

# Germany hopes for rain to avoid 3rd straight summer drought

April 28 2020

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An Icelandic horse rolls in the dust in its paddock at a stud farm in Wehrheim near Frankfurt, Germany, Monday, April 27, 2020. Due to a long dry period with no rain falls the grounds in Germany are very dry, farmers expect losses. (AP Photo/Michael Probst)

Germany's farmers, foresters, and firefighters are eagerly awaiting

widespread rain forecast for later this week, as a warm, dry spring has raised fears of a third summer drought in as many years.

Ahead of a virtual climate meeting Tuesday for officials from 30 countries, German Environment Minister Svenja Schulze said the previous two years of dry weather, combined with overall [higher temperatures](#), show the need for action.

"We can see that the last two summers have been extremely dry, that this is already causing enormous problems for our agriculture and forestry," she said. "That is why we have to adapt to the changes we can no longer avert, and we must ensure that it does not get any worse. ... We really must push ahead with climate protection measures now."

Reservoirs are already low, and if there is no heavy rain in the next two to three weeks widespread crop failures could ensue, said Mojib Latif, a meteorologist with the Helmholtz Center for Ocean Research in Kiel.

"The last two years were extraordinarily dry," he told the Rhein-Neckar Zeitung newspaper. "The ground needs rain."

The 2018 drought caused severe crop damage, resulting in such a poor harvest that the German government had to come up with an aid package for farmers worth hundreds of millions of euros. At the same time, rivers and lakes hit record low levels, causing environmental disruption and hitting the freshwater shipping industry.



The hot air shimmers in front of a tractor during a long time of drought near Bad Lauchstaedt, Germany, Monday, April 27, 2020. (AP Photo/Jens Meyer)



A tractor tills a field during a long time of drought near Bad Lauchstaedt, Germany, Monday, April 27, 2020. (AP Photo/Jens Meyer)



Dry river banks are seen due to a long time drought in front of the Bayer chemical plant at the river Rhine in Leverkusen, Germany, Monday, April 27, 2020. The traditional chemical, health care and agriculture giant Bayer AG holds an online-only stockholders' meeting on April 28, 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner)



An Icelandic horse shakes off the dust in its paddock at a stud farm in Wehrheim near Frankfurt, Germany, Monday, April 27, 2020. Germany's farmers, foresters, and firefighters are eagerly awaiting widespread rain forecast for later in the week, as a warm and dry spring has raised fears of a third summer drought in as many years. (AP Photo/Michael Probst)



Plants grow on a field in Falkensee, near Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, April 28, 2020. Germany's farmers, foresters, and firefighters are eagerly awaiting widespread rain forecast for this week, as a warm and dry spring has raised fears of a third summer drought in as many years. (AP Photo/Michael Sohn)



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A tractor tills a field during a long time of drought near Bad Lauchstaedt, Germany, Monday, April 27, 2020. (AP Photo/Jens Meyer)



A woman jogs between rape fields in Fahrland, near Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, April 28, 2020. Germany's farmers, foresters, and firefighters are eagerly awaiting widespread rain forecast for this week, as a warm and dry spring has raised fears of a third summer drought in as many years. (AP Photo/Michael Sohn)



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A lorry drives along a country road that between a flowering rape field and a freshly tilled field in Pattensen, Germany, Tuesday, April 28, 2020. (Julian Stratenschulte/dpa via AP)



Rape grows on a field in Fahrland, near Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, April 28, 2020. Germany's farmers, foresters, and firefighters are eagerly awaiting widespread rain forecast for this week, as a warm and dry spring has raised fears of a third summer drought in as many years. (AP Photo/Michael Sohn)

Last year was also exceptionally dry, causing widespread damage to the country's forests. Wildfire warnings are already at their second-highest level this year, Ulrike Hoefken, minister for the environment and forests in the state of Rheinland-Palatinate, told the dpa news agency.

"A third summer drought in a row would be catastrophic," she said.

There has been almost no [rain](#) since March 14, German Weather Service meteorologist Andreas Friedrich said, and it's too early to tell whether the precipitation expected later this week will be enough to alleviate the situation.

"If May were to be wet again, then we would have an easing of the situation, then there would be no drought," he said. "If, of course, May were to be as dry as April, then we would have to fear a serious [drought](#) situation, but no meteorologist in the world knows that at the moment."

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