

Signpost Webinar Series

ASSAP Programme Update; September 16th 2022

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Farming for
Water Quality

Dairy
Sustainability
Ireland





Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP)

Farming For Water Quality



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



Presentation Outline

- Progress to date
- Advisor/Farmer interaction,
 - Case Study 1: Upper Deel EIP
 - Case Study 2: Dysart_010
 - Case Study 3: Drinking water MCPA exceedances
- Innovation – focus on diffuse nitrate loss
- ASSAP External Review
- Look ahead to the 3rd Cycle

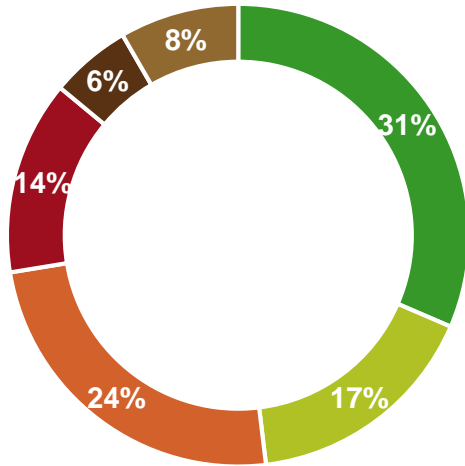
ASSAP to date...

- Total farm assessments 31 July 2022 : 3143
- Total follow up farm visits : 755
- Farmers Meetings : 142
- PAA's ASSAP active in : 124
- Farmer engagement : 96%
- Farmer agreement on proposed measures : 93%
- Average issues identified per farm : 5
- Implementation of measures
 - Started/Completed/On-going : 62%
 - Not started/Not proceeding : 38%
- ASSAP Advisors:
 - Teagasc - 20
 - Co-ops - 16 (to increase to 18 this year)



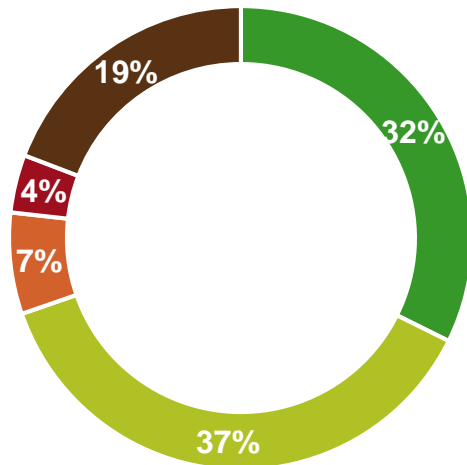
ASSAP – 31 July 2022

PAA Pressures



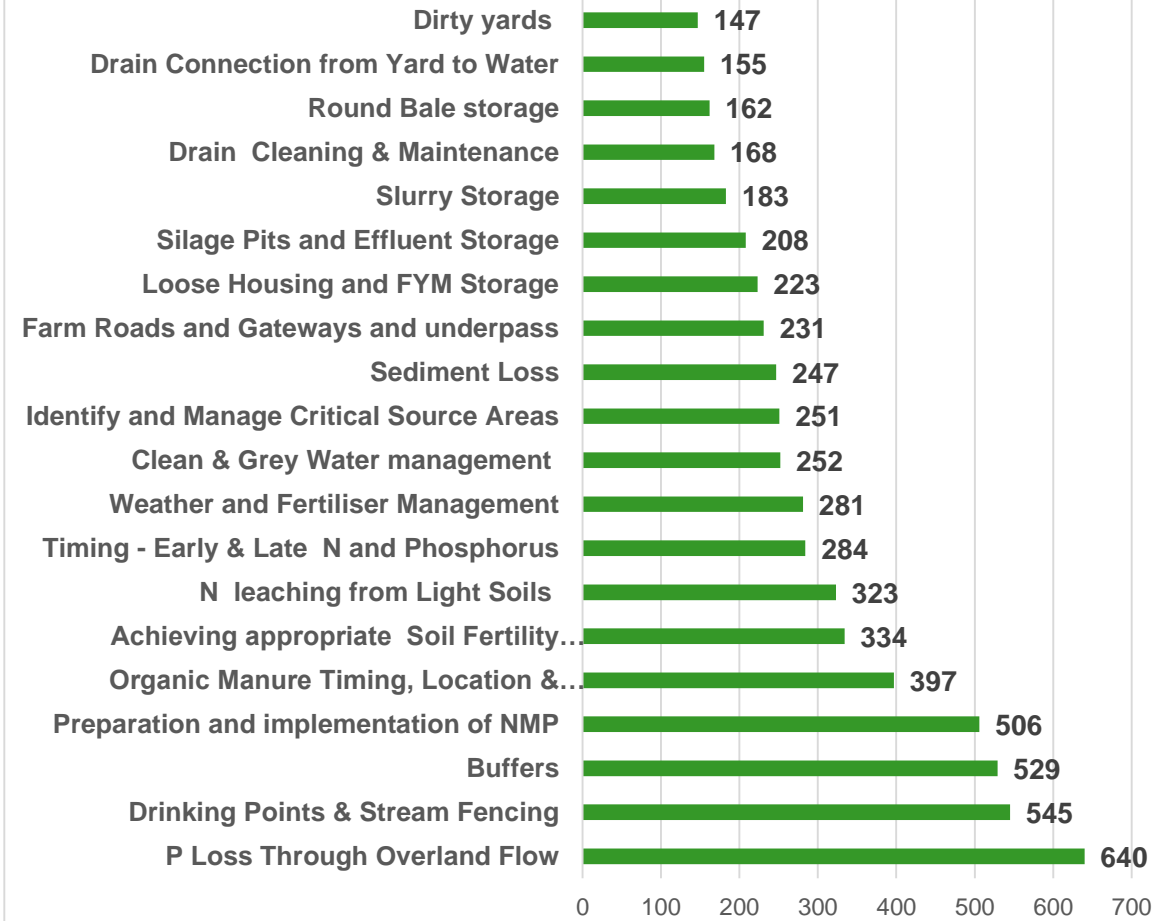
- P Loss (Diffuse)
- N Loss (Diffuse)
- Sedimentation
- Point Source Losses
- Toxicity & Pesticides
- Ammonium

