WRW, Agricultural Context and Water Abstractor Groups

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The challenge

One of today's biggest challenges is tomorrow's water

In less than 25 years a lack of water could limit growth and employment opportunities and have a very real impact on people's everyday lives

By 2050 we're going to need over 200 million additional litres per day

It has to come from somewhere

The opportunity

We're working together to make a plan

We are ambitious

We can make our water resources truly sustainable

Investment will bring wider benefits

Water Resources West
a multisector collaboration

A group of abstractors, their representatives and their regulators. Working together to ensure the sustainability of water resources, considering wider societal needs, environmental improvement and cross-sector opportunities.

Agricultural & horticultural sectors represented by NFU and HTA

Our members

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water
HAFREN DYFRDWY severn dee
SEVERN TRENT WATER
South Staffs Water
United Utilities Water for the North West
NFU
Energy UK
British Ceramic Confederation
cpi confederation of paper industries
Canal & River Trust Making life better by water
HTA
mpa
Independent Water Networks
INA Independent Networks Association
mua
WATERLEVEL

We also have advisory input from:

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government
NATURAL ENGLAND
Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales
Environment Agency
RAPID

Water Resources West

Survey of abstractors

1/3 of abstractors report their business is constrained by the amount of water they can abstract. This is particularly the case for the horticulture sector and those with private water supplies.

94% of abstractors think their water use will increase by **2050** yet only 1/3 have plans to reduce their water use via water efficiency initiatives.

Non-PWS abstraction supports UK energy and food security and underpins vital parts of our economy. This is the first survey of its kind and we had a good response rate, covering most catchments in our region.

3/4 of abstractors would experience a major or significant impact if their licence was reduced by 25%.

39% of abstractors were affected by the 2022 drought.

68% of abstractors are interested in working with others in their catchment but only 1% are part of an abstractor group.

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Agricultural sector's water needs

Projected water needs for sector

- We have now reached the end of the Brexit transition which may have large, as yet unknown, impacts on the farming sector.
- This sector is expected to experience the second largest overall increase in abstraction, for irrigation.
- This increase in abstraction will be especially prominent in the Midlands, where horticulture and potato growing is intensive.

WRW recommendations for sector

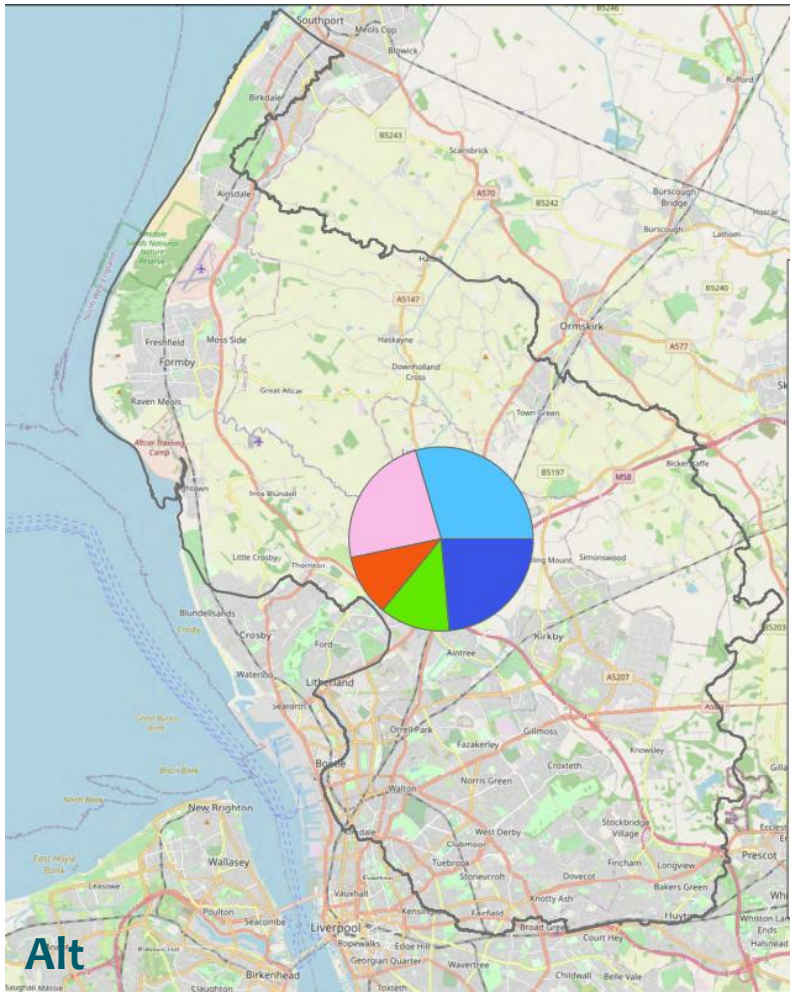
Farmers should take a strategic approach to:

