



A clear solution for farmers

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Soil erosion from a maize field in the Avon Catchment

Hampshire Avon Catchment (24)

CSFO: Jodene Williams

Farm Description

There is a high risk of diffuse pollution in Hampshire's Pewsey Vale; the problem lies with the greensand underneath the chalk that dominates the area. Greensand makes the ground less permeable. The gradient and the relatively intensive agriculture in the region add to the pollution problem. Water quality on the River Avon is generally very good but the riverine designated SSSI is "largely unfavourable." Farmer Richard Butler has reduced soil erosion and run-off from a specific field at his mixed 17,000 acre farm on the Upper Avon.

Pollution Problems

The catalyst prompting the farmer to act came when heavy rain caused soil erosion on a newly planted maize crop in a 25 acre field opposite his dairy enterprise and close to housing. "We knew we had a problem when, just after planting maize, two inches of rain fell in an hour and washed tonnes of soil out of 'Clover Ground' on to the road," he said.

Pollution Solutions

The farmer attended a soil management training workshop and can now counter the risk of soil erosion in his fields. On the basis of what he learnt at the workshop, he's changed how he farms 'Clover Ground.'

1. He's modified cultivations – he now grows rape in the problem field - and altered the timing of various field operations to reduce the risk of runoff. "We know we must choose the most

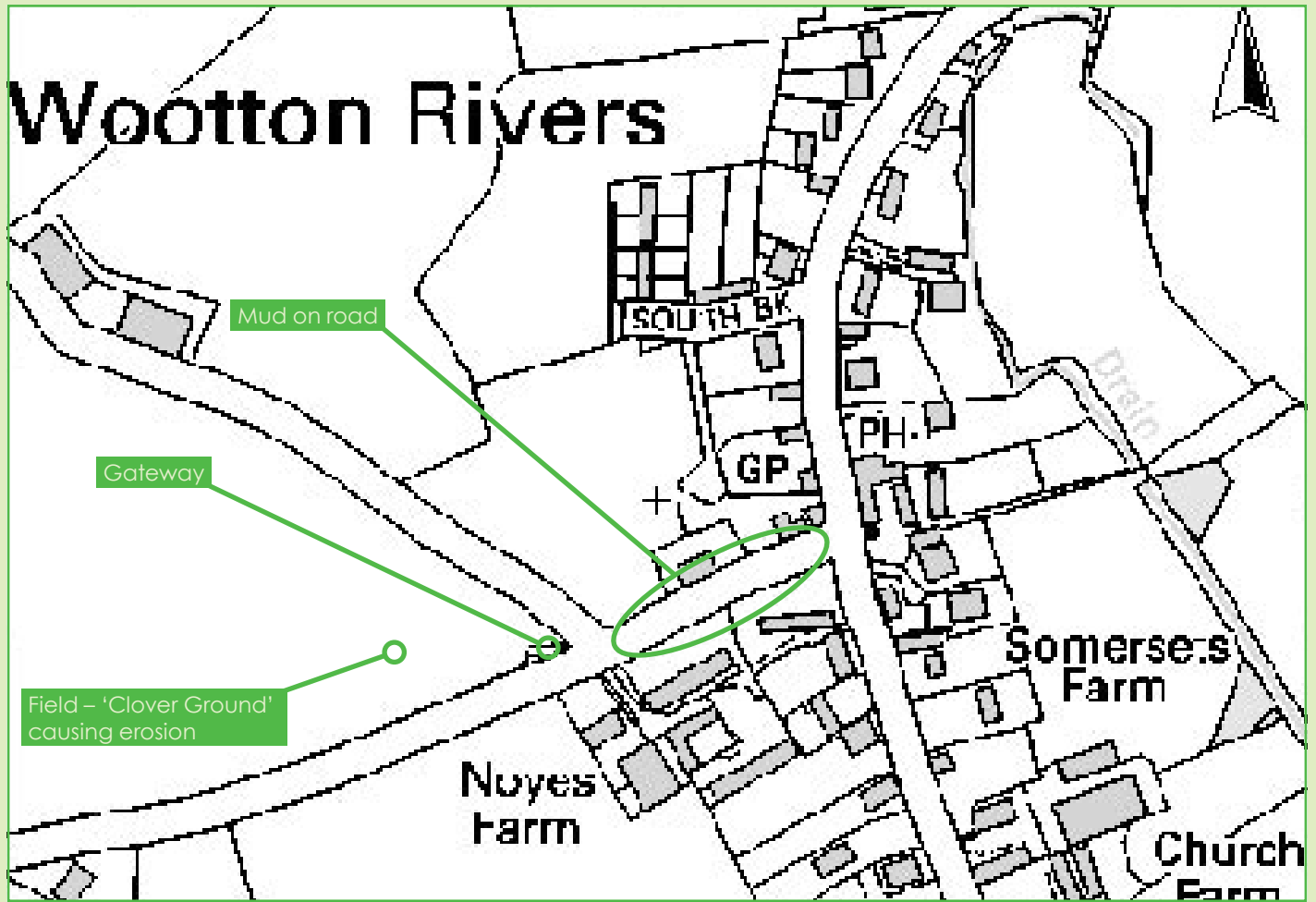
suitable cultivations for the field in question because this maximises yield potential and shows due diligence," said Richard Butler.

2. He subsoils to relieve compaction.
3. He's planted a grass buffer all around 'Clover Ground' to reduce erosion and run-off. He has established trees in the bottom corner and repositioned the gate further up the field.

Farmer Engagement and Motivation

The CSFO found the farmer enthusiastic and engaged in the process. His farm has recently been accepted under the Entry Level Stewardship scheme.

Wootton Rivers



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