

What are Water Abstractor Groups (WAGs)?

- Water Abstractor Groups bring farmers and growers **together** to defend their right to irrigate, build a **communication** channel between **themselves** and the **regulator**, foster commitment among members to use water wisely, and provide a **strong voice** to influence future water **policy**.
- WAGs feed into the work of the Water for Food Group (WFG)



Examples (with approx. membership)

- [BAWAG](#) - Broadlands - Norfolk ~ 170
- ESWAG - East Suffolk ~100
- Fenland Agricultural WG - Lincolnshire
- LAG - Lark ~ 50
- LWT - Lincoln Water Transfer ~ 19
- Lincoln Heath WAG
- Water Transfer Limited (Witham IV - north of Boston)
- NNAAG - north Northumberland ~25
- Notts TLAG - ~6
- TAG - Thet Norfolk
- Wissey Abstractors group - Norfolk ~20
- HWAG - Hereford ~30

[Forming a Water Abstractors Group \(ukia.org\)](http://ukia.org)



Why are WAGs important? : Improving water supply resilience for agriculture

- Around half (48%) of the abstraction licences for irrigation have a relatively good level of resilience.
- The other half (52%) are susceptible to hands-off flow conditions in periods of dry weather, or vulnerable to restrictions during drought.
- Many reasons for their establishment
 - Drought response
 - A louder voice
 - Stronger engagement locally
 - Identifying joint solutions
 - Water sharing
 - Water rights trading
 - Local evidence base
- A place in the water resources planning process, but water resources planning not reliant on their existence



Forming a Water Abstractors Group (WAG) can reduce emerging risks to your agri-business.



Would you benefit from a WAG?

Q1. Is irrigation crucial to your business?

Y [1] N [0]

Q2. Do you think that you are able to adequately defend your irrigation water rights individually?

Y [0] N [1]

Q3. Do you think existing organisations you are a member of are able to defend irrigation water rights in your catchment?

Y [0] N [1]

Q5. Are you aware of the main water policy issues that will impact on your business (e.g. CAMS, Water Act 2003, EA requirements for licence renewal, Habitats Directive)?

Y [0] N [1]

Q6. Do abstractors in your catchment have a constructive working relationship with the Environment Agency and other organisations?

Y [0] N [1]

Q7. Do you think the views of irrigation abstractors are sufficiently considered in water policy-making?

Y [0] N [1]

Q8. Do you think that the importance of irrigated agriculture to the rural economy is sufficiently understood by policy-makers and regulators?

Y [0] N [1]

Q9. Would farming in your area benefit if abstraction licences were more flexible and abstractors were more directly involved in water management?

Y [1] N [0]

Q10. Have you had recent access to training to improve your irrigation efficiency?

Y [0] N [1]

Q11. Do you think that cooperation between abstractors would increase the chances of securing grant funding for irrigation projects?

Y [1] N [0]

Q12. Do you think that abstractors need to collaborate and work together more to meet the future challenges of water scarcity?

Y [1] N [0]



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Water for Food Group

Water for Food Group - UKIA Irrigation

WFF vision statement

What is our purpose

Vision Statement

A fair share of sustainably abstracted water for the agrifood sector

Mission Statement

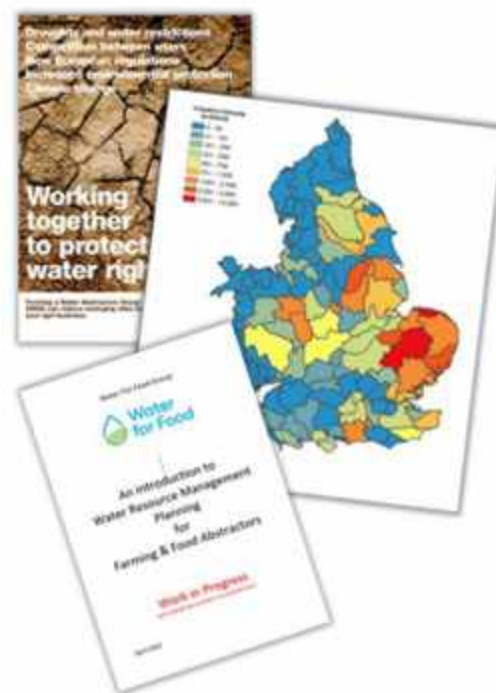
To act as lead point of contact for **technical matters** relating to water resource planning & food production

Goals

- With **one voice**, represent the needs of agrifood abstractors and water users
- Develop a network of **Water Abstractor Groups (WAGs)**
- **Build capacity** within WAGs for water resource management planning
- Enable WAGs to be effective at **catchment, regional & national level**

Values

Industry focussed, open & transparent and action orientated



Register your interest

If you would like to form or join a water abstractors group please register your interest at www.ukia.org or contact:



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Improving water supply resilience for agriculture

- Local resource option studies (identify, screen and prioritise options)
 - Applications will be open to groups of farmers

Example LROs:

- farm storage reservoirs (new, resizing and/or change to multi-season operation)
- water rights trading
- demand management, leakage control and irrigation scheduling
- water sharing
- rainwater harvesting
- improve connectivity of existing sources
- treated effluent reuse
- drainage water use
- aquifer storage and recovery
- wetlands for high flow attenuation
- conjunctive use schemes, i.e. mix of groundwater and surface water



Sign up here to hear when the LRO screening fund



We will use this information to send you an email notice when the LRO screening study application process is launched. Data will be used for this purpose only. It will be held prior to and whilst the LRO screening study window is open.