Farming Enterprise Assessed



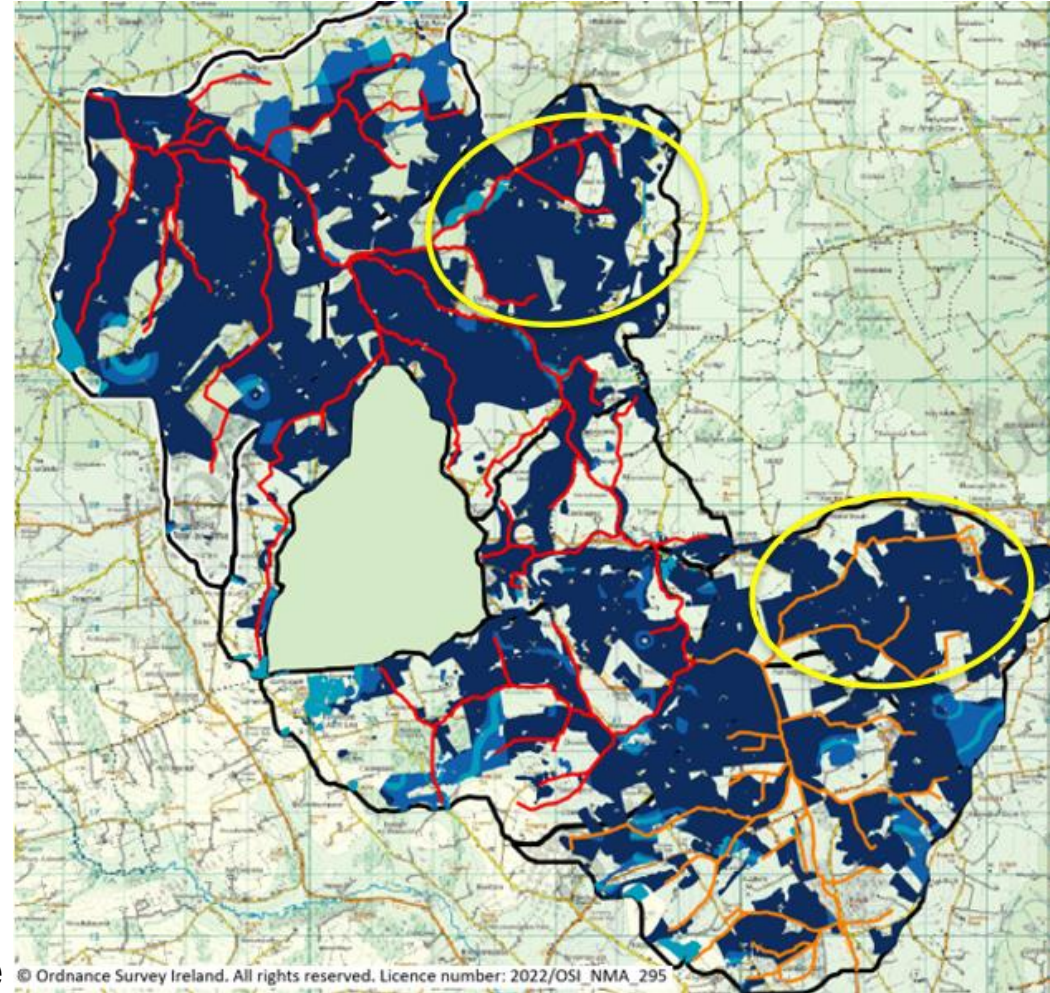
- Dairy
- Beef Production
- Sheep
- Tillage/Other
- Mixed Farming

