

## **First Milk Ltd: Nutrient management and off-set scheme – Innovative use of regulation**

First Milk is the UK's only major dairy company, 100% owned by British farmers.

Their creamery in Haverfordwest processes 250 million litres of milk to produce over 25,000 tonnes of cheese per annum. The milk is sourced from some 300 'local' farms.

First Milk is investing £5.6 million in a new effluent plant at their Haverfordwest Creamery. This is being built to industry leading standards and the discharge levels will be some of the best in Wales. The treated effluent will discharge, via dedicated pipeline, into the Western Cleddau which flows into the Cleddau Rivers SAC. The features of the SAC are dependant on good water quality and the biggest threat to good water quality is excessive nutrients.

Natural Resources Wales have assisted FM to develop an innovative approach in collaboration with its local dairy farmers to reduce nutrient run off from their farms and utilise an ecosystem approach, in order to offset any additional nutrient loadings to the Cleddau catchment.

The farmers who have been involved in this partnership, have had bespoke nutrient management plans created for them. The project group's forecasted reduction in nitrate, phosphate and sediment losses are on target to offset the entire outflow of the new effluent plant.

Other companies including the oil refineries and LNG gas terminals also wish to discharge into the Cleddau SAC or the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC are expressing interest in using the dairy as a farm intermediary as part of potential mitigation measures under the habitat regulations.

