Ulster Farmers’ Union (UFU) and the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers’ Association (NIAPA).

The aim of the 3-year campaign was to improve farmers’ awareness of the need to take action to reduce the problems caused by eutrophication resulting from excess phosphorus in water.

The campaign included a widely publicised launch followed by a range of activities including distribution of 40,000 leaflets, presentations at farmers’ meetings, press articles, radio interviews, exhibits, promotional meetings and briefings. Zero-P and low P fertilisers were also promoted and made available by the fertiliser industry.

Awareness of the phosphate problem has increased as a result of the campaign. However, there has been no evidence of any significant change in fertiliser practice on farms.

Usage of both nitrogen and phosphate fertilisers has been declining since 1993 but the ratio of nitrogen to phosphate has remained constant. While there was a rise in sales of N:K (zero-P) fertiliser over the period of the campaign, sales of zero-P fertiliser remain insignificant compared with total fertiliser usage, and is little different to a decade earlier. The phosphorus in fertiliser phosphate remains approximately equivalent to the surplus phosphorus in Northern Ireland agriculture.
Responsible Phosphate Management Initiative

Report

1. Introduction

In November 1997 the DARD/DOE Water Quality Liaison Group agreed to initiate a campaign to improve farmers’ awareness of the need to take action to reduce the problems caused by eutrophication resulting from excess phosphorus in water.

DARD Countryside Management Branch (CMB) was tasked with implementing, in conjunction with the Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU), the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers' Association (NIAPA) and the Fertilisers Manufacturers' Association (FMA), a campaign to improve farmers' awareness of the phosphate problem and relevant corrective action.

A Working Group comprising representatives from CMB, UFU, NIAPA and the FMA subsequently agreed a 3-year action plan including the campaign title, the contents of a leaflet for distribution to farmers and an event to launch the campaign. Membership of the Working Group is given in Appendix 1.

This report summarises the activities undertaken during the initiative and presents some conclusions.

2. Campaign title and objective

The Working Group agreed on a three-year campaign, commencing in March 1999, with the title ‘Responsible Phosphate Management’ to focus on the need to encourage responsible use of phosphorus fertiliser on farms.

As most of the phosphate used on Northern Ireland farms is applied to grassland, it was agreed that the main thrust of the campaign should be directed at grassland farmers. The objective of the campaign was:

‘To improve farmers’ awareness of the phosphate problem, and relevant corrective action’.
3. Planned activities

The Working Group agreed that it was essential to embrace a wide range of activities to promote the initiative. The Group met six times to agree and initiate an action plan, which included the following activities:

1. A major conference to launch the campaign.

2. Production and wide distribution of a ‘Responsible Phosphate Management’ leaflet aimed primarily at grassland farmers. (See inside back cover and Appendix 2.)

3. Press articles and press releases aimed at the local and national farming press.

4. Exhibits and poster displays at relevant farming events.

5. Presentations at conferences and meetings.

6. Preparation of nutrient management plans for 20 farms to illustrate the benefits of nutrient management planning.

7. Promotion of the supply by fertiliser merchants of low phosphate and zero phosphate fertilisers.

4. Responsible Phosphate Management key message

The Responsible Phosphate Management campaign had the following key message:

FACT: Many soils have high levels of phosphate

PROBLEM: Phosphate lost from land is causing problems with water quality

SOLUTION: Manage phosphate responsibly in the context of overall farm nutrient management
THIS MEANS: - Responsible maintenance of soil fertility

- Responsible use of slurry

- Responsible use of fertilisers

The Working Group composed and agreed the text of this key message and the contents of the promotional leaflet to be used during the campaign (Appendix 2).

5. Roles of participants

The Working Group agreed the following roles for the participating bodies (in addition to input to Working Group):

**DARD**
- Co-ordination of the campaign in agreement with UFU, NIAPA and the FMA.
- Implementation of the agreed action plan including campaign launch, production of campaign leaflet and press articles
- Production and distribution of leaflets
- Briefing all relevant DARD staff
- Implementation of responsible phosphate management on land farmed by DARD

**FMA**
- Promotion of the campaign among FMA members
- Supplying appropriate fertilisers
- Promotion of sales of zero/low P fertiliser

**UFU/NIAPA**
- Promotion of the campaign message throughout respective memberships
- Participation in launch and other events
6. Campaign Launch

The Responsible Phosphate Management campaign was launched at a conference at Greenmount College on 23 March 1999. DARD organised the event, with sponsorship provided by FMA. Participants included government agencies associated with water quality and representatives from the farming and fertiliser industries, district councils and scientific research agencies. A programme of the launch activities is attached as Appendix 3.