High Risk - 20 most frequent issues

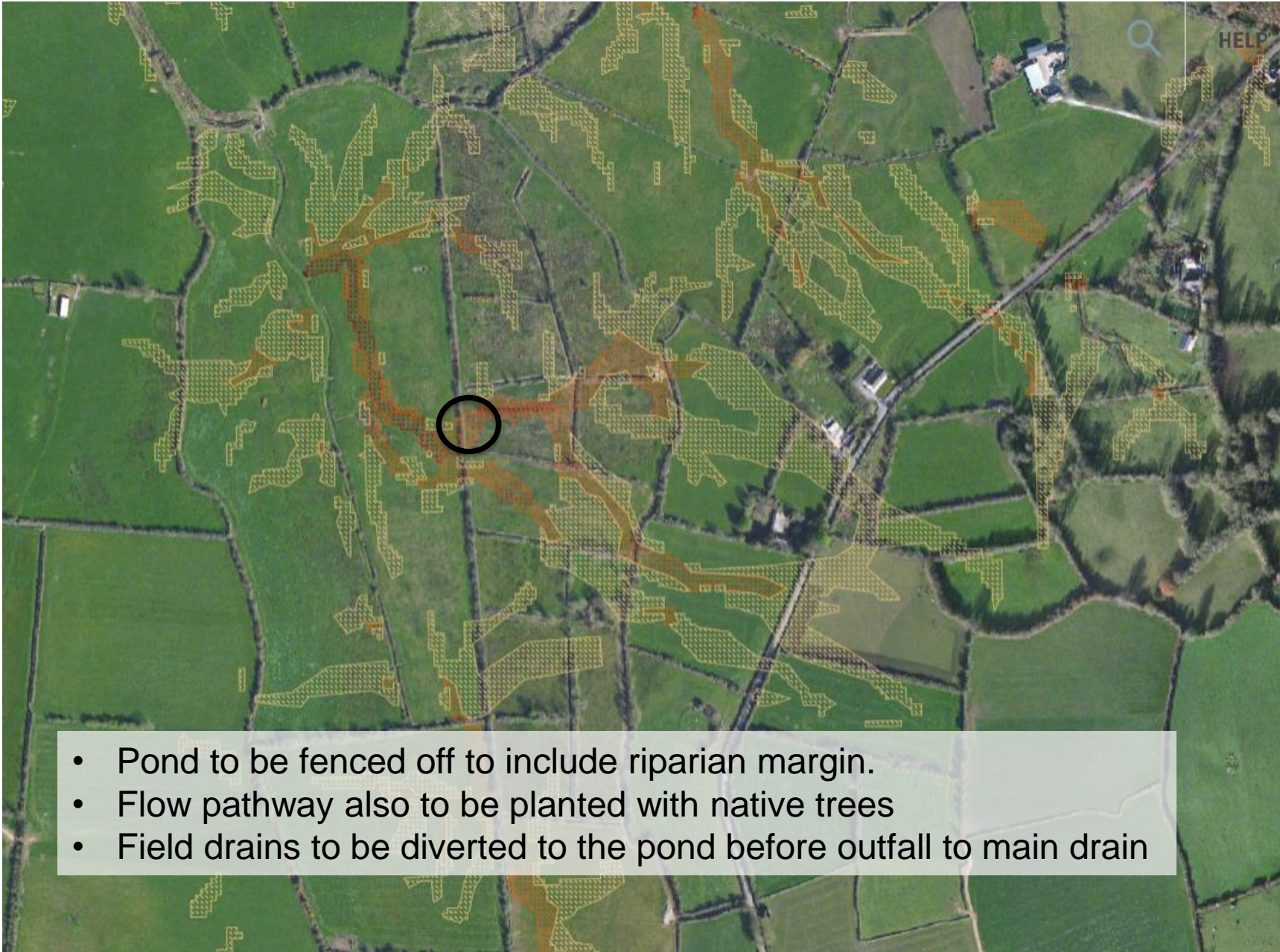


Case Study: Upper Deel EIP

- LAWPRO and ASSAP, supported by Ballyhoura Development Company, were successful in a 2021 application for 80k funding under the DAFM Biodiversity mini EIP
- Two mini-catchments in Deel (NCW)_020 and Deel (NCW)_050 – Limerick/Cork border
- Phosphate and sediment issues throughout
- The project looks at the effectiveness of spatially **targeted biodiversity measures** in reducing diffuse P (and sediment) losses from critical sources areas
- Project partners: Ballyhoura Development company, ASSAP, LAWPRO, Donal Daly, OPW and IFI
- ASSAP Teagasc and Kerry Agri advisors are working actively in the catchment and 90% of landowners are now engaged with the project



