

[Guidance: Hot and dry weather conditions in England](#)

Updated: Information added about grazing field margins or using them for fodder.

The prolonged hot and dry weather conditions are causing difficulties for farmers in meeting the requirements of rural grant and payment schemes. The guidance above sets out how to deal with any difficulties arising from the unusual weather.

[Speech: Speech by UK ambassador during the Queen's Birthday Party in Mogadishu](#)

Welcome Queen's Birthday Party, our guest of honour H.E. Deputy Prime Minister, Mahdi Ahmed Khadar.

This may be a humble patch of astroturf on an airfield but it's greatly elevated by your presence. I know that one day, if your government's vision for reform succeeds, we'll be able to build a new Embassy downtown.

And H E Mohamed Waare, President of Hirshabelle state. I salute your efforts this year in responding to floods and to improve security.

Speaker of the Upper House and Somalia's Commander of Defence Forces

Federal Police Commissioner

And to all our distinguished Somali friends – delighted to see such a large number of Ministers, former ministers, Members of Parliament, Chairs of Parliamentary committees, officials, and members of civil society.

Some of you are British Dual nationals – so this is your Queen's birthday party as well as mine

And a warm welcome to our international friends and partners from Mogadishu and Nairobi.

General Jim AMISOM Force Commander – Sir, we salute your efforts and the sacrifices made by AMISOM troops over many years to create the space for the promising political developments we are seeing today.

Phil Evans from the UK's Department of Intl Development and his colleagues from Nairobi

Rosie Tapper from British Office in Hargeisa

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Lestrangle and British Military

My own team, who, led by my Deputy Mary Shockledge, brilliant job of making our embassy look so good and logistics. Round of applause please for them and our wonderful caterers.

To our Somali guests I have a few things I want to say.

First, you are – together – the movers and shakers who will shape the future of this country

The people who will – together – ensure that Somalia's future is not defined and limited by its recent past

Who will ensure that unity, peace and prosperity triumph over conflict. That the cowardly attacks we saw earlier this month including on the Ministry of Internal Security are ended once and for all.

That governance and rule of law can be rolled out across the country

That trust in Somali security forces is rebuilt

You – and the choices you make – will matter, not just to yourselves but to future generations

A lot of pressure? Well, perhaps. But you are not alone and there's no better time to be shouldering these challenges of remaking a nation.

In the partnership between the President and the PM you have the guiding light of a stable federal leadership.

In fledgling new federal member states, like Hirshabelle, you have the beginnings of a new, cooperative way of organising the country and sharing power, resources and responsibilities.

In the UK you have a steadfast supporter.

A supporter who's here not to pursue narrow self-interests – but something bigger and of mutual benefit.

A stable, sustainable Somalia. A Somalia at peace with itself and at peace with the region.

What does UK support mean in practice?

Let's start with money. The present year we are spending £323 million of UK taxpayers' money in total.

On development

On security sector reform

On humanitarian relief

UK money not always visible, because it is channelled through multilateral agencies, especially in case of humanitarian relief. But it is there, underpinning the international community's ability to stand by Somalia at its times of greatest need.

When the floods came, it was medical supplies, food and tents paid for by the UK that helped provide much of the initial relief.

And when you hear about EU funding, please remember the UK's contribution to this. 15% of all EU development and humanitarian funding comes from the UK.

You may have heard we're leaving the EU. But UK money will continue to flow through the EU and into Somalia for years to come.

Last week at the Somalia Partnership Forum in Brussels it was confirmed that the EU will be providing Somalia with euros100million of direct budgetary support. Euros 15 million of this amount will come from the UK's contribution to EU development funds.

Good news – and a vote of confidence in the Prime Minister, his economic reform plans and the cooperation now gaining momentum between the Federal Gov and the Federal Member States.

And later this year we hope to see another major vote of confidence in Somalia when the World Bank approves a \$140 million grant to Somalia for economic reforms and infrastructure.

Again, the UK is a major contributor to the World Bank. \$18 million of that grant will come from the UK's contribution to World Bank funds

But money isn't all we offer.

We also use our voice and convening power to support Somalia – and to rally others to support you.

