

Farmers help ease water problems in California

25th May, 2015



The U.S. state of California is going through the worst drought in its history. Water supplies are now at dangerously low levels. The state government has introduced many laws to try

to prevent water shortages. California farmers have stepped in to do their part in helping to conserve water. California's agriculture sector has agreed to cut back on its water use by 25 per cent. This will be on a voluntary basis. The agreement follows a move by California's governor Jerry Brown to cut water use in cities by 25 per cent. This was introduced as an emergency measure and it made many city residents angry. They did not want to be the only people having to cut back on water.

California's water system serves over 30 million people and irrigates nearly six million acres of farmland. It is the world's largest and most productive water system. It is also one of the most difficult systems because too many people want too little water. There is a great demand for water in the state. Farmers say it is important they get water first because growing food is essential. However, some crops, like almond trees, need a lot of water. People in the cities say they need water the most to be able to live. There is also demand from California's many golf courses and for the swimming pools of the wealthy people in the state. California's population will be almost 50 million people by the year 2020.

Sources: *Sacramento Bee* / *LA Times* / *Wikipedia*

Writing

Water should be expensive to use so we use less. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

drought / history / levels / shortages / cut back / voluntary / emergency / measure / irrigates / farmland / productive / demand / essential / almond trees / golf courses

True / False

- California is suffering from its second worst ever drought. T / F
- The California government has not yet passed water shortage laws. T / F
- California farmers agreed to cut back on water by 25%. T / F
- California residents totally understand the 25% cuts. T / F
- Over 30 million people use the California water system. T / F
- The water system in California is the biggest in the world. T / F
- Almond trees need very little water. T / F
- The population of California will be 50 million by 2020. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1. worst | a. deal |
| 2. prevent | b. economise |
| 3. conserve | c. call |
| 4. agreement | d. necessary |
| 5. cut back | e. most terrible |
| 6. irrigates | f. require |
| 7. demand | g. safeguard |
| 8. essential | h. rich |
| 9. need | i. stop |
| 10. wealthy | j. waters |

Discussion – Student A

- Should California ration its water?
- Is it easy to taste the difference between bottled and tap water?
- Should water be free for everyone?
- What do you think of swimming pools in a water shortage?
- Should golf courses be banned from using water?
- Do you think there will be water wars in the future?
- Someone once said water is the only drink for a wise man. Do you agree?
- What questions would you like to ask California's governor?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. going through the worst | a. sector |
| 2. prevent | b. back on water |
| 3. California's agriculture | c. people |
| 4. introduced as an emergency | d. acres of farmland |
| 5. the only people having to cut | e. drought in its history |
| 6. nearly six million | f. many golf courses |
| 7. too many people want | g. measure |
| 8. There is also demand from California's | h. year 2020 |
| 9. wealthy | i. water shortages |
| 10. by the | j. too little water |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What would you do if water was in short supply?
- Should we pay more for water so we don't waste it?
- Why should farmers have to cut the amount of water they use?
- What would happen if your water supply was cut by 25%?
- How could you cut back on water?
- Should companies stop producing bottled water?
- What will the water situation be like in 50 years from now?

Spelling

- the worst rthdgou in its history
- water ilsepsup
- etveprn water shortages
- on a olrantyuv basis
- introduced as an eyregenm measure
- it made many city trsieedns angry
- California's water symtse
- most duoivceptr
- There is a great dnmdae for water
- growing food is asiestnel
- talwehy people
- California's tplonaipuo

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. i	3. g	4. a	5. b
6. j	7. c	8. d	9. f	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Water

You think water is the worst thing to be short of. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why being short of their things isn't so good. Also, tell the others which of these can you do without most (and why): money, free time or sunlight.

Role B – Money

You think money is the worst thing to be short of. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why being short of their things isn't so good. Also, tell the others which of these can you do without most (and why): water, free time or sunlight.

Role C – Free time

You think free time is the worst thing to be short of. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why being short of their things isn't so good. Also, tell the others which of these can you do without most (and why): money, water or sunlight.

Role D – Sunlight

You think sunlight is the worst thing to be short of. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why being short of their things isn't so good. Also, tell the others which of these can you do without most (and why): money, free time or water.

Speaking – Shortages

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst things to be short of at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| • water | • electricity |
| • chocolate | • sun |
| • phone battery | • free time |
| • money | • medicine |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.