

Software could save 800 billion litres a year

A Queensland water scientist has developed a software program that can save up to 50 per cent of the water currently used to irrigate Australia's one million-plus hectares of cotton, grain and sugar cane crops.



Credit: iStockphoto

Dr Malcolm Gillies from the CRC for Irrigation Futures said the software can be used to monitor the performance of furrow, bay and basin irrigation, which are the main methods to irrigate crops in Australia. 'Water savings averaging 20 per cent, and as high as 50 per cent, can be achieved through improved flow rates and scheduled irrigation times suited to various field layouts and soil types,' he said.

'Potential total water savings in Australia are estimated at over 800 000 megalitres (800 billion litres) a year. The saving is potentially applicable to farming systems in Australia which use more than 4 000 000 megalitres (4000 billion litres) of irrigation water.'

The new tools will be integrated into an existing suite of irrigation technology called IRRIMATE, developed at the University of Southern Queensland.

From ECOS online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC153p7c>