At a time of so many competing needs around the world, that's important.

It's why last year's London Somalia Conference was a milestone. Generating a new phase of momentum for a new phase of Somalia's long march back from collapse.

Out there in the world's international fora, Somalia has no stronger friend than the UK. Take the issue of debt relief. Somalia owes its creditors more than \$5bn and cannot access concessional financing in the meantime from international financial institutions.

That's a major obstacle. The UK is helping Somalia and the international community work together to find a way forward on debt relief. This could be a game-changer for Somalia.

Somalia will need to continue to play its part. The Federal Government is to be congratulated for successfully completing a second IMF reform programme. The next IMF programme will be challenging. It will require painful changes. But it is critical to Somalia's future. We call on everyone here to pull together to support the Federal Gov in delivering it.

Expertise is something else we provide, where Somalia needs it and we have it to give, including advisers who can work closely with ministers and ministries to help them translate their visions and policies into plans and actions.

And supporting civil society and developing Somali talent. We do that too. Many Somalis have won Chevening Scholarships in recent years to study in the UK. Some of those scholars are now in government and here today.

And this year I was particularly pleased we were successful in winning places for on the British Government's prestigious and highly competitive International Leaders' Programme for two exceptionally talented young Somalis

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Ilwad Elman, a champion of human rights and the cause of women and girls and Adam Haji Ali, Chief Justice of Somaliland.

I congratulate them both and wish them well on their forthcoming leadership programmes in the UK.

So, we support Somalia with our wallet

We support it with our voice

With our networks

And with opportunities for future leaders

And throughout all of this we are determined to do so in a way that's inclusive of all Somalis

Prime Minister is championing here an inclusive politics agenda. We fully support that.

Agreements on the constitution, on the one person one vote elections that will be held on 2020, on how resources and responsibilities are to be shared between centre and the regions.

I'd hope we all agree that such fundamental advances must be made inclusively if they're to bring stability to Somalia and a firm foundation to build on.

Inclusion more widely is something the UK is determined to champion — at home, in Somalia and across the world.

This week in London we hosted the world's first ever Global Disability Summit, with more than 700 delegates from across the world gathering to

commit to making the world a better, more inclusive place for people with disabilities.

I'm pleased to say Somalia was well represented – by a delegation led by Deqa Yasin, Minister of Women and Human Rights.

Global estimates put rates of disability between 10-16%. In Somalia the figures are likely to be higher still, due to the effects of malnutrition and prolonged conflict. Over 25% of the Somali households we reach with humanitarian cash transfers have a person with disability living among them.

So let's work together to end the social stigma against people with disabilities here in Somalia and promote disability inclusion.

Be assured we'll be practising what we preach. My colleagues in DFID Somalia are looking across our support programmes to identify opportunities to advance disability inclusion.

For example, we're exploring how to ensure Somali farmers affected by disabilities can benefit from a programme to promote inclusive markets in Somalia.

And we're looking too at the support we're providing for girls' education in Somalia.

The UK is already providing 53,000 marginalised girls in Somaliland, Puntland, Galmadug and Benadir with access to education. That in itself is a major contribution to inclusion. The next phase is likely to see over 200 schools supported on disability inclusion. Over 2,800 girls with disabilities are likely to benefit.

So, inclusion is something the UK is committed to developing as a shared value with Somalia. We want this not just because inclusion is right, but because it is essential. With so many displaced people and marginalised groups, Somalia's only path forward is to put inclusion front and centre of everything it does.

Two other values are fundamental to our partnership. Accountability and transparency.

I promise you all today that in all of the support we provide to Somalia, we'll continue to be both accountable and transparent.

Continue to work in partnership and friendship with other countries, through the aid coordination mechanism and the Comprehensive Approach to Security mechanism set up in London.

The challenges Somalia faces – and the opportunities it must now seize – are too complex and big for any one donor. We must all work together. Putting Somalia ahead of any national interests as we do so.

Let me end by thanking all of you again for coming here today. You'll have noticed the bunting fluttering in the wind. I have news for you. These are

the winds of change. Moving across the Horn from Ethiopia and Eritrea, where historic, bold steps are being taken to end years of confrontation and conflict and open up new possibilities for economic integration in this part of Africa.

