

For more information on FARMS, visit:
WaterMatters.org/agriculture
 or call 1-800-320-3503 (FL only)
 or (941) 377-3722, ext. 6529.



Southwest Florida
 Water Management District

WATERMATTERS.ORG · 1-800-423-1476



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) does not discriminate on the basis of disability. This nondiscrimination policy involves every aspect of the District's functions, including access to and participation in the District's programs and activities. Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation as provided for in the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the District's Human Resources Director, 2379 Broad St., Brooksville, FL 34604-6899; telephone (352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only), ext. 4702; TDD 1-800-231-6103 (FL only); or email ADACoordinator@WaterMatters.org.

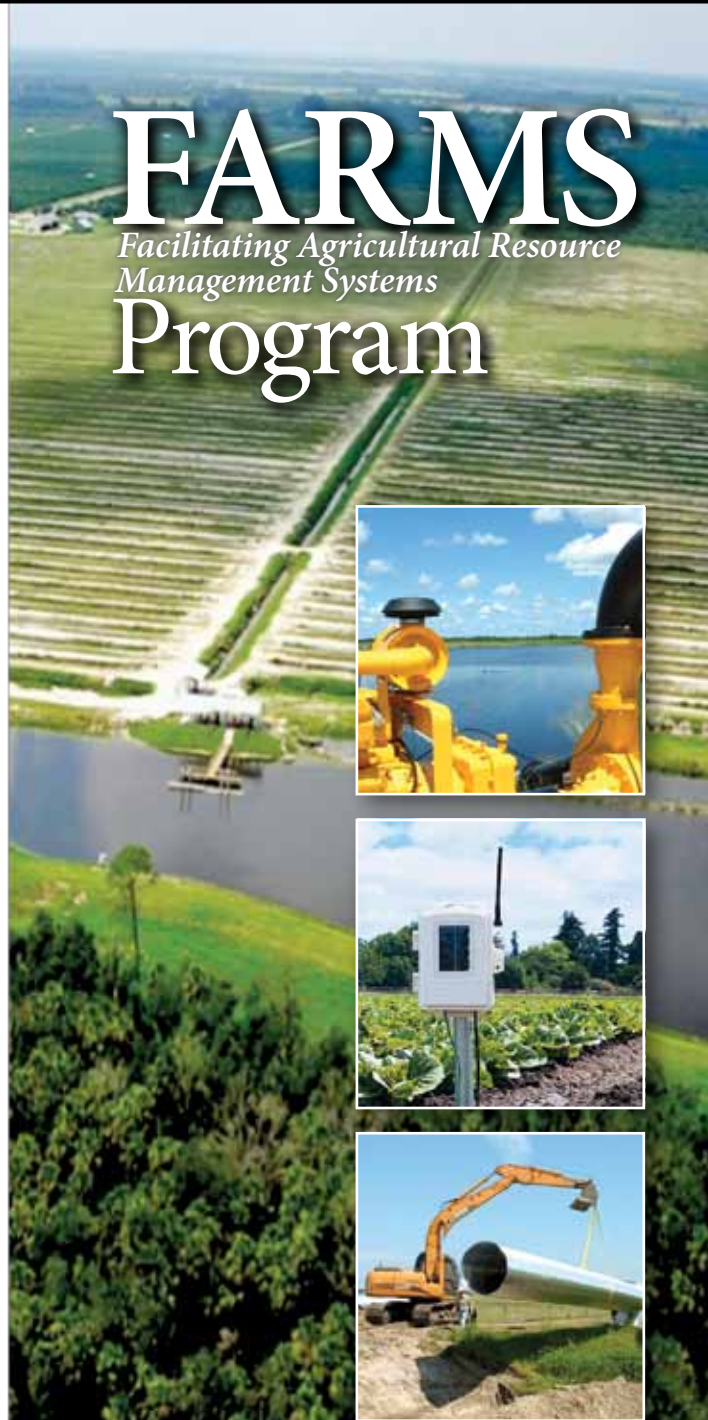
Priority Areas

Shell, Prairie and Joshua Creeks Watersheds

Declining water quality trends in Shell and Prairie creeks have caused water quality degradation in the City of Punta Gorda's reservoir. Lower water quality experienced during extreme droughts has made it difficult for the City to meet secondary drinking water standards for chlorides, sulfates and total dissolved solids. Similar water quality trends have also been identified in Joshua Creek, a tributary to the Peace River. Abnormal concentrations of these substances may be ecologically harmful to watersheds.

Upper Myakka River Watershed

Within the upper Myakka River watershed, excess water has resulted in tree stress mortality in Flatford Swamp. A District-sponsored study determined the cause of tree mortality may be the increased dry season flows from irrigation, which shortens the drying out period.



FARMS

Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems

Program



Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS)

FARMS is a cost-share program to reduce groundwater use through water conservation best management practices (BMPs) in agricultural operations.

To qualify for funding, projects must be located in the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) and include one or more of the following BMP strategies:

- ◆ Utilize an alternative water supply or technology to reduce groundwater use.
- ◆ Improve irrigation water quality and watershed ecology by reducing reliance on poorer quality groundwater.
- ◆ Restore or augment water resources and ecology in priority areas (see map).

FARMS Project Guidelines

- ◆ Growers manage their projects and are reimbursed for approved expenses.
- ◆ Reimbursement can amount to as much as 75 percent of total project costs with water quality and water quantity BMPs.
- ◆ District and grower enter into a contract for the project duration (generally 5–10 years).
- ◆ Growers are responsible for obtaining all project-related permits and must have District authorization prior to incurring approved reimbursable expenses.

District FARMS staff members closely assist growers with implementation of water conservation BMPs, regulatory issues and contract reimbursement.



Surface Water Irrigation Pumps and Filters



Riser Culverts and Water-Control Structures



Tailwater Capture and Reuse Pump Stations



Remote Irrigation Zone Controls and Soil Moisture and Climate Sensor Telemetry

FARMS Well Back-Plugging Program

As a result of chronic drought conditions and long-term pumping, high levels of chloride and sulfate minerals often become a problem in groundwater from deep irrigation wells in the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA). The accumulation of these minerals in stormwater runoff from irrigated fields and uncapped flowing wells can degrade the water quality of regional watersheds. In addition, regular use of highly mineralized groundwater for irrigation results in lower crop yields, excessive pumping and more frequent irrigation maintenance.

The FARMS Well Back-Plugging Program was integrated into the District's FARMS Program to assist growers with improving water quality of their irrigation wells and to help protect the District's southern watersheds. While the FARMS Program is authorized to operate throughout the District, the FARMS Well Back-Plugging Program is available only in the SWUCA.

Well back-plugging identifies the source of deeper mineralized groundwater in a well and seals it off with backfill and a cement plug.

Participating growers, specifically in the Shell, Prairie and Joshua creeks watersheds (see map), have successfully reduced mineral content of groundwater from wells by more than 60 percent. Growers have also reported remarkable crop response from the improved water quality.

Well owners may be reimbursed up to \$6,500 per well for back-plugging. District FARMS staff can assist well owners in evaluating their well's water quality.