Western Governors’ Drought Forum

NOV. 13-14, 2014
California State Capitol, Sacramento, CA

Drought Impacts and Solutions in the Agricultural Sector

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The Western Governors’ Drought Forum initiative is being conducted in partnership with NOAA’s National Integrated Drought Information System.
In response to Australia’s Millennium Drought, $2 Billion was invested in canal control technologies to sustain agriculture.

- 840,000 acres of irrigated land
- 2.5M ac-ft diverted for agriculture
- 3,900 miles of open canals
- 70-80% of the water used in Victoria
- 14,000 irrigators, 20,000 service points
- 8,000 regulating structures
- $10 billion dollars of agricultural production (dairy, fruit trees, grapes, tomatoes)

- Victoria is approximately equal to Colorado in Land Mass
- The Murray River is Approximately As Long As The Colorado River, with Equivalent Flow Capacities
Canal system investments make available an additional 344,250 ac-ft each year

Efficiency improved from 65% to 85%

Phase 1 (2008-2012) 182,250 ac-ft for $1b
- Installed sophisticated management software to manage both demand and supply
- Automated 1,875 miles of primary canals
- Deployed nearly 12,000 automated gates
- Installed nearly 6,300 meters in service points

Phase 2 (2014-2017) 162,000 ac-ft for $1b
- Converting 2,200 miles of tertiary channels into gravity pipe with capacity from 21 to 35cfs
- Irrigation farmers do NOT want to be exposed to rising energy costs from pumping
- Low energy pipeline solutions are half the cost of traditional pipeline solutions
Irrigation district ‘more resilient’

Modernisation working

The international spotlight on water availability and accountability is highlighting northern Victoria’s water management to the world

Modern marvel at work

Modernisation has increased cropping potential

Benefits that flow to all Victorians

Irrigators put their heads together to reap the benefits of modernisation.

Upgrade ensures farm’s viability

Groups welcome irrigation upgrade

Result a-maizes
Californian Irrigation Districts are benefitting from this same technology, at typically below $50 per ac-ft per year

Operational Spills Before Canal Automation

Downstream Spills Eliminated by Automation

Savings of 1,700 AF per year on the Claribel lateral alone, 6.5 mile canal with 17 pools
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