

# Water Policy

Maasdijk, 12 June 2020  
Version 4.0

## Introduction

It is a core value of Nature's Pride to do 'Good Business'. We put people and the environment at the heart of our operations while pursuing a healthy business that creates shared benefits and contributes to a better world. How we pursue this long-term goal is detailed in our 2019-2023 Sustainable Business Framework that can be consulted on our website. In this framework water is an essential element, reflecting its importance to our business. This document further outlines our position concerning water and the steps we will take to advance responsible water use.

## Context

Around the world, water challenges are growing as weather patterns change while the global population and consumption continue to grow.

The water situation in our sourcing areas is the result of a complex interaction between the local context and international value chains. We realize we are only one actor in a much bigger value chain and we cannot control other actor's operations. Nor are we the only buyer in sourcing areas or a direct stakeholder in the catchments we source from. Notwithstanding these limitations, Nature's Pride, as a leading European importer of exotic fruits and vegetables, is dedicated to playing its role in addressing water challenges.

## Our goal and approach

Our goal is to advance responsible water use at farm and catchment level in our sourcing areas. To achieve this we follow the Alliance for Water Stewardship's definition and approach: '*Water stewardship is the use of water that is socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that involves site- and catchment-based actions*'.<sup>1</sup> We will work with our procurement team, our growers, clients, non-governmental organizations, sector organizations and knowledge partners to further this goal.

## The current situation

Since the establishment of Nature Pride, the cornerstone of our approach to sustainability has been to pick our suppliers wisely. Out of a pool of thousands of potential suppliers from around the world, we choose to work with growers that have a demonstrated commitment to sustainability. We enter into long-term partnerships in which we pursue continuous improvement and shared value.

For many years Nature's Pride has worked intensively with our dedicated growers on improving labor conditions. Since 2017, responsible water use has been added to these efforts. Over the past years, our growers have gone to great lengths to advance sustainable water use within their sphere of influence.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.a4ws.org](http://www.a4ws.org)

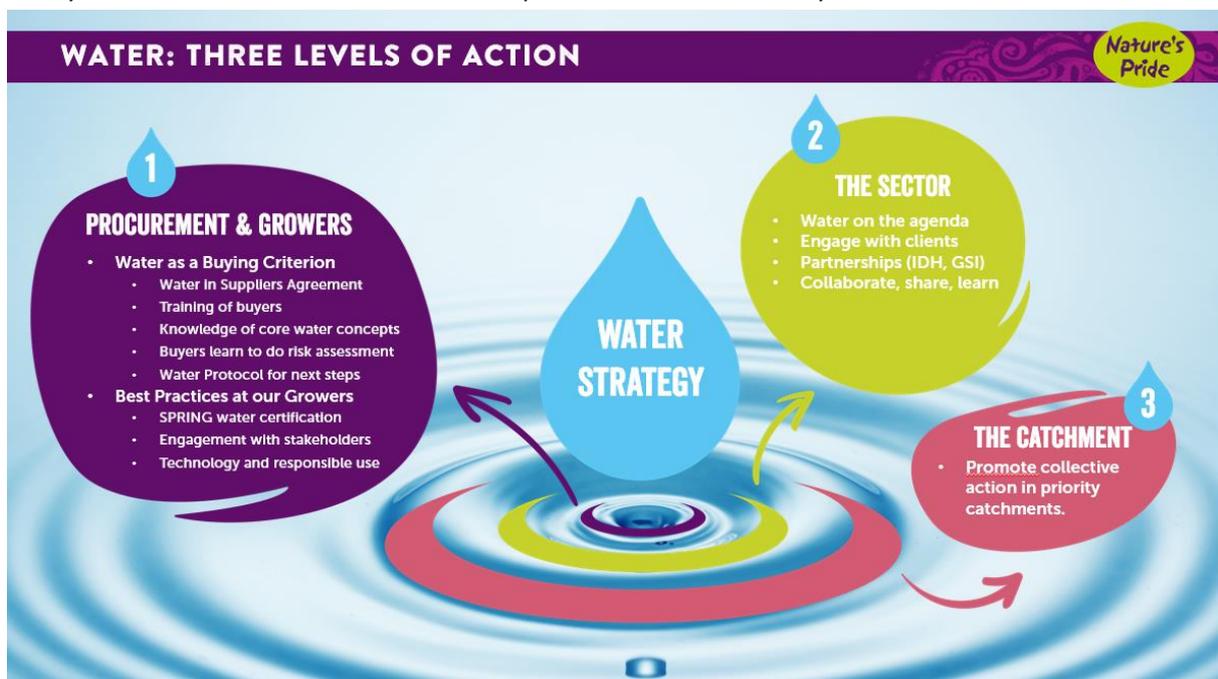
This includes adequate water permits; state-of-the-art irrigation technology; intelligent soil and farm management; construction of reservoirs to use natural water flows (rivers) to irrigate and to re-charge aquifers instead of using groundwater; building infrastructure to treat waste water of nearby cities and using this for irrigation instead of groundwater; *not* using the total amount of water they are entitled to according to their permits; and *not* planting parts of their land, precisely because they are aware of the broader socio-economic context.

