



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

[Ag Water Management via the Web: The Georgia Farmer Portal](#)

Since the mid 1980s the state of Georgia has required that all water withdrawals totaling more than 100,000 gallons per day be registered with the Department of Natural Resources. These permits are divided into categories as to the type of use such as municipal, industrial or agricultural. In 2004, the Georgia State Legislature required that all 21,000 agricultural water withdrawal permits be metered with the intension of monitoring use by annual meter readings. The potential to have metered annual use is an excellent opportunity for regional analyses of agricultural water use. With the installation of the farmer as a resource of information, the potential expands the ability to collect irrigation and cropping practices on an event basis rather than an annual basis. The Georgia Farmer Portal provides free web based tools to achieve such goals by allowing the farmer to report events such as rainfall, crop plant and harvest dates, irrigation information. Utilizing the latest aerial imagery available in conjunction with an extensive GIS database, farmers can manage their information via visible, geographic locations such as meter locations or individual fields providing a total picture of irrigation and crop practices through out the year. The data can be presented to the farmer in terms of their yield and water use in comparison to averages in a pre-determined area such as county, basin or state. Reports can be generated on the basis of crop, soil type, tillage system, seed type and others. The Georgia Farmer Portal also collects valuable information that can provide local, regional, and state irrigation and crop data on common geographic divisions necessary for informed policy decisions. The information collected can further be applied to the documentation of "reasonable use" for individual farmers and in support of interstate issues relating to water allocation.

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