

Farmer bulletin

December 2022

Launch of new Nutrient Leaching Tool

In this bulletin find out how to register for and complete the NLT

Introduction

For new farmers joining up to this newsletter here's a recap of why we as a farming group are working on the Poole Harbour Nutrient Management Scheme (PHNMS). Also we look ahead to the launch this month of the NLT.

Farmers working to reduce nutrient losses that cause ecological damage is clearly the proper thing to do. But adding urgency to what we should do, lies in the fact that a group of NGOs with an interest in water quality took the UK Government to the High Court in 2015 claiming that the Government had failed to do enough to protect key water bodies, including Poole Harbour. In simple terms the NGOs won the argument, but all sides, aware that the imposition of regulation such as a Water Protection Zone would be drastic, agreed to work on alternative solutions that achieve the same outcome. In 2024, the EA and Defra (must report back to the Court on progress.

If there has been no progress or the alternative solution doesn't work, it seems likely that the Court would impose an WPZ. As farmers we need to demonstrate that there has been sufficient progress, and that it will continue, to be sure of avoiding the WPZ.

So, Poole Harbour Agriculture Group (PHAG) was formed and, with farmer support, have developed a voluntary farmer-run scheme, Poole Harbour Nutrient Management Scheme. Natural England and the Environment Agency have signed off PHNMS as an Approved Scheme, with the next two years acting as Phase 1 of roll-out.

Louise Stratton, Development Manager



Photo credit: Wakely Cox

Timeframe

The Environment Agency will shortly be releasing the Nutrient Leaching Tool (NLT) to farmers in the Poole Harbour catchment.

What you need to do now:

- **All farmers need to register with the Environment Agency to receive the NLT.** Email poolefarmreturn@environment-agency.gov.uk with your name, farm name and address, SBI, CPH and telephone number.
 - The EA will then send you a link to an interactive mapping website, where you can check that your holding number includes all your farm's field parcels that you manage.
 - Once this is correct, the EA will pre-populate your NLT and email it to you, please allow a few days for it to be processed and returned. This is then ready for you to input your farm data.

Complete and return the NLT by 31st March 2023:

- **Training sessions** on how to enter the data (see below) and complete the NLT will be available in January for all farmers, and we will circulate details once venues and dates are confirmed.
- **Input your farm data** for Spring 2022 to Spring 2023 farming year.
 - This will generate your baseline data; showing what your current farm system leaches in nitrates in the year 2022 - 2023 and what you are expecting to lose for the 2023 - 24 year.
- **Input your projections** for the Spring 2023 to Spring 2024 farming year.
 - This will help guide you to what changes, if any, you need to make for next year to meet the glidepath figure (if in PHNMS) of 25.6kg/ha or the Environment Agency target figure (if outside of PHNMS) of 18.1kg/ha.
- **Return the NLT by 31st March 2023.** The NLT must be returned to PHAG if you are a member or direct to the EA if you are not.

Photo credit: Wakely Cox



POOLE HARBOUR
Nutrient Management Scheme

Why join PHAG?

Farmers who join PHAG and therefore participate in PHNMS will be permitted by the EA to work to a gentler glidepath nitrate target until 2030, rather than meeting the end target immediately.

Farmers participating in PHNMS will not submit their NLT data directly to the EA. PHAG farmers' data will be anonymised and only shared with the EA at a catchment scale that protects the anonymity of each farm holding.

Farmers who participate in PHNMS will send their NLT results to PHAG to be verified. PHAG will only share with the EA the name and farm of its participating farmers; the EA will not have access to the data held by PHAG. Member farmers will be a lower priority for direct farm inspections than farms not participating in PHNMS.

In addition to these benefits, only PHAG members will be able to trade N allowances, either selling surplus allowances they have achieved through nitrate-efficient farming, or purchasing allowances to bring their farm N leaching figure to meet the glidepath target.

About us

The Poole Harbour Agriculture Group Community Interest Company is set up to run and administer PHNMS as a not-for-profit company. Income from membership is necessary to cover the costs of the Company, including overheads such as staff time, insurance, managing the membership database securely and transparently, accounting costs and legal support to ensure members' interests are looked after. None of the Directors or Board members receive a salary and are giving up their time for the benefit of the farming community in the Poole Harbour catchment to help shape and drive the scheme forward. Any profit the Company makes will be re-invested in PHAG.

PHAG Membership - now open!

We have set the membership rates for this first year of 2023 as low as we can, and based on members' farm area.

2022-23 farmer membership rates:

1 - 50ha	£50
51 - 200ha	£150
201ha +	£300

Membership opens now and closes 28th February 2023. Apply now on our [website](https://www.pooleharbournitrates.org.uk).

For further details please contact
info@pooleharbournitrates.org.uk

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