



Referral Report

Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP)

Advisors working with [ASSAP](#) offer a free and confidential advisory service to farmers. Where farmers agreed to take part in the programme the advisor carried out a farm assessment and recommended mitigation actions targeted to address the water issues identified by the Local Authority Waters Programme ([LAWPRO](#)).

Mitigation Actions Recommended

During a farm visit the advisor identifies issues that need mitigation measures implemented to reduce the risk to water quality. These are categorised as Risk 1, 2 or 3. Risk 1 issues are those that are most likely to impact on water quality and relate directly to the water quality issues identified by LAWPRO. Risk 2 and 3 are other issues on the farm that may require management or improvement which would indirectly lead to improvement in water quality.

Reporting

Waterbody scale reports are a summary of the issues impacting water quality and the mitigation actions implemented by farmers. They are a synthesis and interpretation of individual referral reports. They are prepared by ASSAP advisors following review with the catchment scientist.

Accompanying this report are summary details of the mitigation actions recommended and implemented in this waterbody. This report and the accompanying tables will be uploaded to the WFD App.

Summary

PAA	<i>Allow</i>
No. of waterbodies	<i>1</i>
Water body name	<i>Allow_060</i>
Number of referrals	<i>7</i>
Referral codes	<i>RA0000534, RA0000533, RA0000532, RA0000531, RA0000187, RA0000152, RA0000151</i>
Advisor	<i>Eimear Connery, Darren Deasy & Terry O'Mahony</i>
Scientist	<i>Paul O'Callaghan</i>
Date	<i>24th January 2023</i>

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
Allow	Allow_060	FARMYARDS	RA0000534 RA0000531 RA0000187	24/04/2020

1.2 Referral evidence and significant issue

From LAWPRO referral

Three tributaries were observed with heavily impacted macroinvertebrate communities and poor SSIS assessment results. These also had relatively high nutrient levels with two having very elevated ammonium levels (0.622mg/l-N and 0.26mg/l-N) and the other both elevated nitrate (3.9mg/l-N) and phosphate (0.046mg/l-P). The soils in all cases were generally poorly draining mineral soils and so elevated ammonium and nitrate would not be typically expected from diffuse sources. In all cases silage effluent leaks via farmyard drains were located by LAWPro or ASSAP staff. Silage effluent was reaching the waterway via drains on three tributaries these were causing serious impacts to the tributaries and contributing nutrients to the main channel. SSIS assessment indicated severe impact and this was reflected in chemical analysis with highly elevated nutrient concentrations detected. Improved management of collection and storage of farm wastes is necessary, repairs to any damaged or degraded silage storage facilities and prevention of runoff of effluent from farmyards to drains. The referral covers the catchment area of this tributary.

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.

Farmyards were visited based on referral by LAWPRO. Silage effluent was found to be the main issue.

Two farmyards within the catchment had significant silage effluent loss from the holdings.

Remedial work was carried out on two farms including,

New silage slab wall which ensures effluent is always diverted to a tank. €10,000 was spent by this farmer to resolve the issue.

The other farm had silage effluent escaping from a silage pit also. This farmer changed his system to bales which allows him to make bales drier. New slurry storage was also installed on this farm to take runoff from dirty yard.

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.

Initial farmer meeting held on Friday 1st February 2019 with good engagement & turnout of local farming community. Following this a letter was sent out to each farmer informing them of the farm assessment & free farm visit. A newsletter was sent out to all farmers in the catchment in January 2021 to provide an update on work within the PAA. There has been good engagement with the BLUE DOT EIP in the area with a number of events attended by ASSAP advisors. Allow_040 has ongoing issues with the Freemount DWS and there has been engagement via farm visits & text messages around this issue. 2 discussion group meetings were attended by Dairy ASSAP. A presentation was made to North Cork Co-Op Monitor farmers in 2019 on local water quality issues. Various text messages have been sent out over the last number of years on issues such as slurry spreading, correct buffer zones, NUE & liming.

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.

List of potential barriers:

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),

No. of farms that have not engaged

Behaviour (e.g., reasons for 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)

The main issues identified in relation to farmyards were addressed by the farmers. Call back visits to these farmers will be important on an ongoing basis.

1.6 Referral 1 Conclusion

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

Overall there has been very good engagement with farmers in this PAA. The BLUE DOT EIP has been a great asset to have in the catchment as farmers had good knowledge of the river already. Work is ongoing in the catchment as part of the EIP. Sufficient implementation has occurred to address agriculture as a pressure. However these measures must be implemented on an on-going basis.

2 Referral 2:

2.1 Background information

Table 2: 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
Allow	Allow_060	PASTURE	RA0000533 RA0000532 RA0000152 RA0000151	25/03/2020

2.2 Referral evidence and significant issue

From LAWPRO referral

Phosphate was observed to be elevated on several tributaries of the Allow_060. The land surrounding the waterbody is largely poorly draining and the bulk of the sub-basin has a high phosphate PIP. While mitigation measures to reduce phosphate loss in all areas of high PIP may be beneficial there were 3 tributaries which had particularly high phosphate levels.

2.3 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.

Farm visits recommended implementation of better buffer zones when land spreading nutrients, fencing of water courses & drinking points, allowing drains to remain vegetated, following best practice in relation to NMP, timing of nutrient application, moving water troughs back, diverting run off from farm roadways into field, Identifying Critical source areas on farm where farmer should be extra careful on timing of nutrient application. ASSAP engaged regularly with the Blue Dot EIP in the area.

2.4 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.

Initial farmer meeting held on Friday 1st February 2019 with good engagement & turnout of local farming community. Following this a letter was sent out to each farmer informing them of the farm assessment & free farm visit. A newsletter was sent out to all farmers in the catchment in January 2021 to provide an update on work within the PAA. There has been good engagement with the BLUE DOT EIP in the area with a number of events attended by ASSAP advisors. Allow_040 has good ongoing issues with the Freemount DWS and there has been engagement via farm visits & text messages around this issue. 2 discussion group meetings were attended by Dairy ASSAP. A presentation was made to North Cork Co-Op Monitor farmers in 2019 on local water quality issues. Various text messages have been sent out over the last number of years on issues such as slurry spreading, correct buffer zones, NUE & liming.

2.5 Barriers to implementation of measures

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

List of potential barriers:

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),

No. of farms that have not engaged

Behaviour (e.g., reasons for 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)

The main issues identified in relation to land management were addressed by the farmers. Call back visits to these farmers will be important on an ongoing basis.

2.6 Referral 2 Conclusion

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

Overall there has been very good engagement with farmers in this PAA. The BLUE DOT EIP has been a great asset to have in the catchment as farmers had good knowledge of the river already. Sufficient implementation has occurred to address agriculture as a pressure. However these measures must be implemented on an on-going basis.

Waterbody conclusion for WFD App (optional)

Based on Measures Implemented (to be copied to "Progress Description" in EPA App)

This section allows for a consideration at water body scale of all referrals. Referral conclusions (text from Sections 1.6 Referral 1 Conclusion and 2.6 Referral 2 Conclusion etc above) can be combined into a water body scale summary or kept separate and entered into the WFD App at referral scale, as appropriate.