The conference included presentations outlining the importance of responsible phosphate management on farmland and its impact on improving water quality in Northern Ireland. Mr Peter Small, then Permanent Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, welcomed the partnership approach in a self-regulating initiative (Appendix 4). Discussions at the conference were centred on improving awareness of the problems created by the mismanagement of phosphates on farmland and the scientific research which shows how this has contributed to poorer water quality in lakes and rivers. Speakers highlighted techniques and systems geared to the responsible maintenance of soil fertility, how to use and account for the nutrient value in slurry and provided advice on the appropriate use of fertilisers containing phosphate. A summary of press coverage is given in Appendix 5.

7. DARD Activities

In addition to facilitating meetings of the working group and organising the conference to launch the campaign DARD was involved in the following activities:

- Production and distribution of 40,000 copies of the RPM advisory leaflet (See inside back cover and Appendix 2)

- Presentations at farmers’ meetings including 'Profit from Grass’ and ‘Grass Challenge’ conferences, dairy discussion groups and farm walks.
• Production of press articles and features in farmer magazines, newsletters and bulletin and participation in radio interviews to explain the purpose and aims of the initiative (Appendices 6 and 7).

• Exhibits at campaign launch, Greenmount, Loughry and Enniskillen Colleges, DARD Agriculture Development Centres, Balmoral Show and Winter Dairy Fair and at a series of farm walks.

• Meetings with all major fertiliser merchants throughout NI to promote the initiative and encourage the availability of zero/low phosphate fertilisers (Appendices 8 and 9).

• Briefing relevant DARD staff on the principles of responsible phosphate management.

• Implementation of nutrient management planning and use of zero-phosphate fertiliser at DARD farms and provision of nutrient management plans for 20 farms across Northern Ireland.

In addition the chairman of the Working Group, Dr Harry Gracey, met with a UFU Phosphates sub-group set up within UFU specifically on the phosphate issue.

8. FMA Activities

In addition to input to working group and co-hosting the campaign launch, the FMA were involved in the following activities:

• Presentation together with supportive poster display and press release at launch.

• Provision of zero P/low P fertilisers and promotion of sales of zero P/low P fertilisers.

• Promotion of campaign message at fertiliser merchants’ conference.

• Sponsorship of competition focusing on phosphates at Winter Fair.
9. UFU/NIAPA Activities

In addition to membership of the working group, UFU and NIAPA assisted with planning the campaign launch and were involved in the following activities:

- Co-chairing campaign launch and provision of supportive poster displays and press releases at campaign launch (Appendix 10).

- Editorial on responsible phosphate management in UFU Newsletter issued to members and distribution of 12000 copies of RPM leaflets to UFU members (Appendix 11).

10. Conclusions

The phosphorus (P) surplus (inputs of P to farms in feedstuffs and fertilisers minus outputs of P in crop and animal products) has been a feature of Northern Ireland agriculture for almost 50 years. The potential for cost savings to the farming industry by reducing phosphate fertiliser inputs on high P soils has been recommended in advice to farmers since the 1970s.

The water quality problems resulting from excess phosphate in soils have also been highlighted in DARD advice to the industry. An indication of the magnitude of the problem is the fact that since 1974 the soils in the Lough Neagh catchment have accumulated a surplus of 76,000 tonnes of phosphorus. During this period, annual phosphate losses to Lough Neagh from agriculture have increased by 143 tonnes P. While this is only a tiny percentage of the surplus P used in agriculture, it has been sufficient to lead to a steady increase in eutrophication of the Lough. The annual surplus of P within agriculture has remained at approximately 10,000 tonnes, roughly equivalent to the annual fertiliser P use (data from Dr Bob Foy).

The responsible phosphate management campaign aimed to increase farmers’ awareness of the phosphate problem and relevant corrective action. A wide range of methods was used to convey the message summed up in the campaign title. While it is difficult to measure the extent of any increase in awareness among farmers, the significant media coverage of the topic is an indicator of success in this regard.
However, despite widespread and continual promotion of the topic particularly during the three years of the RPM campaign, it is apparent that many within the industry remain reluctant to accept that agriculture is the main contributor to the phosphate problem. In particular, there is a widely held perception that ineffective and inefficient sewage disposal and treatment by domestic and public sewage systems is a major cause of the problem. While this attitude of denial persists it is difficult to envisage significant change in fertiliser practice.

