Blue Dot Steering Committee – ASSAP Update
January 18th 2024
Noel Meehan – ASSAP Manager

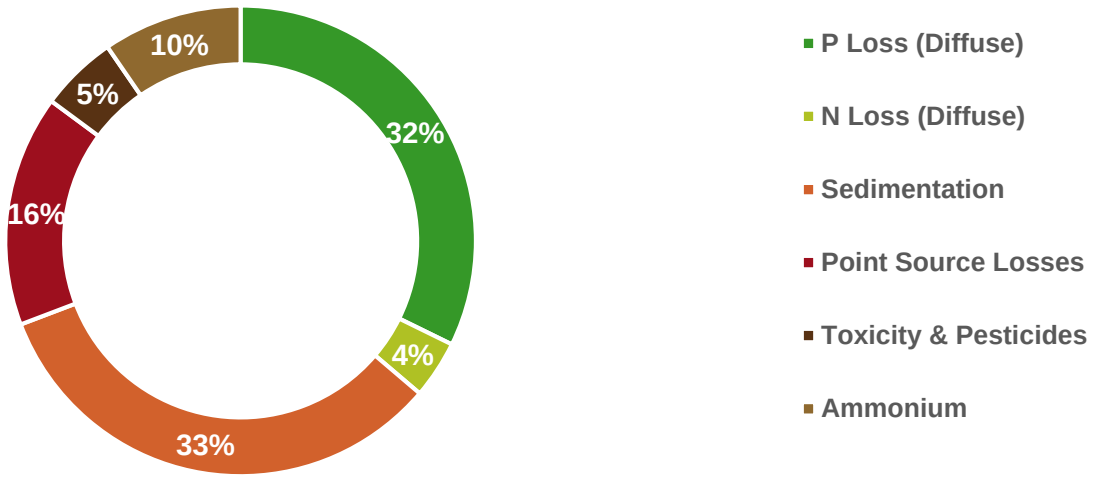
Blue Dot Waterbodies

- Blue Dot waterbody with referrals - 24
- Number of farms assessed in Blue Dot waterbodies - 273
- Farmer engagement - 94%
- Farmer agreement on proposed measures - 90%
- Average number of issues identified per farm - 5
- Reports to Eden App - 9

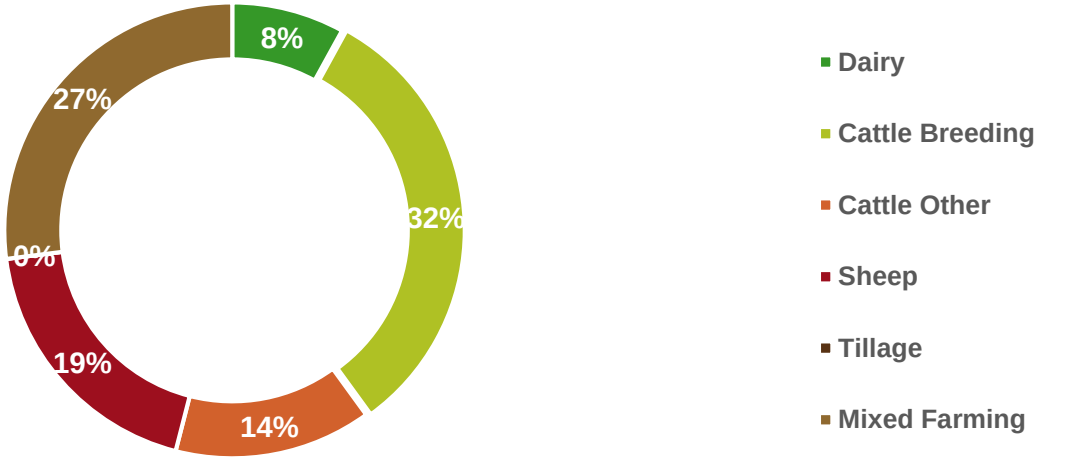
teagasc
Agriculture and Food Development Authority

