

Drought declared across large parts of England amid surge in food prices



Cracks can be seen on dried up bed of Tittesworth Reservoir, in Leek, Britain, August 12, 2022. (Photo by Reuters)

London, August 16 (RHC)-- The vast swathes of England have been hit by an unprecedented drought following the driest July in the United Kingdom since 1935, with households facing another surge in food prices. According to the announcement made by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, parts of the southwest, southern and central England, and the east of England have been moved

into drought status.

The Environment Agency (EA) confirmed that eight of its 14 areas had moved into drought status, as households faced new curbs on water usage during a prolonged period of hot and dry weather. The mismanagement of water resources, along with strong heatwaves, has resulted in parched reservoirs and water shortages.

The water crisis has come to such a level that residents in Oxfordshire village ran out of water this week forcing Thames Water to dispatch water tankers and bottled water to the area. Water companies have also announced several hosepipe bans across England in a bid to limit water use.

The development comes as the UK was hit with a four-day "extreme heat", with temperatures climbing to 36C in parts of the country on Sunday. "We are currently experiencing a second heatwave after what was the driest July on record for parts of the country," Water Minister Steve Double said Saturday.

Dominic Gardener, a farmer in West Sussex, was quoted as saying by the BBC that the dry weather was posing huge challenges for farmers. "Everything is starting to struggle a bit - our grass is not growing at all - and livestock, we're having to feed them extra food," he said.

The situation facing firefighters across the country has been described as "unprecedented", with increasing numbers of wildfires. Multiple fires have broken out across the UK in recent days, including in Leytonstone, east London, Studland Bay, Dorset, Creswell, in Derbyshire, The Dower House in Bristol, and Overton, near Basingstoke in Hampshire.

Meanwhile, soaring temperatures and drought conditions have hiked the price of staple foods such as bread, potatoes and meat, which constitute a dominant portion of a standard diet for a given person.

The National Farmers' Union said it had "never seen a situation like it", with members reporting poorer quality produce and declining yields.

The Britons are under intense economic pressure with energy bills set to double in October, while the recession is looming.

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