

Severn Trent Environmental Protection Scheme

Applications open from
1st February 2024
30th November 2024

APPLICATIONS
CLOSE
31ST NOV 2024

STEPS – Options list

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Contents

Welcome to STEPS	4
Our team and our partners	5-7
How the grant scheme works	8-9
What information should I include with my application	10-11
Priority catchment map	12-13
Priority items packages	14-17
Pesticide washdown area offer	15
Cover crops in groundwater nitrate catchments	16
Cryptosporidium priority fencing offer	17
Terms and Conditions	18-23
Pesticide options	25-52
STEPS001 Pesticide sprayer washdown/handling area	25-30
STEPS002 Roofing for pesticide sprayer washdown area	31-32
STEPS003 Lined biobeds (either off-set/drive over)	33-36
STEPS004 Pesticide biofilter	37-40
STEPS004a DIY biofilter	38-40
STEPS004b Ready-made biofilter	38-40
STEPS005 Arable grass margin: 6m+ buffer	41-42
STEPS006 Riverside margins in grass fields	43-44
STEPS038 Alternative weed management in grassland fields	45-46
STEPS039 Precision pesticide application technology for grasslands	47-48
STEPS040 Non-chemical weed control equipment for arable crops (inter-row weeders, rakes, comb harrows and hoes)	49-50
STEPS041 Closed Transfer Systems (CTS) for pesticides	51-52
Nutrient options	53-82
STEPS007 Arable reversion into low input grassland	53-54
STEPS008 Cover crop	55-58
STEPS011 Livestock removal from high risk fields 'Groundwater only'	59-60
STEPS012 Low nitrogen input into grassland 'Groundwater only'	61-62
STEPS013 Watercourse fencing	63-66
STEPS013a Post and wire fencing	64
STEPS013b Sheep netting	64-65
STEPS013c Permanent electric fencing	64-65
STEPS013d Clipex fencing	64-65
STEPS013e Temporary electric fencing	64-65
STEPS013f Gate (metal)	64/66
STEPS013g Gate (wooden)	64/66

Nutrient options	53-82
STEPS014 Livestock drinking troughs	67-68
STEPS015 Livestock pasture pumps	69-70
STEPS016 Water supply pipe	71-72
STEPS017 Water pump	73-74
STEPS017a Solar panel pump	74
STEPS017b Ram pump	74
STEPS018 Hard base for livestock drinking troughs/resurface gateways	75-76
STEPS018a Hard base for livestock drinking trough	75-76
STEPS018b Resurfacing gateways	75-76
STEPS019 Installation of piped culverts in ditches	77-78
STEPS020 Roofing of existing manure and livestock holding areas	79-80
STEPS020a Roofing of existing manure stores	79-80
STEPS020b Roofing of existing livestock handling areas	79-80
STEPS042 Direct drilling equipment	81-82
Water resilience and management options	83-88
STEPS021 Rainwater harvesting	83-85
STEPS021a Under ground tank	84
STEPS021b Above ground tank	84
STEPS021c Flush rainwater diverters and filters	84-85
STEPS021d Downpipes and gutters	84-85
STEPS022 Constructed farm wetlands	87-88
Other options	89-96
STEPS025 Farmer innovation	89-90
STEPS025a Farmer innovation – precision farming equipment	91-92
STEPS025b Farmer innovation – clean and dirty water separation	93-94
STEPS025c Farmer innovation – other innovation items	95-96
Phosphate options	97-102
STEPS43 Low nutrient input into permanent grassland	97-98
STEPS44 Phosphate fertilisers to high phosphate index soils	99-100
STEPS45 Loosening compacted soils	101-102
Dedicated support and service/Useful resources/FAQ's	103-111
Dedicated support and advice	103
Useful resources	104-105
FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)	106-111



Welcome to Severn Trent's Environmental Protection Scheme

As we come to the tenth anniversary of STEPS, we are taking time to review the scheme to ensure we continue to provide the right support to all of you within our priority catchments. Applications are now open and you have until November 30th to apply for this year's funding, so don't miss out. Information about STEPS 2025 will be available soon, so keep a look out.

No-one could have predicted the ongoing challenges and uncertainty that would face us since 2020. Uncertainty has been a constant when coupled with a policy "pause" for ELMS and the SFI in 2022, it is little wonder that the outlook is still taking time to settle down.

We know that many of you out there have continued to push and make investments in your business and the environment, and we thank you for your continued support in protecting water quality and working with Severn Trent's Farming for Water Programme.

Whilst not new we have maintained our recently introduced (March 2022) packages of priority items, including up to £30,000 for pesticide washdown areas and free rainwater harvesting, soil testing for cover crop applicants in groundwater catchments and up to 100% funding for fencing in our crypto catchments.

- We have increased our grant rates for many of our items.
- There are still a great range of options to choose from, all aimed at protecting the environment and water quality.
- Within your catchment you will still find specific priority items, which once implemented will make a fundamental difference to the health of the surrounding water environment.
- Once you make an application, we will endeavour to confirm if your application has been successful within 6 weeks of submission.
- You will have a year to complete the work, from the date you are issued your agreement.

There are revised Terms and Conditions, please read these carefully. We hope that this greater degree of flexibility will encourage as many farms as possible across our priority catchments to work with us and apply for grants over the coming months. Remember your local Agricultural Advisor is always on hand.

Our team and our partners

All of our team have a farming background, most have agricultural degrees, are BASIS qualified, and some have FACTS qualifications. Some of the team are also farmers, with farms located in our region.

North Warwickshire, Derbyshire (Dove)

Surface water catchments:

Whitacre, Bourne and Blythe, Dove

Groundwater catchments:

Haseley Springs

Una Maycock

Phone number: 07811 847161

Email: Una.Maycock@severntrent.co.uk

South Warwickshire/ Northamptonshire

Surface water catchments:

Avon & Leam

Groundwater catchments:

N/A

Marion Perrett-Pearson

Phone number: 07970 944834

Email: Marion.Perrett-Pearson@severntrent.co.uk

Peter Bowman

Phone Number: 07711 169635

Email: Peter.Bowman@severntrent.co.uk

Shropshire (Shrewsbury to Bewdley)

Surface water catchments:

Middle Severn, Cound

Groundwater catchments:

Oakeley Farm, Ruyton, Hilton, Gringleforge, Copley, Beckbury, Nesscliffe, Diddlebury

Geoff Jordan**Surface water catchments**

Middle Severn, Diddlebury

Phone number: 07800 961684

Email: Geoff.Jordan@severntrent.co.uk

Emma Jones**Groundwater catchments**

Phone number: 07944 947267

Email: Emma.Jones2@severntrent.co.uk

Vacancy Cound

Shropshire (North of Shrewsbury)

Surface water catchments:

Shropshire Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments:

Stoke-on-Tern, Rodway, Swynneton, Pulston Bridge, Hatton, Weston Jones, Burntwood, Fulford, Mill Meece

Mark Biddulph

Phone Number: 07970 198191

Email: mark.biddulph@severntrent.co.uk

Cath Edwards

Phone Number: 07508 091799

Email: Cath.Edwards@severntrent.co.uk

Our team and our partners

Shropshire/Worcestershire (Ludlow to Worcester)

Surface water catchments: Teme

Groundwater catchments: Astley, Bratch

Jess Nott

Teme and Bratch

Phone number: 07887 376657

Email: Jess.Nott@severntrent.co.uk

Romane Clarke

Teme and Bratch

Phone number: 07498 540405

Email: romane.clarke@severntrent.co.uk

Cheshire

Surface water catchments: N/A

Groundwater catchments: Towerwood,
Peckforton

Nick Morris

Phone number: 07977 712363

Email: Nicholas.Morris@severntrent.co.uk

Worcestershire & Gloucestershire

Surface water catchments:

Worcestershire Severn

Groundwater catchments:

Ketford, Brockhill, Bellington,
Newent, Tack Lane

Susan Bamber

Phone number: 07921 676664

Email: Susan.Bamber@severntrent.co.uk

Emily Williams

Phone number: 07498 959818

Email: Emily.Williams@severntrent.co.uk

Robin Bickley

Phone number: 07957 761004

Email: Robin.Bickley@severntrent.co.uk



(Mitcheldean to Leominster)

Surface water catchments:

Mitcheldean (River Wye)

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Robin Ransome

Phone number: 07990 068941

Email: Robin.Ransome@severntrent.co.uk

Majid Khan

Phone number: 07512 010692

Email: Majid-Wye.Khan@severntrent.co.uk

Staffordshire Derbyshire

Surface water catchments: Tittesworth

Groundwater catchments: Highgate,
Poolend and Wallmyres

Josh Ballance

Phone number: 07435 513817

Email: Joshua-TRT.Ballance@severntrent.co.uk



Derbyshire

Surface water catchments:

Upper and Lower Derwent, Ogston

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Margaret Baile

Phone number: 07789 903652

Email: Margaret.Baile@severntrent.co.uk

Leicestershire

Surface water catchments:

Cropston, Staunton Harold

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Louise Richmond

Phone Number: 07825 556404

Email: Louise.Richmond@severntrent.co.uk

Nottinghamshire Boreholes

Surface water catchments: N/A

Groundwater catchments: Boughton, Bestwood, Rufford, Amen Corner, Budby & Budby Forest, Clipstone & Clipstone Forest, Chequer House, Far Baulker, Ompton, Epperstone

Snežana Lee

Phone number: 07784 924584

Email: Snezana-ST.Lee@severntrent.co.uk

Our team and our partners

Our Partners

We have an exceptional way of working with partner organisations across the region. By utilising our partners skills and expertise, it allows us to work with and support our local farming community to provide access to schemes and programme grants that will ultimately help to protect and improve the quality of the local environment.



Shropshire Wildlife Trust



Worcestershire



Warwickshire



Nottinghamshire

How the grant scheme works

The scheme offers farmers and land managers, both owners and tenants, financial and technical support, to invest in tailored solutions to help tackle diffuse water pollution and to protect and maintain biodiversity and the natural environment.

This scheme is specifically aimed at protecting water quality, and enhancing the biodiversity on your farm.

We've awarded over 2000 grants to farms across our region, with projects ranging from pesticide washdown areas, to cover crops and biofilters.

We even offer an option for farmers to submit an innovative idea, specially developed for their farm business.

How to apply for a grant

①

Is your farm in a priority catchment?

Do you farm, or have land in a priority catchment in the Severn Trent Region? See the map on page 10 of this brochure, or view it online at stwater.co.uk/steps

Each of our surface and groundwater priority catchments are affected by a particular pollutant, for example pesticides, nitrate or bacteria. Options which are particularly useful in addressing the pollutant risks of your catchment are highlighted, and are considered priority items.

Your Agricultural Advisor will notify you of any other priorities in your catchment.

②

Choose your options

Find details of the grant options available in the accompanying booklet or go online at stwater.co.uk/steps Remember to check out our priority item offers and packages.

Our Agricultural Advisors are available to help and assist you in the process. You can call them to arrange an appointment to suit you, or chat to them on the phone.

How the grant scheme works

3 Make your application

Applications will close on 30th November 2024. Simply go online and fill in the easy application form at stwater.co.uk/steps

We aim to let all applicants know the outcome of their application within 6 weeks. However if we need to ask for more evidence or check a few things this can be longer.

4 Assessing your application

The grant scheme is a competitive process and all our applications are assessed and reviewed based on the farms individual circumstances and the options you choose to apply for.

We advise you to read the Options brochure and the Terms and Conditions in this guide, before making an application – this will improve the chances of you making a successful application. Applicants will score higher if they demonstrate a clear water quality benefit to address the issues of concern in their catchment.

5 We'll be in touch

Once you submit your application, we'll acknowledge receipt. Then once every application has been assessed, we will notify everyone of the outcome of their application via email.

If successful, this email and the attached letter specifies the items and grant amount that has been awarded to you, so it is important to keep it.

You will be able to download and accept your agreement electronically.

If you would prefer to receive your agreement via mail, you will be given the option to do so in the application process. Applicants who select this option will receive two agreements which you will need to sign and send one copy back to us.

6 Complete the work

Once you have returned your signed agreement to us you're free to get on with the work. You have until the deadline dated in your agreement to get the work done.

After completing your work, let your Agricultural Advisor know, and they will supply you with a claim form. You'll need to submit photographs, receipts or invoices to show that the work was completed.

We'll then reimburse you for the amount agreed in your offer and agreement letter.

In STEPS 2024 All works must be completed and claimed by 31st December 2024. After this date, unfortunately projects will lose their funding.

Dedicated support and advice

To help you get the best out of what's on offer, our local Agricultural Advisors are available to help you.

What information should I include with my application?

All STEPS applications are made by filling in our online application form.

Each STEPS item requires supporting information and evidence.

Providing as much information as possible helps us assess applications quickly and accurately.

1 Provide clear and complete information about what improvements you wish to make.

The changes I would like to make to my farm using the STEPS grants are:

We currently don't use any guidance on our main tractor but want to modernise, so would like to add GPS with variable rate to improve accuracy and reduce overlaps. We hope this will reduce the amount of chemical we apply and help protect the watercourse.

We would like to plant cover crops to help protect the soil surface and improve the soil structure in our fields that are in the groundwater area, we hope this reduces leaching...

2 Fill in all the parts of the application form, ensuring you tick the options you wish to apply for and give as much detail as you can in the table below so we know where your options are going to be located and over what area equipment will be used.

☒ STEPS008a - Cover crops £125/ha (N priority) or £60/ha (non priority)

Item	Locations	Area of cover crop	Grant value
	Locations(s)		
	Long Acre - SK66447987 (Sheet ID and Parcel ID) - 15ha SK 65305 17194 (Grid reference)		
	Buckthorn (Sheet ID and Parcel ID) - SK66446256 - 17ha SK 65305 17340 (Grid reference)	Hectares	£
STEPS008a Cover crops £125/ha/yr	Broomgate field - SK664420146 (Sheet ID and Parcel ID) - 39ha SK 65400 17340 (Grid reference)	73.00	9,125.00 1,443.94

☒ STEPS008a - Cover crops £125/ha (N priority) or £60/ha (non priority)




Item	Locations(s)	What hectareage will the equipment be used on?	Please insert value applied for	
STEPS025a Precision farming equipment	SO 79483 68737 (Grid reference)	1.00	110.00	0.66





What information should I include with my application?

- 3 Evidence to include with the application
As this application is for both precision equipment and cover crops, evidence for both must be provided.

For STEPS 025a Precision farming equipment




Itemised quote for GPS	PA certificate	NTST certificate
		

Photos showing GPS not already on machine



	
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For STEPS 008a Cover crops 'Before' pictures of fields

'Before' pictures of fields

 <p>Longacre - before photo - STEPS08 - SK 65305 17194 (Grid reference).JPG</p>	 <p>Buckthorn - before photo - STEPS08 - SK 65305 17340 (Grid reference).PEG</p>	 <p>Broomgate field - before photo - STEPS08 - SK 65400 17340 (Grid reference).JPG</p>
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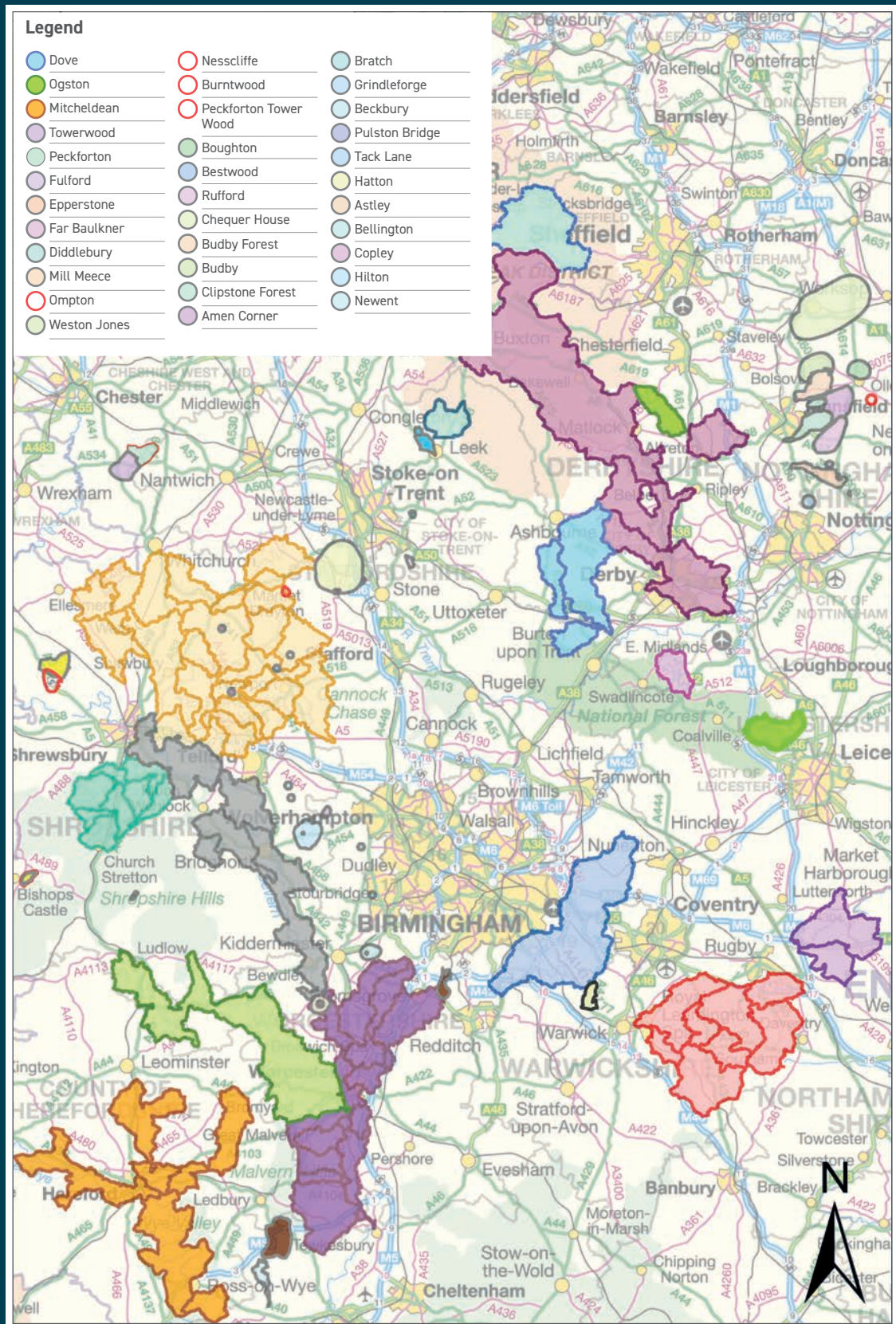
Farm maps, showing location of cover cropped fields and arable fields which you spray in catchment

	
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Priority catchment

View the map online at stwater.co.uk/steps



Priority catchment

Catchment	Catchment Type	Priority issue	Top Priority Item in catchment (others available)
Amen Corner	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Astley	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Avon	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Beckbury	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Bellington	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Bestwood	Groundwater	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Boughton	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Bratch	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Brockhill	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Bourne and Blythe	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Budby	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Budby Forest	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Burntwood			
Chequer House	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Clipstone Forest	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Copley	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Cound	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Cropston	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Derwent	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Diddlebury			
Dove	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Epperstone			
Far Baulker			
Fulford			
Grindleforge	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Haseley Springs	Groundwater	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Hatton	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Highgate	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Hilton	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Ketford	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Leam	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Middle Severn	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Mill Meece			
Mitcheldean	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Newent	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Nesscliffe			
Oakeley Farm	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Ogston	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Ompton			
Peckforton			
Poolend	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Pulston Bridge	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Rodway	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Rufford	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Ruyton	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Stoke on Terne	Groundwater	Nitrate	STEPS 008 Cover Crops
Shropshire Middle Severn	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Staunton Harold	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Swynnerton	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Tack Lane	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Teme	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Tittesworth	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area
Towerwood			
Wallmyres	Groundwater	Cryptosporidium	STEPS 013 Watercourse Fencing
Weston Jones			
Worcester Severn	Surface Water	Pesticides	STEPS 001 Pesticide washdown area

Priority items packages

Priority items packages



Many of our STEPS items are priorities for particular pollutants in our catchments and including one or more in your application increases the chance of funding being granted.

