

# MAgrSc Innovation Support Programme 2017-2019

## **Study title:**

‘Development of a KT tool to enhance awareness of best management practices for rush control and to reduce instances of pesticide residue in drinking water sources’

**Student:** Emma Swan

## **Supervisors:**

UCD – Dr. Helen Sheridan

Teagasc – Enda Geoghegan

**Office location:** Ballina, Mayo

# Study Objectives

- To investigate the current practices associated with rush control in areas where MCPA levels have breached the drinking water standard.
- To explore the awareness among the sample of farmers regarding the risks to drinking water contamination from current chemical control practices.

# Study Objectives

- To develop a suitable Knowledge Transfer action incorporating best management practices for rush control.
- To pilot the KT tool in a catchment where contamination of drinking water with MCPA is taking place.

# Study Methodology

1. Discussions with key-informants involved with water quality – Local County Council, Irish Water, Pesticides Controls Division DAFM.
2. Semi-Structured Interviews – Sample farmers in a catchment area.

Purposive sampling method



Snowball sampling method

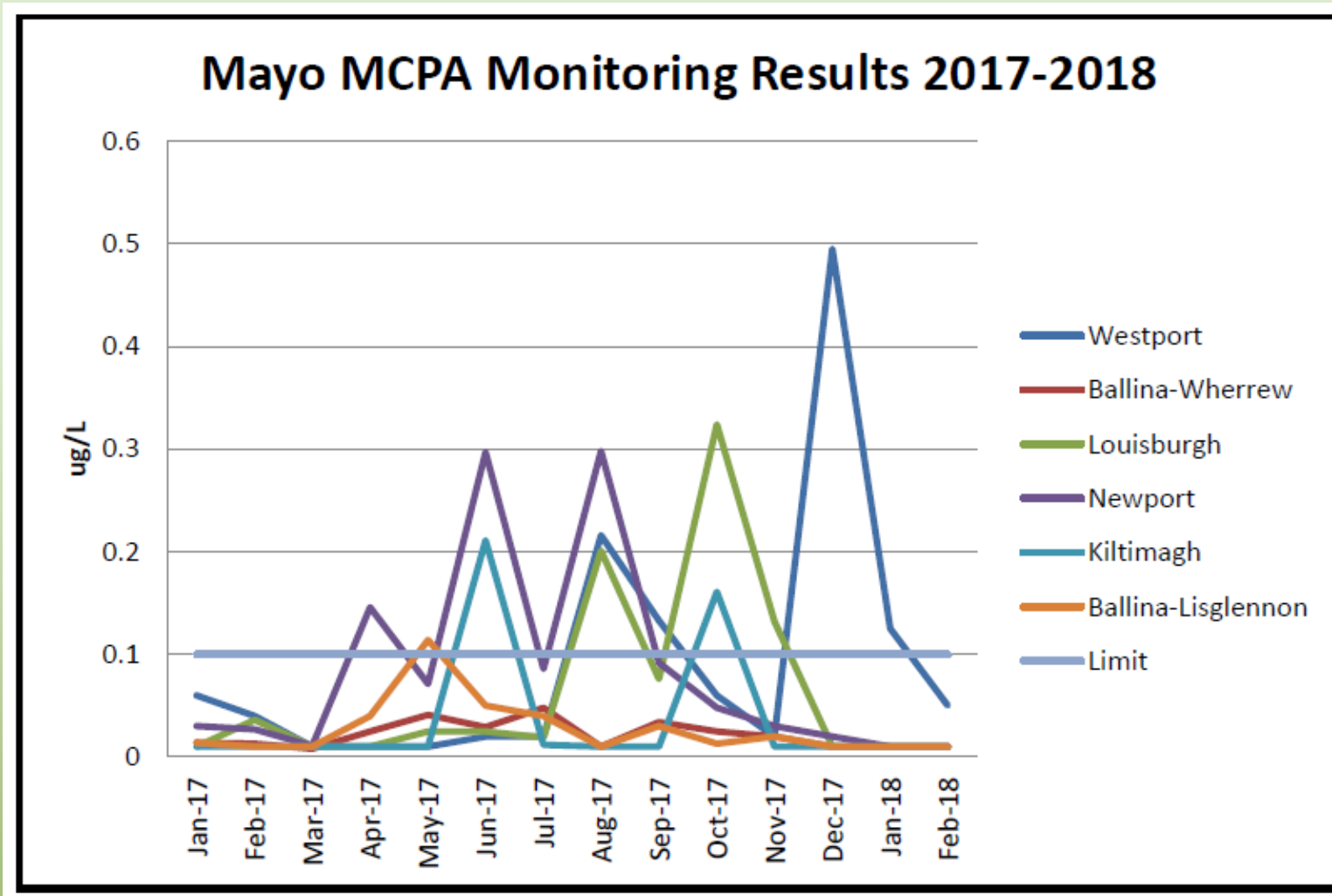
# Study Methodology

3. Focus Group with stakeholders involved with water quality water quality.
4. Develop and pilot a KT action with farmers in catchment area.

