Addressing Water for Agriculture in the Colorado River Basin: Planning for Water Research, Extension, and Education*

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Planning Grant Project Team

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Project Background

Activities:
- Team building for Regional Project
- Interviews
- Survey
- GIS Mapping

Objective: work with Ag water managers to explore:
- How they are responding to changes and pressures they are facing
- How they see the future of Ag in their area of the Basin
- Beliefs about Ag water transfers, water law and policy, and the role of storage
- How land-grant universities can assist to address Ag water issues
Uncertainty about water supply security in CRB
Growing pressure to closely link surface and groundwater management
Greater regulatory burden
Increased pressure across basin for more efficient use of ag water and for conservation
Both cooperation and conflicts created from growing demand by other interest groups
Concern about a lack of public understanding of and support for irrigated ag
Uncertain transition to new generation of farmers
Positive experience with land-grant universities
Varied views about the future

Stakeholder Interviews
## Ag Water User Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pressures impacting ag water users</strong></td>
<td>Drought was ranked the highest (87%)</td>
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<td>Growing urban and suburban areas ranked second highest (65%)</td>
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<td>Most prevalent option in response to identified pressures is to leave fields fallow when water is scarce (46%)</td>
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<td>Alter water management practices was second option (42%)</td>
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<td><strong>Beliefs About:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Water availability</strong></td>
<td>69% agree that there will not be enough water for ag in the CRB in the future</td>
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<td><strong>Water law/policy</strong></td>
<td>60% believe policymakers do not understand the importance of ag in their area</td>
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<td><strong>Role of storage</strong></td>
<td>75% believe it is possible for different sectors (including environmental) to work together to develop storage projects that meet multiple needs</td>
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<td><strong>Preferences for meeting future demands</strong></td>
<td>Water conservation and efficiency were ranked the highest (77%)</td>
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<td>Public policy that supports keeping land and water in ag (75%)</td>
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<td><strong>Interest/involvement in water transfers</strong></td>
<td>76% of respondents are strongly opposed to the temporary transfer of water from ag</td>
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<td>Only 4% are considering (or have considered) a transfer of their water right to a non-ag water user.</td>
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<td><strong>Potential for cooperation to address water challenges</strong></td>
<td>59% agree that ag water users should coordinate with other sectors in order to stretch limited water supplies</td>
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GIS Mapping: Agricultural Water Governance

Objective:
Develop geospatial layers for multi-level, multi-purpose governance of agricultural water

Activities:
- Data Collection
- Data Visualization
- Support Survey & Interviews

Data collected:
- Political jurisdictions
- Hydrologic boundaries
- Ag water districts
NEXT STEPS...

Project Website: www.crbagwater.colostate.edu