



Surface irrigation facts vs fiction

Perception	Facts	
(1) Old, wasteful and inefficient	– Precision Surface Irrigation > 90% efficient – Cheapest to build, cheapest to operate – CP LM \$25 – \$40/ML just to pressurise	
(2) Doesn't really matter how long it takes to irrigate. The clay only takes so much water.	– Not quite – the rate of infiltration slows dramatically but infiltration still continues while the water is on the soil. – Opportunity Time	
(3) Should stop the siphons before the furrows run through – There is plenty of water still coming down.	– Not quite. – Long runs and high flows rates need to run tailwater.	
	0.3m Head	
(4) Siphon size doesn't make much difference	Size (mm) 50 63 75	Flow (l/sec) 1.9 3.3 5.0
	63 mm Siphon	
(5) Head over field doesn't make much difference	Head (m) 0.1 0.2 0.3	Flow (l/sec) 1.9 2.7 3.3
(6) Over irrigation is cheap insurance for good crop yield	– Not any more – Cost of water – Availability of water – Nutrients flushed below root zone.	

Source: Jim Purcell, Aquatech Consulting, Narrabri

