



Colloquium and Research Seminar
Water Savings, Farmers and Aquifers in the
Lerma-Chapala Basin, Mexico

18 May 2004

Colloquium Room (C60), De Nieuwlanden

14.00-14.30 Flip Wester

Overview of the Lerma-Chapala Basin

14.30-15.00 Hans Paters

Farmers Efforts to Manage Decentralization and Save Surface
Water in the Lerma-Chapala Basin

15.00-15.15 Break

15.15-15.45 Jaime Hoogesteger

The Underground: Understanding the Failure of Institutional
Responses to Reduce Groundwater Exploitation in Guanajuato

15.45-16.15 Gabriel Torres:

Systems of Life: Water, Food Production and Global Change in
the Lerma-Chapala-Santiago Basin

16-15-16.45 Discussion



Lake Chapala in 1976



Lake Chapala in 2002

As part of the Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture (CA) program (see www.iwmi.cgiar.org/assessment), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and its partners have made provisions for case studies on river basins to create a knowledge base on how, in a river basin context, water can be managed in an equitable, pro-poor, efficient and sustainable manner. The Irrigation and Water Engineering group (IWE) of Wageningen University has obtained funding from the CA program to carry out research in the Lerma-Chapala Basin in Mexico.

On Tuesday, 18 May 2004 a Colloquium and Research Seminar on Water Savings, Farmers and Aquifers in the Lerma-Chapala Basin, Mexico will be held from 14.00 to 16.45 in the colloquium room of De Nieuwlanden. Special guest is Dr. Gabriel Torres of CIESAS (Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social), Mexico. You are cordially invited to attend.

14.00-14.30 Flip Wester: Overview of the Lerma-Chapala Basin

14.30-15.00 Hans Paters: Farmers Efforts to Manage Decentralization and Save Surface Water in the Lerma-Chapala Basin

Irrigation management turnover has taken place in Mexico and the formation of Water Users Associations (WUA) took place quite rapidly, while following different trajectories. Simultaneously, these associations encountered pressure to manage water in a more efficient way in order to make it available for other use and the environment. It is unclear to what degree the efforts of the WUA-overarching Integral Agricultural Planning Group (GTEPAI) are effective in: reducing surface water use, helping farmers to sustain their livelihoods and hereby mitigating one major cause of water contest, which is most visible by the continuing depletion and contamination of Lake Chapala.

15.00-15.15 Break

15.15-15.45 Jaime Hoogesteger: The Underground: Understanding the Failure of Institutional Responses to Reduce Groundwater Exploitation in Guanajuato

Groundwater in the State of Guanajuato, Mexico is severely overexploited. Since the advent of tubewell technology in the early 1950's groundwater irrigation expanded rapidly in the State and presently consumes between 75-85% of extracted groundwater. Farmers are semi-subsistence producers of basic grains or commercial farmers that supply national and international markets with vegetables. Contract farming has developed as one of the most important production systems for both kinds of producers. Several governmental responses aimed at reducing groundwater exploitation have emerged in the past years without being effective. The presentation analyzes these responses and why these have not been effective in reducing overexploitation by studying groundwater irrigation practices.

15.45-16.15 Gabriel Torres: Systems of Life: Water, Food Production and Global Change in the Lerma-Chapala-Santiago Basin

16-15-16.45 Discussion