

Our client, JFD Hargreaves Ltd, is located within an area closed to new abstraction licences. They required water for spray irrigation and the answer lay in a unique abstraction licence.



The Challenge

Water was required for spray irrigation of root crops. The farm lies on the Chalk aquifer within a groundwater management unit that is designated “no water available”. While water was being used for trickle irrigation, spray irrigation was required to allow more efficient farming.

While at face value there is no way in which we could help the client, it was important that we looked hard for a solution.

The nature of the chalk based catchment and low topographic gradients, meant that surface water was limited and what runoff was available was very flashy and difficult or impossible to capture. We needed to find a groundwater based solution.



The Envireau Way

Our starting point with this type of problem is to try and think outside the box, not to be constrained by what “the book says”. We researched the issues that were restricting groundwater abstraction; we considered the reasons within the context of the WFD; and within the context of the temporal availability of groundwater. We could demonstrate that groundwater was available for some periods of the year.

We needed to explain the concept to the Environment Agency and design an abstraction licence that protected vulnerable times of the year; allowed abstraction when water was available; and could be easily policed.



The Result

In short, we got an abstraction licence. The licence is unique in terms of its justification and in terms of the way it is controlled by a hands off level condition.

The result wouldn't have been possible without the willingness of the Environment Agency to listen, consider and look for solutions. It was far from easy. We were challenged every step of the way. But we, the client and the Environment Agency were at least all pulling in the same direction.

“I knew water was there and that I should be able to abstract it. The Envireau Water team persevered and delivered technical arguments. Without them it wouldn't have happened.”

Ben Hargreaves, Director,
JFD Hargreaves Ltd

Need our help?

It has been said of Envireau Water that “if they can't get you an abstraction licence, nobody can”. We do it by understanding the science and regulations, by keeping it as simple as possible, and by looking for solutions, not barriers.