ASSAP – Blue Dot Waterbodies

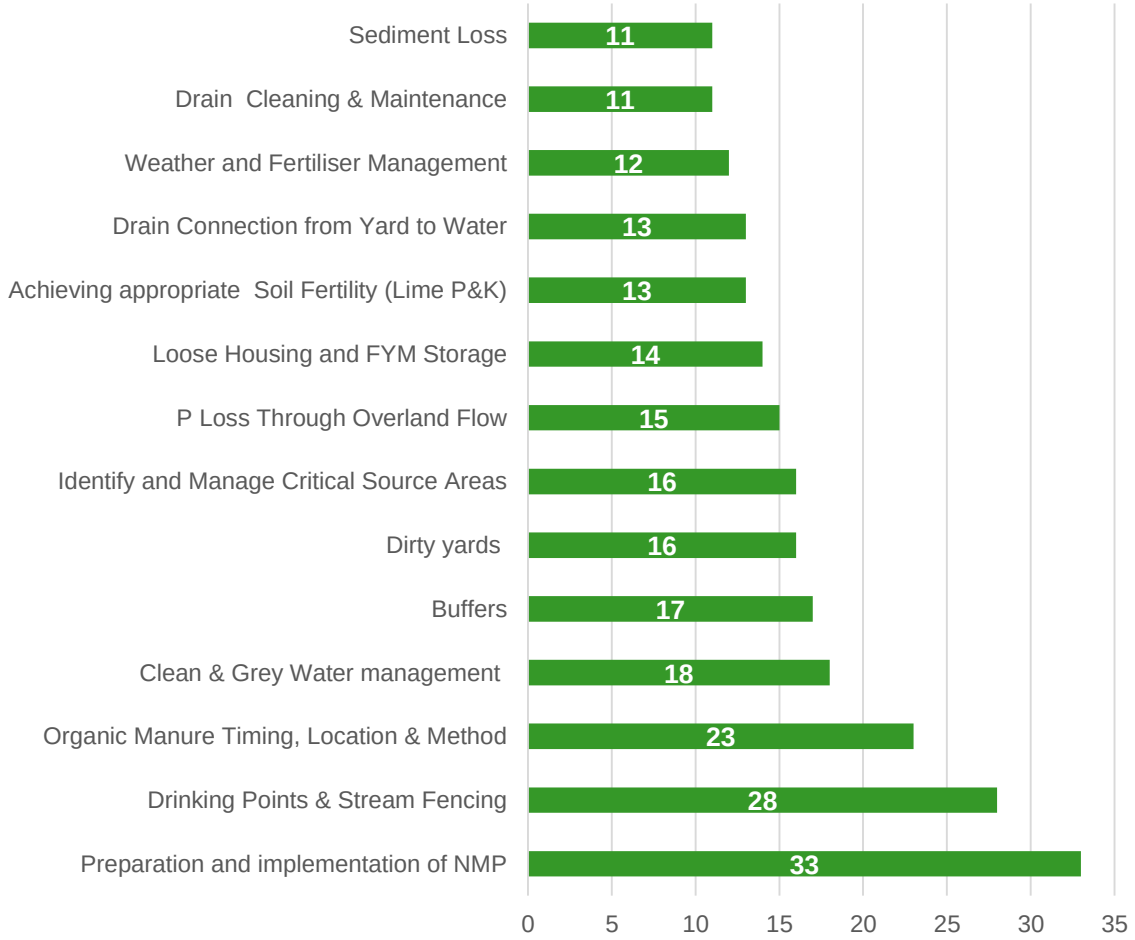
PAA Pressures



Farming Enterpsire Assessed



15 most frequent high risk issues



Agriculture and Food Development Authority

5 Most frequent High Risk Issues – Mitigation actions and implementation

Issue	Mitigation Actions	Risk 1	Risk 1 - Agreed	Issues Reviewed	Not Started	Not Proceeding	Commenced	Complete	Ongoing
Preparation and implementation of NMP	Precision application of nutrients at correct rate	23	23	22	12	0	0	0	10
Preparation and implementation of NMP	Informing and educating farmers	18	17	16	0	0	0	0	16
Preparation and implementation of NMP	Avoid application at high risk times	5	5	5	3	0	0	0	2
Preparation and implementation of NMP	Use of straight fertilisers	4	4	4	2	0	0	0	2
Preparation and implementation of NMP	Avoid application at high risk places (CSA's)	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	2
Drinking Points & Stream Fencing	Prevent livestock access to waters	25	15	25	8	2	4	11	0
Drinking Points & Stream Fencing	Informing and educating farmers	13	7	13	0	0	0	0	13
Organic Manure Timing, Location & Method	Avoid Application at high risk places	13	12	13	5	0	0	0	8
Organic Manure Timing, Location & Method	Avoid application at high risk times	8	8	8	2	0	0	0	6
Organic Manure Timing, Location & Method	Adopt latest manure application techniques	7	6	7	4	1	0	0	2
Organic Manure Timing, Location & Method	Informing and educating farmers	6	5	6	0	0	0	0	6
Organic Manure Timing, Location & Method	Precision application of nutrients at correct rate	4	3	3	0	0	0	0	3
Organic Manure Timing, Location & Method	Change from slurry to solid manure	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2
Organic Manure Timing, Location & Method	Use buffer zone	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Clean & Grey Water management	Separation of clean, grey, soiled and dirty water in farmyard	12	12	12	6	0	1	5	0
Clean & Grey Water management	Improved management, collection and storage of farm wastes	11	9	8	6	0	0	2	0
Clean & Grey Water management	Informing and educating farmers	8	8	8	4	0	0	0	4
Buffers	Adhere to buffer zones and safeguard zones	14	14	14	2	0	0	0	12
Buffers	Avoid application at high risk places	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	4
Buffers	Avoid application at high risk times	4	4	4	1	0	0	0	3
Buffers	Informing and educating farmers	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	1