Implementation of Measures





Gibbingsgrove

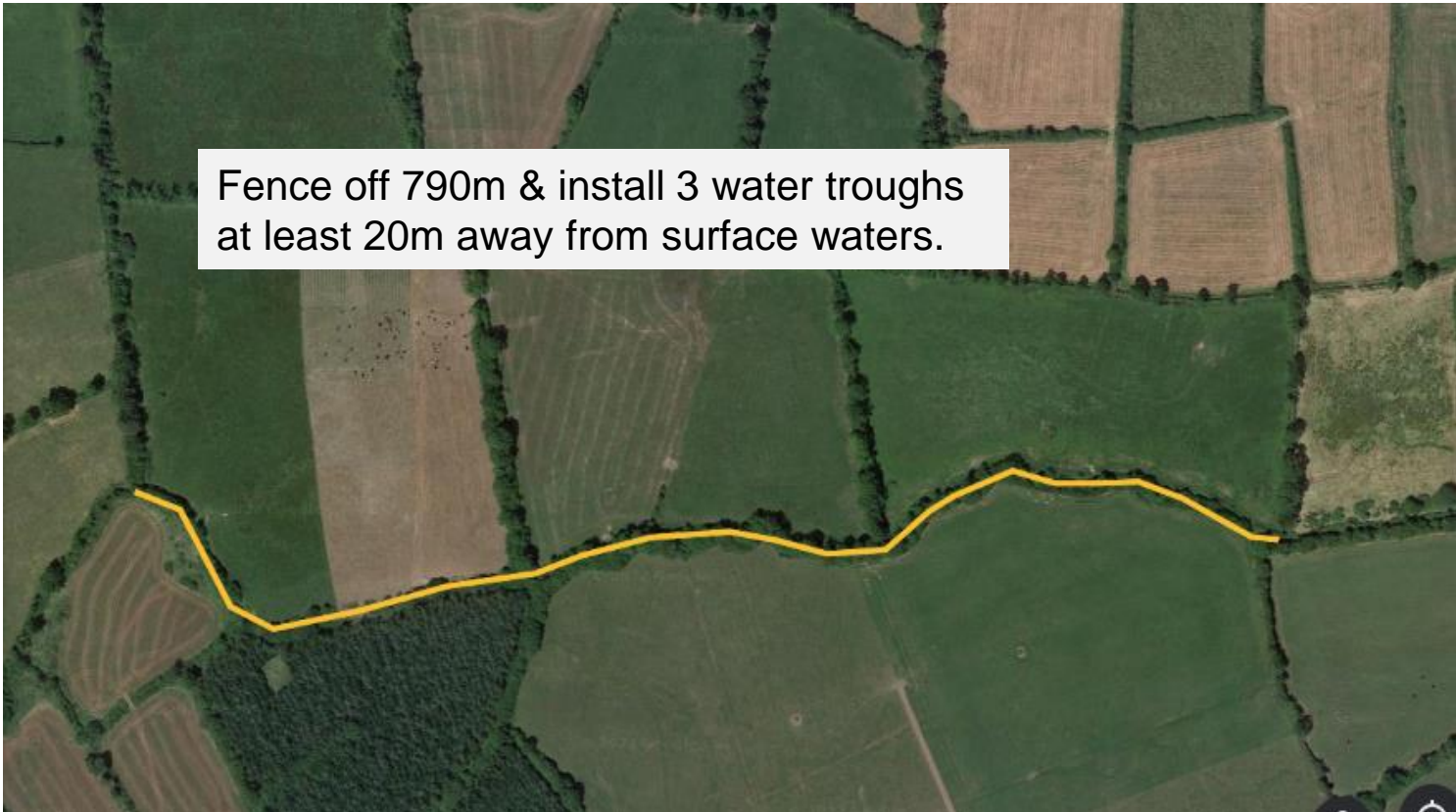
Fence off area 0.3ha.
Plant with native trees.

Fence off area 0.04ha.
Plant with native trees.

ville

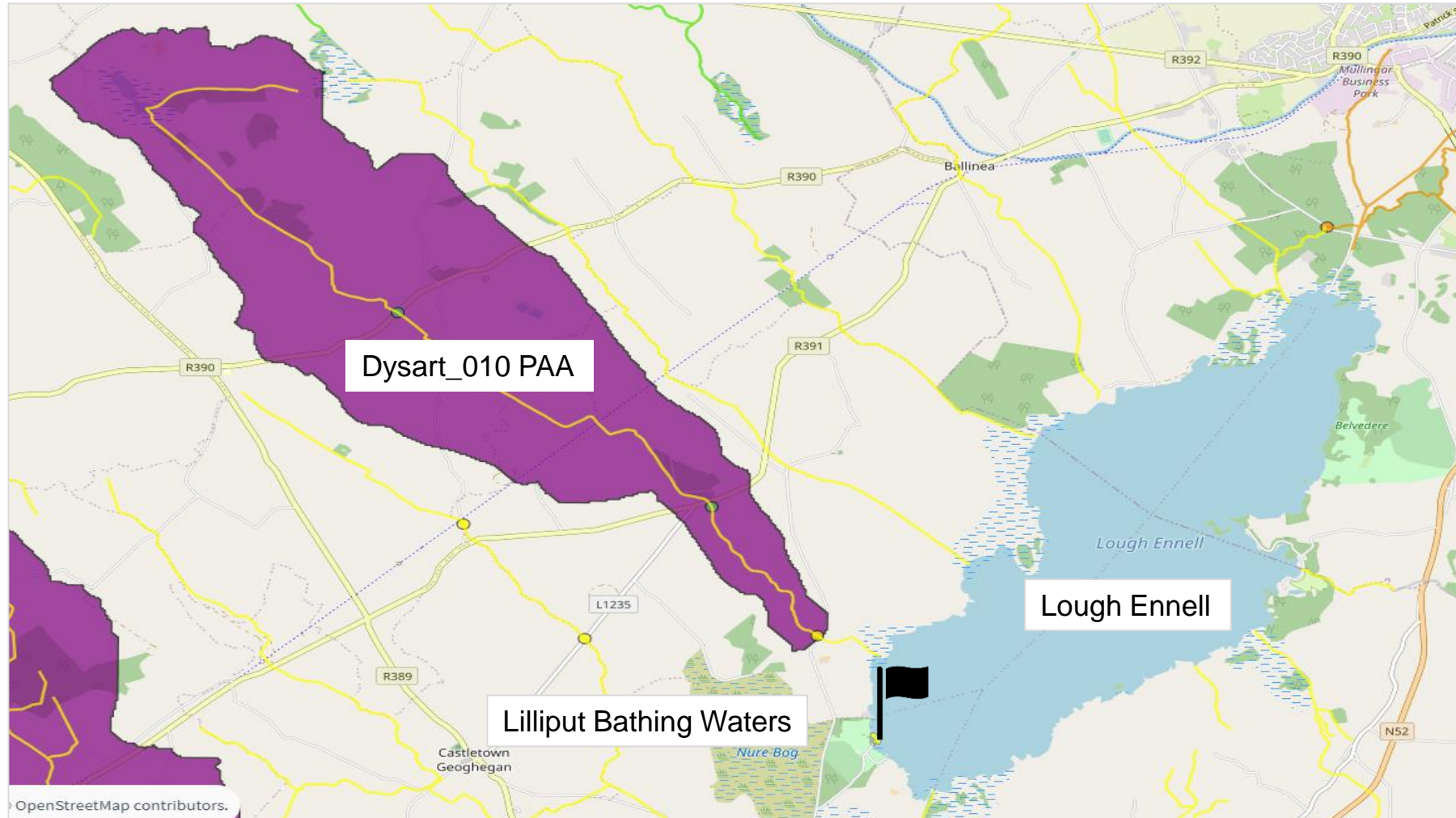


Fence off 790m & install 3 water troughs at least 20m away from surface waters.



