

## News Release

For Immediate Release:  
May 17, 2006

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**Editors:** Visit [www.sare.org/press](http://www.sare.org/press) to download cover and feature images.

### Conservation Approaches to Agricultural Water Use

**Beltsville, MD** – Long-term droughts in the Southwest, increasing water scarcity in the semi-arid Plains and seasonal rain shortages throughout the South and Northeast have prompted many farmers and ranchers to seek ways to conserve water.

“The hard truth is that we’re drawing down the aquifer,” said Vivien Allen, a Texas Tech University researcher who has devised ways to reduce water in cotton systems. “Everything pivots around water.”

Now producers and agricultural educators have a new, free resource highlighting new approaches to water use, including promising conservation measures. “Smart Water Use on Your Farm or Ranch,” a 16-page bulletin by the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), features ways to manage soil to improve infiltration, select drought-tolerant crops and native forages, and design innovative runoff collection systems.

“Smart Water Use” showcases innovative research, much of it funded by the USDA’s Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, such as Texas Tech University’s alternative cotton rotation that pairs cotton with cattle and drought-tolerant forages – and reduced water use by 23 percent in university trials. In Nebraska, University of Nebraska-Lincoln researchers are testing cool-season oil crops such as brown mustard and camelina during the fallow period in wheat systems, producing biofuel while retaining water for the next grain crop. University of Arizona researchers have designed water-saving systems pairing olive production with shrimp farming to grow two products from one water source.

The bulletin also features farmers and ranchers who work hard to conserve water. Minnesota farmer Tim Gieseke designed a contour capture system to divert hillside runoff to valuable walnut tree roots. Milford Denetclaw of Shiprock, N.M., built a new irrigation system with a gated pipe that regulates water flow and improves a native grass pasture for his beef herd.

“Smart Water Use” is the latest of a series of publications that feature the most creative research funded by SARE. Download the entire publication at [www.sare.org/publications/water.htm](http://www.sare.org/publications/water.htm). To order free print copies, visit [www.sare.org/Webstore](http://www.sare.org/Webstore), call 301/504-5236 or email [san\\_assoc@sare.org](mailto:san_assoc@sare.org). Agricultural educators may place orders for print copies in quantity at no cost.

*“Smart Water Use on Your Farm or Ranch” was published by the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. SARE is a program of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and*

*Extension Service (CSREES), USDA, and works with producers, researchers and educators to promote farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities. SAN operates under a cooperative agreement between CSREES and the University of Vermont and the University of Maryland to develop and disseminate information about sustainable agriculture. For more information about SARE grant opportunities and other SAN resources, visit [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org).*

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