

A.W.ALSTON

Farmer

Accounts & Correspondence:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Tel: [REDACTED]

Deliveries:

[REDACTED]

24th May 2020

By e mail: waterdetermination2020@cma.gov.uk

Dear Sir,

We have been asked by WRE to add our support to the letter sent to you around 11th May by their Chairman, Henry Cator

Whilst I support the comments about capital expenditure for Water Companies to build in water resilience and combat pressures from environmental protect I would like to add some further comments.

1. I do not believe that there is enough incentive for PWS in Eastern Region to reduce the water consumption per person per day. The target is around 115l/person/day but I understand that the actual usage is more than 135l/per/day and rising, not reducing. If the Public want to live in the driest part of the Country then they must buy into extreme water efficiency measures at home and not expect farmers to take the brunt of any reductions.

2. There is an ambition in East Norfolk to build 38,000 additional homes NE of Norwich. That alone will require some 5.6 million cubic meters of additional water rights required by the PWS. To protect agriculture, this water must be additional water and not come at the expense of agriculture's rights. Anglian Water must be permitted a large increase in capital expenditure to ensure they have the resources to supply these additional houses.

3. In London water is used up to seven times before flowing out to sea. In Norfolk water is used once and, in coastal sewerage works, is pumped out to sea while farmers are seeing their supplies squeezed. Much of the reasoning behind this is to do with the water quality flowing through protected sites in Broadland and it's cheaper to pump the discharge water out to sea rather than deal with the water quality issue. This water is of use to agriculture and more effort should be made by PWS to reuse this water and work with farmers to find solutions to water quality problems. In addition, Government should be looking at IDB discharges, currently being pumped into the North Sea to find a solution to the excessive volumes being wasted out to sea. Future cross compliance should target this Public Good.

4. I am aware that the poorest in our Society should be able to afford water, so the Price of water is kept low. Is it possible to set one price for up to say 100cm/year for every household but over that level the cost rises in an effort to make the Public in Eastern region for efficient with their water use? Or smart meters which shut off after 350l/house/day? This should also be linked to recharging aquifers, where the Public are letting water percolate their property, there should be an incentive to recharge aquifers. Farmers have a role to play in aquifer recharge by letting water through their

land and not running off to ditches. Future cross compliance should target this Public Good.

5. I feel that too much emphasis of the shortage of water is placed on the abstraction side of the water cycle. More effort should be made to look at how aquifers recharge. An example is Cambridgeshire which is slowly being concreted over, limiting the recharge of the chalk aquifer. The run off from the concrete is causing water quality issues in the Chalk Rivers because it has not been filtered by the soil. We have good examples in North Norfolk of improvements to Chalk Rivers by farmers changing land management to improve flows and water quality.

6. Farmers are having issues with “In combination” effects in the Habitat Directive assessments from PWS abstraction even though “alone” there is no problem. I would like to see a much quicker reaction from PWS when environmental issues are uncovered to protect farmers’ supplies and the environment.

7. Finally Norfolk needs a long term Water Plan. Current PWS plans are 5 years but if agriculture is to invest in water storage for irrigated agriculture and deliver the associated jobs then a 50 year water plan is required. The trouble with PWS water plans are that they do not look at all the issues such as water quality, recharge, reuse, co-operation with agriculture and the environmental improvements, they appear to be done in isolation and that is why they never achieve the long term goals hoped for. WRE has been set up with the aim of finding solutions for our water issues in Eastern Region. We would like to see PWS engage more with WRE and its members with enthusiasm to start to put solutions in place. There has been too much talk and not enough action on the ground or in the rivers and farmers need action now to protect their businesses.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Alston
Agricultural Water Specialist