On top of increasing our grants, there are also some additional packages of items available to maximise the benefit to both your business and the environment.

- **Pesticide washdown area offer**
- **Cover crops in groundwater nitrate catchments**
- **Cryptosporidium priority fencing offer**

Pesticide washdown area offer



Up to £30,000 available* for pesticide sprayer washdown/handling areas!

STEPS funding may be used to cover 50% of the cost of the Pesticide washdown/handling area up to a maximum of £20,000. **On top of that, we will add up to £5000 of rainwater harvesting to your roofed pesticide washdown area for free!**

If completed inside of 6 months, Severn Trent will contribute an extra 25% to the washdown area cost up to a maximum of £30K.

***50% funding up to £20,000 available. Additional 25% bonus up to £30,000 for projects completed in 6 months. Bonus and free rainwater harvesting is not available for applicants who have started or applied for a PDWA through STEPS previously.**

Applications for washdown area projects will close on 31st May 2024. Later applications may be considered if works can be completed in very short timescales.

How to apply

- ① All pesticide washdown areas should have a Specialist On Farm Advice (SOFA) survey completed beforehand, in order to help you plan the work.
- ② Select which items you need in your application from the list below, and provide the dimensions of the project. Applications for the offer must include at least STEPS 001 and either 003 or 004.
STEPS 001 Pesticide Washdown/Handling Area
STEPS002 Roofing for Pesticide washdown area
STEPS 003 Lined Biobeds
STEPS 004 Biofilter
- ③ Specify the costs of each of the items. If you are able to claim back VAT then this should be excluded from your costs. Other STEPS items may not be included in the cost of the project.
- ④ Provide quotes, plans and before photos with your application.

Please note, the claimed area of the washdown area and any roof must only include that which is used for pesticide handling activities. For example if the washdown area forms part of a new building, only the area which can be reasonably considered for its operation may be included. **Additional costs, such as side walls and roller doors are not included in the grant offer.**

If you are doing the work yourself, you can include the cost for your time. We'll pay the rate as per John Nix, currently set at up to £12.60/hr.

Cover crops in groundwater nitrate catchments

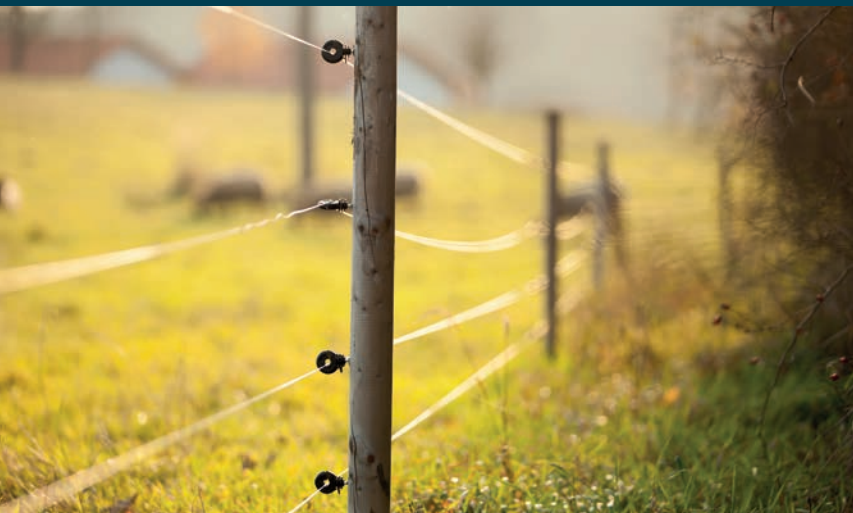


Applicants in our groundwater nitrate catchments can take advantage of uplifted grant rates for cover crops whilst also benefiting from free soil testing and soil health and nutrient planning webinars.*

How to apply

- ① Select the type of cover crop that suits your business from the list below, specifying the areas and fields. If you are still finalising cropping plans indicate this on your application.
- ② Tick the 'Soil testing' box on the application form if you are interested in this service.
- ③ Clearly mark the fields you are entering on a map of your farm and include pictures to show how the fields currently look.
- ④ When we run our summer webinars we will send you an invite to register!

Cryptosporidium priority fencing offer



Customers in our cryptosporidium priority catchments may take advantage of up to 100% funding of watercourse fencing and free ancillary items.*

STEPS may be used to fund 100% of watercourse fencing costs. Livestock drinking troughs and hard bases, water pipes and pumps in the field(s) where access to water has been lost may be funded at 100%.

*Funding offer is available to customers in cryptosporidium priority groundwater catchments only. This offer may only be applied to fields within the Severn Trent priority catchment. Only ancillary items in the fenced off fields may be funded at 100% cost.

How to apply

- ① In your application form, select the watercourse fencing items you require from the list below and indicate the cost of each.

Watercourse fencing

STEPS 013a - Post and Wire

STEPS 013b - Sheep netting

STEPS 013c - Permanent electric fencing

STEPS 013d - Clipex fencing

STEPS 013e - Temporary electric fencing

STEPS 013f - Gate (metal)

STEPS 013g - Gate (wood)

- ② Select any ancillary items that are required in order to give livestock continued access to water and specify the costs. Please note that these should only be in the fields being fenced off:

STEPS 014 - Livestock drinking troughs

STEPS 015 - Pasture pumps

STEPS 016 - Water supply pipe

STEPS 017a - Water pump - Solar powered

STEPS 017b - Water pump - Ram powered

STEPS 018a - Hard base for livestock drinking trough

- ③ You must clearly mark the fields where the watercourse fencing is being applied for on a map of your farm, together with the locations of any items such as drinking troughs or pasture pumps.
- ④ Include quotes for the items you have selected with your application.

STEPS 2024

Terms and Conditions

Your personal data and environmental information

1. By participating in the scheme, you agree to provide ST with the necessary personal and farm business data in order to comply with the scheme's requirements, and to meet our audit parameters. Any data used for our own audit purposes is totally anonymous.

For further details, please, read the Privacy Policy on our website: stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/legal/privacy/

2. In the event that we receive a request for information under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR"), we may be required to disclose information to third parties that you have provided to us, to the extent that it is environmental information as defined under the EIR.

The Severn Trent Environmental Protection Scheme (STEPS) is part of Severn Trent's Farming 4 Water catchment management programme.

The scheme is a grant programme solely covered by Severn Trent and provides a wide range of options to farmers for infrastructure investments and land management items.

These Terms and Conditions are here to help applicants understand the requirements and conditions of the grant funding that can be awarded.

All applicants accept that they are familiar with the Terms and Conditions outlined in this document and will comply with them.

If applicants have any queries in relation to their application they should speak to their local Agricultural Advisor (contact details at the front of this handbook), or email; farming4water@severntrent.co.uk before submitting their application.

In the event that there are any changes to these Terms and Conditions, they will be publicised immediately on the Severn Trent Water website and an updated version of the document available for download. You will also receive a soft copy via email where possible.

The following abbreviations will be used throughout the Terms and Conditions:

'ST' shall mean Severn Trent Water Limited.

'STEPS' shall mean Severn Trent Environmental Protection Scheme.

'SPZ' shall mean Source Protection Zone.

'Objective' shall mean a specific action required to be completed in association with a particular scheme.

STEPS 2023 Terms and Conditions

'Farm' or 'Holding' shall mean all the production units that are under the control of the applicant farmer/land owner.

'Farming Activity' shall mean dairy farming; livestock production; cultivation of fodder and tillage crops, and the growing of horticultural crops.

'Eligibility' shall mean essential criteria which must be fulfilled to allow a STEPS contract to be agreed.

'Application' shall mean an application for a STEPS support scheme prepared and submitted by land owner/manager.

'Watercourse' shall mean all rivers, streams, ditches, drains, cuts, culverts, dykes, sluices, and passages through which water flows, but excluding any pipes owned or used by ST or any other water or sewerage undertaker.

'EA' shall mean Environment Agency.

'Building control regulation' shall mean the most up to date regulations as outlined by your local council or Local Authority.

The STEPS grant scheme Terms and Conditions

1. Criteria for funding

- You must be aged eighteen or over, on the date you submit your application.
- You must be the owner or leaseholder of the farm.
- Applications from contractors may be considered, however you must provide maps and SBI numbers for farms you work for in the Severn Trent priority catchment.
- Applications may be submitted by a 3rd party on behalf of the landowner, however you should declare this on the application, and provide confirmation that the landowner's permission has been obtained.
- Grants will only be available to farmers and landowners who farm, or have land within a ST drinking water abstraction catchment, and/or farm within one of ST's priority SPZs.
- For details on priority catchments, the map is available on page 10 of this brochure.
- STEPS priority water quality items must be implemented on land which is being farmed within the catchment.
- Any evidence of 'double funding' will result in the cancellation of your agreement and withdrawal of any potential funds.

- Where funding has already been released, you will be required, and agree, to refund it and we (ST) will take the necessary action to recoup the funds, including any legal costs.
- Any applicant or application found to be fraudulent will be rejected and the applicant disqualified from future ST programmes and schemes.
- Leased items are not eligible.
- ST may reject applications if they are not likely to benefit water quality, biodiversity or the environment.
- The submission of a valid application does not guarantee entry to STEPS.
- Once offered a grant, applicants can't change their capital or works, or amend their agreement unless given permission by ST.
- Contracts are non-transferable except in the case of:
 - Certified serious illness of applicant
 - Death of the applicant
 - Long term professional incapacity of the applicant.
- Each STEPS item specifies particular criteria to be met, in order to be included in an application.
- We cannot fund any item or work which is a regulatory requirement.

2. Supporting evidence for applications

Mandatory supporting evidence is required in order to successfully assess your application, as outlined below:

- Brief description of the farm enterprise
- An overview of the work planned and the environmental reason for undertaking this work
- Forecast timescales for completion of the project
- Dated photographs of site prior to commencing any work
- Farm maps which display the farm boundary, location of STEPS items chosen, and the location of where the photographs were taken
- Dated quotes for items applied for under 'Farmer - innovation'.

Our Agricultural Advisors will be available to support with the application process free of charge but are not responsible for the submission of your application.

3. How we assess your application

- A scoring system is used to ensure that funding will go to projects that demonstrate the greatest water quality benefit. We will also take into consideration any prior engagement with a ST Agricultural Advisor, participation in other ST catchment schemes and particularly in the case of Farmer innovation applications, value for money and unfinished works from previous funding rounds.
- Application forms are usually submitted through the online portal accessible through the Severn Trent Catchment Team website stwater.co.uk/steps
- Scoring is a competitive process, and not all applicants are guaranteed to receive full funding or any funding at all, even if applicants have been successful in the past.
- Applications are scored separately from previous funding rounds. However failure to complete previously agreed works within the required time frame may impact on further funding being awarded.
- All applicants will be contacted regarding the outcome of their application.
- Where possible, as part of our ongoing commitment to our impact on the environment and in a bid to reduce paper waste, agreements may be issued and accepted via email.
- Applicants will be given the option of choosing how they are notified at the outcome of their application at the end of the application process.
- The agreement form must be signed, dated and returned to us, either electronically or by post (if applicable).
- Returning and signing the agreement form acknowledges that you are committed to the work, as per your grant application, and will abide by these Terms and Conditions.

4. Your obligations

- If successful in being awarded STEPS funding, you must return a copy of your signed grant agreement to the catchment team by the date specified on your acceptance letter. Agreements not returned by this date will be voided and the funding reallocated to other STEPS projects.
- Works must be completed and claimed by the deadline on your agreement.
- We are unable to offer extensions on this deadline.
- You must inform ST of any change to a selected option and a written reason displaying

STEPS 2023 Terms and Conditions

your actions. You will then receive confirmation of approval. If you change the location of the STEPS item and do not inform ST you may not receive the allocated funding.

- All records must be kept for a minimum of 5 years following entry into the scheme. Records include invoices, receipts, permits, maps, photos and consents.
- Any breach of cross-compliance noted during an on farm inspection may be reported to the EA.
- All work must comply with relevant environmental legislation, have the appropriate planning permissions, and meet the latest building control regulations and British Standards.
- Specialist On Farm Advice (SOFA) visits are a requirement for some STEPS items. Refusal or cancellation of the visit without rearrangement will result in the STEPS application being terminated or funding withheld.

Planning permission and consents

- Written consent(s) from a relevant authority may be required with your application. You may or may not require planning permission from your local authority or relevant body – it is your responsibility to check and to apply if permission is required.
- Planning permission may be required depending on the capital scheme chosen. Consult your local planning authority or National Park authority to seek advice.
- You must enclose a copy of the consent, or the application for consent, with your application if relevant.
- In some cases, and with permission from ST, advice and consent can be received up until 15 days after the application deadline; applicants can discuss this with their Agricultural Adviser. ST won't be able to process your application until we receive these.
- All works must comply with relevant environmental legislation associated with the scheme.
- Once the scheme is complete it must be kept in agricultural use e.g. not changed to an alternative use such as residential or commercial accommodation, for a minimum of 5 years from the date of your STEPS contract.

Health and safety

- All work must comply with the relevant health and safety legislation. Please visit the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk) for further information. It is the responsibility

of the applicant to ensure that any work carried out under a STEPS agreement complies with the relevant health and safety legislation.

This includes all subsequent maintenance of items which address water quality or biodiversity. The HSE may need to be notified of some construction work.

- All work must comply with all British Standards and Codes of Good Agricultural Practice.
- Capital items must be installed in accordance with Protecting our Water, Soil and Air: a Code of Good Agricultural Practice for farmers, growers and land managers (CoGap).
- Capital items installed under the scheme must have a minimum design life of 10 years; or have a minimum design life of 20 years if the item has to comply with The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry, and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended 2013) (SSAFO).

Environment Agency, Natural England, other authorities and legislation

- If your work affects any of the following you will need consent from the EA or from the relevant authority;
 - National Park
 - Listed Building
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Protected Species
 - National Nature Reserve
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Registered Parkland
 - Local Nature Reserves
 - Registered Battlefields
 - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
 - RAMSAR
 - Biobed/Biofilter construction and spreading of used Biomix to land.
- Before commitment to any work, you may have to seek guidance from the EA e.g. installation of a biobed on your farm holding.
- Any work carried out within 1m of the top of a river bank may require flood defence consent. Depending on the size of watercourse you should consult the EA. Telephone: **03708 506506** or email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

5. Our (ST) obligations

- Assess applications in an unbiased manner.
- We will provide one-to-one support through our Agricultural Advisors. Where necessary, in order to protect you and our advisors, this support may be conducted via phone, video call, or via email in order to comply with government guidelines in social distancing.
- Respond to queries within 20 working days via our catchment team inbox email – **farming4water@severntrent.co.uk**
- Provide at least 7 days notice of any planned site visit and inspection.
- We may carry out on-the-spot checks at farm level to ensure compliance with the requirements of the scheme.
- We will keep all your personal, farm and financial information confidential. See our privacy statement, at the end of these Terms and Conditions.
- This does not affect our duty to report any breaches in cross compliance to the EA.

6. Processing grant payments

- All applications for support and payment claims will be subjected to our administrative checks, and any other controls deemed necessary, before approvals or payments are made under the scheme.
- Receipts or invoices for materials purchased for the delivery of STEPS options must be retained and must be submitted with your completion and evidence of the work carried out.
- Participants must provide documentary evidence of payment. Receipts must be made out by the vendor to include the name and address of the beneficiary.
- Receipts must be dated and any materials purchased before entry to STEPS will not be accepted.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any requested supporting documentation for the release of payments is submitted. Photographs of site must be taken and retained both before and after completion of work. (Please take both photos from same position where possible).
- The maximum payment to any participant in STEPS shall not exceed £10,000 per year unless part of a special package of items offered by Severn Trent.
- Severn Trent can only pay grants at the rate originally agreed at the time of application. We are unable to uplift or decrease grant rates to those offered in subsequent STEPS funding rounds.

7. Additional funding opportunities

- It is the applicant's responsibility to understand that if they decide to apply for funding from other National Schemes, addressing similar objectives to the STEPS scheme, that they will be at risk of losing any grant awarded from ST, and also the other organisation to which an application has been made for funds. This is known as double funding.
- Double funding is defined as grant money used, from different sources to fund the same capital works at the same location. As a guide, the following schemes should be considered (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Countryside Stewardship
 - Catchment Sensitive Farming
 - Paths4Communities
 - Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme
 - LEADER Farm Productivity Grant
 - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Aid
 - Woodland Grant schemes
 - Energy crops.
- During the SFI transition period, in accordance with Defra guidances, SFI options may be stacked with those receiving STEPS funding. This may be reviewed at any time/subject to Defra funding rules. Applicants entering into an SFI agreement for works covered by an existing STEPS agreement do so at their own risk and must adhere to the specification and conditions covered by their STEPS agreement.
- In relation to your claim, all paperwork must be kept for 5 or 10 years depending on the length of your agreement.
- VAT will not be paid if you are VAT registered.
- If you are not VAT registered, your VAT can be included in the total costs provided it does not exceed the £10,000 limit.

8. Breaking your agreement and participation in STEPS

Force Majeure - where an applicant is unable to continue within STEPS commitment(s) due to reasons beyond their control. The following categories of Force Majeure will be recognised (not an exhaustive list):

- Death of the participant
- Long term professional incapacity of the participant
- Expropriation of a large part of the holding if such expropriation could not have been anticipated before joining STEPS

- A natural disaster affecting the holding's agricultural land
- The accidental destruction of livestock buildings on the farm e.g. destruction of property via a fire
- An outbreak of disease affecting all or part of the livestock on the farm
- The disposal or vacation of land to satisfy a court order or legal settlement in cases of marital breakdown
- A profound change of business circumstances that makes participation financially unviable.

