

## **1792 Trends in Water Conservation Among U.S. Cotton Producers**

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U.S. cotton producers have made significant progress in water conservation. According to the USDA Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey, cotton ranks 19th out of 24 crops in terms of water use per irrigated acre despite the fact that cotton is grown in warmer climates with greater water requirements. From 1988-2003, cotton's water use declined 28%, by 2.24 million acre-feet. This is equivalent to the annual water use of 20-25 million people. This decline occurred even though irrigated cotton acreage went from 4.0 million to 4.1 million acres from 1988-2003. Water use per irrigated acre declined from 2 acre-feet per acre in 1988 to 1.4 acre-feet per acre in 2003, a 30% drop. While part of the reduction in water use intensity has come from regional production shifts to areas with lower water requirements a more significant factor has been the increased used of sprinkler irrigation, which grew from 19% of irrigated cotton acres in 1988 to 50% of acres in 2003.