

Carlisle Dairy Farm gives back to local environment after polluting river with slurry

The Glebe Farm, Hethersgill, near Carlisle, has completed an Enforcement Undertaking following a pollution incident when farm slurry entered Highberries Beck, a tributary of the River Eden. The beck flows through the farm land and joins the river Eden approximately 11km downstream in Carlisle.

TG & K Fisher Ltd who run the dairy farm, offered the Enforcement Undertaking in response to the incident which was investigated by the Environment Agency in October 2017.

Environment Agency officers found the beck flowing through the farmyard was polluted with slurry. This was traced to a field approximately 2km upstream that had been land spread by a contractor on behalf of the company.

Enforcement Undertakings address both the cause and effect of the offending. Polluters can make an offer to the Environment Agency to pay for or carry out environmental improvements as an alternative to any other enforcement action and the Environment Agency decides whether this is acceptable. Enforcement Undertakings differ to cases which are dealt with in court, as they result in money being spent directly protecting, restoring and improving the environment.

The company had admitted the offence, cooperated with the Environment Agency's investigation, implemented works to try to prevent the pollution continuing and carried out improvements to prevent a recurrence.

The Environment Agency accepted the offer by TG & K Fisher Ltd, which included a donation to an environmental charity; £6500 was donated to Eden Rivers Trust for use towards projects in the catchment working with farmers to improve separation of clean and dirty water and reducing slurry run-off, which will directly benefit the local environment.

Anne Jackson, Environment Agency officer said:

Enforcement undertakings allow polluters to positively address and restore the harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents. When appropriate they offer quicker and more directly beneficial resolution than a court prosecution and help offenders, who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions, to voluntarily make things right, working with their local communities.

We will continue to seek prosecutions against those who cause the

most severe pollution or who act deliberately or recklessly.

Mr John Fisher, said:

This was a one-off incident which occurred as a result of heavy rainfall following our contractors spreading slurry. We acted quickly to respond to stop the pollution and we have now invested in our own umbilical spreading which gives us greater control of our slurry spreading operations and enables a more rigorous system across our land, helping ensure this doesn't happen again.

We're really pleased the money we've given Eden Rivers Trust will help other farmers improve separation of clean and dirty water and reduce slurry run-off, so this doesn't happen to other people.

Elizabeth Radford, CEO of Eden Rivers Trust, said:

The Trust naturally wants to see a pollution-incident-free Eden, however, where incidents do occur we're pleased that compensation for the environment is demanded from polluters, and improvements to effluent handling practices are enforced. We will use these compensation monies to help deliver our water friendly farming programme – giving one to one advice to farmers helping them understand how they can farm successfully and in harmony with nature.

Environmental incidents can be reported to the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 807060, waste crime can also be reported anonymously via Crimestoppers online or on 0800 555111.