

Documents

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Impacts of agricultural policy on irrigation water demand: a case study of Saudi Arabia
(2014) *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, 30 (2), pp. 282-292. Cited 19 times.

Abstract

Saudi Arabia's groundwater resources have been heavily over-exploited to achieve food self-sufficiency. The country enacted a new agricultural policy that discourages the cultivation of wheat and encourages that of vegetables and fruits. This has produced significant reductions in irrigation water demand as well as food self-sufficiency. This paper reviews the performance of the Saudi agricultural sector and presents four scenarios forecasting the new policy's long-term impacts on the use of water for agriculture. The findings show that the new policy does not support sustainable utilization of groundwater resources. Additional policy modifications are needed to optimize the combination of import and domestic production of agricultural products based on a sustainable water utilization strategy. © 2014 Taylor & Francis.

2-s2.0-84897448603

Document Type: Article
Publication Stage: Final
Source: Scopus