



A insegurança hídrica na agricultura Como garantir abastecimento de água para ter regadio no futuro? Um caminho para a sustentabilidade

Carina Arranja

Federação Nacional de Regantes de Portugal (FENAREG)
secretariado@fenareg.pt

ABSTRACT

Water is vital to maintain agriculture and rural areas alive. Desertification and climate change show us how fragile our country is, through fires and droughts.

Without water to develop agriculture and tackle climate change, there will be no people living in rural areas. In these areas we lost youngsters and 25% of the population are farmers, mostly elderly, over 65 years old.

In 20 years we've lost half of the farms and more than two hundred and forty thousand hectares of irrigated area (twice the area built in Alqueva). Most of the farms that disappeared had irrigation. Irrigated areas occupy only 5% of the territory but ensure 60% of the national food production. We import 3 times more than in the beginning of the century and we are a long way from the goal of balancing the agri-food trade in 2020, set five years ago.

We have to plan for the future. It is urgent to promote a broad debate and to introduce a new political agenda of the need to guarantee water security in agriculture in order to stop the trend of agricultural abandonment, guaranteeing food security. It's time to establish a National Policy for Irrigation for the long future and the 5 essential measures identified in this work are:

1. Increase water storage (to respond to interannual regulation)
2. Modernize irrigation infrastructures and create new areas (to increase efficiency and resilience)
3. Practice of precision irrigation (to optimize the management)
4. Certification of efficient irrigated areas (for environmental sustainability)
5. Innovation and capacity built support systems

Keywords: Irrigation, sustainability, efficiency, water storage, climate change.

JEL classification: Q, Q1.

RESUMO

A água é estratégica para manter a nossa agricultura e os territórios rurais vivos. A força da desertificação e das alterações climáticas mostram-nos a fragilidade do nosso território, através dos incêndios e das secas, entre outras. Sem água para desenvolver a agricultura e fazer face às alterações climáticas, não haverá fixação de pessoas no interior, sendo a agricultura o grande motor