

Case Study Warburtons reduces water use by 10%

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“ We now have a strong corporate responsibility framework in place, built around our company’s values, which provides a great platform for us to make our business more sustainable. We will reduce the amount of water we use by developing better systems of water management and continue to monitor our total usage through metering. ”

Sarah Miskell, Corporate Responsibility Director, Warburtons



Warburtons has a corporate target of 20% reduction of water by 2020, excluding that in product, against a 2007 baseline. The company’s water targets and objectives are incorporated into their environmental management system.

Although Warburtons is not a large water user, the company’s first Corporate Responsibility Review published in 2011 highlights its commitment to manage this limited resource better, through:

- metering and monitoring: 120 meters have now been fitted in all the bakeries and these are read every week to determine trends;
- the use of ‘Green Teams’ to promote awareness and encourage behaviour change;
- identifying and eradicating leaks;
- reviewing cleaning procedures and excessive use of hose pipes;

- ensuring new vehicle washing facilities are more water efficient and use harvested rainwater where possible;
- routinely switching off basket washers when not in use; and
- fitting washrooms with ‘smart’ hand washing including sensors on taps, flush control on urinals and reduced flush on WCs.

The Federation House Commitment (FHC) has provided technical support to a number of sites and potential annual water savings of around 39,000m³ have been identified. Group communication has improved through the use of the Green Teams and the provision of in-house water management training.

The next steps for continuous improvement include:

- investigating and implementing the opportunities identified; and

- investigating the use of waterless urinals and water reuse on a larger scale (basket washing, vehicle wash and WCs).

Over the last 12 months Warburtons has reduced its reliance on mains water by 47,096m³ – a reduction of 10% compared to 2010. This is despite a 3% increase in production.

When directly compared to production, the reduction in water use per tonne is equally significant. Average water use (excluding that in product) is 0.54m³/tonne, a decrease of 0.08m³/tonne compared to 2010 (13.4% reduction).

Overall, Warburtons is on track to meet its internal target of a 20% reduction in water use, with the support provided by the FHC an integral part of achieving this.

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