

## ***Supplementary written evidence from the National Farmers Union***

Dear Mr Dunne,

Thank you for inviting the NFU to give evidence as part of your Water Quality in Rivers Inquiry. We always value the chance to input to the work of the Committee and I hope you found my evidence helpful.

I promised to write to the Committee with more detail about compliance of the dairy industry with slurry legislation. I am informed that this information is not held directly by the NFU, but the Environment Agency has recently looked at compliance in a specific catchment, the River Axe, and Dame Glenys Stacey also looked at the subject in her report Farm Inspection and Regulation Review. At the NFU, we have looked at compliance in the past, and once surveyed our members on the question, but the sample was small and the work is now out-of-date.

The NFU is clear, we would like to see greater compliance with slurry legislation. There are some structural barriers to building new storage and increasing compliance including gaining access to finance, generating a return on investment, certainty around future regulation and trade, securing planning permission, and overcoming tenant-landlord dynamics.

The River Wye came up throughout the conversation, in particular a suggestion that water quality issues are closely linked to an expansion of poultry farms in the catchment. While this link may seem plausible, it is just not supported by recent and reliable evidence. In January this year, Natural Resources Wales published an assessment of compliance against phosphorus targets in the Wye and found 'the overall pattern of failures in the Wye does not support the hypothesis that poultry units are the main or even a particularly important reason for nutrient failures on the Wye'.

I hope this information is helpful. Thank you again for inviting the NFU to give evidence and please do let me know if I can offer any further help or information.

Best wishes,

**Richard Bramley**  
Chair, NFU Environment Forum

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