



Press Release

18th January 2010

VI WARNING: Stop and think in winter weather

The cold snap and wet weather that has gripped Britain is cause for farmers to think carefully before applying any winter treatments to crops, warns The Voluntary Initiative (VI).

In many parts of the country prolonged wet weather means winter spray programmes are behind schedule and time is running out for some applications, especially oilseed rape weed control.

“The recent snow and cold weather poses a number of issues for anyone looking to spray crops,” says VI manager, Patrick Goldsworthy.

“Melting snow is likely to result in saturated soils. This may lead to recently applied pesticides being lost in run-off or field drainage. The risk of run-off will be worse where ground is frozen,”

“Best practice is to not to spray frozen or water logged soils and to wait until field drains have stopped running.”

“The temptation is to take advantage of the good travelling conditions offered by frozen ground. The downside is that if heavy rain falls before a thaw, the risk of run-off is very high, and spraying crops in such conditions poses a significant risk of pesticides reaching water, as well as potential crop damage,” says Catchment Sensitive Farming’s Steven Bailey,

Best practice advice on water protection is being promoted by the VI and the Crop Protection Association (CPA) in partnership with the England Catchment Sensitive

Farming Delivery Initiative. Further advice can be found in the VI's H₂O? Water Protection Advice Booklet, this can be obtained from the library at www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk.

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Notes to editors:

1. The sponsors of the Voluntary Initiative are the Agricultural Engineers Association, Agricultural Industries Confederation, Country Land and Business Association, Crop Protection Association, National Association of Agricultural Contractors, the NFU, NFU Scotland and the Ulster Farmers Union.
2. The Crop Protection Association represents companies in the UK engaged in the manufacture, formulation and supply of crop protection products for use in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, home gardening, industrial, and local authority outlets. www.cropprotection.org.uk
3. The England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative (ECSFDI) is a partnership project between Defra, Environment Agency and Natural England which offers advice and support to farmers to reduce diffuse water pollution from agriculture. For further information see <http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/landmanage/water/csf/>

Further information

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