



Broadland Rivers and Cam and Ely Ouse (CamEO) catchments Delivering the Courtauld 2025 Commitment

Report from Workshop, 19 March 2019, Norwich



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1. Introduction and aims of the C2025 project

The [Courtauld 2025 Commitment](#) is an ambitious voluntary agreement that aims to bring together organisations across the food system to make food and drink production and consumption more sustainable. Signatories have made a commitment to identify priorities, develop solutions and implement changes to cut the carbon, [water](#) and waste associated with food and drink by at least one-fifth over the next 10 years.

The Rivers Trust are facilitating a “[Water Stewardship Service](#)” to deliver the “collective action” that is required to enable C2025 signatories, their producers, growers and processors, to positively influence their impact on water throughout the supply chain.

The Broadland Rivers and Cam and Ely Ouse (CamEO) catchments are two of six pilot areas across the UK that have been selected to deliver collective action through the Courtauld Commitment.

With the support of Courtauld signatories, a regional workshop was held in Norwich on 19th March 2019 to engage local and national growers, processors, suppliers and retailers. Twenty-two people attended the event, representing a total of 17 organisations.

Eight of these organisations were businesses directly involved in major retailer supply chains:



Other attendees represented lead delivery organisations and key regional stakeholders, including:





2. Workshop presentations: Water Sensitive Farming and Riverlands

As well as learning about the water-challenges within the Broadland Rivers and CamEO catchments (phosphate, sediment, pesticides and water quantity), the attendees were also presented with two projects, both of which are currently being implemented within the catchments to improve water quality and reduce water usage.

1. The '[Water Sensitive Farming](#)' initiative, funded through the WWF and Coca-Cola Freshwater Partnership since 2012, was the first to be presented. This Initiative, which is now in its third phase of funding (2018-2021), provides independent farm support and advice. The aim is to deliver practical on-farm measures that improve the quality and resilience of the surrounding water environment.
2. The second project to be highlighted was '[Riverlands](#)', a National Trust project that includes focusing on restoring the Upper Bure – part of the wider Broadland Rivers Catchment. Work will include river restoration, slow the flow and flood alleviation, habitat creation and tackling non-native species, as well as engaging with local communities.

These projects are being aligned in the Upper Bure Catchment, with Water Sensitive Farming operating as the key delivery mechanism for providing on-farm soil and water advice.

3. Workshop interactive group activities: SWOT analysis results

Attendees broke into three groups and contributed to a water-focused SWOT analysis. Whilst originally planned to individually cover key agricultural sectors (arable, mixed, livestock, combinable, poultry and dairy etc.), it was agreed during the SWOT analysis to combine this sectoral consideration and instead identify key themes. The combined SWOT results are summarised below under these themes:

Strengths

Communication and collaboration

- There is already a vast amount of best practice advice available e.g. AHDB soil health guidance, which should be followed and built on.

Practice

- Many of the issues are visible on or near growing sites, and this serves as a constant reminder of them.
- The majority of growers are receptive and willing to change.
- Responsible growers and processors have the ability to adapt their practices with the right support.

Business factors

- The market is driving water use efficiencies.

Sector-specific



- Maize is now starting to be under-sown by some growers using GPS to provide winter cover and spring grazing.
- There is better recording of water usage within poultry, and this has led to a reduction in water usage and dirty water waste through processing efficiencies and improved drinker designs.
- The wider catchment is considered when acquiring land for poultry e.g. away from watercourses.
- Arable farmers can be agile due to the short-term nature of cropping.

Weaknesses

Communication and collaboration

- Complex nature of landlord/tenant relationship dynamics is a big obstacle.
- There is a grey area in terms of who takes responsibility for covering the costs of good practice and adapting to the necessary changes. Should it be growers, landowners, suppliers or retailers, especially with contract growing on short-term tenancies?
- Processors require more best practice advice to guide their growers.
- There is a lack of connectivity and communication within retailers' different staff departments on the need for a step change in food production e.g. Corporate Social Responsibility and Buying/Procurement.
- Growers are faced with inconsistencies in what is required e.g. retailers' focus on Unique Selling Points (USPs).
- Each element of the industry is working in isolation e.g. retailers unaware of reality and contracts reflect this in that there is no room for poor growing seasons.
- Catchment Partnerships are not yet providing the right forum for businesses, suppliers and growers to link up and develop solutions.
- Roles and responsibilities of regulators are unclear e.g. Environment Agency acting as regulator and advice-giver causes confusion.
- The many types of certification are confusing for the consumer and onerous for the grower e.g. Soil Association and Red Tractor.

