

1 Pesticides

Pesticides are manmade and include all herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, molluscicides and their related products.

Water quality standards

One water quality standard exists for most pesticides, irrespective of their differing toxicities. The standard, 0.1 µg/l (micrograms per litre, or parts per billion) is equivalent to approximately 100 grains of sugar in an Olympic size swimming pool. The government has also set advisory levels for some individual pesticides, based on World Health Organization safe levels.

Source of pesticides

Some of our water sources contain traces of the herbicides atrazine and simazine, which have been widely used as weed killers in the past, particularly on footpaths and railway tracks. Our river water source at Bough Beech reservoir also contains traces of agricultural pesticides and herbicides from farm use in the surrounding area.

Pesticide users are increasingly switching to more environmentally friendly and biodegradable products that will not find their way into water sources.

What we are doing to protect water resources

We have an on-going campaign to protect water resources by trying to minimise and control the use of pesticides at the point of use by engaging in positive dialogue with local users.

How we deal with pesticides

Where we find pesticides in our water sources we have installed granular activated carbon (GAC) filtration plant at the treatment works which reduces levels to well below guidelines.

Want more information?

Further information about pesticides can be found on the Drinking Water Inspectorate website at www.dwi.gov.uk, or on the Water UK website: www.water.org.uk.