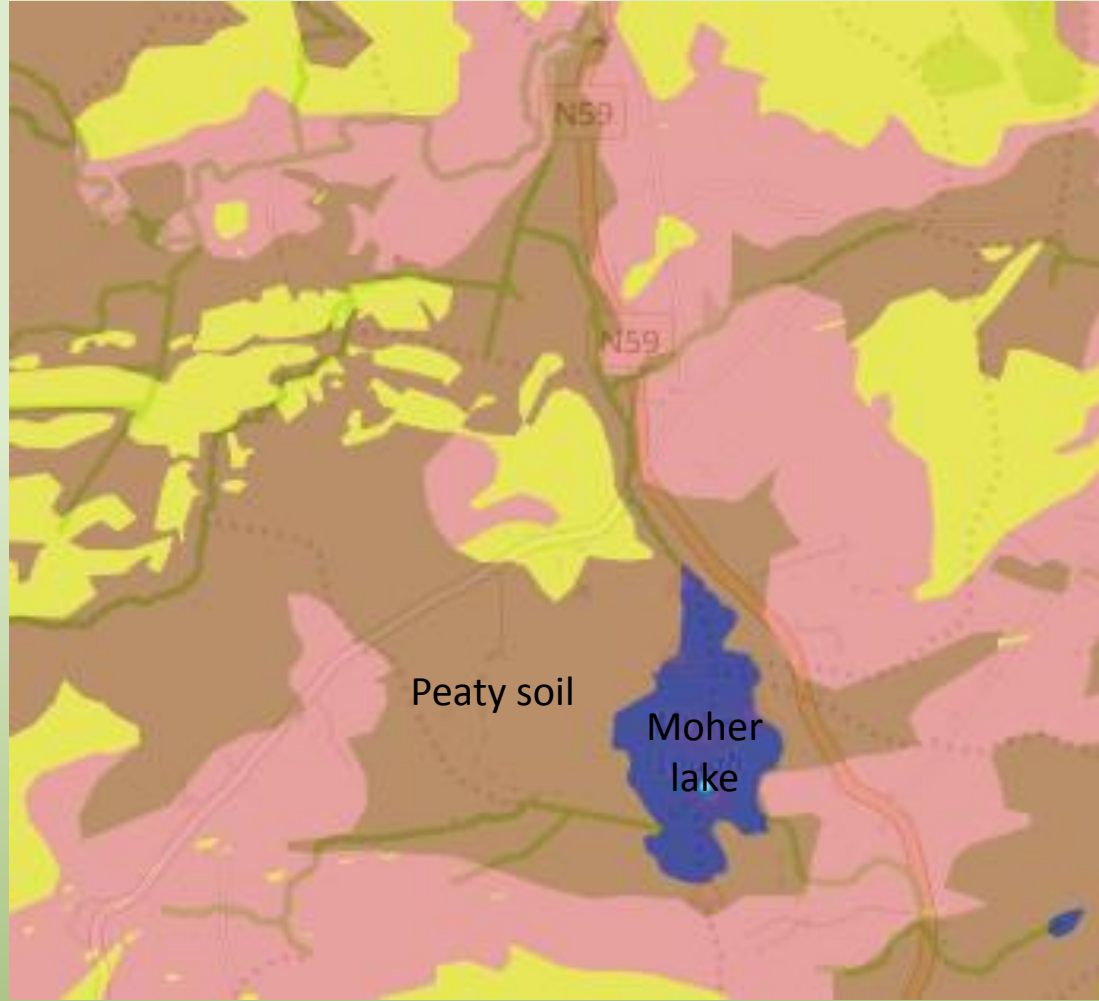
# Findings to Date – Key Informants

- Issue on communication of MCPA breaches to target audience
- Currently letters are sent out to landowners within 200 m of a drinking water abstraction point.
- No set buffer zone around tributaries leading into the catchment.
- Advisors unsure on what is the best KT tool to deliver to farmers.
- Leaflet given with BPS documents to farmers on best practice for using pesticides – not being looked at by farmers.

# Findings to Date



# Moher lake Catchment



Liscarney, Westport Co.  
Mayo

Three main tributaries from  
the Owenee river - drinking  
water river.

Moher lake currently being  
reviewed by Irish Water;  
monitoring stations in this  
lake.



# Findings to Date – Key Informants

‘Farmers know the right thing to do, what’s the difference between the farmer knowing what to do and getting them to do the right thing’

‘A co-ordinated approach is needed, the DAFM and other stakeholders believe that Knowledge Transfer will change practice’

‘Campaign needs to be at a local level’

# Progress to date (Since Jan 2018)

Submission of research proposal

Discussions with key informants to help develop interview guide and identify a suitable catchment for sample population.

Started identifying farmers in the catchment to interview

# Issues/Problems arising

Sourcing contacts of people to interview – Client and non-client farmers and contractors.

# Advisory/Education work (Jan – June 2018)

- Fodder crisis co-ordinator in Mayo region.
- Grass measuring and setting up farmers on Pasturebase.
- BPS
- Helping out with KT Discussion Groups.
- Attending training and events – education and advisory.
- EPM for beef and sheep KT clients.
- Testing grass samples.
- Education work
  - Skills assessments with Greencert students.
  - Assisting with Greencert classes in Ballina and Ballinrobe.

# Schedule of Activities (Work Plan)

