

Press release

14 September 2020

Excessive levels of metaldehyde already detected in water courses this autumn.

Wet and unsettled weather in July and August encouraged a late flush of weed growth, caused problems at harvest and created ideal conditions for slugs. There is concern that any return to wet weather may cause excessive water run-off and the industry is keen to remind growers for the need for best practice use of molluscicides, particularly metaldehyde, at this time.

Dr Neal Evans, Operations Director at the VI said; "Following the long, dry spring which saw many soils develop extensive cracking, the recent wet weather in some areas of the country has resulted in run-off to water courses. We have heard reports from some water companies that they have already detected metaldehyde in raw water at levels well in excess of the 0.1 ppb limit. It is important to stress the need for careful, best practice use of pesticides and metaldehyde in particular as part of an integrated pest management approach. Careful stewardship of metaldehyde will be key as this slug pellet treatment is phased out."

Further information on Integrated Pest Management and best practice is available from the VI website at www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk and information on metaldehyde in particular at www.getpelletwise.co.uk. Currently, the withdrawal dates for metaldehyde are as follows:

31 December 2020: Deadline for the sale and distribution of metaldehyde slug pellets

31 December 2021: Deadline for the disposal, storage and use up of existing stocks

-ends-

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Notes to editors:

- The Voluntary Initiative is a programme of measures which promotes responsible pesticide use as part of an integrated pest management approach. It is sponsored by the Agricultural Engineers Association, Agricultural Industries Confederation, Country Land and Business Association, Crop Protection Association, National Association of Agricultural Contractors, the National Farmers Union, NFU Scotland and the Ulster Farmers Union. Further information on the VI can be found at: <https://voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/>