9. Breaching the agreement

This could result in the non-payment or recovery of the grant payable or already paid. Note that applicants are responsible for the work carried out (even if work was contracted to an external contractor). The following are classed as breaches of agreement (not an exhaustive list):

- Refusal to allow ST Agricultural Advisor access to the land for inspection on reasonable notice (7 days)
- Sale of equipment which is still under the terms of your STEPS agreement
- Providing false or misleading information in relation to the grant and evidence
- Submission of a claim for capital works that are not completed or where funds have been used for an alternative purpose
- Lack of evidence of how the funds were spent or of the finished work e.g. photos
- Removal of any capital works without written consent from ST
- Change of use of a capital item, e.g. roofing over a manure storage to turn it into a grain or machinery storage (even when at the applicant's own expense)
- You are found to not meet the criteria for funding
- Not following the relevant deadlines for responding and submitting your agreement form
- Failure to comply with the appropriate standards, planning rules and agricultural codes of practice
- Subsequent refusal of a Specialist On Farm Advisory visit (should one be required in order to be eligible for a STEPS item) after returning your signed agreement
- Failure to complete all or some the agreed works may reduce the likelihood of being awarded STEPS grants in the future.



Pesticide sprayer washdown/handling area



How does this help the environment?

A pesticide handling and washdown area provides a dedicated space where pesticides can be safely loaded into sprayers, and acts as a safe area for housing the sprayer and for sprayer cleaning.

- 40% of pesticide detections in our catchments are from contamination when handling pesticides.
- The remaining 60% of pesticide detection comes from the field.
- Managing the washings and wastes that come from pesticide handling is one measure that can be taken to help keep pesticides out of water.

How does this help my farm business?

Pesticide handling areas and the associated treatment facilities are great for demonstrating that your farm is serious about chemical and pollutant management. It can also improve the efficiency of your operation and by reducing the losses of pesticide products, improves the safety for staff. It's an ideal place to park the sprayer too.

Pesticide
priority

STEPS001

Grant value:
up to 50% cost
see page 14



Eligibility

STEPS001 is a priority item for pesticides

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

This item can be applied for under the Pesticide washdown area offer. See page 14 for details in conjunction with:

STEPS002 - Roofing for washdown area

STEPS003 - biobeds

STEPS004 - biofilters

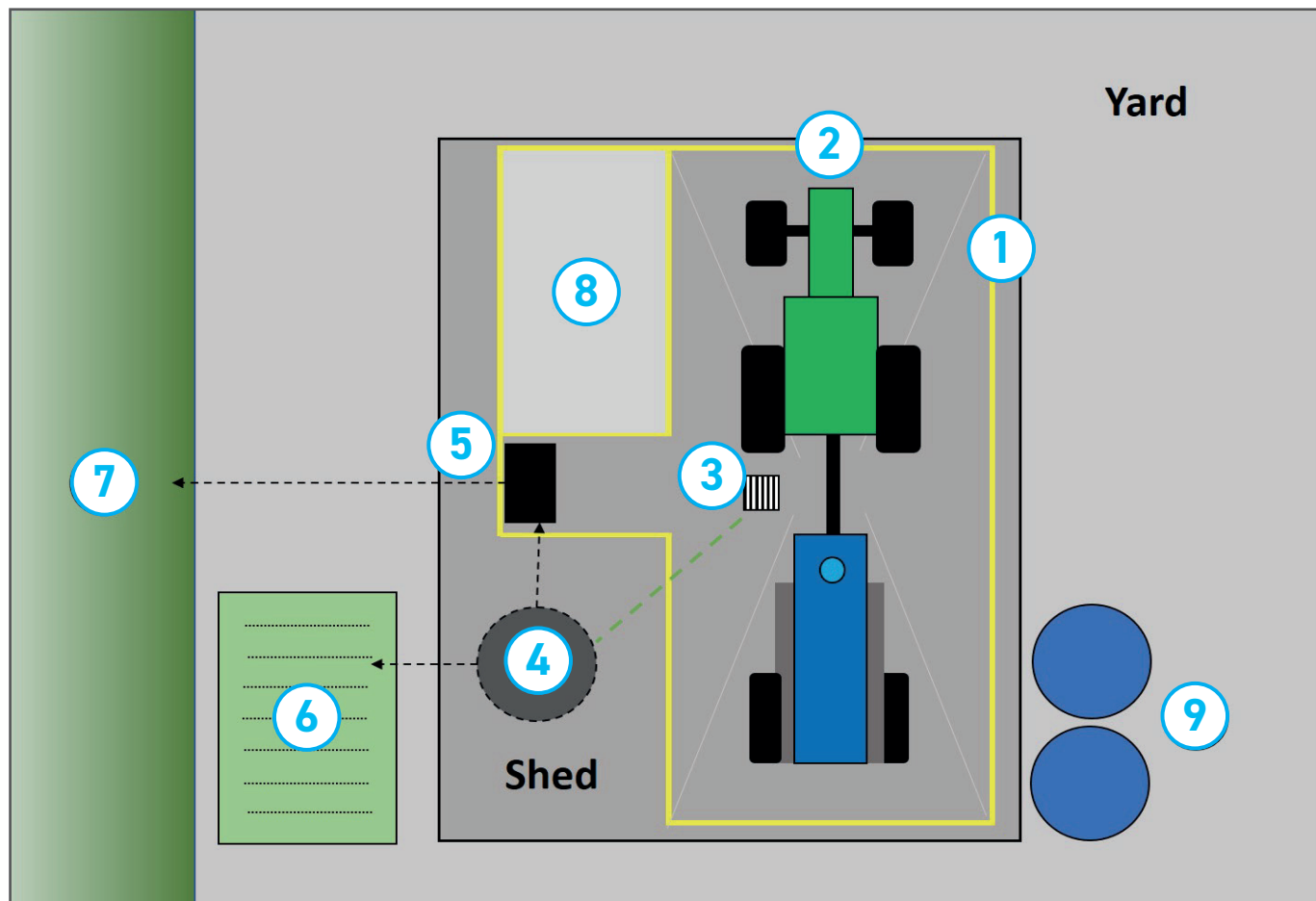
Advisory visit required



To select a washdown area, you must have an expert advisory pesticide handling visit which can be arranged through your Agricultural Advisor. This is because there are a number of important regulations (listed over the page) to follow and so you can maximise the benefit for your business.

STEPS001 Pesticide sprayer washdown/handling area

What does a pesticide washdown area look like?



- 1 Bunded pesticide washdown area (yellow line) not including pesticide store (8) –** ideally located under cover or in an existing shed. The pad is sealed reinforced concrete and large enough to comfortably park the tractor and sprayer and allow room to walk around the machine. This example also incorporated the biofilter and the pesticide store in the area to capture any spills. New roofing is available as **STEPS002**.
- 2 Access ramps –** The bund has appropriately formed ramps to allow ease of access for the tractor and sprayer.
- 3 Drain with sediment trap –** The bunded area falls to a drain (1:100) with an integral sediment trap; (consider appropriate siting to avoid problems associated with attaching/detaching machines and dropping small items i.e. keys and phones) this is connected to the pesticide washings storage tank (4).
- 4 Pesticide washing storage tank –** This tank should only contain a maximum of 1500 L of dilute washings at any time to meet regulatory requirements, although some farms opt for a larger tank to provide extra assurance against larger spills. This can be then fitted with a float switch for regular emptying during normal use.

STEPS001

Pesticide sprayer washdown/handling area

5 Biofilter – Washings are treated by being pumped into a biofilter (**STEPS 004**), which must also be sited in the bunded area. Biofilters are a series of 3 IBCs filled with biomix (a soil, compost and straw mix) through which washings are circulated to break down pesticides. Biofilters have a small footprint and so easily fit in the corner of a shed. If not indoors the uppermost layer of the biofilter should be covered to prevent rainfall entering.

Or

6 Lined biobed – Alternatively washings may be treated in a biobed (**STEPS 003**). These are lined pits filled with biomix and covered with turf, over which washings are dribbled before being collected in a sump. Biobeds are more complex than biofilters but can be sized according to the volume of washings being passed through them, and so are best suited to large operations.

7 Vegetated area – once fed though the biofilter or biobed, treated washings should be dribbled on to an appropriately sized vegetated area.

8 Pesticide Store – A secure pesticide store is regulatory requirement for farms and should be independently bunded to 110 or 185% of content volume depending on if you are located in a Drinking Water Protected Area. Although stores cannot be funded through STEPS, many farms choose to relocate their existing store within the footprint of the new washdown/handling facilities to speed up filling operations and reduce the risk of spills when undertaking spraying operations.

9 Rainwater Harvesting tanks – filtered rainwater may be harvested from the washdown area roof (**STEPS 021**) and used for filling or washing down the sprayer. Tanks can be fitted with a mains top up facility ensuring that the Water Supply and Fittings regulations are complied with.

Environment agency exemptions for biobeds and biofilters

- The Environment Agency should be contacted regarding site specific advice and regulatory matters on their customer enquiries line: **03708 506506**.
- Biobeds/biofilters require an Environment Agency T32 waste exemption to legally treat dilute pesticide washings. These may be applied for free online.
[Go online and search: gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-t32-treatment-of-waste-in-a-biobed-or-biofilter](https://gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-t32-treatment-of-waste-in-a-biobed-or-biofilter)
- A U10 allows waste biomix from the biobed (when it has come to the end of its working life) to be composted for a year and then spread to land.

For spreading exemptions, go online and search: gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-u10-spreading-waste-to-benefit-agricultural-land

or

gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-u11-spreading-waste-to-benefit-non-agricultural-land

- It is acceptable to apply for a STEPS grant without exemptions in place but you should ensure they have been obtained prior to the work being completed.

STEPS001 Pesticide sprayer washdown/handling area

Guidance

Location

Pesticide handling and washdown areas cannot be constructed:

- Within 10m of a watercourse
- Within 50m of a spring, borehole, well or reservoir
- Within 250m of a borehole used to supply water for producing domestic food without prior agreement from the Environment Agency (EA)
- In a groundwater source protection zone
- In areas liable to flooding or influenced by a high water table. This may be checked using Magic Maps magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx
- On historic or archaeological features, areas of wildlife value identified on the Farm Environmental Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map, or Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (HEFER)
- You must obtain the necessary consents and waste exemption from the Environment Agency (EA). This can be done after you apply for a STEPS grant but must be submitted before your grant is approved
- The washdown pad should not be used as a general washdown and cleaning area for other farm equipment. Oil and grease washed into the treatment apparatus may lead to damage or inefficient function.

Washdown area construction

Install a concrete bunded loading area, holding tanks, and fixed pumps and pipes to remove washings from the tank, as follows:

- The grant funding for this item includes the cost for the necessary drainage, bunding and holding tank, which must be installed. Washdown areas constructed without these elements cannot be funded
- Remove topsoil and excavate an area for the washdown area and tank
- Remove or divert any field drains that cross the site
- Cover the site with 140mm to 160mm of well compacted hardcore and at least 25mm of sand blinding
- Lay a damp-proof membrane weighing at least 1200g per square metre
- Lay a reinforced concrete slab at least 150mm thick to falls of at least 1:100
- Construct a concrete bund around the perimeter of the slab, making sure that all concrete joints are sealed with a proprietary sealant
- The bund must be suitably sized so that it can retain liquids
- The concrete bunded area should be as wide as the sprayer plus 2m, and as long as the sprayer plus 1.5m. You can tailor the area of the pad to your specific requirements

STEPS001

Pesticide sprayer washdown/handling area



- The bunded concrete slab must contain a slotted-cover type drain connected to a silt trap with a removable cover that has a nominal capacity of 250mm below the inlet
- Alternatively, lay the concrete so it is sloping 4 ways to a drain in the centre of the slab - the drain should have a silt trap within it
- Direct the drain containing the silt trap to a tank or chamber (no larger than 1500 litres) from which pesticide washings can be pumped and disposed of
- The holding tank must be made from seamless polyethylene, glass-reinforced plastic (GRP) or pre-cast concrete
- If there is no roof or cover, the holding tank should be sized according to local rainfall and the area of concrete pad
- The whole structure must be impermeable
- Inspect the concrete slab and bund regularly and repair any damage or deterioration. The pumps will also need to be checked regularly to make sure they are operating properly
- Construction of a pesticide sprayer loading or washdown area, for crop sprayers will require arrangements to be made for the disposal of washings and/or drainage water either by a specialist waste removal contractor or through treatment in a biobed, bunded biofilter
- You should state on your application how you intend to dispose of any pesticide washings, if not also selecting a biobed or biofilter
- If coupled to a biobed or biofilter, the pesticide washings from the loading and washdown area collected in the holding tank should be pumped before the tank reaches capacity using a pump float switch
- **Final applications must be made by 31st May 2024 for completion by 31st December 2024. Later applications may be considered if completion in short timescales is possible.**



This option is subject to a 10-year agreement.

This will be highlighted in the agreement if your grant application is successful and you decide to proceed.



Roofing for pesticide sprayer washdown area

How does this help the environment?

Roofing a pesticide washdown area minimises the amount of rainfall, which would otherwise be collected and need to be disposed of, in either a biobed, biofilter or evaporation unit.

This means that you have less liquid to run through your treatment apparatus and fill up storage tanks.

How does this help my farm business?

Excluding rainfall from your washdown area means more washings can be treated in the biobed/filter.

It also provides a useful shelter in which your sprayer can be stored prepared and filled. This often reduces the need for anti-freeze use during storage, and creates better working conditions for the operators.

Pesticide
priority

STEPS002

Grant value:
up to 50% cost
see page 14



Eligibility

STEPS002 is a priority item for pesticides and included in the pesticide washdown area offer

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

This option is available to cover either a newly constructed washdown area, or one which has already been built.

Advisory visit required



If selecting this option as part of a new pesticide handling area, you must have an expert advisory pesticide handling visit which can be arranged through your Agricultural Advisor. This is because there are a number of important regulations to follow and so you can also maximise the benefit for your business.

STEPS002 Roofing for pesticide sprayer washdown area

Guidance

- Pesticide handling areas, and the treatment facilities which are to be roofed over, must be bunded and meet current Environment Agency regulatory requirements.
- The constructed roof must cover the bunded area, plus a 1.5m overhang on all sides. Any additional roofing required beyond this specification must be fully funded by the applicant.
- An overhang is not required where the bunded area is fully enclosed by solid walls.
- The work may include foundations, supporting structure, roof sheeting (must be impermeable to rainwater), guttering and the installation of clean water drains.
- Guttering and drains must direct roof water to a clean water drain or rainwater storage tank. Please see **STEPS021** – Rainwater harvesting for additional options.
- Side walls and shades can also be built with your roof. **This work would not be covered by the STEPS grant and would therefore be at your own expense.** Any additional building must comply with any consent/permits acquired.
- The foundations, support structure and roof must comply with the relevant parts of BS 5502.



This option is subject to a 10-year agreement.

This will be highlighted in the agreement if your grant application is successful and you decide to proceed.

Drainage works must comply with:

BS 8000
BS 8500
BS EN 752
BS EN 206-1:2000
BS 6213:2000+A1:2010
BS EN 1610.

Lined biobeds

(either off-set/drive over)

How does this help the environment?

A biobed provides a simple method for on-farm treatment of dilute pesticide wastes. The biomix in the biobed allows any pesticides within the waste liquid to lock onto the organic matter. The bacteria within the soil and the biomix then slowly break down the pesticide residues.

- 40% of pesticide detections in our catchments are from contamination when handling pesticides.
- The remaining 60% of pesticide detection comes from the field.
- Managing the washings and wastes that come from pesticide handling is one measure that can be taken to help keep pesticides out of water.

How does this help my farm business?

Pesticide treatment facilities, such as biobeds and biofilters, are great for demonstrating that your farm is serious about chemical and pollutant management. They give peace of mind that, should the worst happen, there are extra barriers in place between contamination and the environment.

Pesticide
priority

STEPS003

Grant value:
up to 50% cost
see page 14



Eligibility



STEPS003 is a priority item for pesticides and is included in our pesticide washdown area offer

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

This item can be applied for in conjunction with: **STEPS001** - Pesticide sprayer washdown handling area and **STEPS002** - Roofing for washdown area.

Biobeds are not a substitute for best practice and every effort should still be made to avoid spills or splashes of pesticide concentrates during sprayer cleaning.

Advisory visit required



To select a biobed, you must have an expert advisory pesticide handling visit which can be arranged through your Agricultural Advisor. This is because there are a number of important regulations you need to follow and which will also help maximise the benefit to your business. These can be found in the guidance over the page.

STEPS003 Lined biobeds (either off-set/drive over)

Guidance

Location

Biobeds cannot be constructed:

- Within 10m of a watercourse
- Within 50m of a spring, borehole, well, or reservoir
- Within 250m of a borehole used to supply water for producing domestic food without prior agreement from the Environment Agency (EA)
- In a groundwater source protection zone
- In an area liable to flooding or influenced by a high water table
- On historic or archaeological features, areas of wildlife value identified on the Farm Environmental Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map, or the Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (HEFER)
- You must obtain relevant necessary consents and waste exemption from the Environment Agency (EA). This can be done after you apply for a STEPS grant but must be submitted to us before your grant is approved.

Biobed construction

Below-ground biobed:

- The surface area of a biobed needs to be big enough to handle all planned sprayer washings and any associated rain water – general recommendations are that you should allow approximately 1m² for every 1000 litres of water
- Excavate an area for the biobed
- Remove and block off any field drains
- Compact the sides of the earth bank to a slope of 30 to 35 degrees (about 1 in 1.5) towards the base
- Lay an impermeable synthetic liner at least 1.2mm thick (pesticide grade) on top of a geotextile membrane underlay (190g per square m) and 25mm of sand blinding
- Works must meet relevant British Standards. Go online to **BSIgroup.com** and search the standards database.

Above-ground biobed:

- Use pre-cast or reinforced concrete and a 1.2mm thick liner, or an impermeable pesticide grade container
- Follow the liner manufacturer's installation instructions
- Any necessary holding tanks, pumps and pipes must then be installed for the below or above-ground biobed.

Biobed outlet:

- Fit the biobed with a sump at the lowest point
- Create an internal sump when digging the biobed pit
- Lay the liner to incorporate the sump
- Make sure the liner is not perforated
- Insert a central, permeable, vertical access tube (0.5m in diameter) to allow water to flow into the sump base
- Install a pump within the tube, operated by a float switch setting
- Place a ring of perforated drainage pipe into the base of the biobed on top of the liner to assist the pump flow
- Install pumps to carry the treated discharge from the biobed to a vegetated area for irrigation; or pump it to a storage tank for irrigation or re-use.

Further guidance may be found at:
voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/water/biobeds/



This option is subject to a 10-year agreement.

This will be highlighted in the agreement if your grant application is successful and you decide to proceed.



Lined biobeds (either off-set/drive over)



Preparation of the biomix:

- Mix one part peat-free compost, one part topsoil and 2 parts straw (wheat or barley) by volume
- Allow the biomix to compost for 30 to 90 days before using it to fill the biobed to an effective depth of 1m, topping it up if there is any settlement
- Use at least 1m³ of biomix for every 1000 litres of liquid treated in any 12 month period
- Turf over the biomix
- Lay perforated pipes to distribute pesticide washings across the surface
- The biobed does not need a cover or roof.

Biobed operation for offset biobeds

Collect pesticide washings from an existing pesticide loading and washdown area in a storage tank then pump them for treatment in the offset biobed.

