



Saving Water on the Farm or Ranch

We can all do our part to reduce impacts of limited water supplies – **and we can start by conserving the water we use today.** Here are some helpful and common tips for saving water on your farm or ranch.

- **Fix any leaks in the irrigation system:** Some studies have shown a significant portion of applied water can be lost to leaks.
- **Make your irrigation system more efficient and easier to maintain:** Consider reducing nozzle sizes or installing drip irrigation. Research has shown that drip irrigation and drip tape can use 30 percent to 50 percent less water in many cases.
- **Ensure pivot pressure regulators and nozzles are in good operating order:** This will ensure uniformity of water distribution. Inspect systems regularly and replace worn pressure regulators and nozzles as needed.
- **Know how much water you are using:** Install flow meters or other measurement devices that keep track of water use.
- **Monitor or test soil moisture:** To save water, it is important to determine if moisture is penetrating below crop root zones. If moisture consistently moves below the root zone, you're likely overwatering. Use soil moisture probes or tensiometers to guide irrigation timing.
- **Turn off end guns and leave the corners of fields fallow:** This can meaningfully reduce applied water.
- **Plant less water-intensive crops:** Shift to cropping patterns that are less water dependent than your current system. Plant varieties of crops that withstand dryness, hold water, and reduce the need for irrigation. Melons, tomatoes, squash and beans are better suited to dry conditions, while lettuce and corn rely on wetter conditions to thrive.
- **Tap into local resources:** A variety of technical bulletins and online resources are available from partners around the state. The Extension Program through Oregon State University, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and local soil and water conservation districts can help you find ways to use water more efficiently this year and beyond!

For more information, visit owrd.info/savewater