

As authorities battle forest fires and mobilize specialist teams to protect crops from scorching temperatures across the Yangtze river basin, China has issued a 'yellow alert', its first national drought warning of the year, according to a [report by Reuters](#).

The news of the alert, which is two notches short of the most serious warning on Beijing's scale, comes after regions from Sichuan in the southwest to Shanghai in the Yangtze delta have experienced weeks of extreme heat.

As many as 66 rivers across 34 counties in the southwestern region of Chongqing have dried up, state broadcaster CCTV said on Friday. Citing local government data, it added that rainfall in Chongqing this year is down 60 percent compared to the seasonal norm, and the soil in several districts is severely short of moisture.

As a result, the Chongqing agricultural bureau has set up expert teams to protect vulnerable crops and expand planting to compensate for losses ahead of the autumn harvest.

The water resources ministry has instructed drought-hit agricultural regions to draw up rotas determining who can access supplies at any particular time, to ensure they do not run out.

To read the full report, please [click here](#).