

# Soil Action Plan Advisory Forum Newsletter

## Issue 15: November 2006

### Actions

1. Due to the Christmas break there will be no December issue of the newsletter. Please send any information to be included in the January newsletter to [Becca Taylor](#) by **Thursday 25 January**. It is our intention to circulate the newsletter at the end of each month unless the volume of material is insufficient.
2. Can any AF members that have not already done so please let [Becca Taylor](#) know their availability for the postponed AF meeting, to be held either during week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

### General

1. Unfortunately the November meeting of the Advisory Forum has been postponed. The departure of Sharon Ellis at the end of October has resulted in an urgent vacancy that we are seeking to fill. This has coincided with a busy time for us, resulting in our resources being stretched as we develop the UK negotiating position on the EU Thematic Strategy for Soil and proposals for a Soil Framework Directive, as well as drafting the soil strategy for England from 2007. The rearranged meeting will take place in February – further details to follow shortly.

### SUS (Sustainable Soil Management)

1. To support farmers in their efforts to reduce diffuse pollution and to use resources more efficiently, the RSPB and the Environment Agency have produced a new advisory leaflet aimed at farmers and advisors. The leaflet, entitled 'Farming to protect soil, water and wildlife' promotes Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) and the CSF messages currently being disseminated across England. When fully opened out, the leaflet's inside picture demonstrates how agri-environment and other measures can achieve multiple benefits when optimally located on the farm. It explains how options aimed at helping wildlife can protect natural resources and vice versa. In addition, the leaflet details the resources and money-saving benefits of management plans, preventing farmyard pollution and appropriate timing of operations. For your own copy or more to distribute to farmers and advisory contacts please contact [Jim Densham](#).



2. The *Cross Compliance Handbook for England Supplement for 2007* and *Cross Compliance Summary of Key Points* are now available on the Defra and [RPA](#) websites and have also been sent out to all Single Payment Scheme applicants. The Cross Compliance Supplement updates the 2006 Handbook and Supplement. It includes updates to GAEC 1 (Soil Protection Review) and GAEC 2 (Post-harvest management of land after combinable crops).
3. The Defra-funded project to develop advice for farmers and land managers to maintain and enhance their soil organic matter is making good headway. The project leaders have consulted with CSF officers in all 8 priority catchments, and have held a workshop with them to develop advice tools and integrate their use with the aims of CSF. A flier has been produced to publicise their research, and a brochure for farmers on SOM management has been prepared for use in conjunction with case studies. A [website](#) is also in preparation which will include a searchable database of the case studies. Over the next 6 months, GYA will assess the reaction from farmers to the case studies and will continue to assess farmers' need for additional support until early 2008. During this period they will also continue to develop additional case studies. A workshop has been organised for early December 2006 to explore the current extent of soil management advice provision in upland and moorland areas, and identify areas where this advice could be coordinated, extended and enhanced. For further information please contact [Matthew Shepherd](#).