



**California**  
**Farm Bureau®**

# California Agriculture Surface Water Use

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## Questions;

Slide 3. How much total surface water does the state get in one year on average?

- How much water does agriculture need in a given year to feed us?

Slide 4. How much water is captured for use in California?

Slide 5. How much captured water does agriculture get in California?

Slide 6. How much captured water does the urban sector get in California?

Slide 7. How much captured water does the environment get in California?

Slide 8. How is water for California agriculture represented in the media?

Slide 9. How is water for California agriculture portrayed?

Slide 10. Uncaptured water is environmental water!

Slide 11. How much water does agriculture get in California from total water?

Slide 12-14. How should agriculture be portrayed in California agriculture?

Slide 15. California agriculture uses water efficiently

Slide 16. Key Statistics about California Agriculture

# How much total water does the state get in one year on average?

On average over many years – 200 Million Acre Feet (MAF). In wet years such as 2023, this number is significantly higher

How much does agriculture need in a given year to feed us;

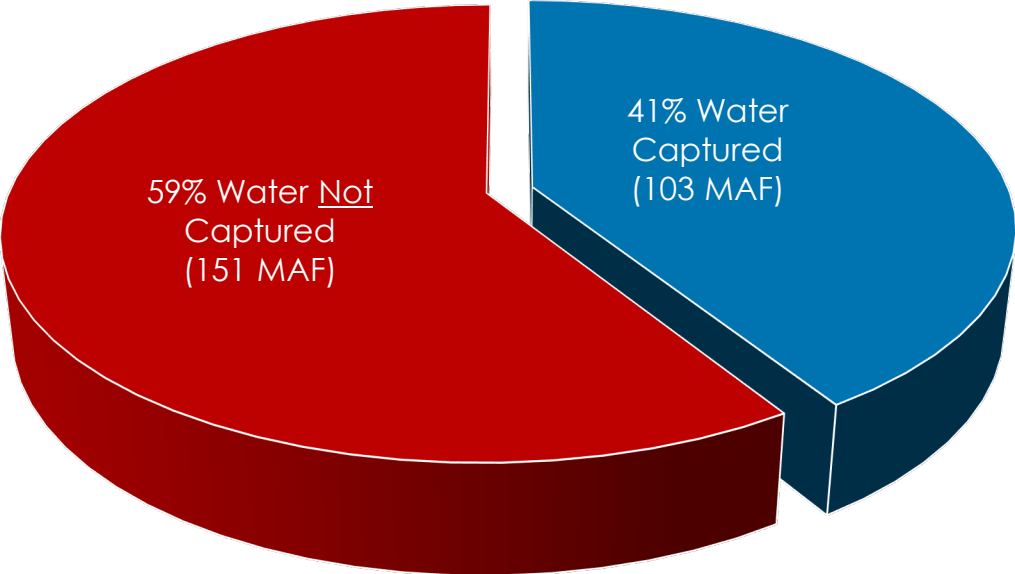
Approximately 43 MAF for 9.6 million irrigated acres (less now due to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and droughts)



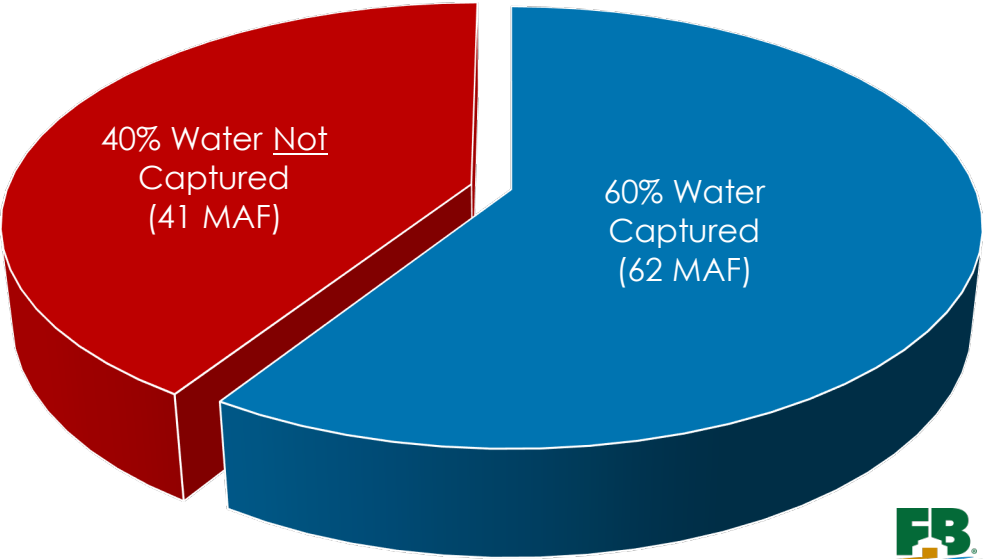
# How much water is captured for use in California?



