



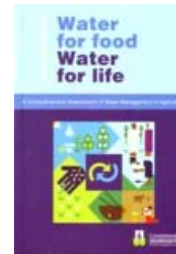
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Title: Water for Food Water for Life	
Author(s): David Molden (ed).	
Date of Publication: 2007	Publisher: Earthscan
Pages: xviii + 645	ISBN: 978 1 84407 396 2
Price:	Format: Paperback

Overview:

Target Readership	Sen Secondary
Presentation/Style	★ ★ ★ ★
Content	★ ★ ★ ★
Literature	★ ★ ★
Originality	★ ★ ★ ★
Overall	★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Content: Summary for decision-makers; 1 – Setting the scene; 2 - Trends in water and agricultural development; 3 - Looking ahead to 2050: scenarios of alternative investment approaches; 4 - Reversing the flow: agricultural water management pathways for poverty reduction; 5 - Policy and institutional reform: the art of the possible; 6 - Agriculture, water and ecosystems: avoiding the costs of going too far; 7 - Pathways for increasing agricultural water productivity; 8 - Managing water in rainfed agriculture; 9 - Reinventing irrigation; 10 - Groundwater: a global assessment of scale and significance; 11 - Agricultural use of marginal-quality water - opportunities and challenges; 12 - Inland fisheries and aquaculture; 13 - Water and livestock for human development; 14 - Rice: feeding the billions; 15 - Conserving land - protecting water; 16 - River basin development and management.

Review: Water is a key global resource. This book, subtitled 'a comprehensive assessment of water management in agriculture' is an attempt to produce a workable summary of the water needs in one area. Although the topic is well known there have been very few recent attempts at something on this scale and as such this book should be seen alongside global assessments of biodiversity and global warming as a key publication. Of course, the scope is one thing and the actual production is another.

We start with the preface which outlines the basis of the study and the 10 key questions they sought to answer. A summary provides a very useful overview of the research. The basis for discussion here is the simple question of whether there will be enough water. The response - yes, but - takes the remainder of the book to answer in detail. It might be tempting to either stop at this or to ignore it but in reality the reader should do neither because subsequent chapters provide a wealth of detail and the summary is a very useful guide to an otherwise lengthy report. The remainder of the text is divided into four unequal parts. The first part/chapter covers the study methodology and the key concepts behind it. There is also discussion on the limitations of the study and the ways in which the best outcome can be found. This is important to note - the study is aimed at solutions not just research. Part two focusses on trends and scenario building. The aim here is to look at how we got into our current situation and what it might be like in 2050. A range of drivers are outlined and the diversity of solutions are also given credence. Part three acknowledges that water is not a solo issue but one linked to a range of other areas. The idea of chapter four is that the relationship between development, water, agriculture and poverty is neither simple nor easy - it's a highly complex web where not all the parts are understood. Chapter five takes this uncertainty and complexity and tries to make a policy and reform framework from it. Chapter six tackles the idea of excess. The problem with water is that it is rarely sufficient to just add it to soil to find a solution. It's the idea that irrigation and drainage go together that confuses students and yet the damage that overuse of the water resource can do is often ignored. Here we have a review of the problems caused by over-abstractation of water which range from altered watercourses to change in water quality. Chapter seven works on the idea that water supply is fixed and therefore it's best to use what we have more productively. Part four tackles a range of thematic issues - specific areas of water use and management that are seen as crucial to the managed development of the resource. Topics covered range from rainfed agriculture (making do with natural resources in drier areas) to irrigation (better use of technology) and river basin development (holistic approach to sustainable use).

This is a remarkable text on many levels. For those seeking more information this book has a wealth

of detail. There are numerous maps, data tables, diagrams and images which provide statistics and case studies. Those wishing for a readable account of a complex theme will be delighted in the production ideas in the book. The initial summary is a vital resource. Chapters start with an overview where the degree of certainty in statements is often explicit. End-of-chapter notes, summaries and references make follow-up easy. This, backed some very impressive full-colour production techniques makes it a very accessible resource. The assessment itself is a very interesting methodology an the focus of practical solutions and sustainability goals mean that the book becomes a possible reality rather than a dry tome or polemic which it could easily become. Overall, one of the most remarkable books on this topic - it should become a classic text and a necessity in the library. The first must-buy book of 2007.

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