

## **Response from Alister Andrews (Environmental Response Manager, Swale Borough Council) and the Environment Agency**

Local industries produce various materials that can be used for agricultural benefit. These include compost, sewage and paper products as well as livestock manures. The use of such materials as fertilisers is a recognised agricultural practice. As such, these materials are being recycled which reduces the need for alternative local waste disposal options such as landfill/ incineration, or the use of inorganic fertilisers. There are Regulations and Codes of Practice in place to ensure that these processes are conducted effectively, with a minimal impact upon the environment and residents.

Swale Borough Council and the Environment Agency work closely to ensure that industries, local farmers and contractors comply with the legislation and any best practice. We engage with the industries regularly to monitor control mechanisms, and discuss operational activities. Contractors and farmers will consider factors such as wind direction, potentially sensitive areas, and incorporation of the product prior to stockpiling or spreading. The nature of such materials, and the spreading methods means that there are likely to be some localised odours whilst the spreading is in place. However, swift incorporation after spreading should assist in controlling those odours (usually within 24 hours, although most farmers do this sooner).

The Environment Agency and Swale BC are available to receive any complaints from residents where they feel that the odours are unreasonable. Between us we will monitor the situation and take any appropriate action to control the situation. The contact numbers to report odour complaints are as follows: Swale BC 01795 417850. The Environment Agency 0800 807060

We have worked hard to ensure that farmers and contractors are aware of sensitive areas or businesses such as caravan parks that are reliant upon the same summer weeks as the farmers. Although the late summer months are incredibly busy for farmers, many farmers have become sensitive to the needs of neighbours and where possible they have taken measures to reduce impacts, such as spreading during the week rather than over the weekend, or vice versa for sensitive locations next to schools. As a minimum many farmers/ contractors have advised sensitive neighbouring industries when they will be spreading, what they are spreading and what they will be doing to reduce any impacts and ensure the odours dissipate as quickly as possible. This is usually appreciated by neighbours, and engaging with local farmers in a constructive manner is certainly an option for any concerned industries.