



Drought is unpredictable

Drought occurs when there is not enough water. But where exactly is the 'leak'? Which sources of water failed in the drought of 2018? Meteorologist Imme Benedict studied weather data from the past 40 years to find out where moisture normally comes from and how that changes during a dry spell. The drought of 2018 was caused by a persistent high-pressure area above Western Europe. That blocked the usual supply of humid air from the Atlantic. The main sources of precipitation were then local evaporation and moisture brought in from the east. But even with that knowledge of the water cycle, it is still difficult to predict dry spells. 'There are still so many processes we need to understand better, for example for simulating a persistent high-pressure area. It is important to focus on this so that we can use this knowledge to improve the reliability of simulations for the future.' RK