

Water is extremely important but clean water is precious—and it is essential to human life. Yet in many parts of the world, it is in increasingly short supply. Protecting our water resources and developing technologies for certifying, recycling or desalinating water are critical to our future.

Making Sense

By Tania Shammo



of Water Savings

Emphasizing water efficiency with the EPA's WaterSense program

There are so many ways to save water, and with five simple actions you can help customers save water around their homes. Start saving water, money and energy by fixing leaky faucets, replacing old toilets and washing machines, using proper landscape designs and irrigation and by watering only when necessary.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established the WaterSense program to help consumers find products that are friendly to the environment because of its water-saving characteristics. The EPA has developed the program for a number of reasons, but specifically to point out the benefits of saving water.

Our growing population is putting stress on available water supplies, as the public demand for water has more than tripled in recent time. Americans now use an average of 100 gal of water each day—enough to fill 1,600 drinking glasses. This increased demand has put additional stress on water supplies and distribution systems, threatening both human health and the environment. Water has become a national priority, and by using water more efficiently, we can help preserve water supplies for future generations, save money and protect the environment.

Benefits of Water Efficiency

The benefit of water efficiency is

saving water and money—and who does not like to save money? By making a few simple changes to use water more efficiently, the savings could amount to \$170 per year. If all U.S. households installed water-efficient appliances, the country would save more than 3 trillion gal of water and more than \$18 billion per year.

When we use water more efficiently, we reduce the need for costly water supply infrastructure investments and new wastewater treatment facilities.

products could save nearly 2 billion gal per day across the country.

In the future, WaterSense intends to develop a program for certification of an entire new home. The design of the new home will require all products that fall into the WaterSense program be certified and further reduce water consumption by setting criteria for both indoor and outdoor water use. This program will also include educational programs for homeowners about water efficiency and the benefits of saving water.

WaterSense is working on the development of a number of other water saving standards. They are in the draft stage of developing a standard for water softeners, reverse osmosis systems and irrigation systems. The drinking water treatment industry and the Water Quality Association (WQA) are working with the EPA in the development of these programs so that our industry can begin marketing products with the EPA WaterSense mark to demonstrate its water savings and our industry's green initiative.

The WQA and other industry testing and certification agencies such as CSA, IAPMO, NSF and UL, are EPA-licensed certification bodies, which means they have been approved to test and certify products to the EPA WaterSense standards and specifications.

The WaterSense program's goals are to use water resources more efficiently to preserve them for future generations and to reduce water and wastewater infrastructure costs by reducing unnecessary water consumption.

Through WaterSense, the EPA provides reliable information on high-performing, water-efficient products and practices, raises awareness about the importance of water efficiency, ensures water-efficient product performance and helps consumers differentiate products and programs that use less water. The WaterSense label will indicate products and programs that meet water efficiency and performance criteria.

This program will help save money, energy and encourage innovative manufacturing. Our industry's support of this program may also help prevent future legislation against our products by proactively promoting the use of drinking water treatment products that are water efficient. *wqp*

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