

Consultation on New Basic Rules for farmers to tackle diffuse pollution from agriculture in England - Remote Sensing clarification note

The basic rules for farmers consultation refers to remote sensing as a means of verifying some of the basic rules.

Remote sensing can range from the simplest GPS in a tractor supporting precision farming, right through to satellite data and any of these may contribute towards improving outcomes on the ground.

Government is keen to explore the opportunities for using remote sensing and other technology to increase efficiency and reduce burdens on farmers. At present the focus is on satellite and aircraft platforms rather than drones.

Remote sensing was identified in the consultation as the means of verification for individual actions. Further research has indicated that it is more likely to be used at a broader scale to pinpoint high risk areas for monitoring. It is unlikely at this stage that the level of resolution is such that compliance with individual actions can be monitored.

We welcome comments in the consultation on the future use of remote sensing to facilitate verification and any other comments on appropriate ways to verify the actions proposed.

Further detail

The Environment Agency currently uses a combination of aircraft gathered light detection and ranging (LIDAR) data, which is good for flood management, and satellite monitoring.

The EU Copernicus programme has launched two satellites (Sentinels) which will provide free data at the point of use; further information can be found at: <http://www.copernicus.eu/>

Defra is seeking to increase the use of Earth Observation across the whole of Defra as part of our drive to use the best information at the least to inform policies and operations.

To ensure the most effective use of resources in this area Defra has recently established the “Earth Observation Centre of Excellence”. This draws together expertise from across Defra, acts as a strategic partner to the business and provides an effective interface with the satellite data supply side.

The Earth Observation Centre will coordinate existing Earth observation skills and resources from across the whole of the Defra family, making most effective use of existing knowledge and capacity. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/europes-earth-observation-programme-maximised-by-uk-data-hub>

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