

The NRA's Pollution Control Offices can be contacted 24 hours a day on the following telephone numbers:

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NRA

*National Rivers Authority
Severn-Trent Region*



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S I L A G E E F F L U E N T

Each year many serious pollution incidents happen because of inadequate containment or disposal of silage effluent.

Effluent from ensiled crops is one of the most concentrated pollutants produced on the farm and is at least 100 times stronger than crude sewage. Even small quantities reaching a watercourse can cause significant environmental damage.

Poorly designed or maintained silos or associated effluent collection facilities are the main cause of such incidents. Silage effluent is very corrosive and can easily attack concrete and steel. Liquor can easily escape through cracked, porous or otherwise deteriorated silo floors, collection channels or tanks.

New, enlarged or substantially reconstructed silos, with certain exceptions, must conform with the Control of Pollution (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) Regulations 1991.

The main requirements are:

1. The silo base should be impermeable and be provided with perimeter channels for effluent collection.
2. Where walls are provided, the silo base should be extended beyond the walls to provide channels for effluent collection.
3. Collection channels must lead to an effluent tank which is resistant to acid attack.

It should have a minimum capacity of 3m³ per 150m³ of silo capacity for silos up to 1500m³ capacity.

4. No part of the silo, effluent tank or channels should be within 10 metres of a watercourse.
5. Silo walls should be constructed to minimum standards to conform with BS 5502.
6. The NRA should be notified, in writing, at least 14 days before use.

For further details see the Control of Pollution (Silage, Slurry & Agricultural Fuel Oil) Regulations 1991.

Safety Notes

- a. Effluent collection channels and the area surrounding the silo should be regularly inspected for any signs of blockage or leakage.
- b. The level of the effluent in the tank must be closely monitored and the tank emptied at regular intervals. It must never be allowed to overflow.
- c. Bales should be stored at least 10 metres from any watercourse. At feeding time the bags or wrappings of the bales should not be removed within 10 metres of any watercourse.
- d. Silage effluent should be diluted 1:1 with water before land application. Effluent should not be applied to high risk sites.
- e. Inspect drains, ditches and watercourses regularly for signs of pollution and inform the NRA immediately if a problem occurs.



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