Captured Water - **Wet Year** (2006)  
254 MAF

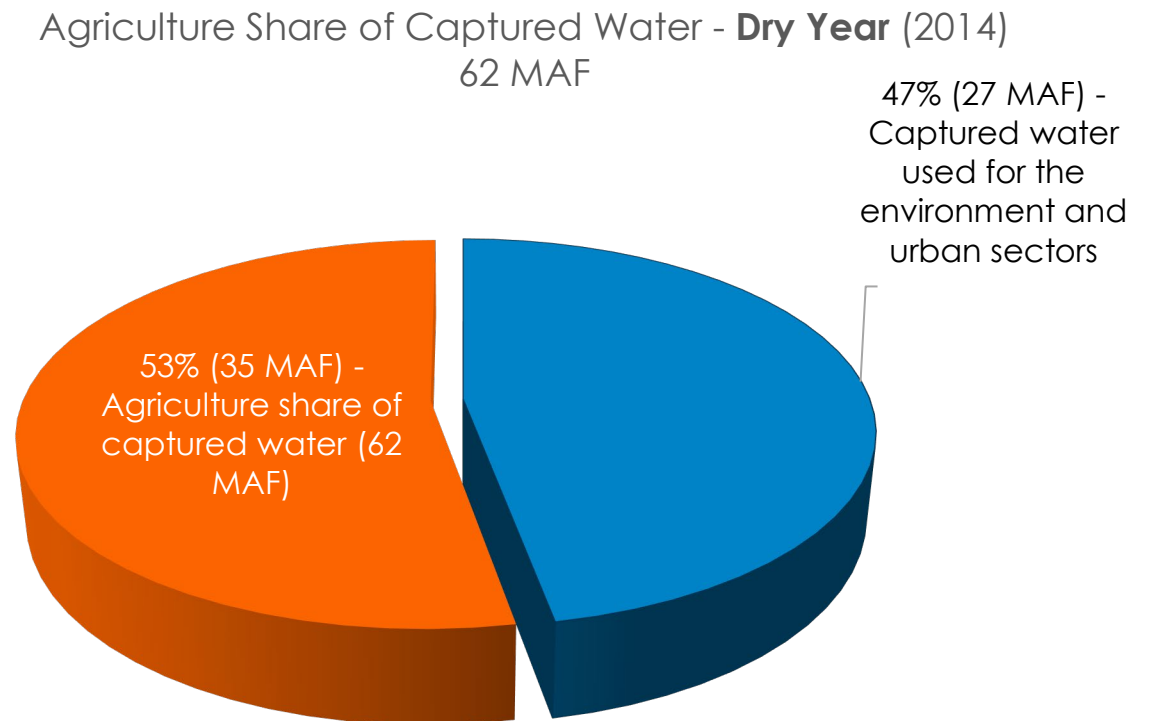
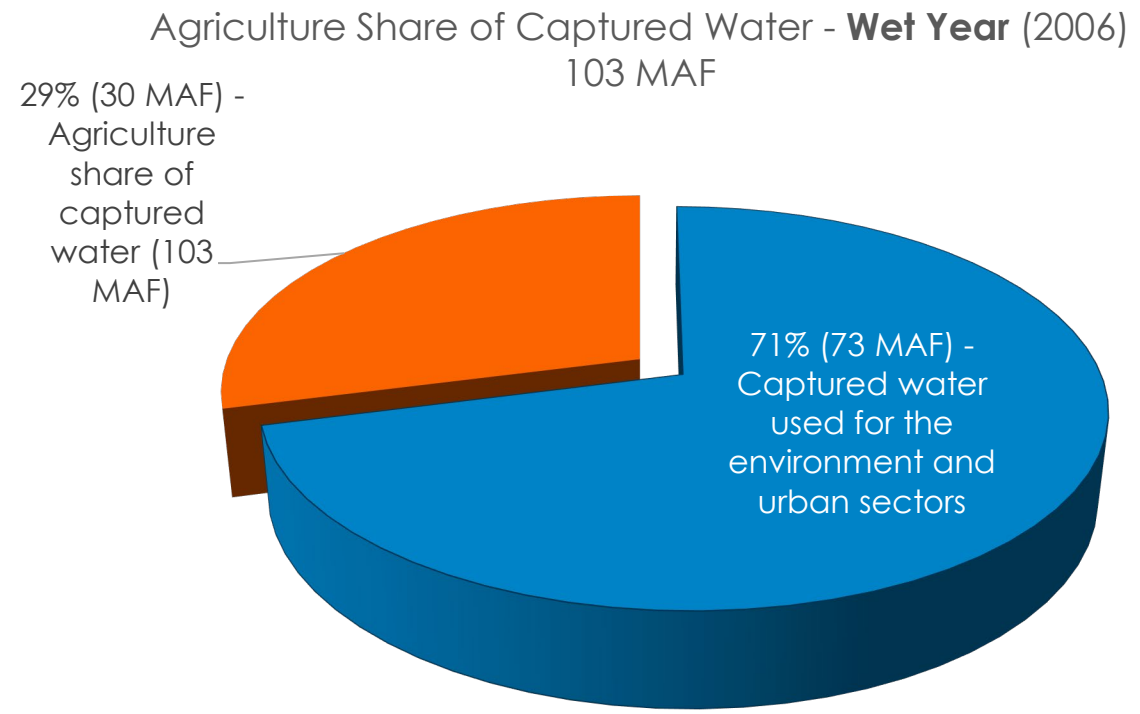