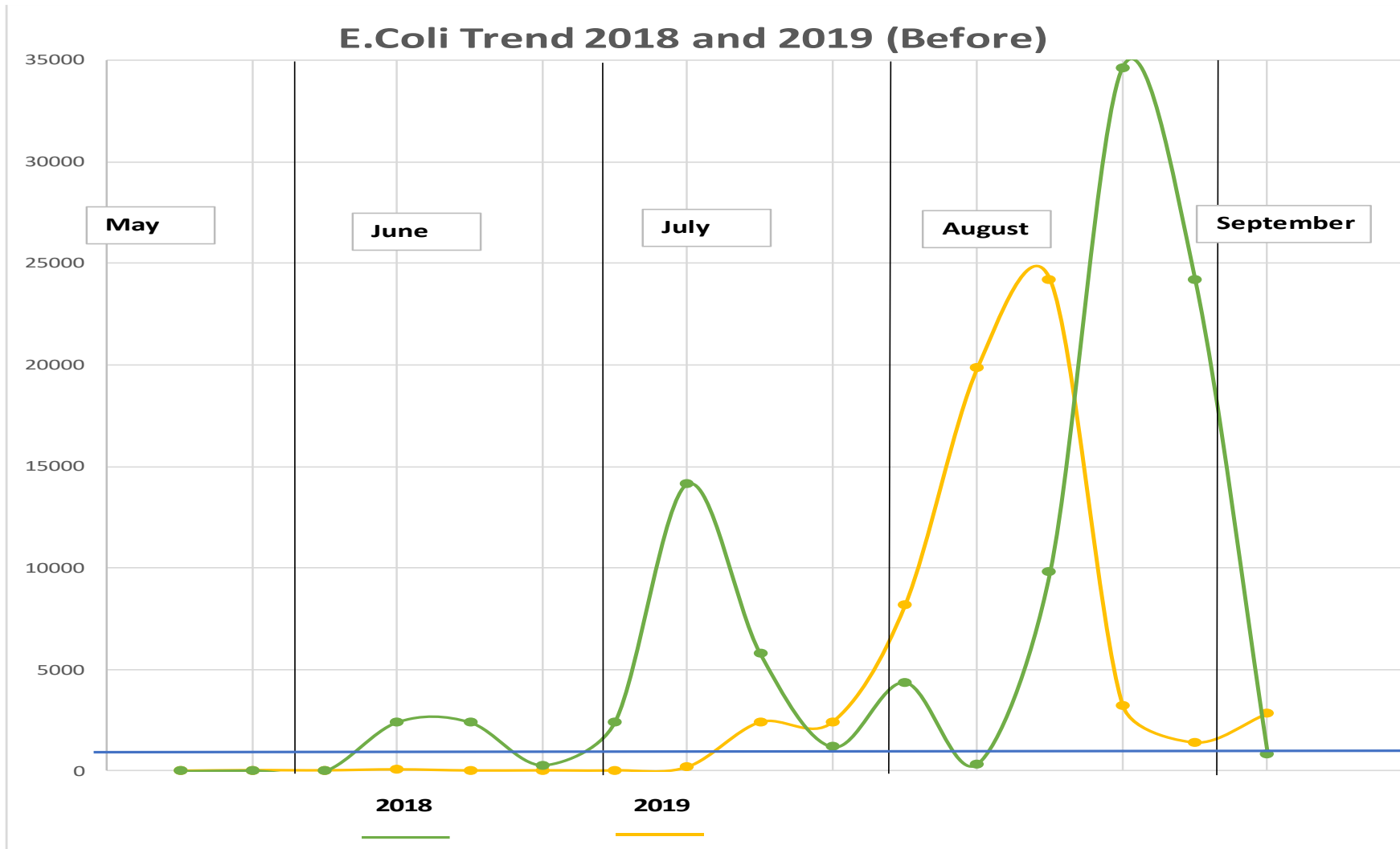
Case Study: Dysart_010 & Lough Ennell

- Pathogen losses from agriculture in Dysart_010 impacting on Lough Ennell bathing waters
- Diffuse phosphorus and sediment losses also impacting



Case Study: Dysart_010 & Lough Ennell

- Lilliput E.coli trend in 2018 and 2019



Blue line indicates 'Sufficient' water quality.

