

## AGRICULTURAL WATER MANAGEMENT PANEL DISCUSSION

Bob Hutson, Moderator  
Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation

In the Mississippi Delta, increased agricultural demand for water has placed the Alluvial aquifer under severe stress. The eighteen Delta and part-Delta counties that make up the 7,000 square-mile Alluvial plain are the seat of ninety-eight percent of Mississippi's irrigation and aquaculture needs. The demands account for a water use in excess of 1.1 billion gallons per day, according to the Mississippi Bureau of Land and Water Resources. The Alluvial aquifer is dropping at a rate of 1.5 feet per year, faster than nature can replenish it.

This panel discussion was an informal presentation by three Delta farmers who have experimented with various methods to reduce their dependence on ground supplies. Most of the discussion centered on landforming, which has substantially reduced the amount of water they need to grow rice and soybeans. Closely allied with landforming is more intensive management of applying water to the land. Also discussed were the relifting of surface water and the use of stream sources. In addition to water conservation, the economic benefit of reduced pumping costs was a major factor in long-range planning for these farming operations.

### Panelists:

Hugh Arant, President  
Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation  
P. O. Box 1972  
Jackson, MS 39215

Randy Howarth  
Circle H Farm  
Rt. 1  
Boyle, MS 38730

Herbert Huddleston  
Huddleston Farm, Inc.  
Box 83  
Lamont, MS 38755