

AGRICULTURE

PAJARO FARMERS CURB WATER USE 19 PERCENT



PHOTOS BY KEVIN JOHNSON — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Javier Zamora, at his farm in Royal Oaks on Thursday, stands next to one of his water-saving sprinkler heads that he uses to water organic strawberries on his 18 acres.

Drought intensifies groundwater problems

By Samantha Clark

sclark@santacruzsentinel.com
@samanthabclark on Twitter

WATSONVILLE » Pajaro Valley farmers reduced water consumption 19 percent so far this year compared to 2014's exceptionally high use due to the drought.

Use dropped from 18,349 to 14,770 acre feet. An acre-foot is equivalent to 326,000 gallons and is enough to grow a half-acre of strawberries or supply two families of four for

a year.

"It's really good news, but the tough reality is we're still pumping this basin way too hard," said Mary Bannister, director of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency. "If these drought conditions are really the new future, we're going to have to come up with more solutions and more reductions."

Conservation is key here, where water problems go beyond the drought. Agriculture

WATER » PAGE 7



Lakeside Organic Gardens has one field near Watsonville using solely recycled water and is looking at how to bring purple pipes to more of its land.