Anything above this line is 'Poor'

Dysart_010 ASSAP Farmer Engagement & Mitigation Actions

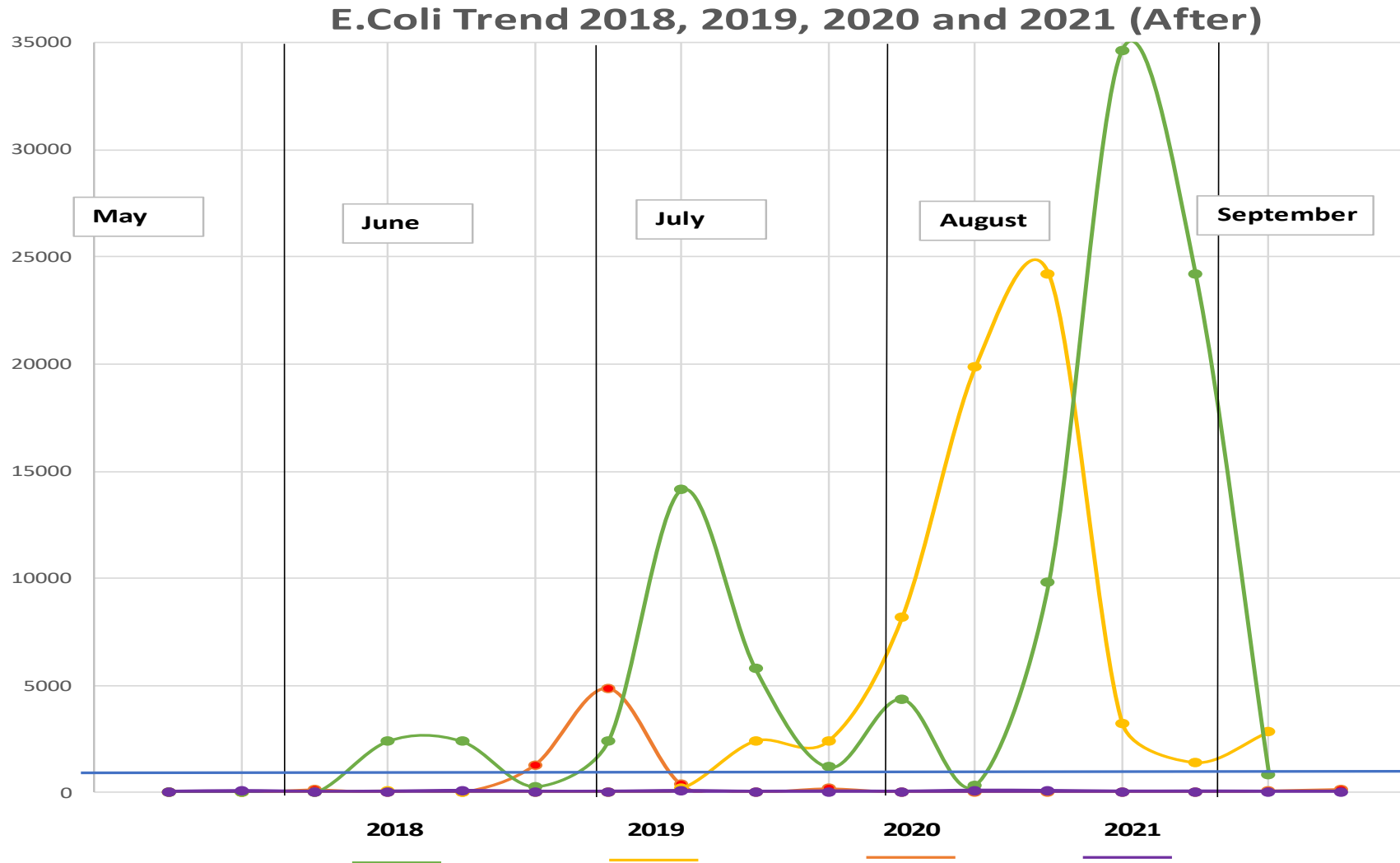
- ASSAP advisors visited 23 farms based on LAWPRO referrals
 - 19 Beef farms
 - 4 dairy farms
- Issues identified - diffuse P and sediment losses
 - Surface runoff leading to P and sediment losses on poorly draining land
 - Cattle access to watercourse for drinking
 - Drainage maintenance
- Mitigation advice – regulatory compliance
 - Adherence to buffer zones
 - Compliance with fertiliser limits
 - Compliance with organic manure storage and closed periods
- Mitigation advice – voluntary actions
 - Riparian margins and management of critical source areas
 - Prevention of cattle access to waters and alternative drinking supplies
 - Farmer education and information on drainage maintenance

ASSAP – Mitigation Actions



Case Study: Dysart_010 & Lough Ennell

- Lilliput E.coli Trend from 2018 to 2021 – 2021 data below threshold



Blue line indicates 'Sufficient' water quality.