For drive-over biobeds:

- Construct a bunded drive-over grid above the biobed, with supporting foundations
- Make sure the grid and its foundations are suitable for the loading of any equipment driven over the grid.

Biobed maintenance:

- Add fresh, pre-composted biomix to the biobed every year to maintain 1m depth. Replace the biomix every 5 years
- Hazardous waste, fertilisers or fuel and oils must not be treated in the biobed.

Environment agency exemptions for biobeds and biofilters

- The Environment Agency should be contacted regarding site specific advice and regulatory matters on their customer enquiries line: **03708 506506**.
- Biobeds/biofilters require an Environment Agency T32 waste exemption to legally treat dilute pesticide washings. These may be applied for free online. Go online and search: gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-t32-treatment-of-waste-in-a-biobed-or-biofilter
- A U10 allows waste biomix from the biobed (when it has come to the end of its working life) to be composted for a year and then spread to land.

For spreading exemptions, go online and search: gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-u10-spreading-waste-to-benefit-agricultural-land

or

gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-u11-spreading-waste-to-benefit-non-agricultural-land

- It is acceptable to apply for a STEPS grant without exemptions in place but you should ensure they have been obtained prior to the work being completed.

STEPS004 Pesticide biofilter



Pesticide biofilter

Biofilters are not a substitute for best practice and every effort should still be made to avoid spills or splashes of pesticide concentrates during sprayer cleaning.

How does this help the environment?

A biofilter provides a simple low-cost method for on-farm treatment of dilute pesticide wastes. The biomix inside allows any pesticides within the waste liquid to lock onto the organic matter. The bacteria within the soil and the biomix then slowly break down the pesticide residues.

- 40% of pesticide detections in our catchments are from contamination when handling pesticides.
- The remaining 60% of pesticide detection comes from the field.
- Managing the washings and wastes that come from pesticide handling is one measure that can be taken to help keep pesticides out of water.

How does this help my farm business?

Pesticide treatment facilities, such as biobeds and biofilters, are great for demonstrating that your farm is serious about chemical and pollutant management. They give peace of mind that should the worst happen, there are extra barriers in place between contamination and the environment. Biofilters have a small footprint and can be easily accommodated in the corner of a shed or yard.

Pesticide
priority

STEPS004

Grant value:
up to 50% cost
see page 14



Eligibility

STEPS004 is a priority item for pesticides and is available under the pesticide washdown area offer. See page 14

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

This item can be applied for in conjunction with:

STEPS001 - Pesticide sprayer washdown/handling area and

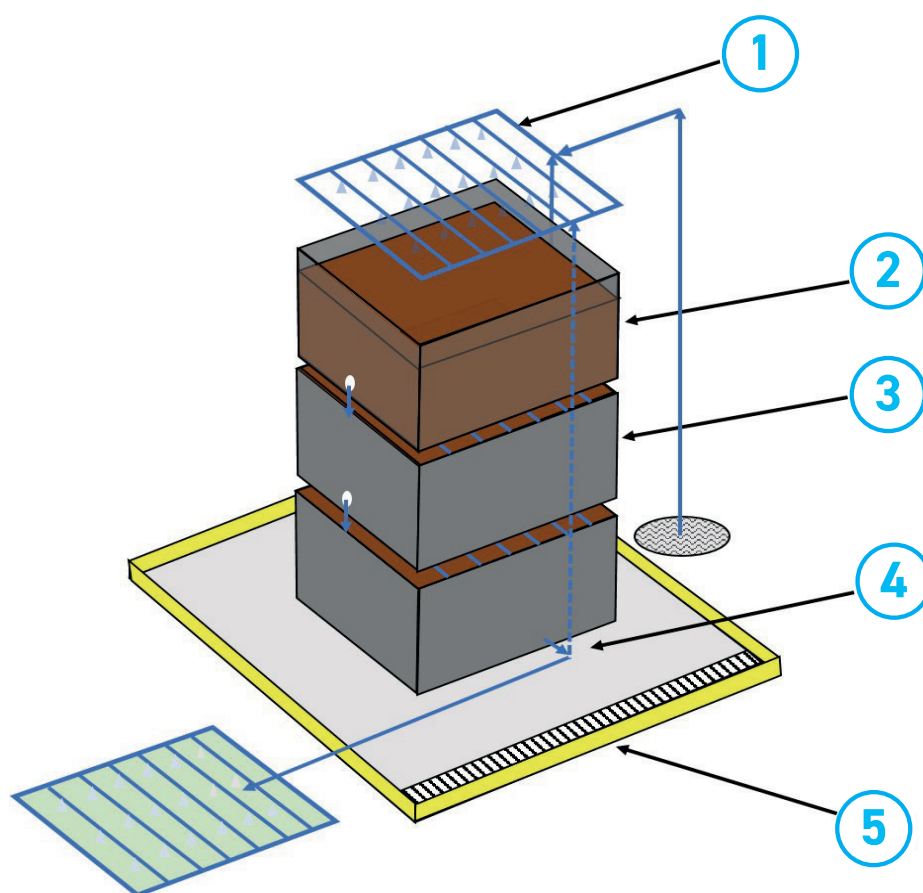
STEPS002 - Roofing for washdown area

Advisory visit required



To select a biofilter, you must have an expert advisory pesticide handling visit which can be arranged through your Agricultural Advisor. This is because there are a number of important regulations (listed in the guidance overleaf) to follow and so you can also maximise the benefit for your business.

STEPS004 Pesticide biofilter



What does a biofilter look like?

- 1** Washings are pumped from the washdown pad holding tank to the top of the biofilter where they are distributed evenly over the area of the biofilter through a dribble bar. The pump should be sized/regulated to ensure that the biofilter isn't water logged. Washings drain through the biomix via gravity. An outlet at the bottom of the IBC feeds liquid into dribble bars in the next stage of the biofilter.
- 2** Biomix made of 25% topsoil, 25% Peat free compost and 50% straw (by volume). This should be composted for 30 – 90 days before use and kept moist.
- 3** New IBCs, or similar filled with biomix. Pea gravel or similar drainage media is used to create a drainage layer on the bottom of the biofilter box, then lined with 'Terram' type membrane and the biomix added. These biofilter boxes will periodically require topping up.
- 4** Outlet from the bottom IBC to allow drainage to a vegetated area where treated washings may be dribbled on to the soil surface.
Alternatively, if fitted with a pump, washings may be recirculated back to the top IBC to allow further treatment and to keep the biomix moist.
- 5** The biofilter should be located within the bunded area draining back to the holding tank in order to contain any leaks and spills. The biofilter should be covered so that rainfall cannot enter though the top. Biomix should be changed at least every 5 years.

Guidance

Location

- Biofilters cannot be constructed within 10m of a watercourse.
- Biofilters cannot be constructed within 50m of a spring, borehole, well, or reservoir.
- They cannot be constructed within 250m of a borehole used to supply water for producing domestic food without prior agreement from the Environment Agency (EA).
- They cannot be constructed in a groundwater source protection zone.
- The site must not be liable to flooding or influenced by a high water table.
- They cannot be constructed on historic or archaeological features areas of wildlife value identified on the Farm Environmental Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map, or the Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (HEFER).
- You must obtain relevant advice from an expert, together with the necessary consents and waste exemption from the Environment Agency (EA). This can be done after you apply for a STEPS grant but must be submitted before your grant is approved.
- Biofilters must be located within their own bunded area or within the bund of the main pesticide washdown area.

Biofilter grant options

- There are now numerous companies specialising in biofilters, with many offering ready-made examples that simply require assembly on farm. Alternatively biofilter kits for use with IBCs are also available at a lower cost but require more time and maintenance.



This option is subject to a 10-year agreement.

This will be highlighted in the agreement if your grant application is successful and you decide to proceed.

Environment Agency exemptions for biobeds/biofilters

- The Environment Agency should be contacted regarding site specific advice and regulatory matters on their customer enquiries line: **03708 506506**.

- Biobeds/biofilters require an Environment Agency T32 waste exemption to legally treat dilute pesticide washings. These may be applied for free online.

Go online and search: gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-t32-treatment-of-waste-in-a-biobed-or-biofilter

- A U10 or U11 allows waste biomix from the biobed (when it has come to the end of its working life) to be composted for a year and then spread to land.

For spreading exemptions, go online and search: gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-u10-spreading-waste-to-benefit-agricultural-land

or

gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-u11-spreading-waste-to-benefit-non-agricultural-land

- It is acceptable to apply for a STEPS grant without exemptions in place but you should ensure they have been obtained prior to work being completed.

Getting further design advice

- Talk to your local Agricultural Advisor who will be able to arrange for an industry expert to conduct a free pesticide handling advice visit.
- Further design advice is available on how to size the pesticide handling facilities and on pesticide washing volume calculations, from Catchment Sensitive Farming.

Go online to gov.uk and search for [guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water-pollution](https://gov.uk/guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water-pollution) or go to the biobed manual at voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/water/biobeds



STEPS004 Pesticide biofilter

Constructing a DIY biofilter

- Use three **new**, chemical-resistant impermeable containers - these will typically be 1000 litre IBCs stacked vertically.
- Store pesticide washings in additional containers next to the IBCs, either before or after treatment.
- Alternatively, pump the washings directly from an underground storage tank that collects washings from a pesticide handling area.
- Cut the tops off the IBCs, leaving the corners intact.
- Insert wire mesh lining in the base of each one.
- Cover the lining with a permeable membrane.
- Install a layer (at least 10cm) of pea gravel over the membrane so that the drainage outlet to the container below is not blocked.
- Make a biomix by mixing 1 part peat-free compost, 1 part topsoil and 2 parts straw (wheat or barley) by volume.
- Allow the biomix to compost for 30 to 90 days before filling the IBCs.
- Fill the IBCs with biomix, leaving a 10cm gap at the top for piping.
- Allow the biomix to settle, then top up to a volume of at least 0.5 cubic metres of biomix in each one.
- Stack the 3 IBCs vertically into a tower on a flat concrete base.
- If the biofilter is not covered, replace the top of the uppermost container to prevent rainfall from getting in.
- Install pumps, pipes and a hose to pump washings from the initial storage tank to the top biofilter container and on to the biomix through a piped ring distribution system.
- Allow the washings to flow by gravity through the pipes to the containers below.
- Pump discharge from the bottom container to a storage tank, or for direct irrigation through a perforated hose on a vegetated area.
- Build a concrete bund at least 100mm high around the biofilter.
- The biofilter must comply with relevant British Standards.
[Go online to BSigroup.com](https://www.bsigroup.com) and search the standards database.
- The biofilter can only treat up to 15,000 litres of pesticide washings (excluding rainfall) in any 12 month period.

Maintaining the biofilter

- Biofilters require moisture to work and benefit from periodically recirculating washings through them. Despite this biofilters should be covered to prevent rain getting into them.
- Fresh, pre-composted biomix should be added to the biofilter to maintain its depth. The biomix should remain moist, using irrigation if necessary. Care must be taken not to allow the container to over flow.
- The biomix should be replaced every 5 years. The biofilter should not be used to treat hazardous waste, fuels, oils or fertilisers.

Arable grass margins: 6m + buffer

How does this help the environment?

Grass margins in arable fields provide a habitat for all manner of flora and fauna, especially when enhanced with wild flower seed mixes. Buffer strips also capture run-off and nutrients from fields, preventing these from reaching watercourses.

What it is and how does this help my farm business?

Buffer strips can provide a refuge for a range of beneficial insects which may benefit your farm. As they intercept run-off pathways, they help to keep soil and nutrients on your farm, which helps you to meet the Farming Rules for Water regulations (2018). [Go online and search: gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution)

They can also be used to maintain margins from expired stewardship agreements.

Pesticide/Nitrate
priority

STEPS005

Grant value:

£515/ha - 1 year agreement

£1030/ha - 2 year agreement

Full payment received in first year



Eligibility

STEPS005 is a priority item for pesticides and nitrates

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

Applicants who apply for this option will be committing to maintaining a grass margin buffer zone for a 1 or 2 year period from the beginning of the agreement.

Upon entering into this 1 or 2 year agreement you will receive a single payment in year 1 of the agreement.

This single payment is expected to cover any maintenance for the agreement period. Payments will be based on the area of land designated to the buffer zone.

STEPS005 Arable grass margins 6m + buffer

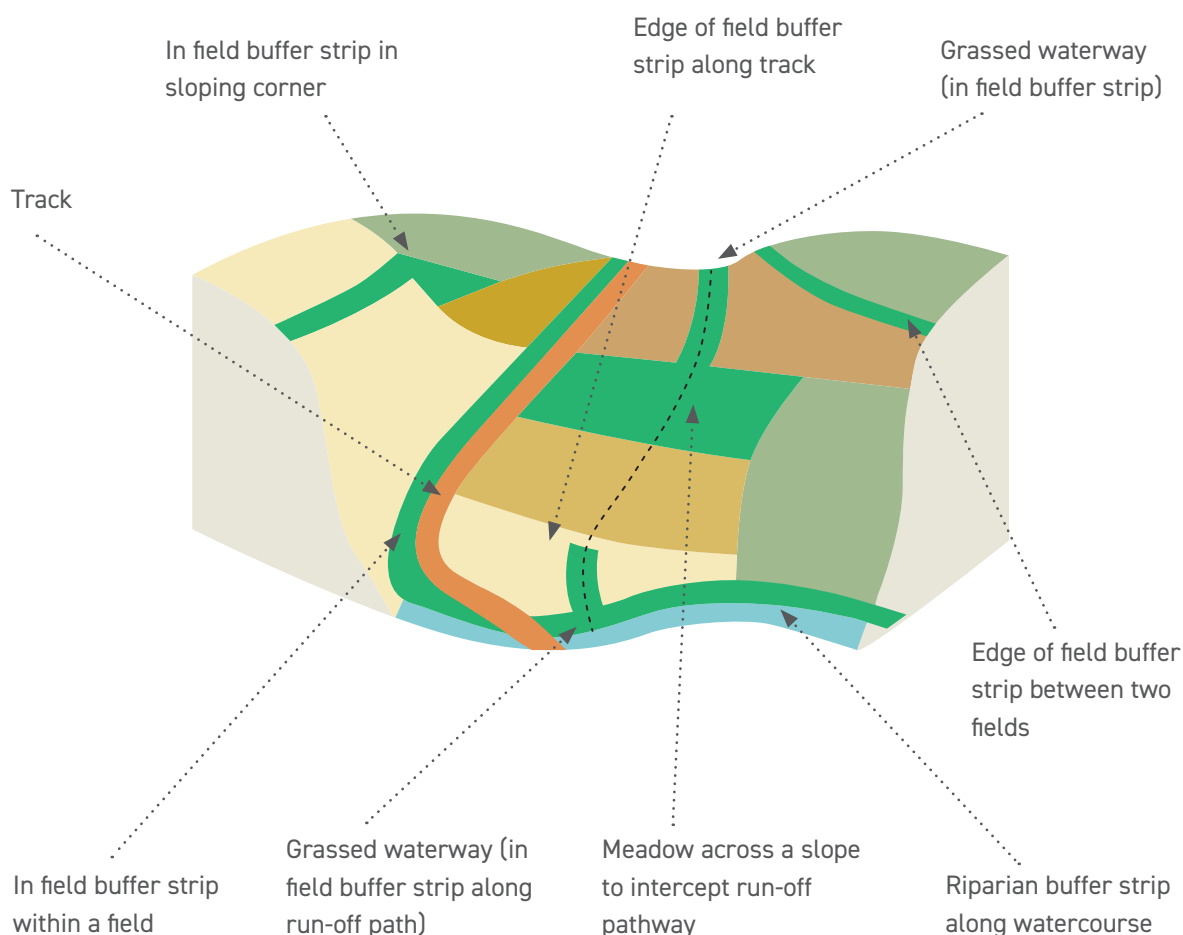
Guidance

The diagram below demonstrates the areas acceptable as buffer zones:

- Establish of a minimum 6m grass margin along arable field boundaries
- Existing margins established in expired stewardship schemes may be included
- Grass margins can also be placed in-field, depending on the topography
- Grass seed labels and receipts should be kept for the duration of the agreement
- Soil cultivation cannot be carried out once the margin is established
- Pesticides, fertiliser or lime cannot be applied to the grass margin
- Grazing is not permitted on the grass margin
- Margins may be used for intermittent access and turning, providing a healthy sward is maintained
- Fertiliser may be used for crop establishment only
- The margin may be mowed and baled or topped annually, ideally after 15th July and should be maintained in order to preserve a healthy sward
- Any buffer zone created for Ecological focus Area (EFA, CAP greening criteria) cannot be claimed under STEPS. EFA is a regulatory requirement which cannot be funded by STEPS

For guidance to the Basic Payment Scheme, go online and search for: [BPS 2020. \(gov.uk/government/publications/basic-payment-scheme-rules-for-2020\)](https://gov.uk/government/publications/basic-payment-scheme-rules-for-2020)

- Unproductive field corners may be included in the area claimed at the discretion of your Agricultural Advisor
- The location of grass margins must be placed in arable fields and clearly marked on the submitted maps. The grass margin cannot be relocated to another field.



Riverside margins in grass fields

How does this help the environment?

Livestock grazing in riverside areas can lead to harmful pathogens entering the water. Riverside margins will stabilise riverbanks and reduce soil erosion. Riverside margins also intercept run-off, reducing the risk of nutrients, pathogens and sediments entering water. Undisturbed margins can also boost biodiversity.

How does this help my farm business?

Buffer strips can provide a refuge for a range of beneficial insects which may benefit your farm. They can also be used to maintain margins from expired stewardship agreements.

Pesticide/Nitrate
priority

STEPS006

Grant value:

£235/ha - 1 year agreement

£470/ha - 2 year agreement

Full payment received in first year



Eligibility

STEPS006 is a priority item for pesticides and nitrates

This option is for a 5m+ margin in intensive grass fields. This option should be implemented in addition to any margin required through Farming Rules for Water. Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

Grass fields only.

Applicants who apply for this option will be committing to maintaining a grass margin buffer zone for a 1 or 2 year period from the beginning of the agreement.

Upon entering into this agreement you will receive a single payment in year 1 of the agreement.

This single payment is expected to cover any maintenance for the 1 year or 2 year period. Payments will be based on the area of land designated to the buffer zone.

STEPS006 Riverside margins in grass fields

Guidance

- Applicants who apply for this option will be committing to maintaining grass margin buffer zone for a period of 5 years.
- Margin width is measured from the top of the bank.
- STEPS grants are based on the area of riverside margin, however margins should be a minimum of 5m width in addition to any margin required under Farming Rules for Water.
- Pesticides, fertiliser or lime cannot be applied to the margin.
- Livestock are not allowed to graze the margin from its date of establishment until the end of your STEPS contract.
- The margin may be mown, but not between March 1st and August 16th.
- Pre-existing margins established during expired stewardship schemes may be included.
- The location of the riparian margin must be clearly marked on the map submitted with your STEPS application. Note, in order to maintain claims on your single farm payment scheme, a gate or moveable rail should be installed.

