

# Lithuania declares emergency as drought hits farmers

July 3 2019

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Lithuania declared an emergency on Wednesday as a severe drought hit the Baltic EU state, threatening to slash this year's harvest by up to half.

Apart from jeopardising crops, scant rainfall has also drastically reduced [water levels](#) in some rivers, threatening fish stocks and shipping activities.

The formal declaration of an "emergency situation" will allow the government to compensate farmers for some losses as well as help them to avoid EU financial sanctions should they fail to reach production goals.

"Farmers believe their harvest can be slashed by 40 percent or 50 percent, while [fish stocks](#) are also endangered," environment minister Kestutis Mazeika told AFP.

Mazeika said "nobody has any doubt" that [global climate change](#) is behind the prolonged and more intensive dry spells and heatwaves in recent years.

He also appealed to neighbouring Belarus to increase the water level in the Neris river by allowing more water to flow from its reservoirs.

Last month was the hottest June ever recorded with soaring temperatures worldwide capped off by a record-breaking heatwave across Western Europe, [satellite data](#) showed Tuesday.

Lithuania also registered its hottest-ever June, with a peak of 35.7 degrees Celsius (96.2 degrees Fahrenheit) recorded on June 12.

Over the last week, firefighters have fought wildfires triggered by the heat in peat bogs in western Lithuania and neighbouring Latvia.

Elsewhere in Central Europe, Polish authorities said this week that varying degrees of drought have put grain crops at risk in 14 of the EU country's 16 regional districts.

The Czech Academy of Sciences said it expects drought to affect the entire country, with 80 percent of the territory facing "exceptional to extreme drought".

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