Captured Water - **Dry Year** (2014)  
103 MAF





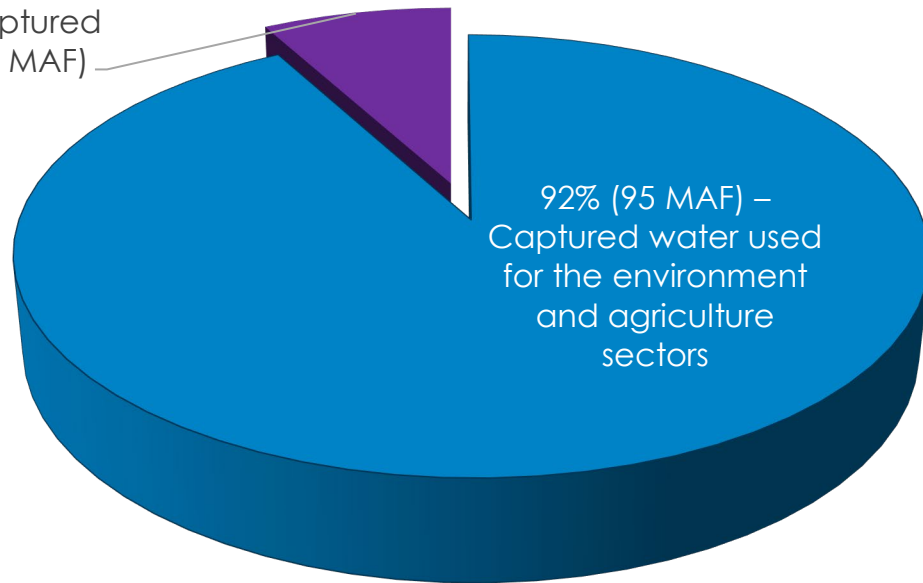
# How much captured water does agriculture get in California?



# How much captured water does the urban sector get in California?

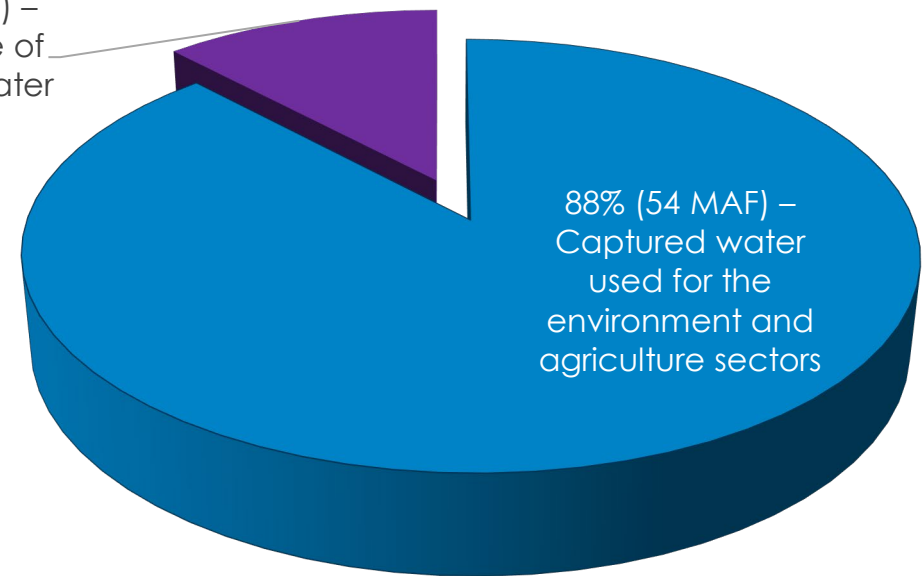
Urban Share of Captured Water - **Wet Year** (2006)  
103 MAF

