

A Somerset farmer has recently been ordered to pay nearly £4000 in fines and costs for polluting a stream with contaminated water. The incident near Stoke St Gregory was picked up during a routine Environment Agency visit. Water from a roofing drain had become contaminated by silage discharge. It emptied into a watercourse within a Site of Special Scientific Interest, impacting several kilometres of watercourse.

All farmers, landowners and businesses should have measures in place to prevent pollution. However, ensuring that these measures work and continue to work is vital. Regular monitoring and testing can pick up any changes before the local environment is impacted. It can also avoid costly cleanup processes, and help avoid accusations of negligence.

Incidents over the last few years in Somerset have included costs of £4000 for a Merriot poultry farm, £9000 for a Radstock dairy farm, £18,000 for a Yeovil box company and £30,000 for a Cannington anaerobic digestion plant. Fines are unlimited and there is the risk of up to 5 years in prison. If your business creates contaminants, or you have a consent to discharge from the EA, get your equipment and processes checked and tested on a regular basis. Contact Somerset Scientific Services, part of SCC, for advice on 01823 355906 or SSSmailbox@somerset.gov.uk