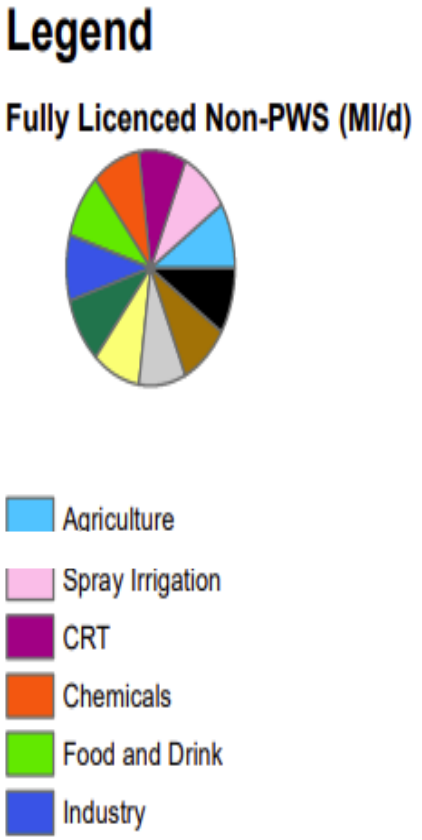
- Consider the implementation of contingency planning on farms to tackle the risk of drought
- Better understand their water needs and act to reduce waste
- Consider best practice in the use of land and water
- Consider using return periods for flood and drought events to plan their resilience