Contracts

- Short-termism is encouraged by retailers being able to drive focus of supply contracts.
- Landowners are too removed from the pressures that growers are facing, particularly the need for a step change in practice.

Practice

- No long-term view of soil health.
- Lack of regulation and enforcement: those doing the right things feel penalised.
- Lack of field planning in place before beginning growing/introducing livestock e.g. gateway points, access to drinking stations, controlled trafficking routes and tramline management.
- Expensive to change – need financial support to assist with this.
- Poor application of slurry.



- Livestock have access to watercourses.
- Need to improve at separating dirty water (currently it is 3/4 as clean as it could be) – driven by cost.
- Cost of adapting practice can be expensive (although this might be a short-term loss vs. long-term gain scenario).
- Fields can be left bare after harvest/post-livestock during the winter.

Education and engagement

- Consumers lack knowledge of food production and the associated issues. Therefore, it is difficult for consumers to make informed decisions about the true value of food.

Business factors

- Business survival is an ever-present concern and tends to take priority.
- Lack of business case for sustainable investment.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can drive contracts from retailers and these can be too weak for what is needed to drive a step change in practice.

Opportunities

Communication and collaboration

- Need to identify gaps in knowledge.
- Increase dialogue across tenants (don't assume land agents are collective).
- More joined up thinking between farmers/landowners/growers/retailers and amongst retailers themselves.
- Agronomists and land agents are key targets for disseminating knowledge.
- To aid connectivity and communication within retailers, there is an opportunity to engage all in farm visits.
- Stories about food that illustrate best practice throughout supply chain.

Contracts

- Minimum 5-year contract length to come from retailers (ideally 10) to support business case for sustainable investment.
- Longer-term contracts will mean that retailers are more willing to support particular growers.

Practice

- Longer-term rotational planning across sectors based on shared objectives – and question of who leads this, landlord or tenant?
- Greater collaboration within the rotation amongst growers and suppliers.
- Improving water quality and quantity will lead to a secure and sustainable farm business with good soil health and fewer losses.
- Carry out site planning and risk assessment of diffuse pollution before starting.
- Consider agroforestry alongside poultry.



- Water storage and rainwater harvesting of winter flows to provide flood reduction and source of water for irrigation.
- Consider location of growing and most appropriate crops to grow in those conditions.
- Increase technology – e.g. drones and mapping (SCIMAP) of sites.
- Grazing off cover crops can provide a rental income.
- Improving soil health can lead to increased yields and higher crop value, as well as lower input costs.
- Livestock farming produces nutrient- rich manures, which can be used (carefully) to build soil organic matter and nutrient levels.
- GM drought-resistant crops to reduce sensitivities.

Education and engagement

- Open Farm Sunday – good for demonstrating success and educating children and consumers.
- Landlord and tenant relationships – not aware of the pressures that growers face.
- Retailers to inform consumers of the true value of food to make informed decisions that are not just cost-based.
- Peer pressure to improve/to reduce reputational risk - CLA/NFU/Land Agents to drive?
- Best practice training for agricultural students, agronomists, land agents and contractors.
- Training retailers' procurement directors on pressures and consequences.
- Knowledge is already out there, but need to improve access to, and methods of, sharing best practice and engaging small-scale growers.

Policy

- Catchment approach and joined up/collective action.
- Retailers can drive collective action.
- New Agricultural Policy??? Will it provide better incentives/more enforcement?
- Retailers could drive change and futureproof their businesses – but need to work collectively and actively, not just understand the pressures.