Reports to Eden App: Tay_010

1. Background information

Table 2: Information relating to PAA and waterbody name, draft and referral code, and referral date.

PAA	Waterbody	Draft code	Referral code	Referral date
Tay	Tay_010		RA0000207	23/04/2020

2. Referral evidence and significant issue

From LAWPRO referral

The main reason these pressures are significant and should be addressed is that the location of the cattle access in the Referral 2 area is in very close proximity to the EPA monitoring station and that this is a high status i.e. sensitive waterbody.

Similarly, the livestock feeding area in Referral 2 is very close to a tributary and there is a high risk of nutrient and sediment entering the tributary and impacting the main channel.

The pollutant is likley nutrients from organic matter and sediment from disturbed soil on the riverbank. The pathway is short and "runoff from overland flow" best describes the likely pathway for this significant issue.

For the purpose of connecting this excel referral to the EPA App referral, the pressure type has been classified as "Animal access point", as this is closest in description to the possible cause of the pressure. Phosphate and sediment is the potential significant issue for the area inside Referral 2.

3. Measures implemented by ASSAP

Information relating to the final mitigation measures agreed and implemented – at referral scale

Measures implemented were related to mitigating nutrient and sediment losses from a livestock winter feeding area location and animal drinking points.

- In this referral area:
  - Winter feeding area has been relocated to less vulnerable area.
  - Animal access points have been mostly fenced off (95%)

4. Barriers to implementation of measures

Information relating to the barriers that prevented the implementation of mitigation measures recommend by ASSAP – at referral scale.

Describe the barriers identified in the handover process (decision tree) relating specifically to:
Time (e.g., measure not implemented because farmer must wait until next growing season),
Cost (e.g., farmer can't afford to implement a measure),
Behaviour (e.g., no or lack of engagement or participation),
Social (e.g. age, health)
Policy (e.g., existing policy prevents the farmer from implementing a measure),
Non-ag issue (e.g., LAWPRO confirmed the issue is due to a pressure other than agriculture, such as WWTP),
Time lag (e.g., waiting for nutrient levels to decline after nitrate mitigation measures are implemented),
Unknown issue (e.g., where ASSAP and LAWPRO agree the pressure or issue has not been identified)

Delay in implementation due to a social related barrier.

5. Referral 2 conclusion

Conclusion relating to the process from measures recommended to barriers to implementation – at referral scale.

It was agreed by both scientist and advisor that sufficient measures were recommended in the referral area to address issues relating to the referral. If the final animal access points are fully fenced, it is agreed that sufficient work has been carried out here to address issues in the waterbody relating to this referral. However, if the final measure is not fully implemented it is expected that issues in the waterbody will continue.

1. Background information

Table 1: Information relating to PAA and waterbody name, draft and referral code, and referral date.

PAA	Waterbody	Draft code	Referral code	Referral date
Tay	Tay_010		RA0000209	23/04/2020

2. Referral evidence and significant issue

From LAWPRO referral

- Referral 1 area observations: Drainpipe, no discharge, but aquatic plant growth. Low DO, slightly high Cond.

3. Measures implemented by ASSAP

Information relating to the final mitigation measures agreed and implemented – at referral scale

- No measures recommended for the pipe as it was found to be a land drain for a spring (confirmed with landowner), but other issues were identified through farm visits in the area.
- In this referral area;
  - A critical source area (CSA) was identified ~ 0.5 ha. It was agreed that organic manure will not be spread in this area – exclusion zone.
  - Riparian margins were installed adjacent to the waterbody in areas considered to be vulnerable to sediment and phosphorus loss ~ 200m.
  - Agreed to adhere to appropriate buffer zones for organic and inorganic fertilisers.
  - Animal access points were closed off.

5. Referral 1 conclusion

Conclusion relating to the process from measures recommended to barriers to implementation – at referral scale.

