

# Water & farmers: Things to know about AP-GfK drought poll

By EMILY SWANSON Associated Press

A new Associated Press-GfK poll finds most Americans think of water as a limited resource that can be depleted if people use too much. When asked to rate priorities when water is scarce during a drought, more said agriculture should be a top or high priority over residential needs, wildlife and industry.

Here is a look at some of the poll's key findings:

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## WATER IS A LIMITED RESOURCE

The poll shows two-thirds of Americans think of water as a limited resource that could be depleted if people use too much, while just one third think of it as a renewable resource that will always be there for people to use.

The belief that water is a limited resource crosses party lines, with a majority of both Democrats and Republicans agreeing.

People living in the West appear particularly likely to think of water as limited, the poll shows, but a majority of people from each region of the country think of water as more limited than renewable.

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## MOST SUPPORT WATER LIMITS

In cases of drought, 7 in 10 Americans say the government should place limits on the amount of water that people and businesses can use. Just 3 in 10 say it should not.

Among those who consider water a limited resource, 78 percent think government should place limits on its use when there is a drought. Just 57 percent of those who consider it a renewable resource say the same.

Just 2 in 10 Americans say they're closely following news of the drought happening in California and other western states.

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## FARMING TAKES HIGHEST PRIORITY

If there is a drought and restrictions must be placed on water use, three-quarters of Americans think agriculture should be a high or top priority to receive water, more than the two-thirds of Americans who say that of residential water use.

A narrow majority of Americans think water supplies for wildlife and ecosystems should be that high a priority, while just 4 in 10 say the same of water for business and industry.

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## PARTIES DISAGREE ON SOME PRIORITIES

Republicans (81 percent) are more likely than Democrats (74 percent) to say water for agriculture should be a high

priority in a drought.

Six in 10 Democrats and about half of Republicans call water for wildlife and ecosystems a high priority. And half of Republicans but just over a third of Democrats say water for business and industry should be a high priority.

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#### SUPPORT FOR LIMITING DEVELOPMENT

Eight in 10 Americans, including similar proportions of both Republicans and Democrats, say the government should limit developers to building only in places with adequate long-term water supplies, while just 2 in 10 think developers should be allowed to build in places with limited access to water.

Even among those who consider water a renewable resource, rather than a limited one, 70 percent say the government should limit developers to building in places with a good water supply.

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The AP-GfK Poll of 1,004 adults was conducted online July 9 to July 13, using a sample drawn from GfK's probability-based KnowledgePanel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.4 percentage points.

Respondents were first selected randomly using phone or mail survey methods, and later interviewed online. People selected for KnowledgePanel who didn't otherwise have access to the Internet were provided access at no cost to them.

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Online:

AP-GfK Poll: <http://www.ap-gfcpoll.com>