

## Erosion Control



### Installation of Erosamat Types 1&2 to prevent silt laden run-off entering protected watercourse, Cobrey Farm, Ross-on-Wye

Cobrey Farm is situated alongside the River Wye close to Ross-on-Wye and is one of the UK's largest growers of asparagus.

During on-going monitoring undertaken by the Environment Agency it was discovered that during wet periods the farm produced significant volumes of run-off which was heavily charged with soil particles.

This problem was a major concern as the Wye Valley is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest being home to a number of rare and highly sensitive species of crustaceans.

Over a number of years the area has been intensively farmed resulting in soil with very low organic content, a consequence of which is a very low water retention capacity. It also means that silt and fines are easily picked up and carried to nearby watercourses which feed the River Wye.



*Erosamat Type 2: Laid in Blueberry Field prior to seeding*

#### Project Information

Project **Installation of erosion control measures to prevent silt laden run-off**

Products **Erosamat Type 1  
Erosamat Type 2**

Value **£25,000**

Contractor **Cobrey Farm and Cranfield University**

Consultant **Cranfield University**

In order to find a solution Cranfield University surveyed the farm and came up with the solution of grassed waterways designed to control the runoff and prevent erosion from occurring, an obvious benefit being a reduction in particulate matter in the run-off.

This requires a large land take of productive land reducing the profitability of each field. There were also difficulties with getting grass to grow due to the residual levels of herbicide used to enhance the asparagus crop.

Following discussions with Cranfield and Cobrey Farm ABG supplied Erosamat, initially in the Type 1 Jute based form and then later as Type 2 Coir form, to help the establishment of the grassed waterways to allow run-off to be managed.

The main benefits are:

- Reduction of land take for the waterways reduced the cost of losing productive farmland
- Surface cover to protect exposed soil from rain bombardment
- Protection for grass seed and seedlings from weather to aid growth in very tough conditions
- As the Erosamat degrades it contributes to increasing the organic content of the soil

Installation started during the autumn of 2009 with a number of phases following on through to summer of 2011. Installation works were undertaken by Cobrey Farm's own workforce and overseen by Cranfield University.

Once the waterways were established, soil erosion was stopped completely. The solution was so successful that Cranfield University and the Environment Agency invited ABG to present at a "Better Soil and Water Management" event to educate other farms in SSSI areas on how they may be able to manage their sites.



*Preparing the water way prior to laying Erosamat*



*Positioning Erosamat*



*Erosamat laid prior to seeding*

*Main image (other side) shows completed vegetated waterway*