

# Response form

## Consultation on 'Drought: how it is managed in England' The updated national drought response framework Your details

When we come to analyse the results of this consultation, it would help us to know if you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or group.

### Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Individual response
- ☒ Responding on behalf of an organisation or group (for example, charity, not-for-profit organisation, trading body)
- ☐ Other

**If you're responding on behalf of an organisation or group, what is the name of the organisation or group?**

Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board

**If you selected other, please explain your area of interest.**

### What sector do you represent?

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Government and regulators
- ☐ Environment
- ☒ Agriculture and horticulture
- ☐ Public water supply
- ☐ Navigation
- ☐ Recreation
- ☐ Energy
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Industry
- ☐ Other

**If you selected 'other', please tell us your sector:**

## Privacy

The Environment Agency would like to keep you informed about the outcomes of the consultation. If you would like to receive an email acknowledging your response and telling you when we have published the consultation response document, please provide your email address with your response.

### What is your email address?

By giving us your email address, you consent for us to email you about the consultation. We will keep your details until we have notified you of the response document publication.

We will not share your details with any other third party without your clear and full consent, unless required to do so by law.

You can withdraw your consent to receive these emails at any time by contacting us at [drought.national@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:drought.national@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Email:

## Can we publish your response?

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we may be required to publish your response to this consultation, but will not include any personal information. If you have requested your response to be kept confidential, we may still be required to provide a summary of it.

### Can we publish your response? This is a required question.

Please select one of the following:

- ☒ Yes  
☐ No

**If you answered no, please tell us why as we will need to understand this when responding to any freedom of information requests:**

The Environment Agency is the data controller for the personal data you provide. For more information on how we deal with your personal data please see our [personal information charter](#) on GOV.UK.

You can email our Data Protection team: [dataprotection@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@environment-agency.gov.uk).

## How we will use your information

The Environment Agency will make all responses publicly available after the consultation, unless you have specifically requested that we keep your response confidential.

We will not publish names of individuals who respond.

Throughout the consultation we will make all comments (excluding personal information) publicly available on our Citizen Space website. This includes comments received online, by email, post and by fax, unless you have specifically requested that we keep your response confidential. We will not publish names of individuals or personal data. But we will publish the name of the organisation for those responses made on behalf of organisations.

We will not respond individually to responses. After the consultation has closed, we will publish a consultation response document on GOV.UK in which we will publish the name of the organisation for those responses made on behalf of organisations and contact you to let you know when this is available.

## Returning your response

Your response to this consultation needs to be returned by **10 January 2025**.

We would like you to use this form if you are not submitting your response online. You can return it by email to [drought.national@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:drought.national@environment-agency.gov.uk). Please use this email address if you have any questions regarding this consultation.

## We welcome your views on the document 'Drought – How we manage it in England'

**Question 1. Before reading 'Drought: how it is managed in England', how familiar would you say you were about drought management in England?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☒ Moderately
- ☐ Very

**Question 2. Refer to Section 1: ‘Drought in England: an overview’. Does this section clearly describe drought in England?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Why do you think this?**

Clear definitions with detailed examples of past droughts in England. Could be strengthened by applying the afore defined types of droughts to the text describing notable droughts in the last 50 years.

Water supply for livestock drinking water should be recognised as essential. In the ‘Agricultural drought’ definition, suggest adding “water for livestock” following “*farming practices such as irrigation*”.

**Question 3. Refer to Section 2: ‘Drought impacts and mitigations’. Does this section clearly describe the impacts of drought and some of the actions other sectors take to mitigate these impacts?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Why do you think this?**

2.2 Suggest adding the wording in bold: “*A prolonged period of low rainfall can severely affect agriculture through crop failure, reduced crop **and grass** yield (quantity or quality), disrupted access to drinking water for livestock and increased fire risk (particularly in upland or heath areas).*”

2.2 In 4th bullet point, suggest adding, “*Continue testing of borehole water quality*”.

2.2, top of page 17, the link to the Key Actions for Farmers relating to Water Management is out of date. It should be an important part of the EA’s drought strategy to keep advice and guidance up to date.

**Question 4. Refer to Section 3: 'Planning, management and response'. Does this section clearly describe the responsibilities of the Environment Agency, government, public bodies, regulators, water companies and local responders in drought planning, management and response?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Why do you think this?**

Agree, however, AHDB is worth including in this section. Though AHDB sits outside these bodies, it plays an important role in communicating and providing timely guidance of agricultural topics, including drought to farmer levy payers.

