PROPOSAL FOR JOINT PESTICIDES FORUM/VOLUNTARY INITIATIVE WORKING GROUP ON GRASSLAND/FORAGE PESTICIDE ISSUES

Both the PF and VI have identified the need to improve the handling, storage, use and disposal practice of ‘infrequent’ pesticide users, in particular those operating in the grassland and forage sectors. Pesticides which are applied to grassland and forage are amongst those most frequently detected as pollutants of water. Improving practice will help to reduce the risk of these chemicals adversely affecting water quality. There are particular challenges associated with reaching and communicating with these ‘operators’.

Aim:
The aim of the working group would be to:

- Identify the key messages relating to the handling, storage, use and disposal of pesticides, remnants, application equipment and packaging (including spraying, seed treatments and granules) relevant to this distinct group of operators;
- Recommend how to promote change in practice and uptake of legal requirements and best practice measures. This will include:
  - Who to interact and integrate messaging with; and
  - Key partnerships and approaches required.

Output:
A report for consideration by PF and VI with recommendations on key messages, what needs to be done, by whom, by when. The WG is expected to complete this during 2014 (timetable to be confirmed at initial meeting of the group).

Membership:
Membership of the group would be drawn from PF and VI. It is likely to include:

- Farming unions (NFU – including S, W and E, UFU, FUW)
- Levy/AHDB – especially DairyCo, EBLEX, HCC, QMS
- AIC (crop protection and Feed companies)
- CPA – such as Dow AgroSciences who are strong in grass products
- Assurance schemes
- Representation/link to CFE
- Aim to include individuals from Water companies and Catchment officers
- Appropriate Government representation from all parts of the UK

We would need to propose a chair from the membership of the group (perhaps from AIC, or a grassland/livestock farmer). Secretariat will be provided via the VI.

James Clarke
Chair Pesticides Forum

Richard Butler
Chair Voluntary Initiative