

# Conagua vows more efficient water utilization

WIRE REPORTS

Mexico uses water for farming at an efficiency rate as low as 33 percent in some regions, National Water Commission officials said Saturday at the Fifth World Water Forum in Istanbul.

To reverse wasteful practices, the commission, known as Conagua, pledged to modernize irrigation systems across 2 million of the nation's 6.5 million hectares of farmland by the year 2012.

Eduardo Mestre, a Mexican water expert and director of the Water Tribune created at the 2008 Zaragoza Water Expo, said that such modernization also must be accompanied by improved practices.

"We need to do much more for the sustainable use of water in rural areas," Mestre said on the eve of World Water Day.

According to the National Statistics Institute, or INEGI, 77 percent of all available water in Mexico is already being used for agricultural activities.

An INEGI study released Friday showed that in just under 60 years, per capita availability of water in Mexico has fallen by 75 percent.

The institute said that the country had 18,035 cubic meters of water per Mexican inhabitant per year in 1950

**CAUSE FOR CONCERN**  
Data shows inefficient water use and declining supply in Mexico.

**77 percent**  
Amount of available water in Mexico used by agriculture

**33 percent**  
Efficiency of water use in some agricultural areas

**75 percent**  
Decline in per capita water availability in Mexico since 1950

SOURCES: INEGI, Conagua

but an annual total of just 4,312 cubic meters per inhabitant in 2007.

It also said that Mexico, a country with almost 107 million inhabitants, has seen its subterranean water reserves reduced by 6 cubic kilometers due to overexploitation of aquifers.

Of the country's 653 aquifers, 101 are overexploited and represent the source for 58 percent of the country's water supply, according to INEGI.

The volume of purified water sales in Mexico increased by almost 2 million liters between 2001 and 2008, the study said.