Alternative weed management in grassland fields

How does this help the environment?

Herbicide use in grassland fields, though usually less frequent than on other agricultural land, is still a significant source of pollution to watercourses and drinking waters. While there can be no substitute for following best practice with pesticide application and land management, there are a number of alternative non-chemical methods available to control problematic weeds.

How does this help my farm business?

Some grassland weeds are poisonous to livestock (e.g. ragwort, bracken, charlock), and can have a major impact on forage yields and quality. Controlling them is an important part of grassland and livestock management. Incorporating non-chemical weed control into your business as part of Integrated Crop Management (ICM) may help reduce costs overall and allow flexibility in when weeds can be treated.

Pesticide
priority

STEPS038

Grant value:

£110/ha 5 year agreement
or 50% cost up to £5,000 for equipment
Full payment received in first year



Eligibility

STEPS038 is a priority item for pesticides

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

Applicants may apply for either the area payment OR up to 50% of weed management equipment cost up to £5,000.

Grass fields must be being farmed.

Fields which do not already receive pesticide applications are not eligible for this STEPS item.

By taking up this STEPS item, you are committing to using non-chemical weed control only, for a period of 5 years.

You must provide pesticide application records for the parcel of land to demonstrate the current pesticide usage.

STEPS038

Alternative weed management in grassland fields



Guidance

There are a range of non-chemical controls which may be employed in grasslands and certain practices may not be suitable in some cases. If you are unsure, please speak to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor. You may select any non-chemical method for use, however common non chemical controls for grassland weeds may include:

Method

- Mechanical removal e.g. Topping, strimming, digging and weed pulling
- Weed removal tools
50% cost up to £5,000
- Weed wands – either thermal or electrical
50% cost up to £5,000
- Weed wipers (uses glyphosate but permitted for this option)
50% cost up to £5,000

If you wish to use a method not on this list, please specify and add details and costs in your application.

IMPORTANT: Use of non-chemical weed control techniques requires careful and considered management to ensure that the management takes place at the correct weed growth stage. This will maximise its effectiveness, and reduce the risks posed to livestock from specific weeds e.g. Ragwort. Before changing your grassland management it is advised you consult with your agronomist.

Precision pesticide application technology for grasslands

How does this help the environment?

Precision spraying equipment can improve the accuracy and efficiency of pesticides beyond that possible with standard apparatus. By reducing overlaps and the quantity of chemical used, less pesticide product ends up within the environment. Best practice and responsible pesticide management should be used before this option is considered.

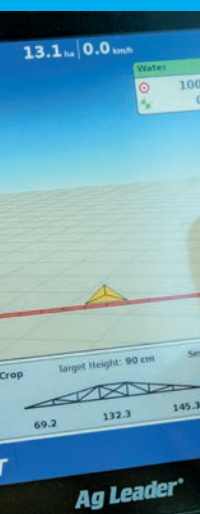
How does this help my business?

Introducing precision equipment to your farm can not only save you money through reducing the quantity of pesticide products used, but can also greatly improve efficiencies across your enterprise. Improved speed of field operations, reduced fuel usage and improvements to crop health are among the numerous benefits precision equipment can bring.

Pesticide
priority

STEPS039

Grant value:
50% up to £10,000



Eligibility

Grassland farms only.

Apparatus must primarily be used for pesticide applications.

When applying for this item, you will be required to submit quotes/invoices to verify the sum applied for.

Applicants must provide maps of the areas they will use the equipment on as well as areas of the fields sprayed. They must also show evidence that they hold a valid PA qualification and the spraying equipment has been tested.

STEPS039

Precision pesticide application technology for grasslands



Guidance

- You must discuss this option with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor before applying.
- Apparatus applied for must directly benefit water quality.
- Applications must outline the water quality benefit of the apparatus in order to be considered.
- If successful in your application, you may be asked for feedback as to how the equipment has impacted on your business e.g. any reductions in product use.
- Applicants must already be following best practice when handling and using pesticide.
- Application of pesticides must be undertaken by competent and certified operator.
- If apparatus is to also be used on arable crops please consider **STEPS25a**.

Non-chemical weed control equipment for arable crops (inter-row weeders, rakes, comb harrows and hoes)



How does this help the environment?

Prior to chemical controls, mechanical weeding was the only option available and has seen a recent resurgence. Mechanical weeding can greatly reduce the usage of herbicides which means less potential for them to enter watercourses and groundwater, whilst also reducing runoff from capped soils.

How does this help my business?

- Mechanical weeding reduces the reliance on chemical weed control and may be useful in tackling resistant varieties, particularly grass weeds such as Blackgrass.
- They can be set up to work in a range of cropping types including cereals, rapeseed, sugar beet and maize.
- Costs per pass are roughly the same as spraying.
- They can also help break up surface crust on some soils.

Pesticide
priority

STEPS040

Grant value:
50% up to £10,000



Eligibility

Arable crops only.

Machinery which was not originally intended for mechanical weeding cannot be funded.

STEPS040 Non-chemical weed control equipment for arable crops (inter-row weeders, rakes, comb harrows and hoes)

Guidance

- Size and spec of the equipment is of your choosing however the primary function on the equipment must be mechanical weeding.
- Applications for machinery not originally intended for weeding cannot be funded.
- If fitted to another piece of equipment e.g. a drill, only the weeding components may be claimed for under this option.
- Itemised quotes must be provided.
- Mechanical weeding may not be suitable for all crops, soil types or conditions and you should consider the implications carefully.



Closed Transfer Systems (CTS) for pesticides



How does this help the environment?

A closed transfer system (CTS) is a device that allows pesticide formulations to be transferred from its container to the spray tank with negligible exposure to the operator and the environment. Closed transfer systems therefore enable operators to manage crop protection and nutrition products in a safer and more environmentally friendly way.

How does this help my business?

Closed transfer systems have numerous benefits to your operations:

- Improved efficiency and increased productivity, the time taken to load the sprayer is significantly reduced, resulting in the possibility of an increased area treated (1-2 extra loads per day).
- Simple to use due to industry standard connections.
- Reduced potential for point source contamination and accuracy to within 0.5%, due to products being diluted and mixed directly into the tank.
- Reduced operator exposure, operators without a CTS have 84 times higher exposure to pesticides when pouring.
- Reduction in manual handling.
- Reduces reliance on single-use plastic containers.

Pesticide
priority

STEPS041

Grant value:
50% of cost and installation



Eligibility

You must be actively farming or contract spraying land in a Severn Trent pesticide priority catchment (just having the yard within a catchment doesn't count, the fields where spraying takes place needs to be in the catchment area).

Both arable and grassland spraying is eligible.

STEPS041 Closed Transfer Systems (CTS) for pesticides

Guidance

- Fit a closed transfer system to your sprayer or have a free standing option.
- There are currently 3 closed transfer systems on the UK market each with differing suitability:
 - FasTran 850 by Wisdom Systems (distributed by Frontier Agriculture)
 - EasyFlow M by Agrotop (distributed by Billericay Farm Services)
 - Pentair Cleanload Nexus.
- Other systems will be considered should they become available, however they must be a closed transfer system.
- If fitted to your machine, some plumbing will be required. If this is the case you may include a quote for the cost of fitting with your application.



Arable reversion into low input grassland

How does this help the environment?

This option will reduce nutrient losses and help stabilise the soil. This option is designed for highly targeted locations to help slow or reverse nutrient levels in groundwater.



Nitrate
priority

STEPS007

Grant value:

£326/ha - 1 year agreement

£652/ha - 2 year agreement

Full payment received in first year



Eligibility

STEPS007 is a priority item for nitrates

It is only available in Severn Trent Water groundwater catchments.

This option is only applicable to land that is currently used for arable production.

Your local Agricultural Advisor will determine if this is a suitable option for your farm.

STEPS007 Arable reversion into low input grassland

Guidance

This is a 1 or 2 year agreement where you will receive a single payment in year 1 of your agreement.

- Applicants must submit evidence with their application that demonstrates a recommended fertiliser management system or evidence to support low intensity farming.
- All records of all management activity undertaken on the parcel of land under this option, are to be kept on farm.
- Applicants must establish a grass sward by October 1st of year 1 of the agreement.
- Applicants cannot store farm yard manure in field.
- All livestock must be excluded from the land between October 1st to March 15th each year.
- Supplementary feeding spots are not permitted, except for mineral blocks.
- Livestock manure may be applied to supply up to 100kg of total nitrogen per ha per year. If livestock manures are not being applied, artificial nitrogen fertiliser can be applied at a total of 50kg/ha per year.
- You must not apply manure within 50m of the boundary of any borehole, spring, reservoir or water course.
- Applicants cannot use pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, etc.), with the exception of herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat invasive non-native species.
- Applicants cannot apply manure or fertiliser between August 15th and February 1st.

Cover crops

How does this help the environment?

The soil health benefits of cover crops prevent nitrogen leaching to groundwater and sedimentation in watercourses from soil erosion. Covering bare soils captures CO₂ and prevents N₂O production from bare, waterlogged soils over winter. Flowering plants provide pollen and nectar for pollinators and seed for birds. Enhanced soil biology supports the bottom of the food chain in the farm ecosystem. Healthy soil results in more invertebrates, providing food for birds and small mammals.

How does this help my farm business?

Cover and catch crops are a vital tool in developing healthy soils on the farm. From nitrogen fixing to biofumigation, organic matter build-up, and soil decompaction, cover crops are beneficial in a multitude of ways for both your business and the environment. They also help you to meet the requirements of Farming Rules for Water.



Nitrate
priority

STEPS008

Grant value:
£ See table



Eligibility

STEPS008 is a priority item for nitrates

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

The land chosen must be inside a Severn Trent groundwater catchment or have direct influence on a water body in close proximity.

To make a claim provide dated photos of a fully grown cover crop with solid green cover.

Photos may taken any time 18th November - 31st December 2024, but the crop should still be maintained until at least 15th January 2025.

STEPS008 Cover crops

Soil and nutrition

Cover crops protect the soil surface from extreme rainfall events. This reduces surface capping, runoff and soil erosion, which prevents the loss of nutrients and pesticides. Plant biomass increases soil organic matter (SOM), which is a key component of healthy soils. Including cover crops in your rotation can improve nutrient management on the farm; e.g. deep rooting plants such as radish can scavenge nitrogen and contain it within the cover crop. After destruction, this nitrogen is released into the topsoil and used by following crops. Including legumes in a cover crop mix can improve soil fertility by fixing nitrogen, allowing it to be used by subsequent crops. Please consider retention of nitrogen when planning your following nutrient applications and consider soil testing to confirm levels.

Pest control

Cover crops act as a break crop to disrupt pest and disease cycles and can have the following benefits:

- Suppression of autumn germinating weeds
- Weed suppression by providing allelopathic exudates, e.g. from hairy vetch and cereal rye
- Blackgrass control
- Biofumigant species, such as Brown or Indian mustard and radish, can control soil-borne pathogens
- Cover crops provide a refuge for beneficial predatory insects.

Grazing

Stubble turnips, kale, forage rape, rye and clover can be grown as cover crops over winter and utilised for livestock grazing, providing a clean, early lambing turnout.

Guidance

- The crop must remain in situ until at least January 15th. In some cases crops may be destroyed earlier e.g. if also being used as a biofumigant. However this should be discussed with your Agricultural Advisor. Early grazing by livestock is not permitted.
- A dense and fast growing cover crop must be established by September 15th in the autumn of your agreement.
- To claim this option, photographs of the established crop should be taken in January.
- Cover crops sown after maize in surface catchments may be applied for at a rate of

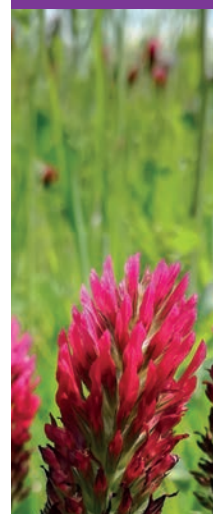
£60 per hectare. However, they must be established by October 15th. If considering this option, you should first consult your Agricultural Advisor.

- After January 15th the crop may be destroyed by chemical or mechanical means or by grazing. Please specify the means of destruction when you apply, or discuss with your agricultural advisor.
- The species used within the crop mix are for you to decide, however you should specify your choice in your application.
- Fertiliser should not be applied to the crop.
- Advice should be sought from your Agricultural Advisor to deem if field is suitable.
- Grazing of cover crops in surface water catchments is permitted but not until after January 31st.
- Ploughing is not permitted, however the use of light cultivation techniques is recommended.
- It is recommended you discuss this option with an agronomist or your Agricultural Advisor.

For guidance to the Basic Payment Scheme, go online and search for: **BPS 2020**. (www.gov.uk/guidance/basic-payment-scheme).

Undersowing maize

- Cover crops may be sown into a growing maize crop.
- Crops should be drilled into a growing crop to give good establishment. Broadcasting of seed will only give poor uptake and cover.
- Undersowing maize requires careful crop management and should be discussed with your Agricultural Advisor if you are considering this option.
- Undersowing maize should not be used to bring marginal growing land into production and suitable risk assessments, such as those developed by the Maize Growers Association should be followed appropriately
- Suggested sowing rates for undersown grass are given in the table below, however rates and timings may differ with species and maize varieties.



STEPS008

Cover crops

Please take into account crop rotations when sowing cover crops. Cover crops can potentially lead to an increase in slug populations depending on weather and soil conditions.

- The location of the area selected must be clearly marked on the map submitted with your STEPS application. The table below gives examples of crops which will be funded through this STEPS measure. This is not an exhaustive list.
- It is suggested that farmers sow as early as possible for good establishment and maximum nutrient capture. Direct drilling into cereal stubble is an effective method of planting.

If you would like to apply for cover crops but don't know the area just yet:

- At the time of submitting your STEPS application, you may not be clear on the area/ location of cover crops you will be planting later in the year.
- Therefore, it is acceptable to state the approximate area and location you think you may plant on your application form, and submit by January 31st.
- When you know the exact area later in the year, inform your Agricultural Advisor before August 15th who will supply you with a form to mark the area and location.
- You must supply maps and photos of crop locations before confirmation.

Cover crop species	Minimum seed rate Kg/Ha	Benefits	
Mustard	10-15	Biofumigant	
Oil radish	15-20	Biofumigant, N scavenging	
Winter turnip rape	10-15	Grazing	
Radish/Phacelia/Oat mix	22-25	Fast growth, pollinators	
Mustard/Oat/Phacelia mix	20-23	Biofumigant, fast growth, pollinators	
Forage Rye/Vetch mix	40-45	N holding and fixation	
Maize under sowing mix	Timing of drilling	Rate	
Tall Fescue and/ or perennial Ryegrass	Before 4 leaves	Up to 7 kg/ha	
	4-6 leaves	10 kg/ha	
	6-8 leaves	15 kg/ha	
Crop type		Grant value	
		Groundwater catchments	Surface catchments
		1-year option	1-year option
STEPS 008a	Cover crops	£136/ha/yr	£60/ha/yr
STEPS 008b	Undersown maize	£136/ha/yr	£60/ha/yr
STEPS 008c	Cover crops following maize (not undersown)	£60/ha/yr	£45/ha/yr
STEPS 008d	Short term catch crop	£45/ha (+£75 extra if retained to January 15th)**	£45/ha/yr

** Short term catch crops are paid at £45 if retained for at least the minimum 10 week period. Should you wish to retain the crop up to the 15th of January, an additional £75/ha can be awarded, subject to a signoff visit by a Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.



Livestock removal from high risk fields

This is a 2 or 5 year agreement where you will receive a single payment in year one of the agreement.

How does this help the environment?

Livestock fields in groundwater catchments which are located close to our boreholes, may pose a greater level of risk to water quality.

In special circumstances it may be appropriate to move livestock elsewhere in order to reduce the risk of contamination from bacteria.



Crypto/Nitrate
priority

STEPS011

Grant value:

£115/ha - 1 year agreement

£230/ha - 2 year agreement

Must maintain for full agreement

Full payment received in first year



Eligibility

STEPS011 is a priority item for cryptosporidium groundwater catchments and nitrates

Livestock must be removed to a field outside the Severn Trent Water catchment.

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

STEPS011 Livestock removal from high risk fields



Guidance

- A high risk field is determined by its topography, soil type and its proximity to a borehole. Your local Agricultural Advisor will determine if this is a suitable option for your farm.
- Livestock must be part of the farming enterprise.
- Livestock must be removed from field all year round.
- Maximum chemical nitrogen usage is 40kg N per year.
- No slurry or Farm Yard Manure (FYM) can be applied to the land/field.
- Field must not be put into an arable crop.
- Grazing cannot take place but the making of hay, haylage and silage is permitted.
- The location of the high-risk fields must be clearly marked on the map submitted with your STEPS application. Your Agricultural Advisor will assist in identifying potentially high risk fields. They will be determined on a case by case basis depending on the associated risks.

Low nitrogen input into grassland

How does this help the environment?

This option will reduce nitrate inputs into grassland in highly targeted locations, to help slow or reverse nutrient levels in groundwater catchments which are used for drinking water.

How does this help my business?

Lower inputs results in lower costs for your farm business. It also aids in disease management of your stock, as lower stock numbers results in reduced host opportunities for parasites.

Nitrate
priority

STEPS012

Grant value:

£396/ha - 1 year agreement

Full payment received in first year

£792/ha - 2 year agreement



Eligibility

This option is only available in Severn Trent Water borehole sites that are at risk to nitrates

This option is only applicable to improved grassland which currently receives at least 200kg Nitrogen per ha per year.

Your local Agricultural Advisor will determine if this is a suitable option for your farm.

STEPS012 Low nitrogen input to grassland

Guidance

- This is a 1 year agreement where you will receive a single payment in year 1 of the agreement.
- Applicants must submit evidence with their application that demonstrates a recommended fertiliser management system or evidence to support low intensity farming.
- This evidence should show that the area currently receives more than 200kg of nitrogen per ha per year. All records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel to be kept on farm.
- Exclude all livestock from the land from October 1st to March 15th.
- Applicants cannot apply/store farm yard manure in field.
- Applicants cannot apply slurry to field.
- Maximum chemical nitrogen usage is 40kg N per year.
- Any fields chosen under this item must not be ploughed, cultivated or re-seeded.
- Supplementary feeding spots are not permitted, except for mineral blocks.
- Applicants are not allowed to use pesticides or herbicides, except to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds and invasive non-native species.
- Applicants must hold a monthly record of the number of livestock grazing the land, and this must not exceed more than 0.8 LU per hectare at any given time. Standard livestock units are given in the tables opposite.

Other livestock	Livestock units
Horses	0.80
Breeding female goats	0.16
Other goats	0.11

Cattle	Livestock units
Dairy cows	1.00
Beef cows	0.75
Heifers in calf (rearing)	0.80
Bulls	0.65
Other cattle (under 1 year)	0.34
Other cattle (under 1 year)	0.65
Other cattle (2 years and over)	0.80
Pigs	Livestock units
Boars	0.35
Breeding sows	0.44
Gilts in pig	0.20
Maiden gilts	0.18
Other pigs	0.17
Poultry	Livestock units
Cocks, hens, pullets in lay	0.0017
Pullets, one week to point of lay	0.003
Broilers	0.0017
Other table chicken	0.004
Turkeys	0.005
Ducks, geese, other poultry	0.003
Sheep	Livestock units
Rams	0.08
Lowland ewes	0.11
Upland ewes	0.08
Hill ewes	0.06
Store lambs (under 1 year)	0.04
Breeding ewe hoggs, 6 months to 1 year	0.06
Other sheep (over 1 year)	0.08

Source: (Nix, 2003)

Watercourse fencing

How does this help the environment?

