

# Burton Mail

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Published: 06/09/2007 00:00 - Updated: 04/02/2010 15:34

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## £400k bill to clear the air for business

A TORY election hopeful who slammed the Government's environmental record has had to shell out £400,000 to combat a stink emanating from his food company's premises.



AB Produce, which is run by Andrew Bridgen, the Conservative prospective

parliamentary candidate for North West Leicestershire, is having to invest the money to upgrade water lagoons and irrigation systems at its Measham base, to prevent 'unpleasant' smells deriving from waste water causing an environmental nuisance to neighbours.

The company processes and packs millions of tonnes of British farm potatoes and vegetables a year at its Westminster Industrial Estate headquarters.

In a press release, AB Produce claimed that the £400,000 investment is part of its "good neighbour" policy.

However, council bosses have confirmed that they and the Environment Agency had already been monitoring the site and the company's water systems, having received an undisclosed number of complaints from neighbours.

The company says it is working with the environmental health chiefs at North West Leicestershire District Council on the project and aims to have it completed by the end of the month.

Martin McQuaide, operations director at the firm, said: "Waste water from the factory is stored in the lagoons and, unfortunately, this can sometimes cause an unpleasant smell in surrounding areas.

"We would like to apologise to any residents that have been affected and assure them we are working hard and investing a lot of money to rectify the problem.

"We believe our new water treatment system will stop any future problems."

Lee Mansfield, commercial services manager at the council, said: "We've been in discussions with AB Produce to clean up its water system and will continue to monitor the progress of this work, along with the Environment Agency."

A spokesman for the authority said it had received a 'number of calls' from people wondering what the smell was, but could not confirm how many.

People living near to the factory say they have been left baffled by the smell for

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One resident of nearby Burton Road, who asked not to be named, said: "There has been a bit of a musty smell hovering over the area and it isn't very nice.

"There is a sewerage works nearby, so the first thought is always that it is coming from there.

"At least we now know what it is and everything can be sorted."

Last week, Mr Bridgen attacked the Labour Government over its 'green' record, particularly issues such as fly-tipping and a possible 'stealth tax' on bulky household waste.

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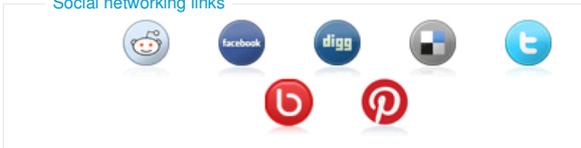
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