



from
Southern Water®

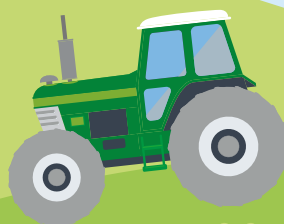
in partnership with



Upper Beult Farmer Cluster

The Upper Beult Farmer Cluster is a diverse group of farmers based in the Upper Beult river catchment.

The cluster aims to help farmers prepare for the future, protect water quality and improve habitats.



Find out more at

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/upper-beult-farmer-cluster

Upper Beult Farmer Cluster

Farmer Clusters are becoming increasingly important to the evolving agri-environment policy in the UK. They bring farmers together to enable more sustainable farming and an improved environment for people and wildlife.

The Upper Beult Farmer Cluster is led by farmers, with Kent Wildlife Trust helping to facilitate. Members host events, farm walks and meetings to discuss improvements to farm efficiency and sustainability, including regenerative approaches to build soil health and connect wildlife habitats.

Cluster members are signposted to funding opportunities, encouraged to share their experience of Countryside Stewardship (CS), and help prepare for ELMS.

Join the cluster

- Be the first to hear about new funding incentives for the Beult catchment.
- Join forces with other farmers to be ELMS ready.
- Learn and contribute to the technology and agronomy trials happening near you.
- Meet up with other local farmers at our events and farm walks.

To join contact Ellen Wilson



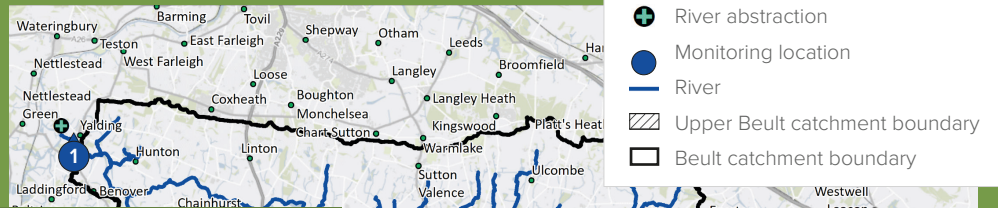
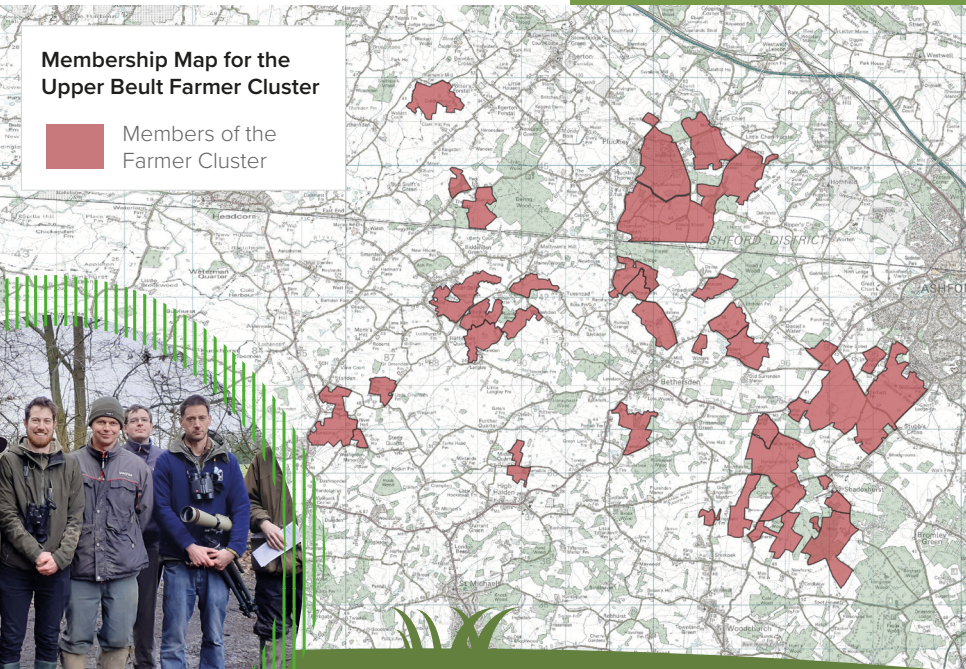
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Water quality in the River Beult

The River Beult is a main tributary of the River Medway, where Southern Water abstract to supply drinking water. Pesticides and other pollutants, often detected in the river, need to be removed to meet stringent water quality standards.

Metaldehyde (used to kill slugs) is difficult to remove from water. Other pesticides such as carbetamide and propyzamide (found in herbicides such as Kerb and Crawler) are also sometimes found at high concentrations, adding pressure to treatment processes. They are mainly detected in the autumn and winter months and are particularly high in the upper reaches of the Beult.

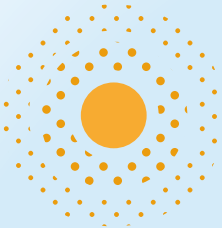
Southern Water aims to work with farmers via the Upper Beult Farmer Cluster to try and encourage sustainable pesticide use to reduce the amount of chemicals entering the river.



- 1** Carbetamide, propyzamide and metaldehyde detected above the drinking water standard in 2020/21 near abstraction point
- 2** Propyzamide detected nearly 100 times greater than the drinking water standard in 2020
- 3** Highest metaldehyde concentration recorded here at over 20 times greater than the drinking water standard in 2018
- 4** Carbetamide detected at nearly 200 times greater than the drinking water standard in 2017

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Southern Water's work with farmers in the River Beult

Farm Capital Grant Scheme

Holdings in the River Beult catchment may be eligible for a grant of up to £10,000 per year to put towards infrastructure and equipment to reduce the risk of water pollution, for example in the construction of sprayer filling/wash-down areas with a biobed or biofilter.

Farm trials

Members of the cluster are helping to shape future Southern Water schemes, with on farm trials, workshops and farm walks to explore novel methods of reducing pesticide use.

Surface Water Measures

Working closely with the cluster, Southern Water will be offering targeted farming incentives from Spring 2022, designed to help reduce blackgrass and other weeds via cultural control. The measures are being designed in consultation with local farmers through the cluster and will be informed by the farm trials in the area.

Specialist advice visits

Free, confidential, specialist advice visits are on offer to help farmers check compliance and achieve best practice on their farms. These include farm infrastructure audits, sprayer area design and soil husbandry advice.

Water quality alerts

Farmers and agronomist receive alerts when high concentrations of certain pesticides are detected. This is to raise awareness of the issue and identify potential causes so that we can help to reduce risks to water quality.

Get in touch

For more information, contact

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Find out more at

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/upper-beult-farmer-cluster