

Forehill Supply Zone Pesticides Failure 31 August 2011

DWQR Inspector:
William Byers

Summary of Incident

On 31 August 2011, a sample taken from the final water into supply at Forehill WTW failed the pesticide standard for Metazachlor with a level of 0.102 µg/l. A series of samples taken thereafter and continuing to date has seen intermittent presence of the pesticide but has also regularly detected levels of Chlorotoluron of up to 0.39 µg/l. These pesticides are used for the control of broadleaf weeds in crops

DWQR declared this situation to be an incident due to failure to restore water quality compliance within two months.

DWQR Assessment of Cause of Incident

There is a known issue at this treatment works of its inability to deal effectively with pesticides that are present in the raw water drawn from the catchment. DWQR had previously written to Scottish Water seeking a commitment, known as an Undertaking, to address the issue. The Undertaking was agreed on 10 May 2011 and can be viewed on DWQR website.

DWQR Assessment of Actions Taken by Scottish Water

Some of the steps set out in the Undertaking require a significant time to conclude e.g. the assessment of strategic options and the design, construction and implementation of treatment processes.

The key steps are:

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| • Implement enhanced monitoring for pesticides | In place |
| • Have formalised procedures for advising Health Authorities of sample failures | In place |
| • Promote sustainable land management in River Ugie catchments | In place |
| • Assess & Report on effectiveness of sustainable land management approach | Completed |
| • Monitor & support water industry investigations into Metaldehyde | In place |
| • Complete Planning & design of appropriate treatment process | Completed |
| • Treatment solution implemented | Due - 31 March 2014 |

DWQR receives a six monthly update report on the status of all the actions raised within each step to fully address the Undertaking.

Scottish Water is progressing with a combined approach of providing treatment and catchment management. Their capital investment project for provision of a pesticides removal stage at Forehill WTW is on programme with the intention of appointing a contractor for the works in autumn 2012.

In relation to catchment management, Scottish Water has established an incentive scheme for sustainable land management and is working with land managers and agronomists in the River Ugie catchment to understand and influence the seasonal application of pesticides.

Scottish Water is also currently reviewing their response plans for implementation in the event significant peaks for pesticides are detected in the drinking water supply.

