

## Written evidence submitted by AWT Farm Services (FR0078)

### CALL FOR EVIDENCE - FARMING RULES FOR WATER

I am a farmer who manages a collaborative farming group growing arable crops across 2000 ha in East Anglia. We grow mainly premium cereal crops and these require fertiliser to obtain profitable yields. I believe it is in the country's interest that these fertilisers are as much organic rather than the reliance on inorganic, man-made fertiliser. Organic fertiliser for us comes from either local livestock enterprises who have insufficient land to spread on, or sewage cake. The disposal of sewage cake is a huge problem for the water companies and farmers are the answer. It is a waste product and we use it as a fertiliser to improve our crops and our soils. This is the bigger picture and unfortunately the Environment Agency and ADAS (RB209) do not get involved in this bigger picture. RB209 is a guideline and not a statutory power and I believe my crops do have a need for Nitrogen and Phosphate in the Autumn.

The EA's implementation of the rules prevents farmers from spreading organic fertilisers in the Summer and Autumn months. This is when most product gets spread before an autumn cereal crop is drilled. It is by far the best time for spreading, as the soil is usually at its driest and capable of withstanding machinery and product. Cultivations to incorporate the product can then be done in good conditions. There is sufficient time for the soils and following crop to break down and utilise these fertilisers.

The rules should be changed then it does not matter about application or interpretation.

Agricultural pollution comes from poor planning and implementation. Farming is more about the correct conditions rather than cut off dates. It is more about practice rather than theory. There are those that pollute and they need to be educated. Water boards should not be polluting directly into rivers or the sea because they have had their alternative plans removed .

I cannot speak for all areas of the country as there are so many different scenarios. In my area it makes sense to spread organic material in the autumn when soils are at their driest; we have annual rainfall of approx 500mm; we do not have excessive slopes; and we are close to the population and water treatment plants. Cereal cropping of mainly oats, wheat and barley are helped significantly by organic fertilisers especially before going into winter. Risks of pollution are low. Please let common sense prevail.

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