CONSERVATION GUIDELINES FOR AGRICULTURE

A. Conduct an ongoing maintenance and repair program on the irrigation system, including a system-wide survey conducted at least once per season that includes monitoring flow rates and system pressures to detect leaks and clogs; routine cleaning system components (nozzles, valves, filters, meters, etc.); checking controllers or timers for accurate operation; and monitoring meters for unusually high or low readings.

B. Conduct an ongoing analysis of the irrigation system efficiency, including conveyance, distribution, and application, and if storage ponds or reservoirs are used, an analysis of storage efficiencies. The analysis shall include periodic testing for application and distribution uniformity and system maintenance to irrigate efficiently.

C. Evaluate the feasibility of improving the efficiency of the current irrigation system, converting to a more efficient irrigation system, or installing tailwater recovery or stormwater ponds. Implement the improvements, conversion, and/or installation when it is determined to be operationally and economically feasible.

D. Implement an irrigation schedule that maximizes the efficiency of delivering the correct quantity of water to the root zone at the time it is needed. This practice shall include the use of tools to determine when and how much irrigation water is needed. Example of these tools include soil moisture sensors, weather stations or other climatic measuring devices, and piezometers to monitor the water table elevation.

E. Avoid daytime irrigation, aeration or other activities which involve spraying water into the air to the greatest extent practicable to minimize water losses from evaporation and the wind. This does not apply to daytime use of water for control of heat stress, frost and freeze protection, plant establishment, field bedding, erosion control, system maintenance or other necessary non-irrigation uses.

F. Reduce or eliminate irrigation runoff by monitoring irrigation duration so that only the water necessary for optimum plant growth is used, avoiding irrigation of non-crop areas, and collecting irrigation tailwater for reuse.