Business factors

- Linking water abstraction and water sensitive farming as an incentive.
- Retailers can promote locally-produced sustainable produce to customers in their stores.

Threats

Contracts

- Short-term contracts between landowner and tenant/contractor do not facilitate long-term environmental practices such as to improve soil health.
- Short-term contracts between supplier and retailer.

Practice



- Who covers the cost in altering land management practices and water interventions when retailer-grower contracts are short-term?

Policy

- Variability in auditing for agricultural standards (e.g. Red Tractor).
- Lack of enforcement and regulation by the Environment Agency and Rural Payments Agency.
- Changes in cropping due to government policy make it difficult to think long-term.
- Reducing number of approved agro-chemicals.
- Changes in agricultural policy as a result of Brexit.
- New ammonia guidelines.
- Water abstraction restrictions.
- Planning restrictions.
- Reductions in direct payments.

Business factors

- Lack of transparency on best practice data in terms of who carried out the research and how it was funded e.g. cover crop trials. This can undermine confidence in testing and altering land management.
- Stuck in a catch-22 of who makes first move within retailers.
- Risk to brand reputation and consumers’ trust if retailers fail to engage with their supply chain.

Environmental

- Antimicrobial resistance.
- Pests and disease - Avian influenza.
- Climate change is causing increasing uncertainty and volatile weather e.g. drought and intense rainfall events.
- Loss of pollinators.

4. How can businesses/retailers influence water use within their supply chains

Below are some proposed ideas for businesses to positively influence their impact on water across the supply chain:

Communication and collaboration
Retailers to forge a closer relationship between themselves and the supply chain in order to identify issues at an early stage to avoid a threat to their reputation.
Contracts
Retailers to award longer-term contracts and agreements with growers (5-10 years). This will mean that there is a stronger business case for sustainable investment in growers and the wider supply chain.
Practice
Businesses and retailers to support growers to make changes by investing in projects that help drive these necessary adaptations such as the Water Sensitive Farming initiative. The Initiative

implements a range of low to medium-cost practical interventions, such as tramline disruption and silt trap creation, to improve water quality, as well as water quantity. The Broadland Rivers and CamEO catchments are the focus areas.

Education and engagement

CSR to educate and improve awareness in procurement teams and the need for more explicit support for pre-competitive collaboration.

Arrange some farm and processor site visits for retailers' buyer and procurement staff to encourage direct engagement across the full supply chain in order to increase understanding of the pressures they face.

Retailers to increase their engagement with consumers to highlight the importance of improving water quality and saving water. This could involve telling a story about their product, or following it throughout the full supply chain i.e. from field to fork. Consumers can know and trust the process, and see the real value in the products they buy.

Policy

Different retailers need to have a collective view on key policy areas. This will require a big step change as they like to have their point of difference.

Set water management expectations that go beyond regulatory compliance for suppliers and growers, and are also time-bound and measurable.

Business factors

Standardise audits as part of a trial – a certification that contains all necessary metrics e.g. soil health, water quality, air quality and biodiversity.



