

NATURE FRIENDLY FARMING

Problem

We sometimes think that all farms and crofts are the same, full of animals, plants and insects. But this isn't always true, as some ways of farming are better for wildlife than others. Intensive farms, where the amount of food grown is given priority, and certain farming activities, have harmed nature and wildlife.

One problem is the use of fertilisers for growing crops, which can mean more produce for the farmer. However, this can also be bad as almost half of the nitrogen fertilisers applied to farmland is wasted. This wasted nitrogen goes into our air, water and soil, damages habitats and wildlife and can be harmful to people.



Importance

Too much nitrogen can lead to environmental damage, upsetting the balance of nature on farms and in the wider countryside. For example, some plants and animals such as salmon, freshwater pearl mussels and water voles are highly sensitive to large levels of nitrogen pollution. Also, nitrogen waste that gets into water sources can cause too much algae to grow, leading to polluted water sources.

Scotland's farmers and crofters are responsible for the management of 70% of Scotland's land, which means that they have a big influence on our nature and climate. If they are supported to farm with nature in mind, then progress can be made in reducing nitrate waste in Scotland, and protecting wildlife that surround farmland.



Solution

Many farmers and crofters care about nature. We can see this in some of the things they do on their land, such as having pollinators around the edges of their field, using less chemicals to grow food and mowing and cutting their grass at the best time for wildlife.

We need farmers and crofters because they grow our food, and we can grow food in harmony with wildlife. Farm support payments - money the Government gives to help farmers - need to be spent in a better way so we get less nitrogen waste, and more amazing animals such as birds and butterflies.