I say to our Somali friends – as others said in Brussels last week – take advantage of those winds of change. Get your own sails out. Move faster on reconciliation and political reforms. Above all, be prepared to compromise for the greater good, as PM Abiy and President Isaias are doing. Things are moving forward in the Horn – don't get left behind.

I'd now like to propose a toast as is the custom to H.E. President Mohamed Abdulahi Mohamed Farmajo of Somalia.

[Press release: Highways England helps to solve cuddly conundrum](#)

A driver called Cambridgeshire Police to report 20 swines sauntering on the motorway between Huntingdon and Peterborough just before 7am on Friday 13 July. However the traffic officers were in for a shock when they arrived as found the drivers' description had been a bit of the sty.

Officers Graeme Laws and Ian White could find no trace of the pigs at junction 15, and then when searching a junction further south found out that the reported trotters were in fact a team of teddies as the "pigs" turned out to be cuddly cows which had been blown around by the wind.

Highways England traffic officers are trained to quickly clear many types of motorway disruption, including animals loose on the network. Thankfully the fluffy Friesians were significantly easier to clear up than the real life pigs they were expecting to find.

Some of the cuddly cow toys picked up by the Traffic Officers

Ian, who was one of the traffic officers to respond to the call, said:

We were looking for these pigs, worried about the disruption they could cause if there were live animals on the motorway, so were quite surprised to find the hoof of the matter was that they were actually teddy cows

The wind had been causing them to moove around in the road, making drivers think they were live animals wandering through the traffic. There were a lot of them, and as we were gathering them we kept spotting anudder one which we needed to grab.

Eventually we managed to manoeuvre them off the road so that drivers could continue their journeys uninterrupted.

The officers milked the situation by bringing the cuddly cattle culprits back to their depot at Whittlesford so others could see what had caused the nuisance.

They are now looking to reunite the cows with their owner, or they will look to donate them to a children's charity.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: DASA funded innovation set to make MOD significant aircraft and fleet support savings](#)

The two-stage recurrent neural network is being developed by a company called decisionLab and is being sponsored by Joint Forces Command and funded by the MOD's Defence Innovation Fund through the Defence and Security Accelerator's (DASA) fast track 'Revolutionise the human information relationship for Defence' competition.

Originally developed for the civilian aviation market, this research funding has enabled the product to be redeveloped to be suitable for the military market.

It's hoped it will in time provide an insight into the future, allowing maintenance engineers to view the status of their systems and the predicted health of that system a day, week, or even a fortnight in advance.

Gripped by this opportunity, the Royal Navy has invested £150,000 in the development of this neural network for exploitation on-board a Type 45 destroyer, and pull through onto the Type 26 – if proven successful.

A Royal Navy ship is incredibly complex, and the Type 45's systems can record 10 million data points a day. With such a huge and complex dataset, the type

of machine learning offered by the neural network will likely have a significant impact on maintenance schedules and support, improving capability, saving money and delivering efficiency.

At present, decisionLab is training their neural network on 1.8 billion lines of Type 45 Platform Management System data. Each day the system gets smarter and more capable, and under current development plans this system will be installed onboard HMS DIAMOND for a trial in the summer. It will allow the user to validate system assumptions and help contextualise events to further train and improve the model.

Lee Packer, Innovation Programme Manager for the Royal Navy said –

“The Defence and Security Accelerator competitions provide the Royal Navy with a unique opportunity to both engage with a broad spectrum of small to medium sized enterprises whom are often new to the Defence market, and to grip technological opportunities from disruptive markets and apply them to Defence problems. This rapid development process, with collaboration at its core, will provide battle-winning capabilities to the hands of the user.”

Joe Hemming, Exploitation Lead for DASA said –

“This is a clear demonstration of the cultural shift across all organisations to focus on capability integration and exploitation as well as technology development. This project is a great example of collaboration between DASA, the competition sponsors (Joint Force Command) and the front lines working hard to turn technology into true capability.

The Navy’s commitment to integrate the DecisionLabs project onto existing architecture will help provide an accurate value proposition for future procurement across the maritime capability and possibly beyond.”