Improving water supply resilience for agriculture

- Improve communications around access to water
 - Continue to invest in water e-alerts to provide speedier notifications to farmers and growers when water is available for abstraction and to better protect the environment when it is not



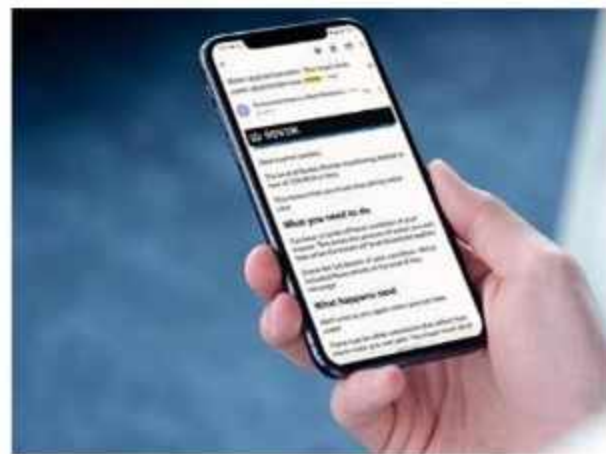
GOV.UK

[Home](#) > [Environment](#) > [Water Industry](#) > [Abstract \(take\) water](#)

Guidance

Manage your water abstraction licence online

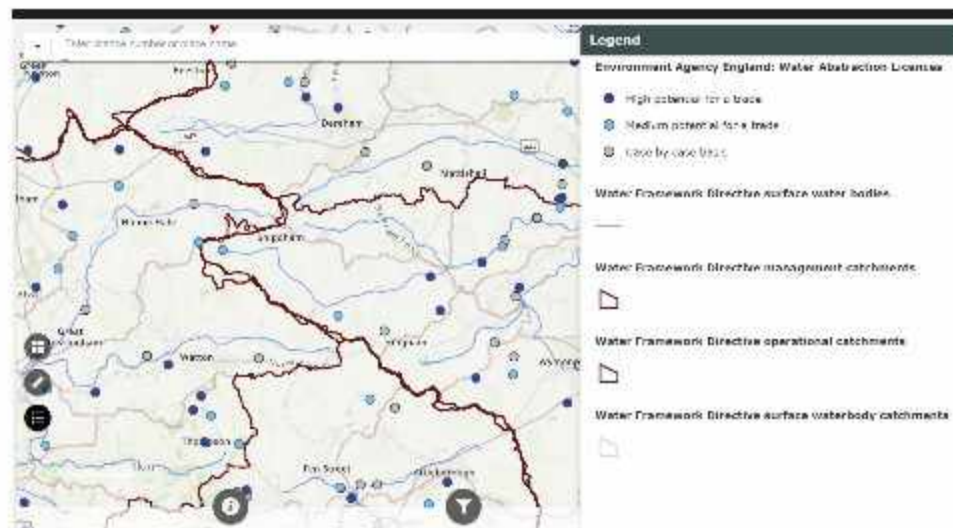
Use this service to view and share your licence information and to submit abstraction returns. Find out about water abstraction alerts.

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website interface. At the top is the GOV.UK logo. Below it is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Environment > Water Industry > Abstract (take) water. Underneath is the word 'Guidance' and the main heading 'Manage your water abstraction licence online'. A short paragraph follows: 'Use this service to view and share your licence information and to submit abstraction returns. Find out about water abstraction alerts.'

Improving water supply resilience for agriculture

- Promote water sharing and enhance opportunities for water rights trading
 - Improved access to information on licences (e.g. trading map)
 - Promote 3rd parties as brokers
 - Highlight case studies where it has worked well

Environment Agency trading 'opportunity' map
(now whole of England and with updates to data)



Trading opportunity map under development. Please email:
Rory.callan@environment-agency.gov.uk
A link will be sent when it's running



Trade, share and broker
water

Guidance

Trade water abstraction rights



Questions?

Any water resource queries or questions please talk to us

Email:

IEP_CLA@environment-agency.gov.uk

Email your query with your contact details and we'll call/ email you back.

Improving water supply resilience for agriculture

- Provide additional flexibility during flood events.

Abstraction licences have conditions to protect other abstractors and the environment.

When there is **an active flood warning in place** farmers and growers will be able to abstract at a higher rate than their licences may currently allow (up to an additional 60 litres per second), and outside of the licensed period.

All other licence conditions will apply, such as fish screens and total licensed quantities, to ensure that water rights and the environment remain protected.



Flood warning for River Lambourn from Upper Lambourn to Great Shefford

Updated 8:17am on 21 January 2024

[View map of the flood warning area](#)



Improving water supply resilience for agriculture



<p>Abstraction from</p> <p>Farm storage reservoirs with no abstraction restrictions</p> <p>(i.e. good levels of resilience, not subject to licence or S57 restrictions).</p>	<p>Abstraction from</p> <p>Groundwater without hands-off level licence restrictions</p> <p>(not likely to be subject to voluntary or S57 restrictions either)</p>	<p>Abstraction from</p> <p>Groundwater with a hands-off level condition requiring reduced abstraction</p> <p>(i.e. has a partial licence constraint but not likely to be subject to requests for voluntary or S57 restrictions)</p>	<p>Abstraction from</p> <p>Surface water without a hands-off flow condition</p> <p>(i.e. without licence constraint but could be included in requests for voluntary or S57 restrictions)</p>	<p>Abstraction from</p> <p>Surface water with a hands-off flow condition requiring reduced abstraction (including from reservoirs)</p> <p>(i.e. has a partial licence constraint and also subject to requests for voluntary or S57 restrictions)</p>	<p>Abstraction from</p> <p>Surface water or groundwater with a hands-off flow or hands-off level condition requiring abstraction to stop (including from reservoirs)</p> <p>(i.e. the licence will require flows to stop when flows are low)</p>
19.7%	28.2%	0.1%	37.0%	0.6%	14.4%*