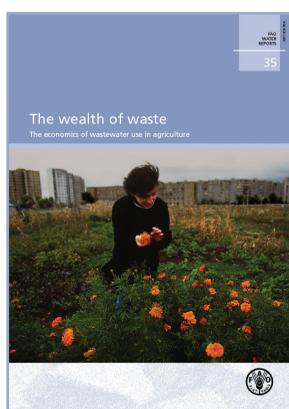




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New FAO water report: The wealth of waste

The economics of wastewater use in agriculture



The wealth of waste: The economics of wastewater use in agriculture

By: Winpenny, J., Heinz, I., Koo-Oshima, S.

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In recent times, the coalescence of different pressures - agriculture water abstraction, population growth, increasing urbanization, drought, reduced run-off, water quality deterioration - has put a major strain on water supply globally. The level of water abstraction is reaching its natural limits, and this calls for a dramatic shift in water utilization concepts. The traditional "linear society" is not a sustainable solution and the "circular society" has to become a new standard. In this context planned water reclamation and reuse for agricultural uses is a strategy gaining wider acceptance in many parts of the world.

The current FAO Water Report addresses the economic and financial issues and the methodology and procedures involved in the analysis of water recycling projects as part of a comprehensive water planning process. The issue is dealt within the wider context of water resources and covers human health, water quality, acceptability, institutional constraints, and other factors, all of which have economic implications and affect the feasibility of reuse schemes. The report has a strong focus on success factors in reuse projects from Case Studies in Spain and Mexico.

The recycling of urban wastewater is a key link in Integrated Water Resource Management- IWRM- that can fulfill several different, but interrelated objectives. These are expressed as win-win propositions, delivering simultaneous benefits to farmers, cities and natural environmental systems, part of the solutions to the urgent global problems of food, clean water, the safe disposal of waters and the protection of the vital aquatic ecosystems.

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