While awareness of the phosphate problem may have been increased, there is no evidence of any significant change in fertiliser practice on farms, or in farm waste management practice. The quantity of phosphate fertiliser used on Northern Ireland farms can be used as an indicator of the effectiveness of the campaign. As the following graphs show, deliveries of fertiliser fluctuate from year to year (source: DARD Statistics). However, the longer term trends indicate annual nitrogen usage rising from 70 k tonnes in 1980 to peak at 130k tonnes in 1995, falling to around 100k tonnes in 2002. Over the same period, annual phosphate usage increased from around 20k tonnes in 1980 to just over 25 k tonnes in 1995, since when it has fallen to under 20k tonnes again.

Source: DARD Statistics
Trends in nitrogen and phosphate use follow similar patterns, as could be expected since most of the phosphate is used in compound fertiliser along with nitrogen and potash. The ratio of phosphate to nitrogen is thus a better indicator of real changes in phosphate use. Indications are that there has been little change in this ratio over the past decade, with the ratio of nitrogen:phosphate remaining close to 5:1.

Use of compound fertiliser containing zero phosphate is another indicator of changes in phosphate practice on farms. Sales of N:K fertiliser did increase to 1342 tonnes between 1999 and 2001, but is still insignificant compared with total fertiliser sales (Source: FMA). This may be due partly to there being little or no difference in price per tonne between N:K and corresponding N:P:K fertiliser, with consequently no real cost-saving for the farmer to use fertiliser without P. Also, the relatively low current usage of N:K fertiliser means that merchants are reluctant to keep stocks on hand, reducing availability to the farmer.

On a more positive note, a few farms, in particular those operated by DARD, have undertaken to adopt the principles embodied within the campaign. These farms have demonstrated that it is possible to reduce the farm P imbalance by modifying the fertiliser practices, without reducing output.
Appendix 1

Responsible Phosphate Management

Working Group Membership

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Harry Gracey (chairman of Working Group) Countryside Management Branch, DARD
Ian McCullough Countryside Management Branch, DARD
John Scott (secretary) Countryside Management Branch, DARD

Fertiliser Manufacturers

Barry Higgs CBE (until March 1999) Fertiliser Manufacturers Association
Paul Walker (from March 1999 to June 2000) Fertiliser Manufacturers Association
Jane Salter (from June 2000) Fertiliser Manufacturers Association
James Morrison Richardsons Fertilisers

Ulster Farmers Union

Douglas Rowe President, UFU

Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association

Brian Mulholland (to June 1999) Public Relations Officer, NIAPA
Miceal McCoy (from June 1999) Chairman, NIAPA
Responsible Phosphate Management
on grassland farms

Responsible Phosphate Management is a joint initiative by the Fertiliser Manufacturers Association, Northern Ireland Agricultural Producer’s Association, Ulster Farmers’ Union and the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland
Responsible Phosphate Management

FACT: Many soils have high levels of phosphate.

PROBLEM: Phosphate lost from land is causing problems with water quality.

SOLUTION: Manage phosphate responsibly in the context of overall farm nutrient management.

THIS MEANS:

- Responsible maintenance of soil fertility
- Responsible use of slurry
- Responsible use of fertilisers

Responsible phosphate management can improve financial margins and water quality.
Phosphate is essential for crops and animals. It is present in feedingstuffs and some fertilisers. On balance, considerably more phosphate is brought onto farms than leaves in farm produce. The resulting surplus accumulates in the soil or is lost in run-off.

Most Northern Ireland soils have sufficient phosphate for grass growth and many have high or excess levels.

At high soil P levels some phosphate is lost into drainage water resulting in water quality problems.

- Soil p index 2 is optimum for intensive grassland.
- Slurry, used responsibly, can meet the phosphate at soil p index 3 (or above is wasteful).
- A nutrient management plan is needed for intensive farms, especially if pig or poultry manure is used.
Responsible Use of Slurry

Slurry is a rich source of phosphate and other nutrients. When used properly it enriches the soil and does not cause pollution. When applied at the wrong time or in the wrong place, slurry can run off or be washed into drains along with the nutrients it contains. Remember, slurry used responsibly can supply the phosphate needs of grass.