Livestock access to watercourses can cause erosion of riverbanks, resulting in the loss of soil, and contamination of water by nutrients and bacteria. Preventing livestock access to watercourses, and allowing the establishment of a buffer strip adjacent to watercourses reduces contamination and provides an area for wildlife.

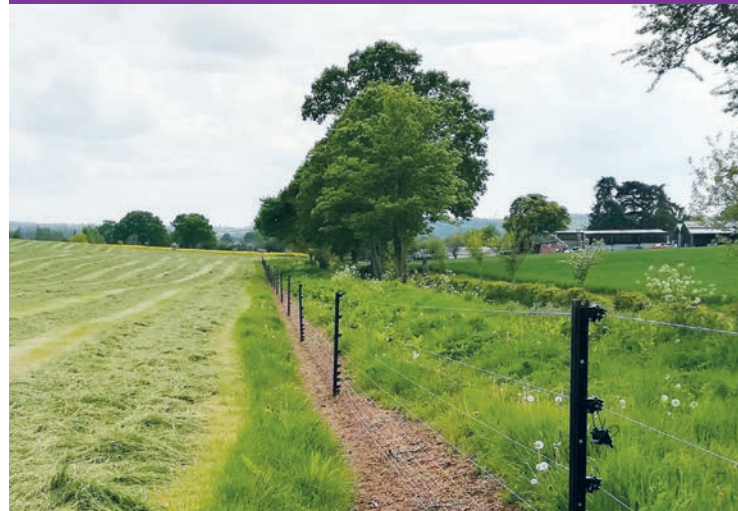
How does this help my farm business?

Installation of robust watercourse fencing can assist with stock management and prevent the loss or injury of animals on hazardous banks. It can reduce livestock exposure to disease risk areas, and improve overall animal welfare.

Crypto
priority

STEPS013

Grant value:
£ See table



Eligibility

STEPS013 is a priority item for cryptosporidium

Available at 100% cost in crypto catchments plus 100% funding for ancillary STEPS items. See page 14.

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

Where fencing is to be erected along dry ditches, these must have a connection to a stream or river.

Existing fencing may only be replaced where it is no longer stockproof (photographic evidence of the fence condition is required).

Full invoices and receipts must be provided for claimed works.

STEPS013 Watercourse fencing

General requirements

- Fences must be a minimum of 1.5m from the top of the bank of the watercourse.
- Fencing should prevent animal movement upstream or downstream.
- The fence should be at least 1.05m high and suitably stockproof.
- All the materials used should meet the relevant British Standards. [Go online to BSIgroup.com](https://www.bsigroup.com) and search the standards database.
- It is your responsibility to obtain permission from the Environment Agency, Natural England, or your local council, if required, before erecting any fencing.
- When erecting a fence, consider installing gates to allow management activities or husbandry operations. Applicants are entitled to apply for a gate (options **STEPS013f** or **STEPS013g**) to install with their fencing to comply with Basic Payment Scheme regulations. This option should be discussed with your Agricultural Advisor.

Guidance

Post and wire fencing

- Use softwood timber that is fully peeled, coated with wood preservative and pressure treated, or treated with an approved preservative. Untreated durable timber can be used as set out in the Forestry Commission guide to forest fencing.
- Use straining posts that are at least 125mm by 125mm square (or have a 100mm top diameter) and are at least 1.87m long.
- Set the straining posts at least 750mm into the ground and no more than 150m apart.
- Place a straining post at every change of direction (horizontal or vertical) and at each end of the fence.
- Use struts that are 75mm by 75mm square, or have a 65mm top diameter, and 1.87m long.
- Set the struts at least 450mm into the ground and mortise them into the straining post.
- Use intermediate posts that are 75mm by 75mm square (or have a 65mm top diameter) and 1.75m long.
- Intermediate posts must be placed at intervals of no more than 3.5m from the post centres.
- Use strands of galvanised 4mm mild plain steel wire or 2.5mm barbed wire, using enough strands to control the livestock.



STEPS013 Fixed costs for fencing types

STEPS codes	Item	Grant amount non priority	Grant amount crypto priority
STEPS013a	Post & wire fencing	50% material cost	100% cost
STEPS013b	Sheep netting		
STEPS013c	Permanent electric fencing		
STEPS013d	Clipex fencing		
STEPS013e	Temporary electric fencing		
STEPS013f	Gate metal		
STEPS013g	Gate wooden		

STEPS013

Watercourse fencing

Guidance

Sheep netting

- Use softwood timber that is fully peeled, coated with wood preservative and pressure treated, or treated with an approved preservative. Untreated durable timber can be used as set out in the Forestry Commission guide to forest fencing.
- Use straining posts that have a top diameter of at least 125mm, or are 100 by 100mm in cross-section when sawn.
- Make sure the straining posts are 1.85m long, if set in concrete, and 2.15m long otherwise.
- Place the straining posts no more than 150m apart, if using mild steel line wire, or 300m apart for high tensile wire.
- Use a straining post at every change of direction (horizontal or vertical) and at each end of the fence.
- Use struts that have a top diameter of at least 80mm, or are 75mm by 75mm when sawn.
- Make sure the struts are 1.6m, if set in concrete, and 1.9m long otherwise. Notch struts into the straining post at an angle of no more than 45 degrees.
- Use intermediate posts that have a top diameter of at least 65mm, or are 75mm by 75mm when sawn.
- Make sure intermediate posts are 1.7m long and space them no further than 3.5m apart.



Permanent electric fencing

- Erect wire fencing at least 1.05m high, using a minimum of 4 mild steel or high tensile plain wires.
- Use straining posts with a top diameter of at least 150mm and 2.15m long, spaced according to the type of wire used.
- Use struts with a top diameter of at least 80mm and 2.1m long, notched into straining posts.
- Use intermediate posts with a top diameter of at least 63mm and 1.7m long, spaced according to the type of wire used.
- Install a mains-operated energiser in accordance with the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) Regulations.

Clipex fencing

- Intermediate posts to be placed at intervals of 3.5m spacings.
- Place straining posts no more than 150m apart.
- If the fencing is being used for larger livestock including cattle, appropriate fencing options must be used which can include an electrical top wire or larger posts.

Temporary electric fencing

- Temporary electric fencing may be installed but only to permit livestock exclusion where the watercourse floods, or when managing stock to prevent overgrazing of fields. Discuss the suitability of this option with your Agricultural Advisor.

STEPS013

Watercourse fencing



Gates (metal and wooden)

- Can only be used where livestock are being excluded from a watercourse.
- For wooden gates - construct the gate out of timber in a style that is traditional to the local area OR if there is no local gate style then construct the gate to the specifications shown below.
- Hang and clap all styles of gate separately from an adjoining fence line – do not use the hanging post as an end strainer.
- **Either**
set gate posts at least 900mm into the ground and surround with concrete at least 450mm by 450mm wide, and 600mm deep, **or** erect gate posts without concrete surrounds and set at least 1.1m below the ground surface, with the soil compacted around the posts in 150mm layers. Weather cap the top of the gate posts, if wooden.
- Wooden wings should be installed, where the gate adjoins a hedge as part of the boundary.
- **Wings must:**
 - Consist of at least 3 wooden rails fixed between 2 posts
 - Do not fix the rails to the hanging post of the gate
 - Rails must be at least 38mm by 87mm
 - Posts must be at least 100mm diameter half round, 1.8m long and sunk 0.7m into the ground.

Gate section sizes		
Section	Gates up to 3m wide	Gates 3m wide and over
Top rail	100mm by 75mm	125mm by 75mm
Top rail tapered to	75mm by 75mm	75mm by 75mm
Under rails	75mm by 25mm	75mm by 25mm
Braces	75mm by 25mm	75mm by 25mm
Hanging style	100mm by 75mm	125mm by 75mm
Shutting style	75mm by 75mm	75mm by 75mm

Livestock drinking troughs

How does this help the environment?

Livestock access to watercourses can cause erosion of riverbanks, resulting in loss of soil and the contamination of water by nutrients and bacteria.

Preventing livestock access to watercourses and providing alternative drinking points allows the establishment of a buffer strip adjacent to the watercourse, which reduces contamination and provides an area for wildlife.

How does this help my business?

Suitable alternative drinking water areas provides livestock with a safer and cleaner space to drink.



STEPS014

Grant value:
50% of trough cost

Eligibility

STEPS014 may be selected in conjunction with **STEPS013** watercourse fencing when excluding livestock from a watercourse used for drinking.

Troughs **must** be applied for in conjunction with **STEPS018a** Hard base for livestock drinking trough.

In some cases it may be permissible to apply when re-siting a trough in a poached area away from a watercourse.

Contact your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

Severn Trent Water will pay up to 50% of new trough cost (100% in crypto priority catchments).

Invoices must be provided as proof of purchase.

Reconditioned troughs are not permitted.

STEPS014 Livestock drinking troughs

Guidance

- The new water trough should not be located on land which is vulnerable to soil erosion, poaching or run-off.
 - The new water trough cannot be located within 10m of a watercourse and not within 50m of a borehole or reservoir.
 - The trough should be mounted on a suitable durable base to avoid soil poaching (see **STEPS018** item Hard base for livestock drinking troughs/pasture pumps for guidance).
- The area around the drinking trough:
- should be excavated to a minimum width of 2.5m
 - should be excavated to a minimum depth of 150mm, or down to a naturally occurring hard surface
 - should have compacted hardcore to a depth of at least 150mm, and on a geotextile liner
- The trough should be made of one of the following; galvanised steel, concrete, spray-moulded glass reinforced cement (GRC), or polyethylene
 - The trough should be fitted with a ball valve and service box and comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. [To find out more, go online and search: legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999)
 - If using a water source other than mains water, the supply of water to a trough may require permission from the Environment Agency, depending on the source of the water. If water is taken from a borehole, well, or watercourse the landowner may require a licence, depending on the quantity abstracted
 - After completion, the trough should be checked on a regular basis to ensure that there is no water leakage and that it is not overflowing.

If you intend to use the public water supply, you must fit a backflow prevention device and comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. To find out more, go online and search: legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999

For further guidance and new connections call 01332 683711

or email water.regulations@severntrent.co.uk

Livestock pasture pumps



How does this help the environment?

Livestock access to watercourses can cause erosion of riverbanks, resulting in loss of soil and contamination of water by nutrients and bacteria. Preventing livestock access to watercourses and providing alternative drinking points allows the establishment of a buffer strip adjacent to the watercourse, which reduces contamination and provides an area for wildlife.

How does this help my business?

Excluding livestock from watercourses may prevent loss or injury of animals on hazardous banks. Suitable alternative drinking water areas provide livestock with a safer and cleaner space to drink.

A pasture pump will provide water for approximately 20 cattle and doesn't require a mains water or energy supply.

STEPS015

Grant value:
£242 per unit



Eligibility

STEPS015 may be selected in conjunction with **STEPS013** watercourse fencing when excluding livestock from a watercourse used for drinking.

Contact your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

The field in which the pump is located must be adjacent to, or in close proximity to, a watercourse which has been fenced off to prevent livestock access.

STEPS015 Livestock pasture pumps

Guidance

- The area chosen for a new pasture pump should not be vulnerable to soil erosion or within 50m of borehole or reservoir.
- The pump should be installed on a hard standing to prevent poaching and run-off, you may apply for **STEPS018** - Hard base for livestock drinking troughs/pasture pumps to compliment this item.
- The excavated area around the pump should extend to a minimum width of 1m by 1m.
- Dig the hardstanding area to a depth of at least 150mm, or down to a naturally occurring hard surface.
- Compact hardcore on a geotextile liner to a depth of at least 150mm.
- The pump should be securely anchored to prevent movement.
- The pump must be designed to allow the animal to use its nose to push a lever that pumps water into a small water bowl or reservoir. A metal splash pan should be positioned under the reservoir to catch spillage.
- Not all pasture pumps are suitable for all kinds of livestock. Please refer to the pump supplier details to ensure the pump you have selected is suitable for your situation.
- Pasture pumps can't be used to replace existing equipment in the same location. The pump can be removed and stored during the winter period but must be available for inspection.
- The pasture pump should be checked on a regular basis to ensure that there is no water leakage.
- The pump should meet the relevant British Standards. Go online to [BSIgroup.com](https://www.bsigroup.com) and search the standards database.

If you intend to use the public water supply, you must fit a backflow prevention device and comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. To find out more, go online and search: legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999

**For further guidance
and new connections
call 01332 683711**

**or email [water.
regulations@
severntrent.co.uk](mailto:water.regulations@severntrent.co.uk)**

Water supply pipe

How does this help the environment?

Livestock access to watercourses can cause erosion of riverbanks, resulting in loss of soil and the contamination of water by nutrients and bacteria. Preventing livestock access to watercourses and providing alternative drinking points allows the establishment of a buffer strip adjacent to the watercourse which reduces contamination and provides an area for wildlife.

How does this help my business?

Excluding livestock from watercourses may prevent loss or injury of animals on hazardous banks. Suitable alternative drinking water areas provides livestock with a safer and cleaner space to drink.

STEPS016

Grant value:
£2 per metre



Eligibility

This option must be selected in conjunction with:

STEPS014 - Livestock drinking troughs

STEPS015 - Livestock pasture pumps

STEPS017 - Water pumps

or

in other works where livestock are being excluded from a watercourse.

STEPS016 Water supply pipe

Guidance

- Pipework should be made of medium-density blue polyethylene with an external diameter of at least 25mm.
- The water supply pipe must be laid underground at a minimum depth of 800mm.
- All joints on the water supply pipe must be water tight and made of brass or plastic.
- If the pipe crosses farm tracks, lay the pipe on a 75mm bed of sand and then cover it with a further 100mm of sand, before overlaying it with backfill.
- The pipe should meet the relevant British Standards. Go online to: [BSIgroup.com](https://www.bsigroup.com) and search the standards database.
- Troughs where water supply piping is connected, must be placed in a suitable location to minimise soil poaching and run-off.
- Any surface water generated around the trough must not directly enter a watercourse.

If you intend to use the public water supply, you must fit a backflow prevention device and comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. To find out more, go online and search: legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999

**For further guidance
and new connections
call 01332 683711**

**or email [water.
regulations@
severntrent.co.uk](mailto:water.regulations@severntrent.co.uk)**

Water pump

How does this help the environment?

Livestock access to watercourses can cause erosion of riverbanks, resulting in loss of soil and the contamination of water by nutrients and bacteria. Preventing livestock access to watercourses and providing alternative drinking points using solar or ram pumps, allows the establishment of a buffer strip adjacent to the watercourse, which reduces contamination and provides an area for wildlife.

How does this help my business?

Excluding livestock from watercourses may prevent loss or injury of animals on hazardous banks. Suitable alternative drinking water areas provide livestock with a safer and cleaner space to drink. Solar power and ram pumps can help to provide remote drinking points with no need for mains power or water.



STEPS017

Grant value:
£ See table



Eligibility

STEPS017 may be selected in conjunction with **STEPS013** watercourse fencing when excluding livestock from a watercourse used for drinking.

The item should only be used in the field which is being fenced off.

Contact your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

The field in which the pump is installed must be adjacent to, or within proximity of a watercourse, which has been fenced to prevent livestock access.

This item cannot be used under animal housing or a roof structure.

STEPS017 Water pump

Guidance

- For ram pumps, install a suitable water collection facility, sediment tank (if necessary), drive pipe (supplying pump), pump chamber, pump, and delivery pipe.
- Set either solar or ram pumps on a firm base made out of a 150mm thick slab of concrete or a 150mm layer of consolidated hardcore.
- All the works must meet the relevant British Standards. Go online to: [BSigroup.com](https://bsigroup.com) and search the standards database.
- The pumping capacity of solar panel and ram pumps may vary with weather and stream flow conditions. It is suggested that additional water storage tanks be provided to ensure sufficient supply is maintained during peak demand.
- Check with suppliers that pumps will be able to raise water a sufficient height to the selected watering point.
- Where water may need to be moved over longer distances, ram pumps are more suitable and work on water pressure alone.
- The water trough and pump should be checked on a regular basis to ensure that there is no water leakage.
- Pump systems can be easily moved from trough to trough.
- The connecting water trough should not be located on land vulnerable to soil erosion, poaching or run-off, not located within 10m of a water course and cannot be located within 50m of a borehole or reservoir.
- The connecting water trough should be mounted on a suitable durable base to avoid soil poaching (see STEPS018 for more guidance).

Pump options		
STEPS code	Item	Fixed grant amount
STEPS017a	Solar panel pump	£450/unit
STEPS017b	Ram pump	£1628/unit

If you intend to use the public water supply, you must fit a backflow prevention device and comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. To find out more, go online and search: legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999

For further guidance and new connections call 01332 683711

or email water.regulations@severntrent.co.uk

Hard base for livestock drinking troughs/resurface gateways

How does this help the environment?

Installing hard bases around troughs and resurfacing gateways, aims to reduce poaching, soil erosion and sediment run-off which may contaminate nearby watercourses or groundwater.

How does this help my farm business?

Hard standing for troughs and pumps provides a level and stable base. This reduces the chance of damage from livestock, improves stock movement, and helps to reduce stock lameness.

Resurfacing and strengthening gateways can improve ease of access for stock, machinery and farm workers.

STEPS018

Grant value:

£180 per base
£95 per gateway



Eligibility

STEPS018 is a priority item for cryptosporidium

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

STEPS018a - Hard base for livestock drinking troughs can be selected in conjunction with the items below in:

STEPS014 - Livestock drinking troughs

STEPS015 - Pasture pumps

STEPS017 - Water pumps

Or they can be applied to livestock drinking troughs or feeders already in place which are acting a source of pollution to a watercourse.

STEPS018 Hard base for livestock drinking troughs/ resurface gateways

Guidance

Hard base for troughs

- The excavated area around the drinking trough should extend to a minimum width of 2.5m, or 1m for a pasture pump.
- The soil on site should be excavated to a minimum depth of 150mm or down to a naturally occurring hard surface, the depth of which will vary according to the type of ground.
- The excavated area should be overlaid with a geotextile membrane and the hardcore well compacted by rolling to a minimum depth of 150mm.
- Edge the hard base with timber boards.
- If there is a requirement for a thicker depth of hardcore, successive layers (each 150mm thick) should be applied and be well compacted.
- The base should meet relevant British Standards. Go online to: [BSIgroup.com](https://www.bsigroup.com) and search the standards database.
- Hard bases cannot be constructed within 10m of watercourse or ditches and cannot be located within 50m of a borehole or reservoir.
- Hard bases cannot be constructed under roofs or livestock handling facilities that are not associated with feeding or drinking.
- Bases constructed within SSSIs must adhere to the Natural England SSSI designation documents.