**Question 5. Refer to Section 4: 'Our drought teams and actions'. Does this section clearly describe the Environment Agency's drought stages, response arrangements, drought actions and triggers, monitoring and data?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Why do you think this?**

Triggers could be linked to the types of droughts for a more comprehensive overview.

Suggest adding some clarity around the areas in which EA responds e.g. catchment.

Additional detail could be added to section 4.9.3 on microbial indicators which are important markers for water quality, e.g. *E. coli*.

**Question 6. Considering your responses to questions 4 and 5, how well do you understand the scope and purpose of Environment Agency area drought plans described in sections 3 and 4?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☒ Moderately
- ☐ Very

**Why do you think this?**

**Question 7. Refer to Section 5: 'How we communicate with others'. Does this section clearly describe the Environment Agency's role in drought communications and the tools we use to do so?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Why do you think this?**

Section 5 lays out the Environment Agency's role in drought communications and the tools used to do so. Further detail regarding the methods through which EA plans to communicate could be provided, e.g. text alert, emails, etc. It is important that this is clearly established as broadband and phone connectivity in rural areas is not always reliable. Despite this, the EA needs to ensure their methods of communication are efficient and successful.

5.2.5 Suggest adding in LinkedIn as another social media route to reach stakeholders.

**Question 8. Refer to Section 6: 'Recovery'. Does this section clearly describe the Environment Agency's role in recovery and how we seek to learn from each drought?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Why do you think this?**

On page 42 it is said that *"data will be assessed to determine long-term effects."* Will this assessment be available for public use for knowledge exchange to land managers, as it may enable an improvement in informed decision making and drought recovery.

**Question 9. After reading 'Drought: how it is managed in England' and answering these questions, are there any inaccuracies you would like to highlight or any other suggested improvements you would like to make?**

There is collaboration with NRW mentioned. Any collaboration with SEPA even if limited would be of interest as well.

Section 4.8.4. Hands off flow and Section 57 abstraction restrictions. There should be consideration for agriculture and how best to prioritise water usage across farm types and farm location so to minimise loss of production.

Agricultural and food processing requirements are important for public health. The 'cost: benefit' analysis for other agricultural and horticulture needs should take priority over environmental concerns to maintain national food security.

**Question 10. After reading ‘Drought: how it is managed in England’ and answering these questions, do you have a better understanding of how droughts are managed in England, the respective roles of the organisations and groups involved, and how they work together to minimise the impacts of drought?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Moderately
- ☒ Much better

**Why do you think this?**

**Question 11. Which Environment Agency operational areas are you most interested in with respect to drought?**

A map of the Environment Agency’s operational areas can be found at: [Environment Agency area and region operational locations](#).

Select any that apply:

- ☒ All (National)
- ☐ North East
- ☐ Cumbria and Lancashire
- ☐ Yorkshire
- ☐ Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire
- ☐ Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire
- ☐ East Midlands
- ☐ West Midlands
- ☐ Wessex
- ☐ Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
- ☐ Solent and South Downs
- ☐ London
- ☐ East Anglia
- ☐ Thames
- ☐ Kent, South London and East Sussex
- ☐ Hertfordshire and North London



☐ Prefer not to answer

**Question 12. What are your thoughts about how drought has been managed in your local area?**

AHDB's agriculture remit is cross sector in all of England with no localised focus.

**Question 13. Do you have any specific concerns about local environmental drought impacts that you would like us to know about?**

AHDB's agriculture remit is cross sector in all of England with no localised focus.

**Question 14. How engaged did you feel with the Environment Agency and other stakeholders during the last period of prolonged dry weather or drought?**

Please choose one of the following:

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☒ Moderately
- ☐ Very
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Why do you think this?**

**Question 15. How do you think the Environment Agency and others can better work together during prolonged dry weather and drought?**

Clear, concise, and open communication with all stakeholders. Be mindful to ensure that what is communicated is done in a manner suitable for the intended audience.

Working groups should be as local as possible to ensure that local knowledge of the drought situation is taken into consideration when decision making is involved.

Encourage collaboration across stakeholders to prioritise actions that enable farmers to also adapt to the changing climate, in addition to managing its impacts when they arise.

Overall, a more comprehensive programme of monitoring for the impact on water quality should be pursued. Improved data gathering and modelling will provide better forecasting of both the likelihood and severity of drought and the recovery phase.