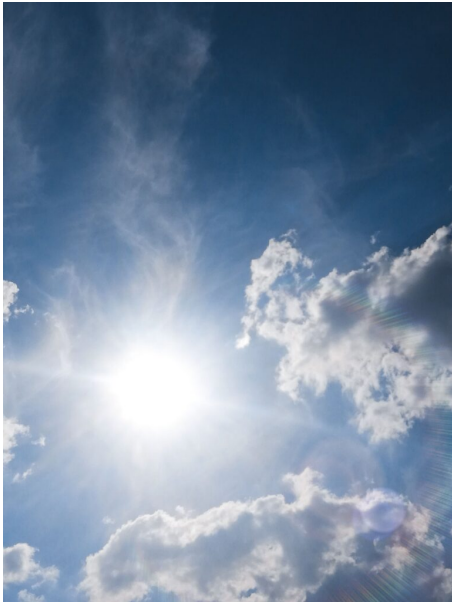


Is Your Food Factory Ready for the Next Heatwave?

9 hours ago



Following the [warmest June on record](#) for England, it's thought extreme temperatures will become the norm for the future. Highs of 30°C or more are predicted to dominate our previously lacklustre British summers, with the [Met Office noting our summers are twice as likely to be hotter](#) now compared to the period of 1991-2020.

With recent red extreme heat warnings popping up across southern England and south-east Wales – for only the second time since the warnings were created in 2021 – reduced transport services and the closure of some schools, it's clear our UK infrastructure isn't prepared for this level of heat.

But, if global warming continues to worsen, Met Office projections show [temperatures over 40°C](#) could become not just a serious possibility for the UK, but even the summer average for some areas in the south, by the 2070s.

Like our transport systems, schools, offices, hospitals and homes, legacy cooling systems installed in food factories across the country – originally built to withstand historical UK conditions – are seriously struggling.

So, are your systems at risk, and what can you do to protect your products and supply? In this piece, Mike England, UK [HVAC Rental](#) Manager at Daikin Rental Solutions, offers some expert insight.

Worries for food security

The UK's cold chain is [worth an incredible £50bn](#) and makes up almost half of all food and drink sold by UK manufacturers. However – according to Phil Pluck, CEO of the Cold Chain Federation (CCF) – this vital

industry is “shamefully undervalued” by the country’s security and resilience policy.

A recent report from the National Preparedness Commission examines this issue, calling for a shift away from ‘Just in Time’ models of preparedness to ‘Just in Case’ systems. This would ensure we have solutions in place *in case* anything goes wrong, rather than solving problems *just in time* to avoid serious concerns.

The annual loss of crops and livestock due to heat stress **already totals £250m**, with predictions that this could increase to an extremely concerning £2.3bn as early as the 2030s. “As our world warms up, we need to upgrade our cooling capacity as a country,” England says. “Many existing cooling systems were designed for a different climate. As temperatures continue to rise, they’re increasingly being pushed beyond their original design limits”. “While overheated workspaces or homes may just be uncomfortable for many, hotter temperatures pose a severe risk for some sectors, especially the food and drink manufacturing industry.

“As average temperatures continue to creep up, food manufacturing systems face productivity drops, outright system failures and product spoilage or recall, as well as health risks for customers and damage to brand reputation”.

“This is why it’s so vital to have an effective cooling strategy in place, whether that’s upgrading existing equipment or supplementing it with temporary rental cooling during periods of peak demand, to keep product at the ideal temperature consistently and reliably. If it’s not possible to update the full system, supplementing your existing, struggling system with a temporary rental chiller or cooling solution is also a fantastic option, to ensure positive results.”

Summer emergencies

Around **12% of the food produced** around the world is lost thanks to insufficient refrigeration – equating to more than 520m tonnes of product. Of this wasted food, 13% is lost between harvest and the wider supply chain.

But with temperatures rising and legacy systems struggling to cope, this number is only set to increase – particularly during the initial manufacturing and distribution stages of the supply chain – especially with summer emergencies on the horizon.

“A cooling failure or emergency doesn’t have to spell disaster for your food manufacturing facility,” England explains. “Ensuring that you have a back-up system on standby is no longer a luxury, but a crucial component of good business operations.”

“Rather than taking a ‘Just in Time’ approach, shift instead to a ‘Just in Case’ mindset and protect your company and your products when unexpected failures occur, with a back-up cooling system, ready and waiting to be deployed.

“Avoid a serious delay or even complete failure of operations by keeping a back-up cooling system on standby at all times. Whether you invest in a full system that can be deployed to support your existing legacy system at times of need or during seasonal spikes in temperature, or you decide to rent a cooling system that can be implemented to avoid an emergency, having a back-up is always a good business move.

“Remote monitoring can also provide early warning of developing issues, helping identify problems before they become critical failures. Combined with a robust contingency plan, this gives manufacturers greater confidence that production can continue even when unexpected issues arise.”

“This kind of business-minded thinking is also a positive during a period of planned shutdown, such as essential works or maintenance, meaning production doesn’t have to halt altogether.”

System health check

Concerned your factory and manufacturing systems might be at risk from the mounting UK heat or summer emergencies? “Start by stress testing three important points,” England suggests.

“Look at the performance of your cooling system on peak days – whether that’s the hottest day of operation so far, or your busiest day – and ensure your cooling system is still performing at optimal levels.

“Check the deployment time for your planned backup solution. Can this be implemented straight away, or will you have a period of downtime while you wait for full installation and transfer of solutions? This will impact the level of production you are able to sustain during the transfer period, as well as whether or not you can prevent product spoilage.

“You should also check the recovery time of your cold storage after an open-door event or human error. A cooling system that fails in the face of momentary changes in temperature levels is not good enough for your business. If the temperature starts to creep up quickly when the door is left open, for example, you should consider replacing the whole system or getting a backup to supplement against any extreme heat you might be experiencing.”

With no sign of the increasing temperatures letting up, performing a full health check on your current cooling systems is the first step towards securing a reliable temperature consistency for the coming quarter and beyond.