The ‘Revolutionise the human information relationship for Defence’ competition was the first competition launched since the start of DASA in December 2016. 34 projects were awarded funding with decisionLab being 1 of 7 to receive phase 1 fast track funding under Challenge 2. In October 2017, DecisionLab was one of two companies to successfully progress to Phase 2 to continue their development of their neural network system.

[Press release: International trade minister visits Panama, Costa Rica and the USA](#)

International Trade Minister, George Hollingbery, travels to Panama and Costa Rica this week (Monday 30 July to Wednesday 1 August), where he will look to

build on progress made in securing continuity in the UK's existing trade agreement with the Central American nations. Minister Hollingbery will also announce that the UK government has doubled the support available from [UK Export Finance](#) for UK-Costa Rica trade to up to £1.25 billion.

The minister will then travel to the US states of Georgia and Indiana (Wednesday 1 August to Friday 3 August) where he will build on the UK's already strong trade and investment relationship, updating businesses on the UK's plans for an independent trade policy as the 2 countries look ahead to a future free trade agreement.

Central America

While in Panama, the International Trade Minister will meet with the Panamanian Minister of Trade and Investment, Augusto Arosemena, where the 2 will reconfirm their commitment to continuity of the EU-Central America Association Agreement (EUCAAA). The meeting follows the successful visit of Panamanian President Varela to the UK in May this year, where he expressed his country's firm support for the swift ratification of a continuity agreement.

The minister will also visit the iconic Panama Canal to explore opportunities around the canal's diversification strategy, followed by a discussion with the Minister for Finance, Eyda Varela de Chinchilla and financial services regulators to learn how Panama is advancing its financial services sector.

Going on to Costa Rica, the Minister will meet with Vice-President and Foreign Affairs Minister, Epsy Campbell and Foreign Trade Minister, Dyalá Jiménez to make clear the UK's commitment to continued trade with Costa Rica and to discuss the smooth transition of the EU-CAAA as the UK leaves the EU.

The 2 Central American nations are crucial to the UK's ties with the region. Panama, the fastest growing country in Latin America, had total trade with the UK worth £242 million in 2016. Meanwhile, trade between the UK and Costa Rica was worth £311 million in 2017, a 13% increase on the previous year.

The USA

Minister Hollingbery's visit to the USA follows the recent launch by International Trade Secretary, Liam Fox, of the first [public consultations on a future free trade agreement](#) with the UK's largest single trading partner.

The minister will travel to Atlanta, Georgia and Indianapolis, Indiana where he will update key local businesses and decision makers on the UK's independent trade policy. In Atlanta, these will include Coca-Cola and UPS as well as leading fintech firms, while in Indianapolis key meetings include Rolls-Royce, Congressman André Carson and Governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb.

At the heart of these meetings will be the UK's unwavering commitment to a mutually beneficial trade agreement with the US post-Brexit, ensuring free and fair trade continues to flow between our 2 nations.

The UK already has a large investment presence in the US. For example, online clothing retailer ASOS plans a brand new e-commerce fulfilment centre in Georgia, a state where the UK is currently the seventh largest trading partner. The UK also supports around 10,000 jobs in Indiana, and is the second largest foreign investor in the state.

Trade between the UK and USA was worth £182.7 billion in Q1 this year, up 4% on the same quarter in 2017. UK exports to the US were up 4.9% to £113 billion in the same year.

On a recent visit to the UK, US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Theresa May made clear their ongoing commitment to a close and prosperous future trading relationship.

International Trade Minister George Hollingbery said:

I'm delighted to be travelling across the US and Central America this week, building on our already strong trade and investment relationship with the US as well as ensuring continuity in our existing agreement with the Central America Association.

Our trade with Panama was worth £242 million in 2016, and with Costa Rica, £311 million last year. Meanwhile, trade with the USA was worth more than £182 billion at the start of this year.

As the UK leaves the EU, we have the perfect opportunity to work more closely with partners across the globe and I look forward to meeting with counterparts in Panama, Costa Rica and the United States to set out what that bright trading future might look like.