

CaBA Agriculture Working Group Case Study

CaBA partnership name:	Ribble and Douglas
Name and location of project:	Ribble and Douglas Farm Advice
Partners involved:	Environment Agency
Dates carried out:	June 2022 – March 2023
Introduction to project:	The aim of this project is to work with farmers across the Ribble and Douglas catchments to deliver diffuse water pollution interventions to improve water quality.
Farmer/ landowner/ land manager engagement:	<p>Ribble Rivers Trust (RRT) is already engaged with a number of farmers across the Ribble catchment but has never worked in the Douglas area.</p> <p>To start engagement in that area, RRT invited all Douglas farmers to a meeting to introduce the Trust, the work we do and what the Trust has to offer with regards to this project.</p> <p>The project allowed RRT Farm Advisors to offer free and confidential farm advice through pinpoint reports - which aim to report on all opportunities to reduce diffuse water pollution on the farm.</p> <p>The project also offered farmers involved a £2,500 grant to deliver an intervention on farm.</p>
Further project details:	<p>As a result of the project 27 farms have been visited across the catchment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15 Douglas catchment farms - 12 farms in the Ribble. <p>14 farms have taken up the opportunity to deliver interventions on farm, these include: watercourse fencing; riparian buffers; and guttering improvements.</p> <p>RRT has also been able to offer Countryside Stewardship standalone development to further the enhancement and legacy of the project to reduce diffuse water pollution in the areas.</p>

Environmental benefits of the project:	<p>Watercourse fencing:</p> <p>Allowing deep rooted vegetation to re-establish and stabilise the banks of the brook, reducing erosion and loss of grazing land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates buffer strips which can reduce the risk of direct and diffuse pollution. - Reduces the amount of siltation due to poaching and surface runoff which leads to a reduction of oxygen in the watercourse which can affect fish spawning sites. - Enables livestock exclusion, preventing direct input of faecal matter entering the watercourse, which increases nutrient levels, resulting in the raised risk of algal blooms which can kill aquatic life and reduce water quality. - Reduces the risk of animals becoming lame from moving along poached, muddy ground. - Fencing (<i>even small lengths of watercourse</i>) can yield worthwhile returns by reducing farm costs such as stock injury/ lameness and time wasted rounding up stock that have strayed onto neighbouring land when river levels are low. - Stable banks reduce erosion and downstream deposition, so spawning and invertebrate habitats are safeguarded. <p>Guttering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better clean and dirty water separation reducing the risk of water pollution from the farmyard. <p>Continued environmental benefits by helping farmers to complete CS standalone applications to further enhance the interventions delivered through the project.</p> <p>Some interventions will also reduce CO2 emissions and tackle impacts of climate change.</p>
Social benefits of the project:	<p>Brought together the Douglas farmers and started a conversation about diffuse water pollution.</p>
Economic benefits of the project:	<p>£2,500 grant to contribute to interventions on farm to reduce diffuse water pollution - seeking to provide farm business benefit where possible (<i>reducing spreading costs, time saved in stock handling, more efficient nutrient use</i>).</p> <p>Farm advice and signposting to other funding.</p>
Monitoring and evaluation:	<p>Where interventions have been delivered, RRT has tried to monitor the effect of that intervention on water quality. However, this is limited by scale and duration of the intervention and project in general.</p>

Next steps:	<p>RRT hopes to have the project extended for 1 more year to continue the positive momentum within the project.</p> <p>RRT is also establishing a farm group to widen participation and opportunities for projects.</p>
Project partner comment:	<p><i>This project has built on a project concept from the Catchment Restoration Fund 'Diffusing the Issue' that enabled relationships to be established through interventions that are easy to understand and not too imposing. It is expected that long lasting relationships and interventions that will increase in size and impact over time.</i></p>
Web link for more information:	-

