



WWF

CASE STUDY

SEPTEMBER

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Case Study

"This project is an exciting journey, initiated by M&S and WWF and the first volunteer farmers, to reduce risk and embrace good water stewardship on the farm, in the catchment and in the supply chain. This work will mean M&S and Woolworths benefit along with the farmers, communities and the environment in the Western Cape"

Louise Nicholls, Head of Responsible Sourcing, Marks & Spencer

The Alliance for Water Stewardship

The AWS Standard defines how to support good water governance, sustain water balances, achieve good water quality, and maintain those water areas of critical importance to species and communities. For more information visit:

www.allianceforwaterstewardship.org

WATER STEWARDSHIP IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Dealing with water risk in M&S' agriculture supply chains

With 70% of all water use is in agriculture, it's a sector that simply cannot be ignored when it comes to water stewardship. But how does water stewardship work in agriculture supply chains, and what can your business do?

Getting started

Using the WWF-developed Water Risk Filter, retailer Marks & Spencer's was able to home in on key risk hotspots. It identified stone fruit suppliers in the Breede River Catchment in South Africa's Western Cape as a particular concern. Now M&S and Woolworths (South Africa) are partnering with WWF and the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) to work with farmers in the stone fruit supply chain to mitigate their water risks.

South Africa as a country faces many water issues, including limited and variable rainfall, growing water quality concerns and on-going challenges implementing water policy. At the same time, South Africa, and especially the Western Cape region, is well-known for its international fruit exports, so it is an area that is likely to be a risk hot spot for many food retailers.

YOUR M&S



ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP

How to use WWF's Water Risk Filter

The Water Risk Filter is a free online tool that any company can use to get an overview of the water risks they face. The tool draws on a number of global data sets, which combine the latest information on water scarcity, climate change and pollution, among others. All you need to do is fill in a short questionnaire for each site, whether it is a farm, a factory or an office, and you will be given a detailed risk score. You can then compare the relative risk across a portfolio of sites in your operations or supply chain and with its new function you can also assess the water risks of agriculture commodities used in products. To find out more go to: www.waterriskfilter.panda.org/

How can your business get involved?

Substantive, lasting risk mitigation requires collective action, as demonstrated by this project. To find collective action projects that your company can get involved in, please visit the Water Action Hub:

<http://wateractionhub.org/>

If you're interested in getting involved in this project please get in touch.

How does the project work?

In 2013, nine farmers voluntarily started participating in a water stewardship effort. The AWS standard (then still being finalized) was used and tested as a roadmap. Taking the lessons we've learnt here is some brief guidance on applying WWF's water stewardship ladder to agriculture supply chains:

Step one – Water awareness

Get a good overview of all on-farm practices that include or affect water and its uses. Focus on water quantity, water quality, as well as important water sources such as rivers and wetlands.

Step two – Knowledge of impact

Identify areas of potential improvement, tailored to the specific local conditions of each site. Participants decided which improvements they would apply, weighing up risks, cost-benefits, and financial and time commitments.

Step three – Internal action

Develop a water stewardship plan, with clear goals around efficiency, water quality monitoring, on-site wetland management and staff training. These goals should address physical, regulatory or reputational risks.

Step four – Collective action

Identify catchment risks and develop a mitigation plan. WWF brought together the farmers and other catchment stakeholders to assess the wider catchment risks. Three shared risks were identified:

- *Risk of pollution from rapidly expanding low-income urban areas*
- *Risk of rapidly invading alien plant species, as these decrease available runoff*
- *Risk of continued poor practice because of lack awareness and poor access to information, especially among emerging farmers*

Step five – Influence Governance

The project is not yet at the fifth and final stage, within which we intend to use the lessons from the project to improve how water is managed at the catchment scale.

What's next?

In this next phase, we'll continue to work with the broader coalition of stakeholders in the Ceres area to address the risks through tailored action and to help other water users become good water stewards in the Western Cape.