

Water Quality and Quantity

The agriculture industry is a key stakeholder in developing watershed management policies related to water quality and quantity (both surface and groundwater). Continued engagement between policymakers and agricultural stakeholders is critical ensuring agricultural interests are reflected in water policy development.

AEPA Key Messages:

- Continued access to safe and reliable water supplies is essential for the agriculture industry sustaining future growth and development.
- Water and land-use policies should take into account future food production needs and opportunities responding to world population growth and emerging economies.
- To remain economically viable, the agriculture industry will require time developing the capacity to effectively respond to place-based water quality objectives. Improvements need to be incremental with measureable change occurring over the longer term.
- System objectivesⁱ need to recognize water quality variances related to the size and origin of rivers and tributaries.
- A flexible water allocation decision-making system is necessary to meet agriculture industry needs and manage the risk of climate variability. To ensure flexibility, water supply management should consider all options including storage, drainage, and distribution.
- Continued efforts by the agriculture industry to increase water conservationⁱⁱ, efficiencyⁱⁱⁱ and productivity^{iv} should be supported to achieve environmental, economic, and social outcomes.
- Decision-makers need timely and accurate information and tools to make informed choices such as continued development of a comprehensive and accurate groundwater mapping database.

ⁱ Objectives: Provide clear boundaries and establish the direction for environmental management in a given place.

ⁱⁱ Water Conservation: Any beneficial reduction in water use, loss or waste.

ⁱⁱⁱ Water Efficiency: Accomplishment of a function, task, process, or result with the minimal amount of water feasible.

^{iv} Water Productivity: Amount of water that is required to produce a unit of any good, service, or societal value.