

# Slug Pellets – Metaldehyde Best Practice Advice

## **Slug pellets are pesticides - Keep pesticides out of water**

Responsible use of pesticides protects the environment and the supply of clean water. It will also maintain the availability of products like slug pellets.

Metaldehyde has recently been detected in raw surface water supplies. This highlights the necessity to follow best practice advice with every slug pellet treatment.

**EVERYONE** handling slug pellets should read this information – it complements the ‘Best Practice’ sticker that should be affixed to applicators.

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## All professional users of slug pellets must be trained

All users of slug pellets must, by law, have received adequate training and guidance in correct use.

They must hold a Certificate of Competence if they:

- Were born after 31 December 1964
- Are providing a commercial service e.g. contractors or applying on land that does not belong to their employer

For a Certificate, a Foundation Module (PA1) and slug pellet Application Module (PA4) is required – see [www.nptc.org.uk](http://www.nptc.org.uk)

Holders of a PA1 and PA2 issued before 1 June 1994 are certificated to apply slug pellets

Holders of a PA1 and PA2 issued after 1 June 1994 need to complete PA4 to be certificated to apply slug pellets

## Calibrate your applicator before use and according to product and rate to be applied

Successful slug pellet application means applying the desired rate per hectare with a uniform spreading pattern.



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This depends upon:

- **Pellet characteristics:** Density, size and rate of flow through the spreader
- **Spreader specific settings:** Flow rate, spread width, forward speed, pellet type

Slug pellets and applicators/spreaders differ greatly. Calibrate the spreader every time one or more of the above factors change.

## Know you applicator spread width and switch off when turning on headlands

The spread width to the side AND behind will vary according to disc speed, product type, size of pellet, shape and density in addition to the speed and direction of the wind and the terrain.

STOP pellets from being applied directly into ditches and other surface water bodies.

- Fit deflector plates for treatments on headlands
- Use 2 or 3 bout headlands to avoid throwing pellets back into watercourses when starting a field bout
- Keep pellets well away from field margins, watercourses and open water on headlands

## Test bait using chicken layers mash

Apply an appropriate rate of slug pellets according to threshold.

Assess slug populations to determine rate of application required by test baiting (trapping).



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Baiting/trapping consists of placing slug traps or empty fertiliser bags on the soil with a quantity of chicken layers mash underneath, and then counting the number of slugs present under the trap the following morning. **DO NOT USE SLUG PELLETS UNDER THE TRAPS.**

Risk thresholds are:

Winter wheat: A catch of four or more slugs.

Winter oilseed rape: a catch of four slugs or more in previous standing cereal crop or one or more in cereal stubble.

## Do not apply slug pellets if heavy rain is imminent

Heavy rain may cause surface wash off with slug pellets potentially washed directly off the surface of the soil and into a ditch or watercourse.

- **Assess the 5 day forecast for guidance on heavy rainfall events.**
- Follow advice guidelines in the VI H2OK information highlighting how to counter pesticides entering water on sloping fields with watercourses as boundaries, and advice on cultivation and establishment practice.
- Fields should be cultivated and drilled with tramlines parallel to the watercourse to avoid surface water travelling directly into the watercourse.



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## Fill hoppers in field away from margins/water courses/hard surfaces

Filling your applicator over a plastic sheet in the field ensures no pellets accidentally end up in a watercourse.

Avoid field gateways and other areas where runoff is likely. Seal up any part used bags.



Do not fill the applicator in the yard as pellets can leak or spill onto the ground during loading or when travelling to the field. These could end up being washed down a drain.

## Clear up pellet spills immediately – no matter how small

Following the filling guidance above will mean spills only occur in field. Excess pellets should be gathered up by hand (using appropriate PPE) or by brush and pan and then placed into the hopper for spreading.

Ensure there is not a concentrated quantity of pellets left on the soil which could be a danger to game, wild birds or mammals. Gloves and equipment should be cleaned away from drains and watercourses.

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## Clean the applicator after each day's use

Application equipment should be cleaned to prevent stray pellets or dust entering a watercourse. This should be carried out in the field.



## Do not contaminate drains or watercourses when cleaning the applicator

Ensure all cleaning activities take place away from watercourses or drains. Methods of disposal of machine cleanings can be found in the Crop Protection Association's Best Practice Guidelines on Pesticide Sprayer Cleaning [www.cpa.org.uk](http://www.cpa.org.uk).



## Application equipment should be stored under cover

Storing under cover ensures no pellet residues can be washed off by rain and enter a drain or watercourse.

## Do not leave packaged product in field unattended

Unused product should not be left unattended in or near the field as it may be damaged by adverse weather and become accessible to wildlife.

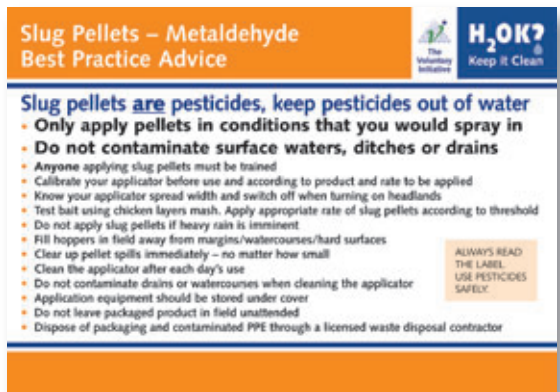
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## Dispose of packaging and contaminated PPE through a licensed waste contractor

Waste packaging and contaminated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be disposed of according to local or national legislation for agricultural waste. Packaging should be emptied thoroughly before disposal.

## Only apply pellets in conditions that you would spray in

Too often there is a temptation when weather conditions prevent spraying, to go pelleting instead. **DON'T DO IT.** If you cannot spray – don't apply pellets.



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**Slug pellets are pesticides, keep pesticides out of water**  
**Only apply pellets in conditions that you would spray in**

- Do not contaminate surface waters, ditches or drains
- Anyone applying slug pellets must be trained
- Calibrate your applicator before use and according to product and rate to be applied
- Know your applicator spread width and switch off when turning on headlands
- Test bait using chicken layers mash. Apply appropriate rate of slug pellets according to threshold
- Do not apply slug pellets if heavy rain is imminent
- Fill hoppers in field away from margins/watercourses/hard surfaces
- Clear up pellet spills immediately – no matter how small
- Clean the applicator after each day's use
- Do not contaminate drains or watercourses when cleaning the applicator
- Application equipment should be stored under cover
- Do not leave packaged product in field unattended
- Dispose of packaging and contaminated PPE through a licensed waste disposal contractor

ALWAYS READ THE LABEL USE PESTICIDES SAFELY

## Do not contaminate surface waters, ditches or drains

Read the best practice advice in this leaflet.

Best Practice Advice stickers to affix to pelleters can be obtained from your slug pellet supplier.



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The Metaldehyde Stewardship Group (MSG) comprises of Lonza (the principal manufacturer of the active ingredient) and slug pellet formulators Barclay Crop Protection, Certis, Chiltern Farm Chemicals, De Sangosse, Doff Portland and Makhteshim Agan.

The aim of the group is to promote and encourage best practice use of metaldehyde slug pellets in agriculture, minimise environmental impact and in particular protect water.

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