



## **USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference**

### [Reclaimed Water Use in Florida: Changes Since the 1990s](#)

Florida is one of the larger producers of reclaimed water in the U.S., and use of this water has increased greatly in the past twelve years. This study will compare changes in reclaimed water use by different entities over the past several years. From 1986 to 2004, total reuse treatment capacity and flow in Florida increased by 252 and 206%, respectively. In the 1980s, reclaimed water (treated wastewater) was considered to be an urban disposal problem, and cities encouraged use of this water by giving it away for no charge. Because it was free, agricultural irrigation became the largest user of reclaimed water in the mid-1990s and is still one of the important users. From 1992 to 2004, overall agricultural acreage irrigated with reclaimed water increased by 81%. Land area of edible crops irrigated with reclaimed water increased during that period but remained relatively constant around 6100 ha after 1996. Irrigation of other crops increased to 9900 ha. Golf course irrigation increased by 236% to 22,078 ha while residential irrigation increased dramatically (over 8000%) to 36,239 ha during this period. Total flow to ground water recharge and industrial uses increased by 145 and 435%, respectively. While agricultural irrigation is still a large user of this water, other uses such as residential, golf course, groundwater recharge, and industrial have become more important. Some cities are no longer willing to provide this water to agriculture for no charge as competition from other entities increases. Agriculture may have to pay for reclaimed water, use less water, or develop other water sources.

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