

Farmers Doing More With Less

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Far too often, we see and hear misleading statements about wasteful agricultural water use. The reality is that regardless of how much rain and snowpack California will receive this winter, San Joaquin Valley farmers must use their water as efficiently as possible.



Therefore, the efficient use of limited water supplies has become even more essential for farmers to stay in business.

Knowing that only a limited supply of water can be expected each year, California farmers have continually

According to a report by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), [Water and the California Economy](#),

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invested in new technology to improve water use efficiency and production.

water demands for agriculture have actually decreased in recent decades. During that time, urban water use has also flattened out. More noteworthy, the report documents that California's water use for environmental purposes spiked. As regulators implement additional flow criteria and water quality standards throughout the state, that trend is expected to continue in the future.

According to the PPIC report, although agricultural water use has steadily declined since 1980, agricultural productivity has increased by 40 percent over that same period of time. Water per pound of product produced is also steadily declining.

Simply put, farmers today are growing more with less.

Water supplies for farmers are dictated by an increasingly complex interaction of regulatory variables, including operation of the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and state water law. As a result, human consumption now plays a secondary role.

As California farmers continue to invest in water efficiency technology and responsibly manage increasingly constricted resources, it can be instructive to take a step back, look at the big picture and give credit where credit is due.



Delta Watch

A Project of the Coalition for a Sustainable Delta



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