It was agreed by both scientist and advisor that sufficient measures were recommended in the referral area to address issues relating to the referral. It was also agreed that sufficient implementation of recommended measures was achieved in the referral area by landowners.

teagasc
Agriculture and Food Development Authority

Reports to Eden App: Duff_010

1 Referral 1:

1.1 Background information

Table 1: Information relating to PAA and waterbody name, draft and referral code, and referral date.

PAA	Waterbody	Draft referral code (LAWPRO excel code)	WFD App Referral code	Referral date
Duff	Duff _010	Duff_010_RFL_01	RA0000457	25/07/2021

1.2 Referral evidence and significant issue

The referral is located in the townland of Drummans, Co. Leitrim. A SSIS kick sample was taken both upstream and downstream of the referral location, both of which indicated that there was no significant issue with the invertebrates present within the stream. In addition, chemistry was collected in the same locations as the kick sample which also noted that the nutrient parameters were within their retrospective Environmental Quality Standard (EQS). However, as this waterbody (Duff_010) is a high status objective waterbody which has only recently returned to high biological status, it is important that we try to maintain this recent improvement, through informing and educating farmers of best practice.

1.3 Measures implemented following advice

Information relating to the final mitigation measures agreed and implemented – at referral scale. Use data from Farm Assessment records to detail measures implemented.

The focus on this protect waterbody referral was to advise farmers in relation to sediment, nutrient and herbicide usage. 2 farmers were visited within the waterbody referral area. Protect measures were made as follows:

Round bale Storage

- Do not store within 20m of watercourse - Risk1 (1 Farmer)

Clean & Grey water management

- Separation of clean, grey and dirty water in the farmyard- Risk 3 (1 Farmer)
- Informing & educating farmers- Risk 3 (1 farmer)

Losses from tillage Crops

- Appropriate disposal of chemicals R3 (1 Farmer)

Buffer

- Adhere to buffer zone and safeguard zones- Risk 3 (1 Farmer)

Sloped Fields

- Avoid application in high risk Critical source Area Risk 2 (2 Farmers)

Weather and Fertilizer Management

- Avoid spreading fertilizer when heavy rain is forecast and when soil conditions are not suitable- Risk 2 (1 Farmers)

1.4 PAA Communications

Description of farmer meetings, discussion groups, KT events, media engagements, newsletters, training courses etc undertaken by ASSAP advisors in water body. Dairy co-op advisors to detail their engagements separately.

Farmers Meeting 12th March 2020 in Cliffoney Hall Co Sligo

ASSAP advisor addressed 9 discussion group meetings in 2019 -2020 period, some of these would have farmers operating in the Duff area

Leaflet drop done over the area in 2019

Fertilizer Applicator Demonstration held on Tuesday 11th Feb 2020 hosted by Martin's Machinery, Kilmactranny Co Sligo for farmers of the area and organised by Teagasc ASSAP advisors

1.5 Barriers to implementation of measures

Information relating to the barriers that prevented the implementation of mitigation measures recommend by ASSAP – at referral scale.

Many farmers are awaiting next **Environmental Scheme** (Acres)

Cost is seen by farmers as a barrier to fencing off watercourses, especially considering providing an alternative water supply also incurs a cost. Where farms are fragmented there are multiple costs in different portions of the farm. Cost also affected the decisions regarding the wintering of livestock especially cattle.

Behaviour/Attitude, some farmers consider their infringements minor and point to sewage schemes, forestry and Urban waste water as bigger issues in the area

1.6 Referral 1 Conclusion

Conclusion relating to the process from measures recommended to barriers to implementation – at referral scale.

This is not an intensively farmed PAA. Out wintering practices of some farmers is impacting water quality, especially where heavier cattle are given access to scrubland for the winter period. Education around the stocking density level used for winter-age has been part of the work in this PAA. Also explaining the availability of grants through the TAMS scheme. The focus was to maintain CAP payments rather that to lose them through malpractice.

With regard to the protection of watercourses, ASSAP advisor feels that the water quality in the area would benefit from an EIP to encourage fencing off watercourses and perhaps offering an alternative water supply through solar powered drinkers, nose bowels or ram pumps where suitable.

The adherence to buffer zones was an easy sell to the farmers, especially where they had a participation history in the previous Agri-environmental schemes

Ongoing events and contact will benefit farmers in the area.

Conclusions

- Predominant issues are
  - livestock access to streams
  - nutrient application rates, locations and timing
  - Adherence to buffer margins
  - management of clean, grey and soiled water in yards
  - management of CSA's
  - drain cleaning and maintenance
- Good engagement from farmers with ASSAP advisors
- Implementation of measures required to see water quality improvements
- Supports through Water EIP and co-operation projects will help with implementation