

Common

Misperceptions

Water usage in California involves a complicated system that operates under both riparian and appropriative rights governed by a state constitution that requires all water use be “reasonable and beneficial.” However, the definition of “reasonable and beneficial” has been a deeply disputed issue for decades.

Agriculture uses 41% of California’s water

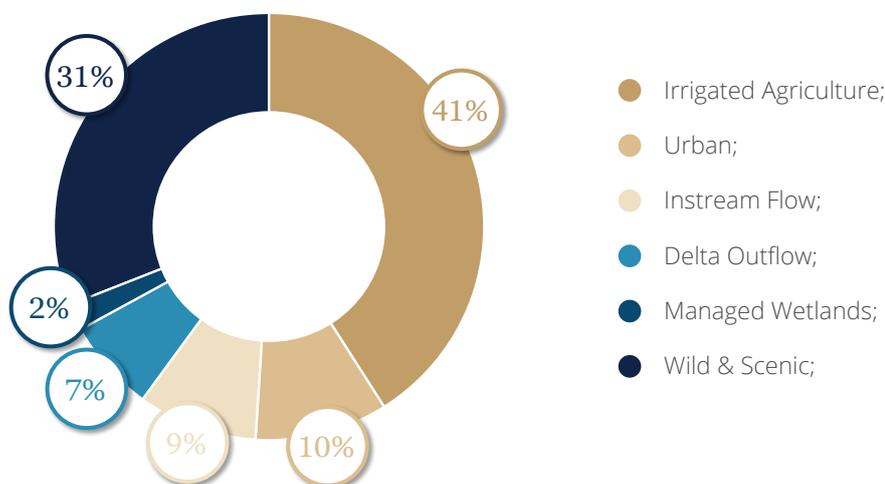
In a state where the population predominantly lives in urban areas, farmers are often maligned for their water use. For example, **The Washington Post** published an article, [“Agriculture Is 80 Percent of Water Use in California. Why Aren’t Farmers Being Forced to Cut Back?”](#)

While the headline achieved its goal of creating animosity against farming, the basis was misleading as it only includes water

allocated for human use. However, state officials now account for environmental uses of water, too. For example, wild and scenic rivers protected under federal law use 31% of all California water. Delta outflows – freshwater that the state allows to be flushed out to the Pacific Ocean – account for 7% of the total water supply.

By comparison, cities use 10% of the total water supply, slightly more than Delta outflows. Based on the total water supply, irrigated agriculture only uses 41%.* In turn, California farmers use this resource to produce over one-half of the country’s fruits, vegetables and nuts.

PERCENT USAGE OF ALL CALIFORNIA WATER INFLOW



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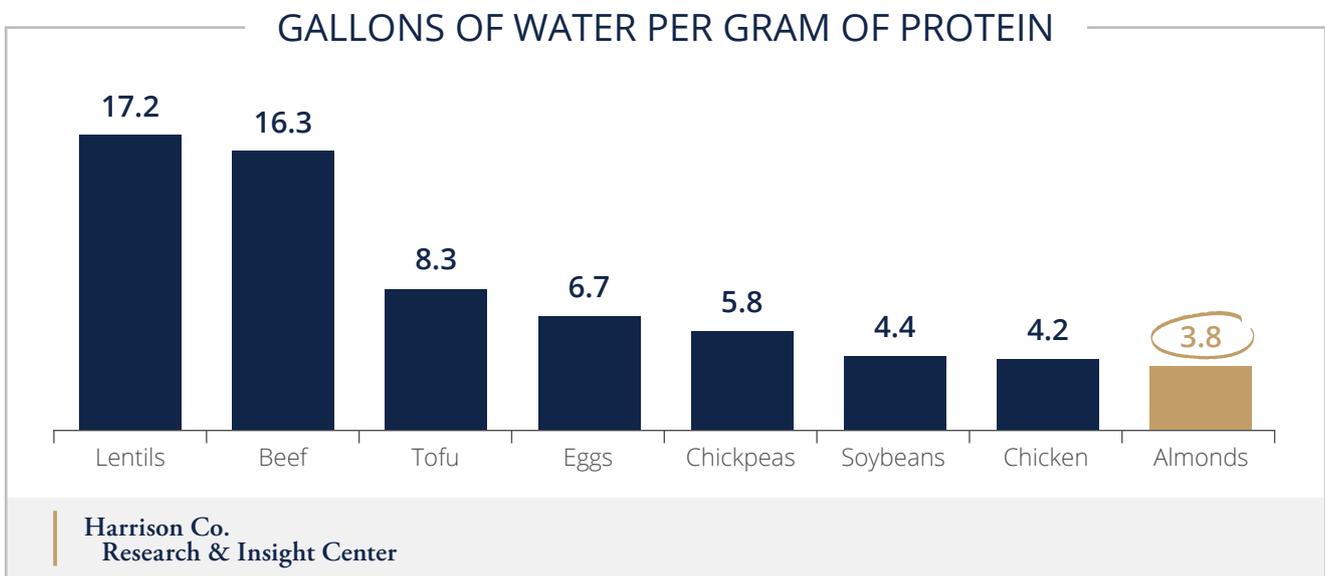
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It takes a gallon of water to grow an almond

The media also reports on farmers' alleged misuse of water. One example is that it takes one gallon of water to grow an almond. Left unreported is the contextual information explaining the amount of nutritional value generated from that gallon of water.

Almonds are nutritionally dense, with 6 grams of protein and 13 grams of monounsaturated, or "good," fats per ounce. They are also high in fiber as well as rich in magnesium and vitamin E. Weight loss, lowered blood-sugar levels and sustained energy are among other proven benefits.

When compared with the amount of water needed per gram of protein to grow or raise every other major plant or animal protein source, growing almonds is an incredibly efficient use of water.



**Johnson, Nathanael, "Everything I Thought I Knew About Water in California Is Wrong," Grist Magazine, April 20, 2015.*



About

Harrison Co.



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