STEPS018 Costs for Hard base for livestock drinking troughs/Resurface gateways

STEPS codes	Item	Fixed grant amount
STEPS018a	Hard base for livestock drinking troughs	£180/base
STEPS018b	Resurface gateway	£95/gateway

Installation of piped culverts in ditches

How does this help the environment?

Installing a watercourse crossing allows the passage of stock and machinery without disturbing the watercourse or banks, reducing erosion and water contamination.

How does this help my business?

Culverting a watercourse allows better access for stock and machinery, and enabling easier movement around the farm, and reducing the risks created when stock move around watercourses.

Crypto
priority

STEPS019

Grant value:

£374 per unit or 75% cost in
cryptosporidium catchment



Eligibility

**STEPS019 is a priority item
for cryptosporidium**

Culverts may not be used to replace an existing structure or where it may damage an environmental, historical or archaeological feature identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map, or the Historic Environment Farm Environment (HEFER).

Please check with your Severn
Trent Agricultural Advisor
to check eligibility.

STEPS019 Installation of piped culverts in ditches

Guidance

- The Environment Agency must be consulted prior to any installation ('Land Drainage' consent may be required).
- Culverts are short sections of pipe designed to carry anticipated flows and have a diameter suited to the likely flows, with a minimum diameter of 450mm.
- A minimum 4m length is required for culverts which will be crossed by heavy traffic wheeled vehicles. A shorter length is acceptable for livestock paths and bridleways.
- Culvert manufacturer specifications and health and safety protocols must be followed. For heavy duty vehicles, manufacturer specifications must be checked.
- The pipe gradient should be approximately equal to that of the ditch bed.
- The pipe invert at the upstream end should be slightly below the bottom of the true ditch bed.
- Pipes must have a positive joint to preserve alignment.
- It may be necessary to take preventative action to reduce the risk of erosion at the downstream end of the culvert. If necessary insert stones or slabs as protection measures on either side of ditch.
- Pack a stone-free filling tightly at the sides of the pipe and at least 300mm above it.
- Build up the filling in layers up to 150mm thick, making sure it is consolidated before adding the next layer.
- Leave the finished backfill surface so it is crowned above the surrounding ground.
- An optional overlying concrete pad of at least 150mm thick may be added to stabilise the culvert.
- Culverts cannot be applied for if managed under another agri-environmental scheme.
- This measure cannot be implemented where a culvert could potentially drain protected and sensitive habitats, such as SSSIs or Sites of Nature Conservation Interest.
- Culverts cannot restrict the movement of migratory fish or eels.
- Where possible, a culvert should have a 'mammal shelf' installed, to allow the passage of small mammals across the watercourse, thereby minimizing habitat fragmentation.

Roofing of existing manure & livestock holding areas



How does this help the environment?

The risk of pathogens and nutrients entering watercourses increases when manure is spread at inappropriate times. Preventing rain from falling on manure storage heaps can reduce the pressure on dirty water/slurry storage, allowing spreading to commence when conditions are suitable.

How does this help my farm business?

Excluding rainfall from your manure store allows you to be more flexible with your slurry management, by keeping your product stackable, and reducing the potential of creating slurry that requires storage. Roofing livestock holding yards can benefit animal handling and welfare, and reduce dirty surface run-off.

Crypto
priority

STEPS020

Grant value:
£72 per m²



Eligibility

STEPS020 is a priority item for cryptosporidium

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

Structures without a concrete base to enable cleaning are not eligible for funding.

Upgrading of existing livestock handling areas only.

Applications for this option will close on 31st May 2024. Exceptions may be made for later applications that are able to complete quickly.

STEPS020

Roofing of existing manure & livestock holding areas



Guidance

- The applicant must stipulate if the option applies to either farm manure storage or livestock handling facilities.
- Temporary field heaps are not eligible for funding.
- The covering of the site may require planning permission. You should check with your local planning authority and Environment Agency officer.
- Works must meet relevant British Standards. [Go online to: BSIgroup.com](https://www.bsigroup.com) and search the standards database.
- Roof must be impermeable to rainwater and water must be directed away from site into a clean water drain.
- Any run-off of FYM effluent is deemed as slurry and must be collected via a holding tank which is compliant with SSAFO regulations, [go online and search: gov.uk/guidance/storing-silage-slurry-and-agricultural-fuel-oil](https://gov.uk/guidance/storing-silage-slurry-and-agricultural-fuel-oil)
- FYM store cannot also be used to house feed, livestock or machinery during the winter period. If inspection determines that your manure store is being used for feed, livestock or machinery it will be a breach of your agreement.
- Livestock handling area cannot also be used as animal housing. If inspection determines that your livestock handling area is used for animal housing, it will be a breach of your agreement.
- Your claim will be based on the erected roofed area in m².

Direct drilling equipment

How does this help the environment?

Direct drilling helps to reduce movement of the soil thereby improving its structure through reducing soil compaction. It also improves the soil ecosystem, maintains and enhances soil carbon sequestration, and helping to conserve soil moisture.

How does this help my farm business?

Direct drilling reduces labour and machinery costs. It also promotes soil stability, fertility and porosity, and can help to control weeds in some situations, so you could become less reliant on both fertilisers and pesticide products in the long term.

Nitrate
priority

STEPS042

Grant value:
50% up to £10,000



Eligibility

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

- Purchase must include seed hopper.
- Cultivators with over-seeders or broadcasters, minimum till drills, strip till drills, grassland over-seeders, and grassland broadcasters are not eligible.

STEPS042 Direct drilling equipment

Guidance

- The equipment should be a direct drill for precision drilling of arable and cover crops.
- The drill must be able to drill the full range of arable and cover crops including cereals.
- The equipment must be capable of drilling through a fully established growing cover crop of at least 15cm in height The drill should use either tines or discs to produce the seeding slot.
- The equipment must have a drilling width of at least 2.9m.
- There should be no cultivation or seed bed preparation equipment in front of the seeding slot mechanism.
- Purchase must include seed hoppers.
- Cultivators with over-seeders or broadcasters, minimum till drills, strip till drills, grassland over-seeders, and grassland broadcasters are not eligible.

Rainwater harvesting (RWH)

How does this help the environment?

Rainwater harvesting helps to reduce the quantity of water entering your slurry store, running across fouled yards, or entering your dirty water tank. This reduces pollution and saves holding capacity.

How does this help my business?

Rainwater harvesting can be a valuable way to increase the resilience of your farm to water shortages, fire fighting or simply provide an additional source of water for filling the sprayer.

STEPS021

Grant value:
£ See table



Eligibility

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

Rainwater harvesting should only be constructed on existing buildings, the exception being when roofing over a sprayer washdown area.

STEPS021 Rainwater harvesting (RWH)

Guidance

Location

- Rainwater is collected from roofed sheds which is then filtered. This filtered water is either pumped or gravity fed into a storage tank.
- Harvested rainwater can be used for irrigation of specified crops and the washing of farmyards and machinery. Harvested rainwater can be supplied as livestock drinking water but must be subjected to further treatment first (e.g. UV treatment).
- Where mains water supply is used to top up tanks, fittings must comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. [To find out more, go online and search: legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999)
- The works should meet the relevant British Standards. [Go online to: BSIgroup.com](https://www.bsigroup.com) and search the standards database.
- Both above ground and below ground storage tanks are available.

Above ground storage tanks

- You must check with the local planning authority in case planning consent is needed.
- Construction of rainwater storage tanks should follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Second-hand tanks are not eligible for funds.
- Storage tanks should be situated on hard standing concrete.

- Storage tanks cannot be used for collecting dirty water, effluents and slurries.

Concrete pad for above ground tank

- Tanks must be located on a reinforced concrete pad. If not already available, one may be created using the grant item.

Below ground storage tanks

- You must check with the local planning authority in case planning consent is needed.
- Construction of rainwater storage tanks should follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Second-hand tanks are not eligible for funds.
- Underground tanks should not be installed in ground with a high water table unless further structural work is undertaken to avoid tanks from floating. In such cases you must seek advice from the manufacturer.
- Underground storage tanks should be made up of glass-reinforced plastic and pre-cast concrete.
- The grant includes the tank, pump, site excavation, a concrete bed, and backfilling with concrete to cover the tank.
- Storage tanks cannot be used for collecting dirty water, effluents and/or slurries.



STEPS021 Rainwater harvesting RWH		
STEPS codes	Item	Fixed grant amount
STEPS021a	Under ground tank	£385/m ³
STEPS021b	Above ground tank	£75/m ³
STEPS021c	Flush rainwater diverters & filters	£138/unit
STEPS021d	Downpipes & gutters	£12/m
STEPS021e	Concrete pad for above ground tank	£20/m ²
STEPS021f	Pump	£225/unit

STEPS021

Rainwater harvesting (RWH)

Flush rainwater diverters and downpipe filters

- You must check with the local planning authority in case planning consent is needed.
- Item diverts and filters potentially contaminated roof water to keep leaves, debris and other contaminants out of water storage tanks.
- Contaminated water is diverted from tanks, reducing tank maintenance and protecting pumps.
- You must send dated photographs of the existing site with your application for this item.
- Item is only available in conjunction with a rainwater harvesting system.

Pumps

- Above ground rainwater harvesting systems may be gravity fed or require a pump to transfer water. For underground systems the cost of the pump is included in the grant amount.

Replacement of downpipes and gutters

- You must send dated photographs of the existing sheds with your application for this item.
- Item is only available in conjunction with rainwater harvesting system or diversion into a clean water drainage system.
- Cannot be used on guttering and downpipes on proposed new buildings.
- Applicants must write a justification for using the item, explaining why it's necessary and how it meets the eligibility criteria.
- Successful applicants will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:
 - Any consents or permissions connected with the work
 - Receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
 - Photographs of the completed work.



STEPS021 Rainwater harvesting (RWH)



Constructed farm wetlands

How does this help the environment?

Constructed farm wetlands are intended to receive and treat lightly contaminated water from around farmyards and fields, and are able to trap pollutants before reaching the main watercourse. Wetlands provide habitat for a range of wildlife and can be the hub of biodiversity on your farm.

How does this help my farm business?

Constructed farm wetlands can be used to treat lightly contaminated run-off from the yard. They also form a useful retention area for water on your farm and may help to prevent flooding in downstream areas.

AV Advisory visit required

A specialist water management advisory visit must be conducted in order to access this STEPS item and can be arranged through your Agricultural Advisor.

Crypto
priority

STEPS022

Grant value:
50% up to the
value of £5,000



Eligibility

STEPS022 is a priority item for cryptosporidium

Please check with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to check eligibility.

Constructed wetlands should not be designed to intentionally capture dirty water, strong effluents, slurries or pesticide washings.

Constructed wetlands cannot be used on historic or archaeological features or areas of existing wildlife interest identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map, or the Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (HEFER).

Or where it will restrict the movement of migratory fish or eels.

Or without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA), local planning authority or flood consenting authority.

STEPS022

Constructed farm wetlands

Guidance

- The size and type of wetland to be constructed will depend on the flow and strength of effluent from the source.
- Constructed farm wetlands provide specific solutions for specific circumstances.
- Wetlands designed to trap sediment may be of a simpler design that may even be dry through part of the year.
- Wetlands can also be built into ditches in some situations.
- Work should be carried out in a dry period to avoid unnecessary soil damage.
- Excavated topsoil should be spread on top of embankments.
- An outflow pipe should be installed at a suitable location 750mm below the top of the embankment to provide a freeboard.
- Several small wetlands may be more effective than a single large wetland.
- Advice and assistance from the Environment Agency will be required for this item. To find your local Environment Agency office go online and search: gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency or you can contact them via email at enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk, you can also call them on **03708 506506**.

For more information on the specific construction details for a constructed wetland, go online and search the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust - [wwt.org.uk](https://www.wwt.org.uk)

Additionally the Environment Agency rural SUDS manuals also contains useful information: gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency



This option is subject to a 10-year agreement.

This will be highlighted in the agreement if your grant application is successful and you decide to proceed.

Farmer innovation

How does this help the environment?

No-one knows your farm and land like you do. Your knowledge and insight can often find innovative ideas and ways to tackle the issues of diffuse pollution from your farm.

These ideas if implemented will protect the local waterbodies and bring benefits to the wider environment, but aren't covered by any of the other STEPS options.

Here's your chance to harness a great opportunity for creative thinking and could be something that other farms could adopt in future years.

How does this help my business?

Every farm enterprise is different. If the list of options available in STEPS doesn't suit your farm, or your circumstances or budgets, using this option to suggest an alternative or innovative way to help protect water quality and the environment, in a way that suits the commercial capability of your farm enterprise, can bring business benefits tailored for you.

STEPS025

Grant value:

50% up to the value of £10,000

Eligibility

Farmer innovation items must address the priority water quality issue in your catchment and should be discussed with your Agricultural Advisor before applying.

Your application will be subject to the same scoring system as fixed grant STEPS items.

If the catchment team deem your application to be of benefit to the catchment, we will fund up to 50% of the cost (ex. VAT) with a maximum contribution of £10,000.

We cannot fund any infrastructure directly linked to meeting regulatory requirements.

We reserve the right to offer you a lower percentage of funding depending on the application.

- All farmer innovation applications must be accompanied with quotes or costings for the proposed works/items, maps and timings. Where this includes your own time, an estimate must be provided.
- All supporting information must be submitted at the time of application. Applications without necessary information will not be considered until this is received.
- Specific requirements for the respective categories of farmer innovation are detailed in the following sections.
- The water quality or biodiversity benefit of the work must be explained in the application form. Applications without this will not be considered.



STEPS025 Farmer innovation

The following are not considered innovative options and will not be funded

- Clearing/re-digging of ditches.
- Storage of waste effluent or liquor (regulatory requirement).
- Replacement or maintenance of items/ infrastructure.
- Machinery and farm activity with no direct improvement of water quality.
- Pesticide storage facilities (including shipping containers).
- Applications for improvements in biosecurity.
- Items otherwise covered by fixed price grants.
- Payment for plant hire for use in installing fixed cost items.
- Field drainage.



STEPS codes	Item	Fixed grant amount (inc. VAT)
STEPS025a	Precision farming equipment	50% of cost up to £10,000
STEPS025b	Clean and dirty water separation	50% of cost up to £10,000
STEPS025c	Other innovation item	50% of cost up to £10,000

Farmer innovation precision farming equipment

STEPS025a

Grant value:
Up to £10,000

How does this help the environment?

Precision farming equipment can improve the accuracy and efficiency of nutrient and fertiliser usage beyond that possible with standard apparatus. Best practice and responsible pesticide and nutrient management should be used before this option is considered.

How does this help my business?

Introducing precision equipment to your farm can not only save you money through reducing the quantity of products used in the field, but also greatly improve efficiencies across your enterprise. Improved speed of field operations, reduced fuel usage and improvements to crop health are among the numerous benefits precision equipment can bring.



Eligibility

We reserve the right to offer you a lower percentage of funding depending on the application.

STEPS025a Farmer innovation - precision farming equipment

Guidance

General

- You must discuss this option with your Agricultural Advisor before applying.
- Apparatus applied for must directly benefit water quality.
- Applications must outline the water quality benefit of the apparatus in order to be considered.
- A range of precision equipment or tools may be considered for funding.
- All applications are subject to scoring. Funding of an item in a single STEPS funding period does not guarantee funding in subsequent years.
- If successful, the STEPS grant may contribute 50% of the cost of the item up to £10,000.
- If successful in your application, you may be asked for feedback as to how the equipment has impacted on your business e.g. any reductions in product use.
- Applicants must already be following best practice when handling and using pesticides.



This option is subject to a 10-year agreement.

This will be highlighted in the agreement if your grant application is successful and you decide to proceed.

- Precision equipment is subject to a 10 year agreement. You may switch to another piece of equipment before the agreement terminates providing it is an upgrade. The new item will then be covered by the terms of the grant for the remainder of the agreement.

Pesticide application equipment

- If successful in applying for an item, further applications to fund another example of that item in subsequent years will not be considered e.g. applications to fit GPS to multiple machines.
- GPS software upgrades may also be considered.
- Additions to upgrade existing equipment may be considered.
- Applications demonstrating that enhanced pesticide handling/management are already in practice on the farm e.g. use of dedicated washdown pads and biofilters, may be viewed more favourably.

Nutrient management equipment

- Fertiliser application equipment will only be considered in catchments where nutrients area a priority. Discuss this with your Agricultural Advisor.

Evidence

Applicants for pesticide application equipment must supply:

- **A map of the land on which the equipment will be used, together with the total area and typical cropping. If contract spraying on anothers land, this should also be included**
- **Proof of PA certification**
- **Proof of sprayer MOT**
- **Applicants for nutrient management equipment:**
 - Evidence of spreader/sprayer calibration
 - Evidence of a nutrient management plan.

Farmer innovation clean and dirty water separation

How does this help the environment?

To prevent the mixing of clean and dirty water or improvement of livestock/yard areas/access ways.



STEPS025b

Grant value:
50% up to the
value of £10,000



Eligibility

Clean and dirty water separation is only available in crypto and nitrate priority catchments. You should discuss this option with your Agricultural Advisor before applying.

This option may not be used to resurface manure, silage or slurry stores, areas housing livestock, or on environmental, historic or archaeological features identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map, or the Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (HEFER).

Grants cannot be used to collect and store effluent or dirty water otherwise controlled by SSAFO regulations.

Works must address areas of your farm that are impacting on a watercourse or contributing to excessive wastewater entering a dirty water tank.

We reserve the right to offer you a lower percentage of funding depending on the application.

AV Advisory visit required

If using this STEPS option to apply for concreting of yard areas, a Farm Infrastructure Audit is required and can be arranged through your Agricultural Advisor.

Farmer innovation - clean and dirty water separation

Guidance

General

- Proposals to concrete yard areas must be supplied with the area to be covered in m² and a quote from your concrete supplier. If doing the work yourself, approximate costings are permitted.
- Concreting must conform to relevant British Standards.

Go online to: [BSIgroup.com](https://bsigroup.com) and search the standards database.

- All items under this option must be accompanied with a drainage plan indicating the separation of clean and dirty water and where this will be stored/diverted to.
- As a minimum concrete must be a minimum of 150mm thick on compacted and blinded hardcore that is at least 150mm thick.
- Concrete should have a reinforced base to minimise cracking and distribute the loads exerted by livestock or farm vehicles.
- All joints should be treated with a sealant.

Examples of where this grant may be used

- Cross drains on access/livestock tracks.
- Improvements to hard standings to enable cleaning of livestock yard areas.



This option is subject to a 10-year agreement.

This will be highlighted in the agreement if your grant application is successful and you decide to proceed.

Farmer innovation other innovation items

STEPS025c

Grant value:

50% up to the
value of £10,000

How does this help the environment?

This option helps any farm enterprise to improve habitats that will help to provide us with food to eat (through sustaining pollination) and helps to clean the water we drink (such as wetland filtration), and helps provide the oxygen we breathe. Improved habitats also bring wider benefits for wildlife. All of this can provide environmental, social and economic benefits too.

