

Media Release

November 23rd 2016



**The
Voluntary
Initiative**

Promoting responsible pesticide use

Test Centres Gear up for Sprayer Tests

From November 26th 2016, all pesticide application equipment in use requires, by law, a valid National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS) certificate. This includes trailed, mounted and self-propelled sprayers as well as foggers, misters, granular and slug pellet applicators.

VI Chairman Richard Butler runs a dairy and arable enterprise in Wiltshire and farms 1200ha with his son and a skilled sprayer operator. He said: “We have been testing our sprayers with NSTS for years - our self-propelled sprayer was tested back in May. Even though we do regular maintenance, the test itself is really useful and reassures us that we haven’t missed anything. A valid test certificate is now a legal requirement, so anyone who hasn’t had their machine tested needs to do so before they next spray or apply slug pellets.”

Sprayer testing centres have been expanding to ensure all equipment can be tested on time.

Jim Wright from the John Rhodes test centre in Pembrokeshire said: “We have taken on extra staff and have been travelling across the country testing sprayers and slug pellet applicators. Previously, assurance schemes have required crop sprayers to be tested but now the law has brought all sprayers into NSTS, including those used in the livestock sector on grassland, which has increased demand for our services.”

An alternative to using your own equipment is to rely on a professional contractor. “Always check that your sprayer contractor holds the necessary certificates of competence, is properly insured and has a valid NSTS certificate for the equipment being used,” advised Jill Hewitt of the National Association of Agricultural Contractors (NAAC). “Your farm assurance scheme will require that you have all the relevant paperwork, although if your contractor is an NAAC Assured Land-Based Contractor this will all be covered and you just need their scheme number.”

If any of your pesticides application equipment is yet to be tested, contact NSTS on 0845 644 8748 or visit www.nsts.org.uk to book your test and make sure it has a valid certificate before it is next used.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. From November 26th 2016, all pesticide application equipment in use needs to hold a valid NSTS test certificate under the Sustainable Use Directive. This includes trailed, mounted and self-propelled sprayers as well as foggers, misters, granular and slug pellet applicators. Application equipment will then need testing again at regular intervals with assurance schemes usually requiring annual testing. Use the [VI sprayer testing card](#) to determine legal minimum intervals. Under the legislation new machinery has until its 5th anniversary to be tested. Hand-held pedestrian operated equipment, such as knapsacks, does not need to be tested but should be checked regularly. To find a local test centre visit the [NSTS website](#).

2. 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.

3. The Voluntary Initiative is a programme of measures promoting responsible pesticide use and includes the National Sprayer Testing Scheme, the National Register of Sprayer Operators (NRoSO) and the Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP).

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