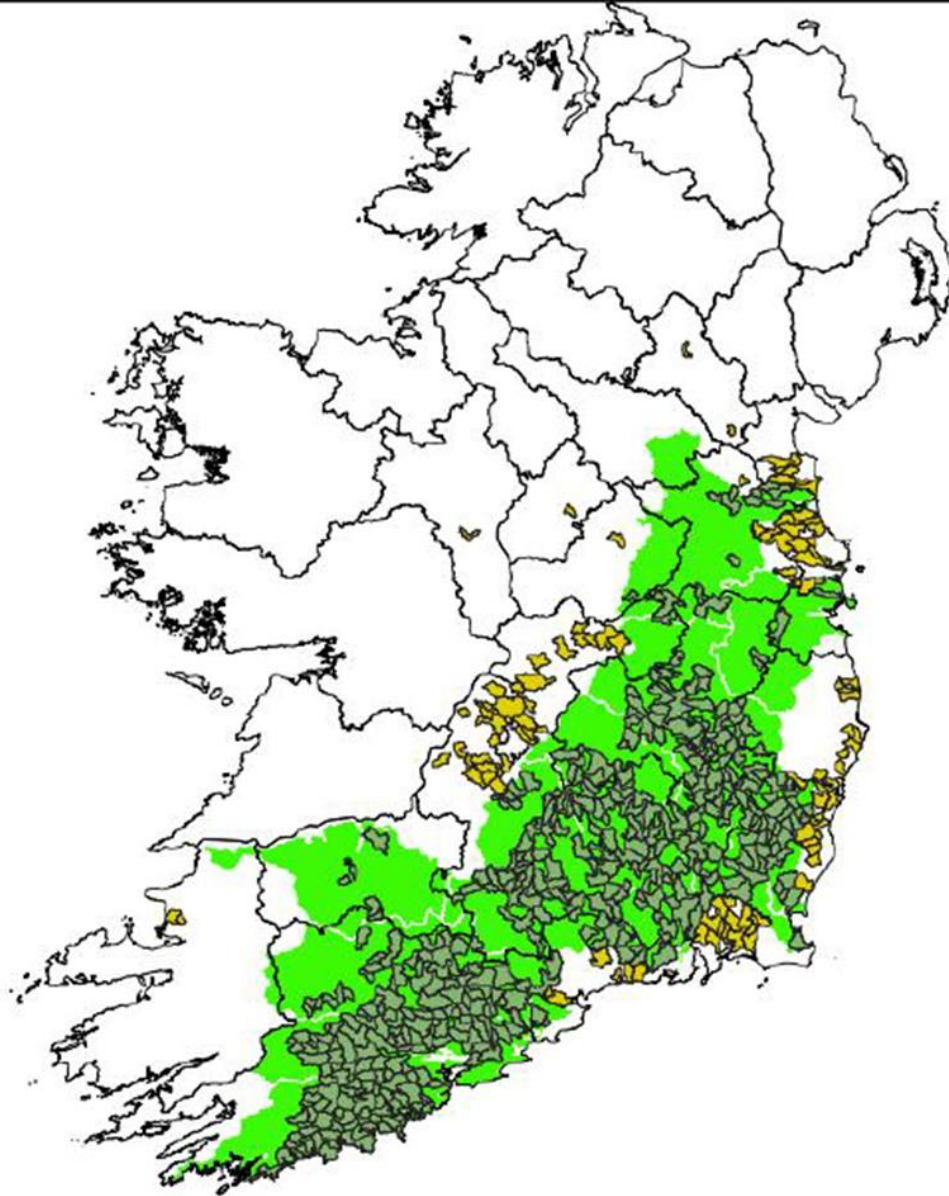
Anything above this line is 'Poor'

Nitrate Referral for N Risky PAA's & Waterbodies




- Dairy Co-op advisory team to increase in 2022 to 18 advisors
- Necessity to provide referrals to these additional advisors – LAWPRO staff at same level
- Novel referral for Nitrate developed by LAWPRO. This will allow the ASSAP advisors to visit farms in PAA's and in selected waterbodies with elevated Nitrate levels and provide mitigation advice on nitrate losses
- Catchment Referrals for Nitrogen have been developed for 1,231 waterbodies
- PAA referrals are priority, these will allow for work to continue where referrals have been completed

Table 1 Priority categories for Catchment Referrals for Nitrogen

| Priority category description | No. of water bodies |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Water bodies contributing high N within catchments of concern | 404 |
| 2. High PIP N areas in catchments of concern (not included above) | 733 |
| 3. Water bodies with elevated N (outside catchments of concern) | 94 |
| 4. 20% reduction in use everywhere | All other water bodies |



Legend

-  Priority 1 Water Bodies
-  Priority 2 Water Bodies
-  Priority 3 Water Bodies

Catchment Referrals for Nitrogen

ASSAP – External Expert Review

- ASSAP External Expert Review requested by the DAFM & DHLGH
- Review to:
 - 1) carry out a comprehensive assessment of the ASSAP to date
 - 2) recommendations for the future development (role and scope) of the programme taking account of developments with regards to the new Common Agricultural Policy, revisions to the Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) and the next River Basin Management Plan
- Expert review panel members:

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|---|
| Chair | Prof Rory O'Donnell | Geary Institute, UCD |
| Catchment Specialist | Prof Phil Jordan | Professor of Catchment Science, Ulster University |
| Policy/Governance | Dr. Matt Crowe | Former director of the EPA |
| Farmer | Mr. Harold Kingston | Dairy farmer, Munster Regional IFA Chairperson |
| Industry | Ms. Orlaith Tynan | Head of sustainability for Dairygold |
| Community Groups | Dr. Trish Murphy | Inishowen Rivers Trust |

ASSAP – External Expert Review

High Level Findings and Recommendations

| | |
|----|--|
| 1. | Develop and expand ASSAP: ASSAP should be further developed under the 3 rd RBMP, expanding as additional PAAs are selected, with appropriate scientific support. Communications expertise should be engaged to consider naming, branding and promotional issues. |
| 2. | ASSAP should continue to focus primarily on water quality in the PAAs: Its objectives should be simplified to focus more on supporting farmers' implementation of the right actions in the right place and demonstration of their impact on water quality. |
| 3. | Funding to support farmers' implementation of Actions: ASSAP needs mechanisms to support farmers to implement the agreed actions. |
| 4. | Enhance the mainstream advisory services: The further development of ASSAP needs be accompanied by a major enhancement and refocusing of the mainstream advisory services (both public and private) with a stronger focus on sustainability (economic, social and environmental) and on-farm and action-based engagement. |
| 5. | Continuous diagnostic review: the diagnostic flow-chart, designed jointly by ASSAP and LAWPRO staff, should be adopted formally as a tool for short-cycle assessment, review of progress in a PAA and identification of necessary network partners. |

