

Farmer adoption of desirable nutrient management practices in the Republic of Ireland.

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The 1991 Nitrates Directive is one of the earliest pieces of EU legislation aimed at controlling and improving water quality. The efficacy of the Nitrates Directive measures in the Republic of Ireland is being evaluated holistically by an Agricultural Catchments Programme through intensive bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring in six representative small scale river catchments dominated by moderate to high intensity grassland and arable enterprises (Fealy et al., 2010).

This paper examines the attitudinal, subjective norm and farm structural variables that influence farmer undertake of desirable nutrient management practices at farm level using the social-psychology theory of reasoned action theoretical framework (Ajzen, 2005). Principal component analysis was used to extract a range of latent environmental, risk, productivity, health and governance attitudinal factors as well as subjective norm peer and information factors. These factors are used in a range of logistic and multivariate regression models in conjunction with farm structural variables to investigate the drivers behind the uptake of a range of nutrient management behaviours including organic manure allocation, nutrient management planning and chemical fertiliser application practices.

Findings from this study have policy design implications as results indicate that latent farmer attitudes, pressure to adhere to peer group social norms and certain farm structural variables are influential in the practice of desirable nutrient management behaviours.

References

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