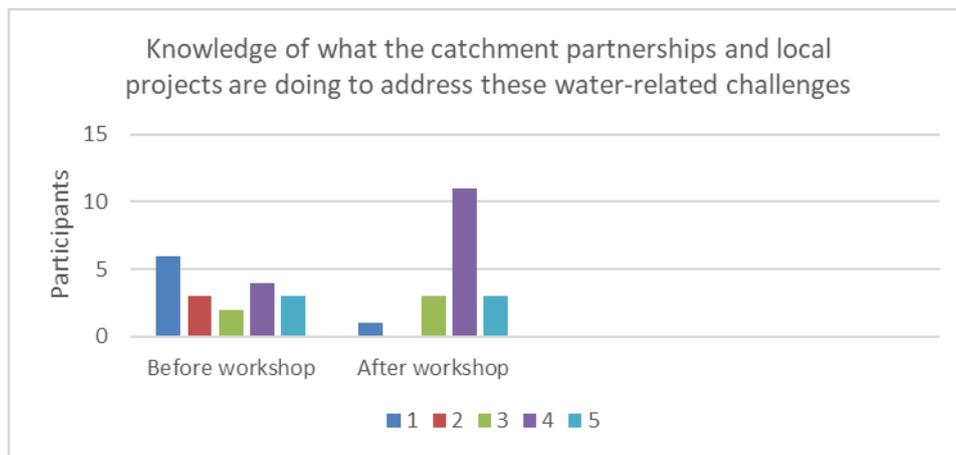
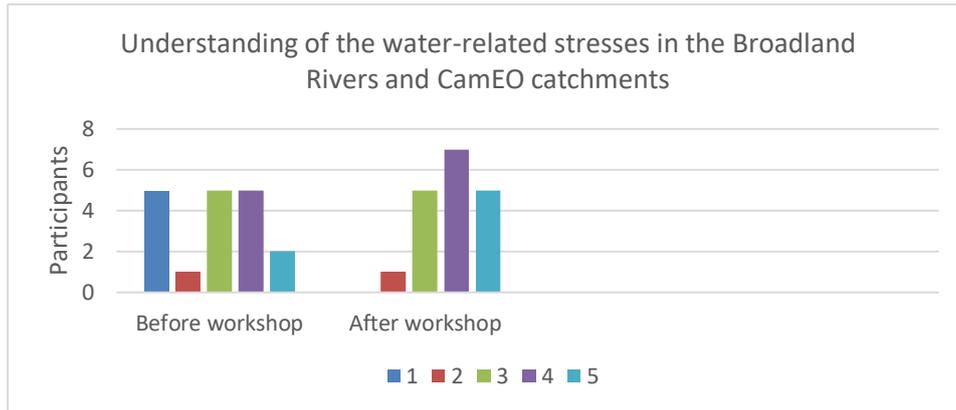
5. Workshop evaluation

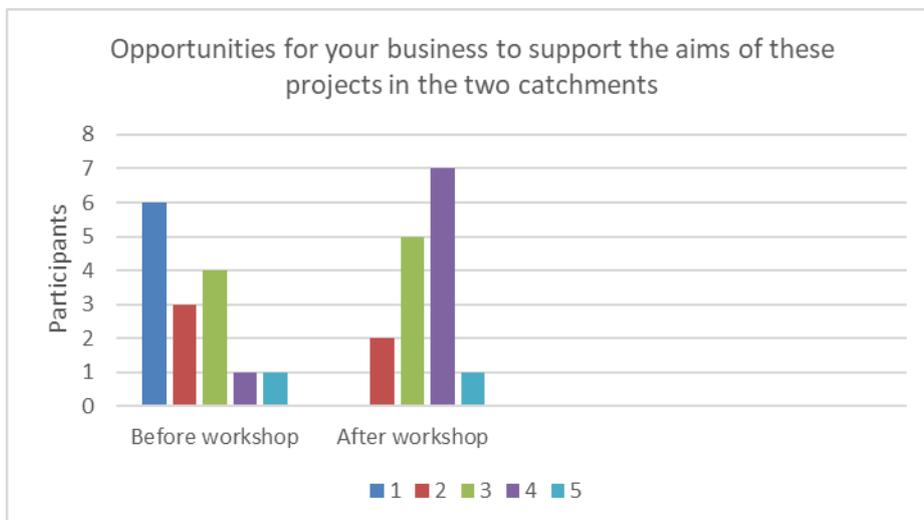
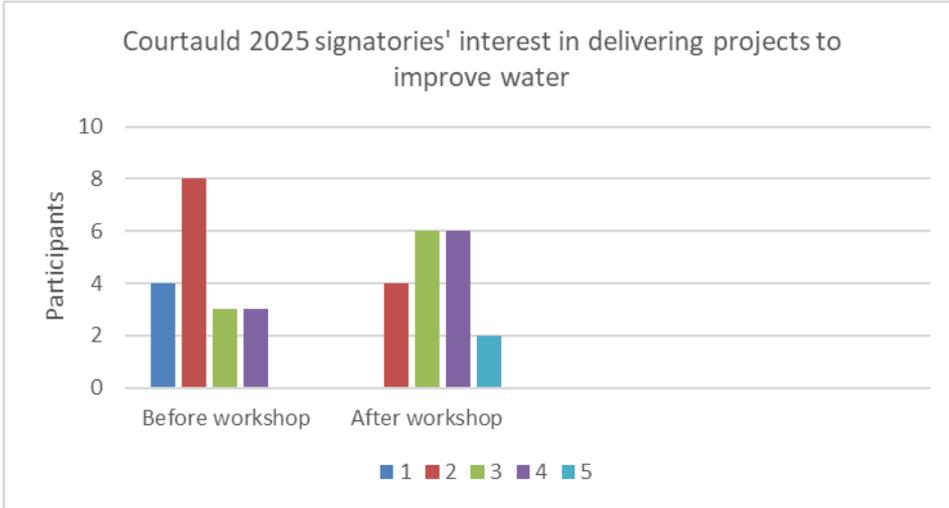
At the beginning of the event, attendees completed a simple evaluation form to assess their baseline level of understanding of several key areas. They also completed these evaluation questions at the end of the workshop, to ascertain whether their understanding had improved as a result of the workshop (see below for full results).

