

News story: National Drought Group – Chairman's Statement – August

The National Drought Group (NDG), chaired by the Environment Agency's Chief Executive, brings together government departments, water companies, environmental groups and others to coordinate action to maintain water supplies and manage the other risks associated with drought. The NDG convened on Wednesday 29 August to assess the present situation and coordinate plans for the weeks ahead.

The present situation and the prospects

Rainfall across England over three months from May to July was 54% of the long-term average (LTA). Farmers, the environment and water companies faced considerable pressures caused by the rapid deterioration in water resources.

At the end of July, a band of wet weather brought some respite as it moved across parts of the country. United Utilities called off a proposed hosepipe ban in early August but continued with applications for 4 drought permits, should they be needed later in the year. These have been approved by the Environment Agency.

August has been unsettled with dry periods interrupted by wet weather. This has helped the situation.

The Met Office's 3 month outlook for September to November forecasts that above average temperatures and slightly lower than average rainfall are likely.

As we move into autumn the Environment Agency, the water companies and the other members of the NDG will continue to work closely together to reduce the risk of water restrictions and balance the needs of the public, businesses and the environment.

Action we are taking

Water Companies

Water companies have taken and will continue to take a range of actions to maintain water supplies for customers, including:

- Operational interventions such as installing new pumping stations, reconfiguring networks to reduce reliance on specific water treatment works, and accelerating work to bring sites back into operation.
- Tackling leakage by providing extra funding and resource to fix leaks, alongside use of technology such as satellite imaging and drones to find leaks.

- Implementing contingency drought plans as appropriate.
- Promoting water efficiency messages to customers through increased media activity, roadshows and community engagement.

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency has:

- Responded to a 330% increase in dry-weather related incidents compared with this time last year.
- [Introduced flexible abstraction for farmers](#) in emergency cases in order to safeguard food production and animal welfare, where it is satisfied there will be no adverse effects on the environment.
- Allowed farmers to trade water allowances – as set out in their abstraction licence – on a short-term basis, without the need to change their licences.
- Granted United Utilities 4 drought permits at locations in Cumbria, to enable them to be deployed quickly should they be needed.
- Used our powers to protect the environment by applying for a drought order. This is the first time we have used these powers due to the extraordinary dry weather this summer.

Other partners

Defra, the National Farmers' Union, Canal & River Trust, the Angling Trust and other NDG members are working actively to manage down the risks and support the needs of water users and the environment.

Advice to the public

Although we have received some rainfall during August, the overall outlook for the next 3 months remains drier than average. We encourage everyone to follow the advice of their water company and use water wisely. This will help protect the environment and the economy, and reduce the risk of further water restrictions.

Next NDG meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 20 September where we will focus on preparing for next summer as the drought may continue through the winter.

World news story: Why would I like to meet my neighbours in the Falkland Islands?

This regional competition offers winners the chance to visit the Falklands for a week with all the costs covered. To participate, contestants should send a one minute video answering the question: "Why would I like to meet my neighbours from the Falkland Islands?" in English.

Winners will be staying with a local family, to experience first-hand the life in the Falkland Islands.

The ideal winner should be active in social media and willing to share his/her experience about the Falkland Islands through these channels.

The contest is meant to promote the cultural exchange between the Falklands and the region, and to spread the knowledge about the Falkland Island and its people.

Find out more about the competition here:

[Regional Student Competition regulations](#)

(PDF, 108KB, 4 pages)

Notice: NR9 5LB, Green Label Poultry Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits and surrenders that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Green Label Poultry Limited
 - Installation name: Weston Poultry Unit
 - Permit number: EPR/HP3931YF/S002 and EPR/HP3931YF/V003
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News story: State of the art greenhouse unveiled in Cheshire

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey has today opened a £5 million cutting-edge glasshouse at Delamere Nursery in Cheshire.

The state-of-the-art growing facility covers a hectare and is set to boost timber production, with its tight environmental controls creating better growing conditions for the four million seedlings it will house.

It boasts computerised environmental controls, rainwater harvesting from the glasshouse roof into a 15 million-litre capacity lagoon and a boom irrigation system, which allows accurate watering and can apply fertiliser and chemicals.

The glasshouse will play a vital role in the maintenance and expansion of the Public Forest Estate throughout the UK, with the seedlings helping timber production and improving biosecurity.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said at the opening:

It is wonderful to be here to officially open this impressive new structure which will help ensure our forests are stocked with trees in a more sustainable and productive fashion.

The forests and woodlands that these trees will go on to be a part of are vital for providing timber, protecting wildlife, and helping us improve our environment for the next generation.

Simon Hodgson, Forestry Commission England, Chief Executive said:

I'm delighted our minister, Thérèse Coffey, officially opened our new forestry glasshouse today. This significant investment demonstrates how committed we are to the nation's forests.

The largest glasshouse dedicated to forest trees in the UK means that Forestry Commission England will be able to plant around five million of the very best trees every year in the nation's forests for timber, recreation and wildlife as well as supplying trees to Scotland and Wales. We are increasing the diversity of tree species we plant so the nation's forests are resilient; protecting them from pests, diseases and the effects of a changing climate.

I would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work in making this project a reality.

The glasshouse was completed in December 2017, with the first seeds sown in March 2018. It is anticipated that it will be fully stocked with a mix of species and ages by 2020.

Notice: WF11 8SQ, Ferrybridge MFE 2 Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish surrenders that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the partial surrender notice, decision document and site condition report evaluation template for:

- Operator name: Ferrybridge MFE 2 Limited
- Installation name: Ferrybridge Multifuel 2
- Permit number: EPR/XP3833DK/S002