- Ensure slurry collection and storage facilities are Adequate.
- Apply slurry during the growing season and follow the Code of Good Agricultural Practice.
- On silage fields apply slurry:
  - at higher rates on low P fields;
  - at lower rates on high P fields.
- Avoid excessively heavy dressings at a single application.

Responsible use of slurry means ensuring it is stored and used as a valuable source of nutrients.
Responsible Use of Fertilisers

An adequate supply of available phosphate is essential in the soil for grass growth. Nutrient availability in soils is measured by laboratory analysis, with results given in terms of soil index values:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil index</th>
<th>Soil P level</th>
<th>Grass response to additional phosphate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Large response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Small response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Optimum</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 and over</td>
<td>Excess</td>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High soil P levels result from:

- continued use of slurry and high phosphate fertilisers;
- excessive use of pig and poultry manure;
- use of inappropriate compound fertilisers on grazing land.

- Where possible, base fertiliser use on soil analysis.
- Only apply high phosphate fertiliser where soil P index is zero.
- Use straight N, NK or low P fertilisers as appropriate.

Responsible use of fertilisers means using zero P or low P fertilisers on high P soils.
**Responsible Phosphate Management**
on grassland farms

- **Responsible maintenance of soil fertility**
  - maintain grassland soils at P index 2;
  - use soil analysis and a nutrient management plan for high slurry inputs.

- **Responsible use of slurry**
  - apply slurry during the growing season and follow the Code of Good Agricultural Practice;
  - allow for nutrient content of slurry when selecting fertilisers.

- **Responsible use of fertilisers**
  - use different fertilisers on cutting and grazing areas;
  - use straight N, NK or low p fertilisers as appropriate. Some examples are illustrated below:

For further information on Responsible Phosphate Management contact your locally based Greenmount College Countryside Management staff or telephone 02890 520922
Responsible Phosphate Management

Launch – 23 March 1999

Programme

Chairman - John Mulvenna

Introduction
Liam McKibben, DARD Environmental Policy

Responsible phosphate management
Ian McCullough, DARD Countryside Management

Phosphates and water quality
Dr Bob Foy, DARD Science Service

Sustainable fertiliser and animal feeding practices
Dr John Bailey, DARD Science Service

Response from the fertiliser industry
James Morrison, Fertiliser Manufacturers Association

Question and answer session
Questions: Douglas Rowe, UFU and Brian Mulholland, NIAPA

Panel: Dr John Bailey, DARD Science Service
Dr Bob Foy, DARD Science Service
James Morrison, FMA
Dr Victoria Crone, Environment and Heritage Service, DOE
Ian McCullough, DARD Countryside Management

Discussion

Official Launch Peter Small, Permanent Secretary, DARD

Poster Display
Partnership highlights need for responsible use of phosphate on farms

The Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland, local farming unions and the fertiliser industry joined forces today during a major conference in Greenmount to highlight the importance of responsible phosphate management on farmland and its impact on improving water quality in Northern Ireland.

Mr Peter Small, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland welcomed the partnership approach to highlighting the problems caused by overuse of phosphates on farmland and added:

"Today's discussions are geared to improve awareness of the problems created by the mismanagement of phosphates on farmland which scientific research shows has contributed to poorer water quality in our lakes and rivers.

"Many soils are already phosphate rich and the application of fertilisers containing more phosphate without soil testing or an nutrient planning strategy is both economically unprofitable and environmentally damaging.

"Speakers this morning have highlighted techniques and systems geared to the responsible maintenance of soil fertility, how to use and account for the nutrient value in slurry and some advice on the appropriate use of fertilisers containing phosphate."

In conclusion Mr Small exhorted farmers to examine their use of phosphates carefully and react positively to the campaign adding:

"The fact that the representatives of both farming and fertiliser industry have joined together with my Department in what is a self-regulating initiative, indicates the genuine concern felt by all about our local environment."