However, it is increasingly becoming clear that individual actions are not enough. The water challenges the world faces are hugely complex and accelerating in the context of climate change.

In 2017 Nature's Pride embarked on a process to deepen its understanding of the impact its products have on the availability of water at catchment level. We hired water experts to work with us on two core objectives: 1) increase our understanding of the technical aspects of water management at catchment level and determine our role and responsibility, 2) define concrete activities we can undertake with our growers and other stakeholders to advance water stewardship at farm and catchment level.

Around the same time, landmark reports from WWF<sup>2</sup> highlighted the inadequacy of sustainability audits in our sector to address water challenges and the need for a new narrative on water. It urged us to take further action.

Today, we take action on three levels to implement our Water Policy.



<sup>2</sup> Morgan, A.J. (2017). 'Water risk in agricultural supply chains: How well are sustainability standards covering water stewardship – A Progress Report', WWF Germany, Berlin. Morgan, A.J. (2018). 'Water stewardship revisited: shifting the narrative from risk to value creation', WWF-Germany, Berlin.

In the first level, procurement and growers, Nature's Pride has the most influence. Ultimately, we decide whom we buy products from. In this level, we increased awareness about water in our own procurement team. We made detailed water risk maps for Peru and Chile, using the WWF Water Risk Filter, WRI's (World Resources Institute) Aqueduct, and local water resources, and explained them to our buyers. At the level of growers, we engaged in active dialogue about water, including various field visits and, most notably, the pilot of SPRING, GLOBALG.A.P.'s new water add-on.

In close collaboration with GLOBALG.A.P. we successfully trialed SPRING (Sustainable Program for Irrigation and Groundwater Use) in Q2 and Q3 of 2019. Six strategic suppliers of Nature's Pride from Peru and Chile participated in the pilot, covering 25 fields and various crops. SPRING proved to be an accessible, cost-efficient, and scalable tool to provide third party evidence of legality, best practices and continuous improvement in relation to on-farm responsible water use. Nature's Pride's suppliers are among the first in the world to achieve SPRING certification.

In level 2, we pursue the promotion of responsible water use at sector level. Here we have reasonable influence since we are a big player in our sector. As Chair of the Sustainability Initiative Fruits and Vegetables (SIFAV)<sup>3</sup> from IDH (Sustainable Trade Initiative)<sup>4</sup>, we have been actively involved in putting water on top of the agenda in our sector. Furthermore, we have reached out to main knowledge partners in the water sector, including WWF, WRI, and AWS (Alliance for Water Stewardship) to explore possibilities for collaboration to encourage responsible water use in the fruit and vegetable sector. Finally, Nature's Pride actively participates in the main international water fora, including World Water Week, Alliance for Water Stewardship Annual Forum, and the EU Water Innovation Conference, with the objective to continue to deepen our knowledge about water, as well as share our experience as a speaker.

In level 3, the catchment, Nature's Pride's influence is limited since we are only one buyer among many with only a few suppliers in a particular catchment. Notwithstanding this limitation, Nature's Pride has made it a key objective to be a constructive promoter of collective action in priority catchments. Certain catchments face serious water challenges. Only through collective coordination of *all* water users can water consumption within a catchment be brought within sustainable levels.

### **Steps we will take in 2020**

In 2020, Nature's Pride will continue to deepen its commitment to responsible water use in its value chain. Among others, we will roll-out SPRING to our strategic growers around the world, train our procurement team in doing a water risk assessment themselves, and push for collective action in catchments where stakeholder coordination is urgently needed. Ultimately, we want to promote water stewardship globally throughout our value chain and contribute to bringing water use in priority catchments within annually renewable levels by catchment. We cannot achieve this alone but will do everything in our power to achieve this goal and bring adequate partners on board.

We invite you to join us.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.sifav.com](http://www.sifav.com)

<sup>4</sup> [www.idhsustainabletrade.com](http://www.idhsustainabletrade.com)