ASSAP – External Expert Review

High Level Findings and Recommendations

| | |
|-----|---|
| 6. | Spatial recording of recommendations and actions: ASSAP, supported by its partners organisations, should complete the move towards spatial recording of recommendations and actions taken. |
| 7. | Safe spaces to enhance transparency of the right actions in the right place and their impact: Use selected waterbodies as a safe space to explore and refine demonstration of the right actions in the right place and their impact on water quality. |
| 8. | Catchment-scale engagement, capacity building and planning: work to enhance the strength and capacity of catchment-level networks, so that catchment protection and management becomes embedded. |
| 9. | Funding of ASSAP: maintain the balance of funding from government and industry as ASSAP expands, keeping the relative contribution of each under review. |
| 10. | Demonstrating impact, informing policy and research: ASSAP should work with partner organisations to devise policy learning and research projects that are appropriate to experimental governance, linking iterative monitoring and review to higher-order long-term validation of the cumulative results of the overall approach to water governance. |

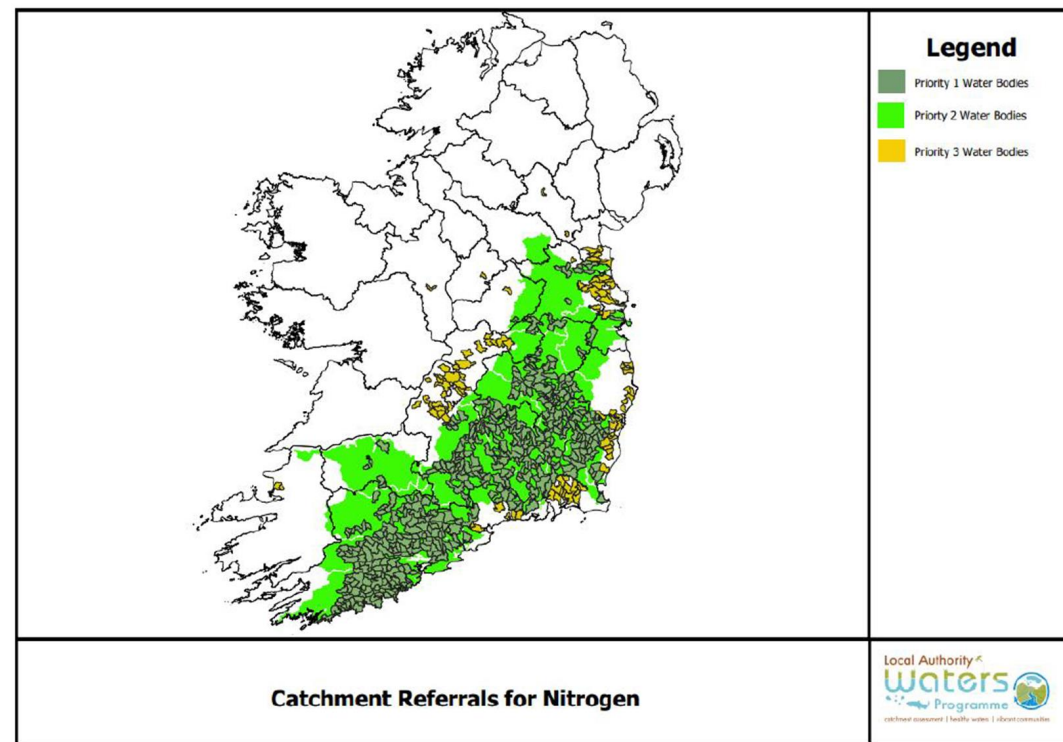
ASSAP – External Expert Review

High Level Findings and Recommendations

- ‘ASSAP should be further developed under the 3rd RBMP, expanding as additional PAAs are selected, with appropriate scientific support’.
- ‘ASSAP should continue to focus primarily on water quality in the PAAs’.
- ‘Financial support, external to the ASSAP, needs to be available to enable farmers implement agreed actions recommended by ASSAP advisors’.
- ‘The further development of ASSAP needs be accompanied by a major enhancement and refocusing of the mainstream advisory services (both public and private) with a stronger focus on sustainability (economic, social and environmental) and on-farm and action-based engagement’.
- ‘Work to enhance the strength and capacity of catchment-level networks, so that catchment protection and management becomes embedded’.

ASSAP – RBMP 3rd Cycle

- Implementation of mitigation actions key to realising WQ improvements
- Government have announced funding for a Water Quality EIP - €60 million over 5 years
- This EIP will provide funding to farmers to implement measures to mitigate the impacts of agriculture on water quality
- Catchment referrals for nitrogen – innovative new approach to tackling diffuse N loss problem
- Catchment referrals for phosphorus?
- Strengthened GAP Regulations
- Expand use of EPA PIP maps - ACRES
- Development of advisory tools – Farm Sustainability Planner
- National Agricultural Inspections Programme





Questions?

