

Case Study



Ambition 2025: Premier Foods

Premier Foods is one of five businesses who sit on the Tamar Water Stewardship Business Board, which has been active since 2017. The Board was set-up to inspire collaborative working between businesses and advisory groups closely connected to the water environment; this includes food and drink businesses reliant on water for production and those with an impact on the land and water via direct commercial practices or supply chains. Board members also include: The Pennon Group (South West Water), Kepak, ABP, Saputo Dairy UK, Business in the Community and Westcountry Rivers Trust.

The Business Board Action Plan identifies 3 key pressures in the Tamar, these are nutrient management, soil health and habitat loss.

These will be targeted via collective action towards best practice supported by the Business Board and their work with primary producers.

This is one of the sourcing areas that sits under the [Courtauld 2025 Water Ambition](#). Premier Foods also sits on the Courtauld 2025 Water Oversight Panel to govern the project development process and monitor progress.

Work has already begun on River Lyd sub-catchment. Working together to implement a natural capital approach, the Board and their partners have started to map the sub-catchment and identify possible areas of improvement. A mapping exercise identified 240 dominant land owners in total. Of these,

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111 have been engaged so far by the business board.

So far, the Board has assessed the level of water quality risks across the catchment. A combined risk map was created to highlight areas of the catchment that receive high risk scores for multiple risk factors. Farms within high-risk areas are more likely to experience environmental degradation and may be more vulnerable to future environment changes. Of the 111 known producers, 17% are in high-risk areas, 63% in medium-risk areas and 20% in low-risk areas. For the known producers that fall in high risk areas, phosphate loading is the most dominant factor.

Going forward, Premier Foods and other members of the Board will support local

business to implement measures on the ground to reduce risk and improve water resilience.

This could be achieved by engaging producers, selecting appropriate measures, targeting interventions, or assessing costs/benefits.

Proposed measures include:

- Planting of native broadleaved woodland in targeted, strategic locations to reduce the risk of pollution transfer to watercourse by intercepting surface water runoff.
- Using vegetation to buffer field margins and riparian corridors to reduce pollutant loss from agricultural fields by intercepting surface water runoff and to allow a settling out of soils and nutrients.

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- Promoting improved soil management to facilitate the movement and storage of water.

The ambition is to roll this approach out on a wider scale; Tamar-wide and south west region-wide to support collaboration between businesses, suppliers and other local stakeholders.

“The Courtauld target to reduce water stress by working collaboratively is seen as the most difficult to achieve and is daunting to many companies. We are delighted that by coming together as a working group, we have been able to find a common issue and achievable solutions that benefit us all and many aspects of the environment. Premier Foods are able to plant 16,000 trees in 2020 due to the working

group – almost doubling out total tree planting from the last four years – through the benefits of working collaboratively.”

Lee Haughton, Group Environmental Manager,
Premier Foods

[View Ambition 2025 Progress Report.](#)