Biodiversity is all about protecting and enhancing the amazing variety of life on Earth.

How does this help my business?

Every farm enterprise is different. If the list of options available in STEPS doesn't suit your farm, or your circumstances or budgets, using this option to suggest an alternative or innovative way to help protect water quality and the environment, in a way that suits the commercial capability of your farm enterprise, can bring business benefits tailored for you.




Eligibility

The works must address the priority issue in the catchment.

You should discuss this option with your Agricultural Advisor before applying.

This option may not be used on environmental, historic or archaeological features identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map, or the Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (HEFER).

We reserve the right to offer you a lower percentage of funding depending on the application.



STEPS025c Farmer innovation – other innovation items

Guidance

General

- To access this grant item you should first discuss your plans with your Agricultural Advisor who will be best placed to recommend a course of action.
- Ideas involving on farm water management may require specialist advice and/or consultation with the Environment Agency.
- There must be a direct water quality benefit from the work you propose.
- The benefits of your idea to water quality must be sufficiently explained in your application.
- Applications must include costings/quotes for proposed work.

Examples

- Equipment to allow dry cleaning of livestock yards.
- Low ground pressure tyres.
- Nitrate inhibitors.

Low nutrient inputs onto permanent grassland

How does this help the environment?

Excess phosphates applied to land can mean that more is available to be washed away by runoff, into watercourses. Reducing phosphate inputs to very low levels reduces the amount that can enter watercourses and cause ecological problems.

STEPS043

Grant value:
£50/ha
1-year contract



Eligibility

Permanent grassland only

Field parcel should have previously been used for grazing/receive muck or fertiliser supplements

Your agricultural advisor will deem if the field is suitable e.g. bordering a watercourse or with known runoff, poaching and waterlogging. Other fields may also be considered.

STEPS043

Low nutrient inputs onto permanent grassland

Guidance

- Grass must be grazed, or cut for hay or silage, and any cuttings should be removed.
- Do not apply paper waste or other industrial by-products.
- When a parcel is cut for hay, haylage or silage, or is grazed, you may apply either up to 12 tonnes/ha of farmyard manure, or inorganic fertiliser at a maximum rate of:
 - 9 kg/ha nitrogen
 - 23 kg/ha phosphate
 - 83 kg/ha potash.
- Applications of fertiliser or manure must not be increased if the current rate is less than this.
- If applying slurry, a slurry test can be organised through your agricultural advisor, to establish the maximum rate that slurry can be applied to your land.

You must not

- Plough, cultivate or re-seed the field.
- Store manure on site.
- Use supplementary feed, except for mineral blocks.
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-native species.

Additional precautions should be taken with regards to archaeological features

- Do not harrow or roll on historic or archaeological features.
- Allow bare ground to develop on historic or archaeological features.



**Specialist on-farm advice
visit available** - slurry or
manure test.

Do not apply phosphate fertilisers to high phosphate index soils



How does this help the environment?

When manufactured fertilisers are applied to soils which already have high phosphate content (P index), the excess can be washed away in runoff.

Allowing soils to return to a more natural, lower phosphate content can reduce losses to watercourses and the associated ecological problems.

STEPS044

Grant value:

£25/ha

1 year contract



Eligibility

Soils in the land parcel must be at P index 2 or higher prior to this item being implemented

If you already know the P index of your soils e.g. from a recent soil test, you must be able to show these results in your application

Farms who do not know their P index may have a free soil test undertaken and arranged by Severn Trent

Should the test show that your fields are already at or below the target P-Index, you will be ineligible for this item. However you will be offered an alternative grant option to the same value.

STEPS044

Do not apply phosphate fertilisers to high phosphate index soils

Guidance

- You must not apply any manufactured fertilisers containing phosphates to any land parcels entered into the scheme.
- Farmyard manure may be applied at a rate of 12 tonnes/ha with a phosphate content of no more than 23kg/ha.



**Specialist on-farm advice
visit available - soils test**

Loosening compacted grassland soils

Trampling by livestock and the passage of heavy farm machinery can compact grassland soils in both grazing and silage fields. Compacted soil horizons may build up over time, and reduce the infiltration of the soil in the long term.

How does this help the environment?

Disrupting compacted horizons, such as through loosening, shallow spiking, slitting, and aeration techniques, allows more rapid percolation of rainwater/slurry into the soil. This reduces the risk of pollutants being transported to watercourses in surface runoff, and increases nutrient uptake from deeper soil horizons by roots.

How does this help my business?

Compacted soils can affect grass root development. They can also lead to waterlogging of upper soil horizons in wet weather, and can block root access to water in the summer. Breaking up this compaction can be highly beneficial to soil health, allowing you to get better grass crop establishment.

STEPS045

Grant value:

£10/ha

1-year contract



Eligibility

Stocked grassland fields where there is a risk of runoff reaching a watercourse due to compaction. Areas of compaction can be identified through a soil husbandry test. This can be organised for you by your agricultural advisor.

STEPS045

Loosening compacted grassland soils



Guidance

- The type of machinery required for this activity depends on the soil type, texture and the depth of compaction, but is likely to include shallow spiking or sub-soiling.
- Expert advice should be sought on the appropriate machinery for the task.
- To maximise the benefit and avoid any further soil compaction, only use machinery when the soil is dry at the depth that is to be loosened. It is possible that this process may cause initial damage to the root system for grassland fields.
- Photographic evidence must be taken before, during and after subsoiling.
- Invoices must be kept if contractors are used or machinery is rented.
- Severn Trent Water is not responsible for any financial loss incurred from this action.



**Specialist on-farm advice visit
available** - soil husbandry test



Dedicated support and advice

In addition to the Severn Trent requirements for each STEPS option, you should also be aware that all works undertaken must conform to UK legislation and you should consult the relevant authority or guidelines to check you comply. Some things to consider are detailed on pages 98-99 along with additional resources.

To help you get the best out of what's on offer, our local Agricultural Advisors are available to help you.

stwater.co.uk/steps

Useful resources and help

For capital items

Each capital item must have a minimum design life of at least 5 years.

If it is covered by The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry, and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended 2013) (SSAFO) it must have a design life of at least 20 years.

You can check the requirements at:

gov.uk/guidance/storing-silage-slurry-and-agricultural-fuel-oil

Works should also comply with Nitrate Vulnerable Zone requirements:

gov.uk/guidance/nutrient-management-nitrate-vulnerable-zones

All work must comply with all relevant health and safety legislation and British Standards (BS) or equivalent. Check the online database for further information go to:

BSigroup.com and [search the standards database](#).

If you intend to use the public water supply to perform any agricultural activity such as filling troughs or topping up rainwater harvesting tanks, you must fit a non-return valve and comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.

legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/1148/contents/made

Planning permission may be required depending on the capital item chosen. Consult your local planning authority or National Park authority to seek informal advice.

Where land is located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB officers may need to be consulted on the location of proposed capital items and the materials to be used.

For water management structures on the farm, advice and/or consents must be obtained from the Environment Agency at:

enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk or Telephone **03708 506506**.

You should also consult your local Internal Drainage Board.

For guidance on the construction of swales, wetlands and water management structures, the Environment Agency has produced a Rural Sustainable Drainage handbook:

gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291508/scho0612buwh-e-e.pdf

For in-field works or groundwork

Work must be undertaken and installed in accordance with:

- Protecting our Water, Soil and Air: A Code of Good Agricultural Practice for farmers, growers and land managers (CoGAP)
- Groundwater Protection Code: Use and disposal of sheep dip compounds; and any higher standards that apply
- Any crop sown created for Ecological Focus Area (EFA, CAP greening criteria) cannot be claimed under STEPS. EFA is a regulatory requirement which cannot be funded by STEPS. [For guidance to the Basic Payment Scheme, go online and search for BPS 2019.](#) www.gov.uk/guidance/basic-payment-scheme

Work carried out near the top of a river bank may require flood defence consent. Depending on the size of watercourse you should consult the Environment Agency Telephone **03708 506506** or email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Applicants must also consider the work's impact on the landscape.

If your work affects any of the following you will need consent from Natural England or from the relevant authority:

- **Natural Environment:**
 - Protected Species, such as Great Crested Newt and Bats species
 - National Nature Reserve (NNR)
 - Local Nature Reserves
 - Protected sites e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), N2K.
- **Historic environment:**
 - Listed Building
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Registered Battlefield
 - Registered Parkland
 - Registered Battlefields.

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999

For all options relating to the above regulations (Options STEPS014 Livestock drinking troughs, STEPS015 Livestock pasture pumps, STEPS021 Rainwater harvesting), we strongly advise that all applicants make themselves familiar with the regulations and adhere to them. Especially where any supply of water is using the public water supply. Failure to do so can lead to legal action being taken. For more information please refer to The Regulations and their Schedules (SI 1999 No. 1148 and No. 1506) are available from HMSO you can find these online: defra.gov.uk/environment/water/industry/wsregs99

For pesticide handling and washdown facilities

You should notify the Environment Agency of your intentions by calling them on **03708 506506** or email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

You should check whether your intended construction location is located in a groundwater source protection zone 1 or 2, as if this is the case it is unlikely you will be able to construct pesticide washdown facilities.

Biobeds/biofilters require an Environment Agency T32 waste exemption to legally treat dilute pesticide washings. These are simple to obtain and may be applied for free online.

Go online to gov.uk and search for **guidance/waste-exemption-t32-treatment-of-waste-in-a-biobed-or-biofilter**

When a biobed/biofilter has come the end of its life, the biomix inside can be composted for a year and then spread to land. To do this you also need a U10 exemption from the environment agency, again these are free and available to apply for online.

Go online to gov.uk and search for **guidance/waste-exemption-u10-spreading-waste-to-benefit-agricultural-land**

Further design advice is also available on how to size the loading and washdown area and holding tanks, and on pesticide washing volume calculations, from Catchment Sensitive Farming.

Go online to gov.uk and search for **guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water-pollution**

The Voluntary Initiative has also produced a complete guidance manual on all aspects of washdown area and biobed construction, including which is the best option to suit your farm needs.

Go to voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/water/biobeds

“ What is the availability of the grant? ”

Q What is a priority catchment?

A These are specific areas across the region where we abstract water to treat and use for drinking water. We abstract water from rivers, reservoirs and groundwater boreholes. These are often at risk due to specific forms of diffuse pollution from farms. In particular groundwater sources are most vulnerable to nitrate pollution while surface waters are at most risk from pesticide pollution.

Q What is the availability of a grant?

- A** ST will pay the fixed costs offered in the handbook for each of the items.
- The maximum payment per farm business, per year, per catchment is £10,000. Successful applicants must claim by 31st December 2024
 - Funding cannot be back dated for items claimed in previous STEPS round. The exception to this is the Pesticide washdown area offer where 75% up to £30,000 if completed in under 6 months or 50% up to £20,000 if longer
 - You may apply for several items but they must all be submitted under one application
 - Applications must be made by filling in the online form
 - Extensions to the size of pesticide washdown areas/roofing/rainwater harvesting granted in previous STEPS rounds will not be accepted
 - ST cannot make additional funds available should the match funded portion of the grant be greater than anticipated. This includes where the total (water quality priority items) grant in the agreement is less than the £10,000 limit
 - There is no lower limit on the size of the grant
 - Grants will only be available to farmers and landowners who farm within a ST drinking water abstraction catchment and/or farm within one of the ST priority 'source protection zones' (SPZs). Please contact your ST Agricultural Advisor (contact info at start of handbook) or you can email the Severn Trent Catchment Team at farming4water@severntrent.co.uk
 - The location of the priority water quality STEPS items must be within the Severn Trent priority catchment. Items located outside these catchments cannot be funded
 - We will not fund any item directly linked to a regulatory requirement
 - We will not fund any infrastructure or project which is also receiving money from another grant scheme. An applicant can only apply for a ST grant in addition to another grant where they fund different items

- We will not fund the costs of any maintenance, normal wear and tear, or direct replacements of capital items.

Q Are there any other factors that are taken into account when applications are being assessed?

A Yes, applications will be prioritised according to the following:

- Water quality benefit - Each catchment contains priority STEPS items. Your application will be prioritised if one of these are chosen. Contact your ST Agricultural Advisor for more details
- The reduction in water pollution for the water quality priority items in the application will deliver i.e. the water quality benefit. This will vary between items, and between catchments, so consult your ST Agricultural Advisor for more information
- The award of STEPS grants are not influenced by any other interaction between a farm business and ST, for example where construction may have taken place on agricultural land. STEPS grants shall not function as a means of compensation or payment for these activities
- Past engagement with ST Agricultural Advisors
- Attendance at ST workshops over previous years

Q When will I get paid?

A Upon completion of the works, let your ST Agricultural Advisor know you are ready to claim. You will receive a visit to sign off the works and collect any necessary evidence, after which you will be issued a claim form which you must fill in and return to ST.

- All grant funding is awarded as a single payment when all works are completed
- ST is unable to make part payments
- Should an applicant be unable to install certain items in their agreement, grant funding may only be claimed for the work which has been completed
- Failure to complete priority STEPS items may result in payment for non-priority items being withheld
- Unclaimed funding either for uncompleted works or those which have not been started, cannot be held and rolled over to subsequent STEPS rounds.

You have until the deadline in your agreement.



“
Will I be
guaranteed
entry to the
STEPS
following my
application?
”

Q What do I need to supply with my application form?

A You need to supply the following with your application form:

- A brief description of the farm enterprise especially the size of the area that you farm in the priority catchment
- An overview of the work planned and the environmental reason for undertaking this work
- Timescales for completion of the project
- Dated photographs showing the site(s) before commencement of works. This includes biodiversity items and cover crop options
- Farm maps which display the farm boundary, and the site location for works being undertaken
- Dated quotes for items applied for under 'Farmer innovation'
- Copies of your farm map(s) that display:
 - The boundary of your holding;
 - The location of the proposed scheme on your farm map, mark an 'X' on the map along with STEPS item code;
 - A national OS grid reference, or valid postcode, marked for the scheme location.

Note: If applying for a fence/track, draw the proposed line on the map. For an example map, please ask your Agricultural Advisor.

Q Will my farm be subject to STEPS inspections?

A Yes, inspections and checks will be carried out at a farm level by ST to ensure that all funded items have been completed as per your application. All applicants can expect a farm inspection within a 5 year period from joining the STEPS scheme.

Q Will I be guaranteed entry to the STEPS following my application?

A No, submission of an application does not guarantee approval. Applications are prioritised through our scoring system which recognises the likely benefit to water quality, together with other factors such as location, value for money and previous engagement with the catchment team.

Q Can I apply if only part of my farm holding falls within a ST drinking water abstraction catchment and/or within one of ST priority 'source protection zones' (SPZs)?

A Yes. However, any STEPS water quality items must be located within the catchment boundary. This is a competitive process and your application may not score as highly as those schemes fully in a catchment where the benefits may be greater.

Q Where can I get a claim form?

A By contacting your ST Agricultural Advisor who will need to sign off your completed works. Claim forms are issued centrally.

Q When will I be informed if my application is successful?

A Applicants will be informed within 6 weeks of the application closing date. Once written confirmation has been received, applicants may commence work on their STEPS item(s).

Q What happens if my application is unsuccessful?

A You will receive a formal letter outlining the reasons for your declined application. Depending on your application you may be encouraged to apply next year.

Q When does the work have to be completed by?

A All STEPS project work must be completed and claim forms/evidence received by ST by the deadline in your grant agreement.

Should you be unable to complete or start the works, your application will not automatically be accepted for the following STEPS round, although you will be encouraged to reapply.

In exceptional circumstances applications may be granted a short extension however this cannot be guaranteed.

Farm management items must be completed in accordance with that specified in the handbook.

Q When will I receive funding?

A Successful applicants are entitled to claim their funds once work is completed.

Q What happens if the work is not completed on time or the standard of work does not meet the required specifications?

A Depending on the circumstances you may not receive the funded grant money. It will affect your application for grants in subsequent years.



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How much can I claim?

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Q How much can I claim?

A You can select STEPS items up to the value of £10,000. Pesticide washdown area offer applicants may claim 75% cost up to £30,000 or 50% up to £20,000 depending on eligibility.

Please note that second hand material including refurbished items should not be purchased under STEPS.

VAT will not be paid if you are VAT registered.

If you are not VAT registered, your VAT can be included in the total costs, provided it does not exceed the £10,000 threshold (Total Cost).

Q The handbook says that a STEPS item needs a specialist advisory visit. What is this and do I need one?

A Yes, some items require a bit more planning and or management in order to provide the greatest benefit to your business and the environment. Specialist advisory visits by industry experts help to provide this information and can be arranged for free by your Agricultural Advisor. If you have already had a visit from an expert e.g. through Catchment Sensitive Farming and can show that your plans are sufficient, additional visits may not be required.

Q Am I entitled to apply for grants from other organisations?

A Yes. However, grants can't be combined with other funding sources for the same work in the same location. This is known as 'double funding'. Failure to acknowledge this may result in both grants being reclaimed. Examples of such funding schemes include:

- Catchment Sensitive Farming
- Countryside stewardship
- Paths4Communities
- Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme
- LEADER Farm Productivity Grant
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Aid
- Woodland Grant schemes
- Energy crops.

During the SFI transition period, in accordance with Defra guidlanes, SFI options may be stacked with those receiving STEPS funding. This may be reviewed at any time/subject to Defra funding rules. Applicants entering into an SFI agreement for works covered by an existing STEPS agreement do so at there own risk and must adhere to the specification and conditions covered by their STEPS agreement.

Q Can the location of the STEPS item be changed?

A Yes, but only under certain conditions. You must inform ST of the change, and provide a written explanation for your actions with updated evidence. You will then receive a letter of approval. Depending on the item, the relevant authorities may also have to be informed (County Councils, EA, etc.) and new planning permits may have to be submitted. If you change the location of the STEPS capital item and do not inform ST you may liable to a penalty.

Q Do consents and permissions need to be given and investigated before submitting the STEPS application?

A Yes, see your STEPS handbook for reference. Written consent(s) from a relevant authority may be required with your application. You must enclose a copy of it with your application or in some cases, and with permission from ST, advice and consent can be received up until 15 days after the application deadline; applicants can discuss this with their Agricultural Adviser. ST won't be able to process your application until we receive these.

Q Can I withdraw my application after I have been successful?

A Yes. Please contact your Agricultural Advisor for advice. Written or electronic confirmation that you wish to withdraw will be required.

Q If my STEPS application is successful, will this affect further applications to the grant scheme in subsequent years?

A No. STEPS operates on an annual basis. Applications are prioritised through our scoring system which recognises the likely benefit to water quality and previous engagement with ST.

Q Will I receive a notification that my application has been received?

A Yes. All applicants will receive a notification that their application has been received within 2 weeks.

Q What are the water quality priority items for my catchment?

A Priority items may differ across each of the priority catchments - contact your Agricultural Advisor for details of the priority items in your area.

Q If my STEPS application is successful, will this affect further applications to the grant scheme in subsequent years?

A No. STEPS operates on an annual basis. Applications are prioritised through our scoring system which recognises the likely benefit to biodiversity and previous engagement with ST.



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