The findings confirm that there was a positive improvement in the level of understanding about the water-related challenges in the catchments, what is already being done, and a willingness to engage and support in future delivery and projects as a result of the event.

Full results

All use a scoring system to ascertain a level of understanding where **1 = no understanding, 3 = moderate and 5 = very high understanding.**







6. Planned actions for Courtauld 2025 delivery

Below is a proposed suite of coordinated actions* for C2025 delivery in the East Anglian catchments arising from the Workshop. The progress and outcomes of these actions will be fed back to the Workshop attendees and other interested parties in a biannual bulletin.

*The action plan is a work in progress and will be updated as and when required. Note that timescales are: **Short- (0-6 months); Medium- (6-15 months); and Longer-term (15 months plus).**

Priority Action	Who to lead delivery	Timescales from Spring 2019
Invite Workshop attendees to join the CamEO Business Board, if not already members.	Norfolk Rivers Trust (NRT)/Anglian Water (contact mBowes@anglianwater.co.uk)	Short
Develop list of available funding to support on-farm interventions.	NRT	Short (and update as and when required)
Publish risk and opportunity maps for Broadland and CamEO catchments (on respective websites). This will help identify risk areas and support farm business and infrastructure plans.	NRT/Broadland and CamEO Partnerships	Short
Collate best practice advice on improving water quality and quantity , and host on an agreed website to signpost growers and processors to.	NRT	Short
In collaboration with suppliers, NRT to arrange high-quality 1:1 farm/site visits under Water Sensitive Farming initiative to: identify water risks, undertake soil health assessments and provide plans for remedial/mitigation measures. These to be targeted at landowners, as well as tenants/contract growers.	NRT/Key suppliers	Short and Medium
		G's growers visit - Short
Hold a follow-up meeting to report on progress and further develop delivery proposals.	NRT	Short to Medium
Create a best practice guide for sugar beet contractors.	NRT/BBRO	Medium
Businesses on the CamEO Business Board to work collaboratively on water abstraction trials as part of the Initial Priority Catchments (IPCs) project (a project that is testing various innovative solutions to abstraction issues). Feedback progress to the group.	CamEO Business Board	TBC



Investigate ways in which we can reach out and engage with landlords about the pitfalls of short-term tenancies, and how engagement between the landlord and tenant can be increased.	NRT	Medium to Longer
Provide best practice training for agri-students, agronomists, land agents, landlords and contractors.	NRT/Stakeholders/Businesses	Short to Medium
Provide training opportunities for retailer procurement teams and directors through farm site visits.	NRT/Stakeholders/Businesses	Short to Medium
Hold knowledge-exchange events in partnership with key stakeholders (including seeing impacts of positive and negative practice).	NRT	Medium and Longer
Form a pilot long-term rotation integration across sectors and suppliers . This will be based on shared objectives such as enhancing soil health, alongside short-term needs to grow crops.	NRT/Growers/Suppliers	Medium and Longer