



Water for Food Security: Challenges for Pakistan (Routledge Special Issues on Water Policy and Governance)

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Pakistan's water management is at a critical watershed. The world's seventh-most populous country faces serious challenges that will require improvements in both the "hardware" and "software" of agricultural water management. Water shortages are growing rapidly as a result of growing demand across all water-using sectors. Rapid population growth, from 175 million people in 2010 to an estimated 236 million by 2030 and 280 million by 2050, and international food-price spikes create pressure to increase agricultural production of staples; but demand for cash crops is also growing rapidly, including for cotton, fruit trees and tobacco, to raise rural incomes and generate rural employment to absorb the relatively young, rapidly growing rural population. Water management is also increasingly affected by climate change – including an increased number of flood and drought events – and growing energy shortages, which affect how water is being sourced and used. Last but not least, Pakistan's political situation is fragile, which has reduced incentives to invest in enhanced agricultural water (and other) technologies. How Pakistan addresses these challenges will be decisive for its population's future water and food security, for economic growth, and for environmental sustainability. It will also affect water and food outcomes globally, due to the interconnectedness of global food trade.

This book was published as a special issue of *Water International*.

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