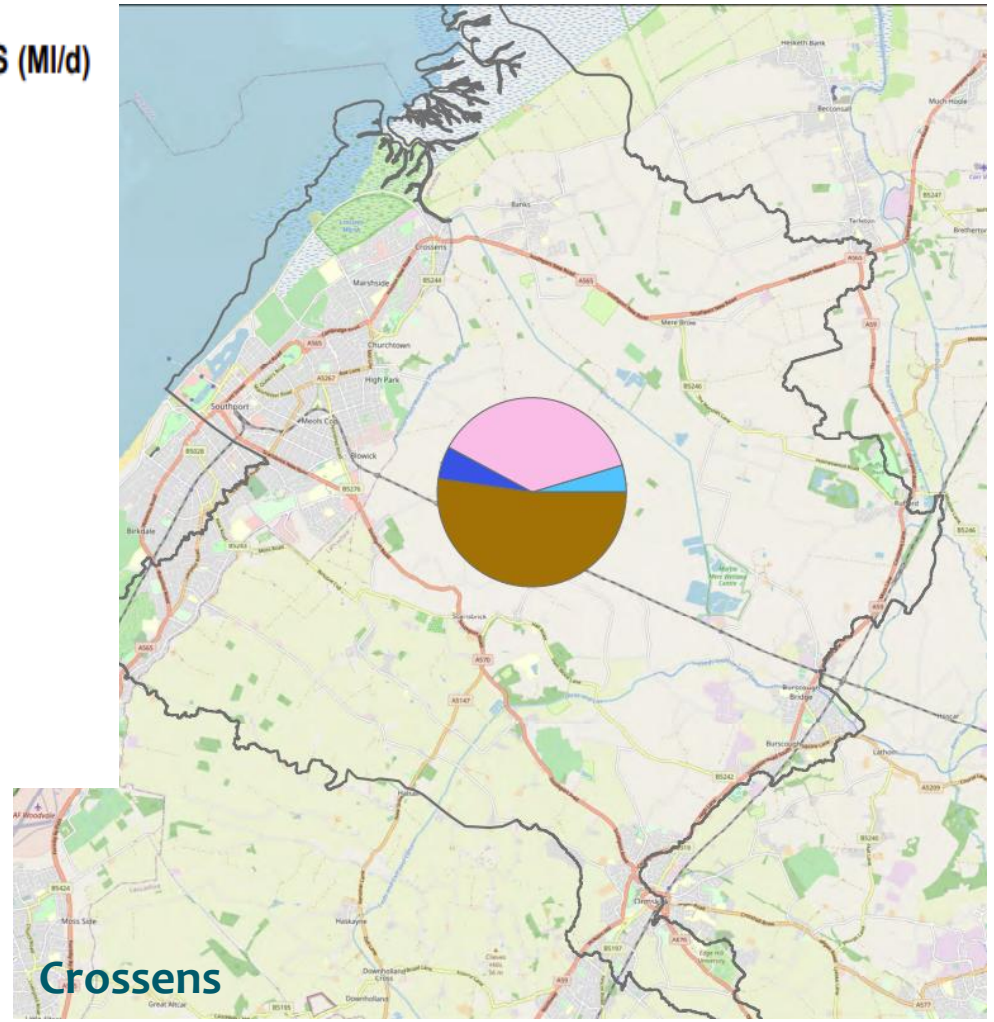
What WRW is doing to support the sector

- Water Resources West will continue to support the sector, sharing knowledge to help with this.
- We are seeking opportunities for joint options between agriculture and other sectors.

Fully licenced abstraction







There is also public water supply groundwater abstraction in the Alt catchment (not shown), but none in the Crossens catchment.

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Benefits of forming an abstractor group in the Alt-Crossens catchment

- Water Resources West is a group of abstractors and their representatives working together across the North West, the Midlands and the cross-border catchments in Wales
- We want to work with local groups to support abstractors to understand their water needs and build resilience

Alt-Crossens Water Needs

Need for abstraction by local businesses predicted to grow by 30% by 2050

Mostly due to increased irrigation, which is predicted to grow by 44%

Climate change will reduce summer rainfall and river flow = less water available

Potential for abstraction licence reductions through catchment reviews

Our survey says

68%

of abstractors are interested in working together with others in their catchment.

Register interest here..

Water Resources West

Forming an Abstractor Group will..

Enable you to share resources and pool knowledge to improve understanding of risks and opportunities

Strengthen your voice locally, regionally and nationally with planners, regulators and policy makers

Allow access to funding, e.g. new Environment Agency fund for Local Resource Option investigations

Water Resources West

- WRW is a regional water resources planning group. Our purpose is to plan for sustainable water resources, i.e. to make sure everyone has enough water now and in the future.
- There is a need to reduce abstraction to protect the environment.
- Overall water demand in the region will reduce in the future due to water efficiency, but we know that agriculture and horticulture will need to irrigate more in the future due to climate change.
- Farmers do act to conserve water – and we encourage more water saving activity.
- We are in discussion with government about funding so that we can provide more support to the sector.
- We want to know about future water needs for farming and horticulture to make our plan better. What do you need to cope with climate change and potential drought? What would encourage water efficiency for abstractors in the catchment?
- Please tell us about water resources in your catchment:

waterresourceswest@outlook.com or waterresouceswest.co.uk

Water-saving tips for farmers

Reuse water

- Harvested rainwater from roofs of farm buildings can be used for a variety of activities, like washing down hard standing areas.

Appliances

- Replacing washers, fixing overflows and attending to dripping taps and hosepipes promptly will help reduce wastage.
- Inspect any pipes on the farm regularly to identify possible leaks. Unusually damp ground, unexpectedly lush ground or reduced community/rush vegetation are all giveaway signs of a possible leak.

Alternatives

- Removing dirt and waste from solid areas in the farm can be done with brushes and scrapers –just use a small amount of water to hose down afterwards.

Apply efficiently

- Irrigating at the right time of day to meet crop needs is more efficient and reduces loss through evaporation.

Top tips

1. Know the water holding capacity of the soil in each field and the water requirements and response of each crop grown
2. Use effective soil moisture monitoring systems and schedule irrigation accurately
3. Choose the right application equipment for each situation and know how to get the best out of it in terms of uniform and timely delivery
4. Manage water application for maximum economic benefit with minimum impact on the environment
5. Audit performance afterwards to seek ways to improve the efficient use and application of water

- For more information on WAGS contact:
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