



# Can **wastewater** contribute to food security?

## Expert Panel Discussion

Thursday, 19. January 2017, 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm  
Room M2/M3, CityCube Berlin, Level 3

Given the increasing competition over water usage, how can it be ensured that agriculture has access to water, and hence can provide the global population with food? What part can agriculture, as the largest user of water, play worldwide in the sustainable stewardship of water as a valuable resource?

With existing fresh water resources becoming limited and over-exploited, climate change and water scarcity are ranking high among the biggest global challenges. Therefore, farmers have to look for alternative ways of covering their needs – like using wastewater. Wastewater is a valuable, and still in many countries untapped resource, which can help the agriculture, agroforestry and forestry sectors achieve food security and move towards climate change adaptation. However, wastewater used in agricultural fields often does not meet the required water quality criteria, let it be from the perspective of the farmers' health and/or agricultural practices (e.g. high turbidity causing the clogging of irrigation pipes).

In the frame of the panel experts from different regions and organizations will discuss the current status of wastewater application in agriculture, its importance for achieving food security, existing challenges, relevance with SDG targets and ultimately the future steps forward.



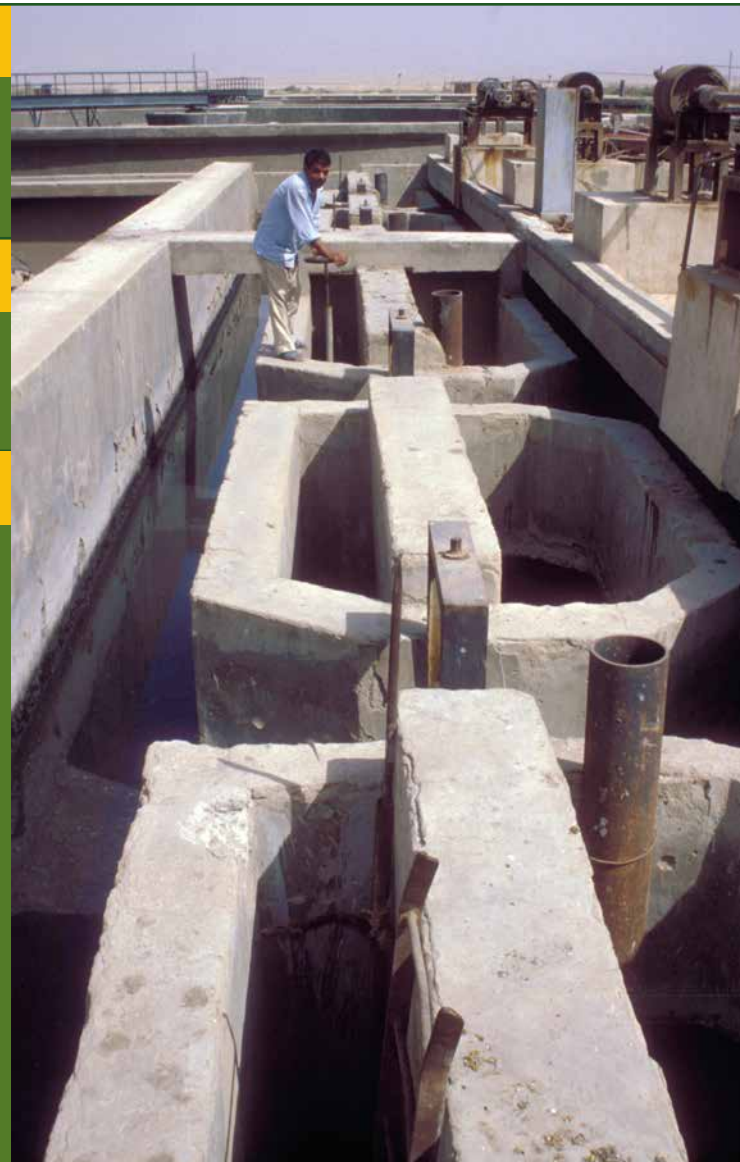
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Improved and affordable mechanisms and state of the art technologies for expanding collection, treatment and safe application of wastewater in agriculture and agroforestry sector might be applied for water scarcity adaptation. These would not only (1) contribute to the country's food security significantly, and (2) help cope with climate change sustainably, but also (3) protect farmers' health by assuring that treated wastewater being applied in the field is also safe. The latter would also contribute (4) to the farmer's income, as well as (5) reduce the amount of pollution produced by agriculture through replacing a significant amount of fertilizer with nutrients recovered from the wastewater (e.g. nitrate). Finally new systems could (6) reduce the total water usage, by implementing a stable water-wastewater-circle that sustains several protagonists with hardly any external influences. However, these aims cannot be achieved without proper water pricing policies and sensitization of the public.

**Active participation of the audience is encouraged.**



## ORGANISERS

- FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
- Leibniz Research Alliance Food and Nutrition

## MODERATOR

**Werner Kloas,**  
Leibniz Research Alliance 'Food and Nutrition'

## PANELLISTS

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UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP)

**Steven N. Schonberger,**  
Global Lead for Water in Agriculture,  
Water Global Practice, World Bank

**Sophie Boisson,**  
World Health Organization (WHO)



**Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations**

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