Notes for Editors
1. "Responsible Phosphate Management" is a joint initiative by DANI, the Fertiliser Manufacturers Association and the farming unions UFU and NIAPA.
2. The purpose of this initiative is to improve awareness of the phosphate problem in Northern Ireland, particularly in relation to water quality and initiate relevant corrective action on farms.
Appendix 5

Responsible Phosphate Management

Press coverage post launch of campaign

Make cuts or else (editorial Farming Life March 27 1999)

The environmental and economic arguments (Farming Life March 27 1999)

Essential element for good production (Farming Life March 27 1999)

Initiative launched at Greenmount (Farming Life March 27 1999)

The effect on Northern Ireland’s lakes (Farming Life March 27 1999)

Phosphate – a waste of money on many farms and a pollutant in the water supply (Farm Trader March 23 1999)

Misuse of phosphates subject of conference (Farm Trader March 23 1999)

Raising awareness about phosphates (Irish Farmers’ Journal March 27 1999)

Be responsible about phosphate inputs (Irish Farmers’ Journal April 3 1999)

Benefits of responsible phosphate management (Farm Week April 9 1999)

Aware and take due care (Irish farmers’ Journal April 3 1999)

Intensive industry takes action (Irish Farmers’ Journal April 3 1999)

All sectors subscribing to problem (Farm Trader April 1 1999)

Integrated crop management aiding battle (Farm Trader April 1 1999)
Appendix 6

Responsible Phosphate Management

Press releases and press articles

The effect on Northern Ireland's lakes (March 1999)

Save money on fertiliser P (April 1999)

Management of nutrient inputs is vital (May 1999)

Unnecessary phosphate - unnecessary cost (April 1999)

Countryside management scheme tackles water quality issues (June 1999)

Nutrient management planning (October 1999)

Nutrient management planning on grassland farms - it makes economic sense (February 2000)

Cut out the phosphorus (February 2000)

Saving money and the environment (March 2000)

Phosphate on grassland - the facts (March 2000)

Use “NK” fertiliser for first cut silage (March 2000)

Phosphate management safeguards water quality (April 2000)

Responsible phosphate management (May 2000)

Farmers take phosphate initiative (June 2000)

Making efficient use of cattle slurry (September 2000)
Responsible Phosphate Management
on grassland farms

Responsible Phosphate Management is a joint initiative by the Fertiliser Manufacturers Association, Northern Ireland Agricultural Producer’s Association, Ulster Farmers’ Union and the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland

FACT: Many soils have high levels of phosphate.

PROBLEM: Phosphate lost from land is causing problems with water quality.

SOLUTION: Manage Phosphate responsibility in the context of overall farm nutrient management.

THIS MEANS:

• Responsible maintenance of soil fertility
• Responsible use of slurry
• Responsible use of fertilisers

Responsible phosphate management can improve financial margins and water quality

For further information on Responsible Phosphate Management contact your locally based Greenmount College Countryside Management staff or Tel: (029) 90525041
Appendix 8

Fertiliser Merchants Visited

- Fane Valley Co-Op Agricultural and Dairy Society Ltd, Armagh
- J Bibby Agriculture, 160 Moira Road, Lisburn
- John Thompson & Sons, 35-39 York Street, Belfast
- R A & T Loane, Main Street, Kesh
- James Scott & Sons Ltd, 2/4 Main Street, Maghera
- Christie And Jeffers, 4a Townhead Street, Ballymoney
- Bill Reid Farm Supplies, 20 Main Street, Ballynahinch
- Joseph Walls, 28 Sandbank Road, Hilltown
- D A Armstrong, 2 Belmore View, Florencecourt, Enniskillen
- Deerings Farm Supplies, Cortrasna, Rosslea
- H Harpur, 11 Kinnallen Road, Dromara
- Seamus Laffin & Sons, Gorran, Tassagh, Keady
- K Powell & Sons, Armagh Road, Keady
- Leckpatrick Agricultural Services, Artigarvan, Strabane
- Alexander Mills, 43 Main Street, Benburb
- R L Hewitt, 26 Main Street, Tullyhogue, Cookstown
- P Mcdermott & Sons, 43 Main Street, Dromore, Co Tyrone
- T McKeown, 46 Main Street, Gortin, Omagh
- W J B McKelvey & Son, 30/36 Lisburn Road, Ballynahinch
- Mackin Animal Feeds, 108 Dublin Road, Newry
- Bakers Super Store, 97 Drones Road, Armoy, Ballymoney
- North Antrim Farm Services, 155 Moyarget Road, Ballycastle
- W A Palmer, 120a Ballinlea Road, Armoy, Ballymoney
- J Bradley & Sons, 83 Craigmore Road, Ringsend, Coleraine
- John G Deeny, 123 Learmount Road, Ballyroy, Claudy
- Joseph Drennan, 41 Main Street, Tobermore
- Keith Scott, 271/273 Ballyquin Road, Limavady
- Northern Counties, Co-Op Enterprises Ltd, Swatragh
Fertiliser Merchants provided with information via letter and leaflet

