

Water stewardship

Water is essential for all life on Earth — for drinking and sanitation and to grow food, generate power, support commerce and nurture ecosystems. On average, agriculture accounts for 70% of global freshwater withdrawals,* and the food sector faces increasing risks related to water quality and availability due to the impact of climate change on global and local water cycles and increasing human demands. This underscores the leadership role General Mills and other food companies must take to address water stewardship issues.

At General Mills, we focus on water use from watershed to production; identify opportunities to increase efficiency,

conservation, and regeneration (or recharge); and continually work to improve performance and enhance resilience. Our vision is a healthy water cycle with clean, abundant water accessible to watershed stakeholders and ecosystems. The [General Mills Water Policy](#) provides a framework for improving the health of watersheds that are critical to our business, and we are signatories to the United Nations CEO Water Mandate.

OUR GOAL

In 2006, General Mills developed specific goals to reduce our water usage rate in our owned manufacturing facilities. As we started to look at water more holistically, understanding that the majority of our

water impact is upstream of our direct operations, we subsequently committed to advancing water stewardship plans for the most material and at-risk watersheds in our global value chain. Over the past few years, through research and farmer pilots, we have also been exploring regenerative agriculture as a means to improve water quality and quantity.

Through this evolution of our journey, we have learned a lot about water impacts and water risks, what has worked well and where our approach may have been limited. On the positive side, our approach has been holistic and collaborative, acknowledging the need for all stakeholders to work together. On the other hand, given the sheer size of watersheds, we have had challenges in influencing and enforcing water stewardship plans. Moreover, we learned

Our goal

To champion the regeneration of water resources in priority watersheds.

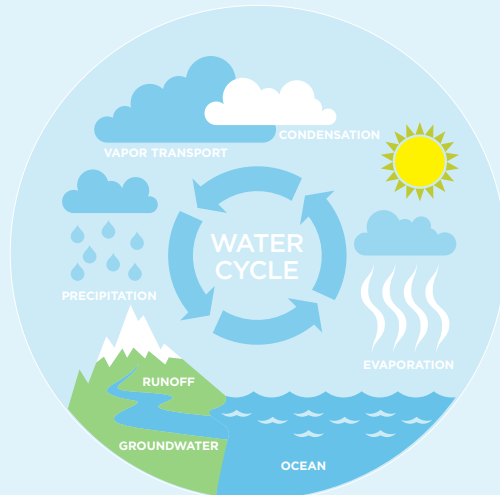


that having a plan doesn't necessarily guarantee a healthy watershed or that our company's water risk will be mitigated.

In fiscal 2022, we updated our water commitment to reflect that, as a food company, General Mills will always depend on clean, abundant water to grow our ingredients and manufacture our products: To champion the regeneration of water resources in priority watersheds.

ECOSYSTEMS RELY ON A HEALTHY GLOBAL AND LOCAL WATER CYCLE

All living creatures require water to survive. The water cycle moves water throughout the planet, providing water storage, cleaning, and distribution. The water cycle sustains life and creates the ecosystems around us.



Farms that grow our ingredients depend on water



Livestock need clean water to drink and water to grow their feed.



Plants require adequate rainfall or irrigation from ground water or surface water to grow.



Pollinators, birds and other local wildlife depend on access to water and healthy plants.



Water makes it possible for soil microbes to cycle nutrients and consume soil organic matter, key to healthy soil.



Farmers rely on water to run their businesses — and as living beings!



Farm communities need water for drinking, sanitation, recreation and more.

As a food company, General Mills depends on water

FOR INGREDIENTS — 85%

- Growing ingredients from both crops and livestock
- Ingredient transformation

FOR PACKAGING — 14%

- Growing (fiber) and extracting (metal, plastic) packaging feedstocks
- Feedstock transformation
- Packaging manufacture

FOR MANUFACTURING — 1%

- Plant sanitation
- As an ingredient
- Employee well-being

*Source: <https://www.oecd.org/water/water-use-in-agriculture.htm>