



Increasing resilience to water-related risk in the UK fresh fruit & vegetable system

The UK fresh fruit and vegetable (FF&V) system is becoming more intensive and increasingly reliant on irrigation to deliver the quality and availability demanded by retailers and consumers. FF&V accounts for 30% of the total “blue” water (direct abstraction) required to support UK food consumption. Domestic FF&V production is concentrated in the driest regions of the UK and water is used at the driest times of year when resources are most constrained. Overall, the UK FF&V system is exposed to physical, regulatory and reputational water-related risks – some of these have potential to create major shocks that could threaten continuity of supply.



This three year project aims to identify ways of building resilience in the UK fresh fruit and vegetable system (from grower to consumer) to current, and future, water-related risks. One of the project’s case studies focuses on domestic food crop production in South and East England and we are working with growers, retailers, consumers and other stakeholders throughout the food system to build understanding around water-related risk. We are particularly interested in the water risks linked to potato, field vegetable and soft fruit production.

With insights from growers we are seeking to identify the positive and negative implications of increasing irrigation efficiency and technology-dependence for vulnerability to water-related shocks and risks to production, and undertaking a critical review of the relevant management options for increasing water reliability and efficiency.

The project aims to help stakeholders better understand the FF&V system as a whole and to enhance abilities to choose between a range of different water management strategies for producers, retailers and policy makers across the value chain.

We want to find out how different actors within the UK FF&V system can work together to help the system become more resilient to water-related risks and to understand how different interventions affect the resilience of different stakeholders.

If you would like to know more about the research or would be willing to share your views in the UK case study, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact:

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More information on the project is available at:

<https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/research-projects/resilience-to-water-related-risks>