- D Clements. 38/40 Main Street, Augher
- Dungiven Farm Supplies, Main Street, Dungiven
- M Beattie & Son Ltd, 70 Plumbridge Road, Newtownstewart
- Agricultural Trading Merchants, Lislee Mills, Co Fermanagh
- Jack Taggart, 1 Carnkenny Road, Ardstraw, Omagh
- Norbrook Laboratories Ltd, Station Works, Newry
- L W Surplus, 31 Drumleggagh, Church Road, Newtownstewart
- R W Toase Ltd, 13 Merchant Quay, Newry
- T H Booth & Sons Ltd, Collumbrone, Ballygawley
- J A Chestnutt, 35 Main Street, Stranocum, Ballymoney
- Taylors (Fyfin) Ltd, 27 Killeen Road, Fyfin, Strabane
- McClungs, 144 Saintfield Road, Crossgar, Co Down
- Devenish Feed Supplements Ltd, 96 Duncrue Street, Belfast
- Lakeland Farm Supplies, Agricultural Centre, Omagh
- Raymond Pogue, 54 Milltown Road, Benburb, Co Tyrone
- J N Sinclair, 7 The Square, Stewartstown, Co Tyrone
- Wilson Feeds, Granville Industrial Estate, Dungannon
- David Dixon, 46 Garden Street, Magherafelt
- Kilcronaghan & Ballinascreen Co-Op, Draperstown
- F Mckenna, 90 Main Street, Maghera
- Linton & Robinson, 1 Dock Street, Strabane
- South Armagh Farming Enterprises, 8 Newry Road, Camlough
- K & S Robinson, 11 Broghter Road, Limavady
- F Warick, 73 Doagh Road, Kells, Ballymena
- T N Mcclelland, 26 Moyra Road, Doagh, Ballyclare
- Hydro-Agri (Uk) Ltd, 48-56 Duncrue Street, Belfast
- P Lavelle & Sons, 80 New Road, Silverbridge
- Rex Humphry, 82 Coolyvenny Road, Coleraine
- Andrews Milling Ltd, 227 Main Street, Lisnaskea
- Murphy Bros, 103 Carrickastricken Road, Forkhill
- J A Linton & Son Ltd, 145 Killylea Road, Caledon
THE ULSTER FARMERS UNION WOULD LIKE FARMERS TO USE PHOSPHATE CORRECTLY TO:

- GIVE THE BEST POSSIBLE YIELD
- TO PROTECT WATERWAYS
- TO SAVE THEM MONEY

USE SLURRY WISELY TO PRODUCE THE HIGHEST YIELD POSSIBLE

ONLY PURCHASE PHOSPHATE WHERE NECESSARY AND

TRY AS FAR AS YOU ARE ABLE TO STOP OUR RIVERS AND LAKES BECOMING PHOSPHATE ENRICHED

THIS VOLUNTARY CODE IT IS HOPED WILL STOP THE NEED FOR LEGISLATION
UFU Newsletter to members

A clean pollution free countryside is a prized asset for a wide variety of reasons, not least to us as farmers producing and marketing quality food. Farming relies on a good supply of clean water, but in turn, farming has the potential to adversely affect water quality.

Phosphate is a vital part of agricultural production, essential for both grass and livestock. However substantially more phosphate is brought on to farms in fertiliser and feed than leaves in crop and animal products. In these cost-conscious times we need to ensure that inputs are kept in line with requirements and that nutrients in slurry are efficiently re-cycled. Our aim must be efficient production coupled with protection of water quality.

Maintaining soil fertility is fundamental to efficient grass production. Responsible use of slurry and fertilisers is critical – and it makes sound economic sense. Irresponsible use is a threat to the environment.

I would therefore endorse the joint initiative entitled Responsible Phosphate Management. The UFU is a partner in this initiative, details of which are in the leaflet enclosed with this newsletter. We all need to play our part.

Douglas Rowe
President