8% (8 MAF) Urban  
share of captured  
water (103 MAF)



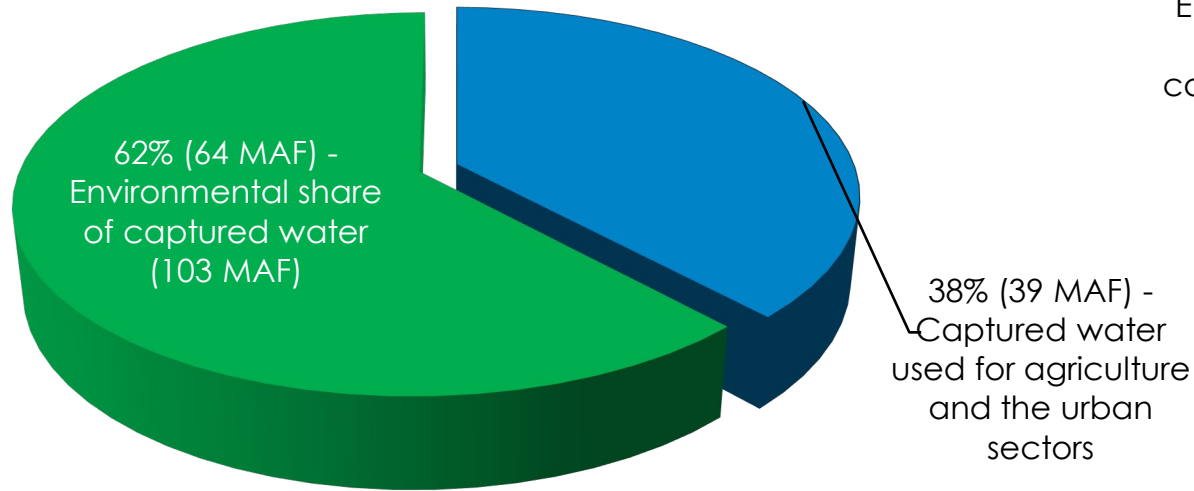
Urban Share of Captured Water - **Dry Year** (2014)  
62 MAF

12% (8 MAF) –  
Urban share of  
captured water  
(62 MAF)

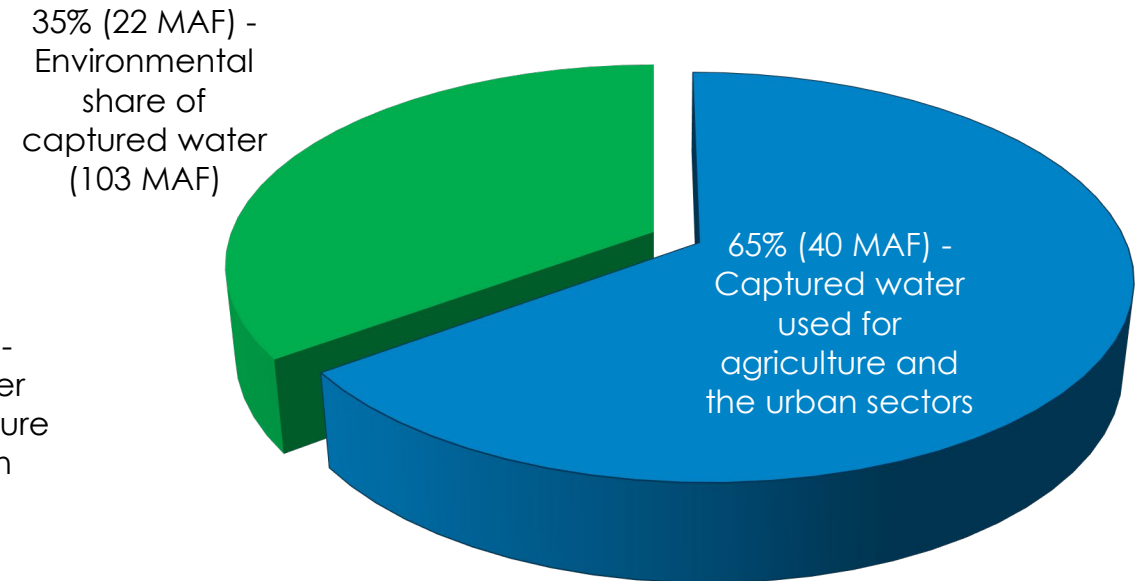


# How much captured water does the environment get in California?

Environmental Share of Captured Water - **Wet Year** (2006)  
103 MAF

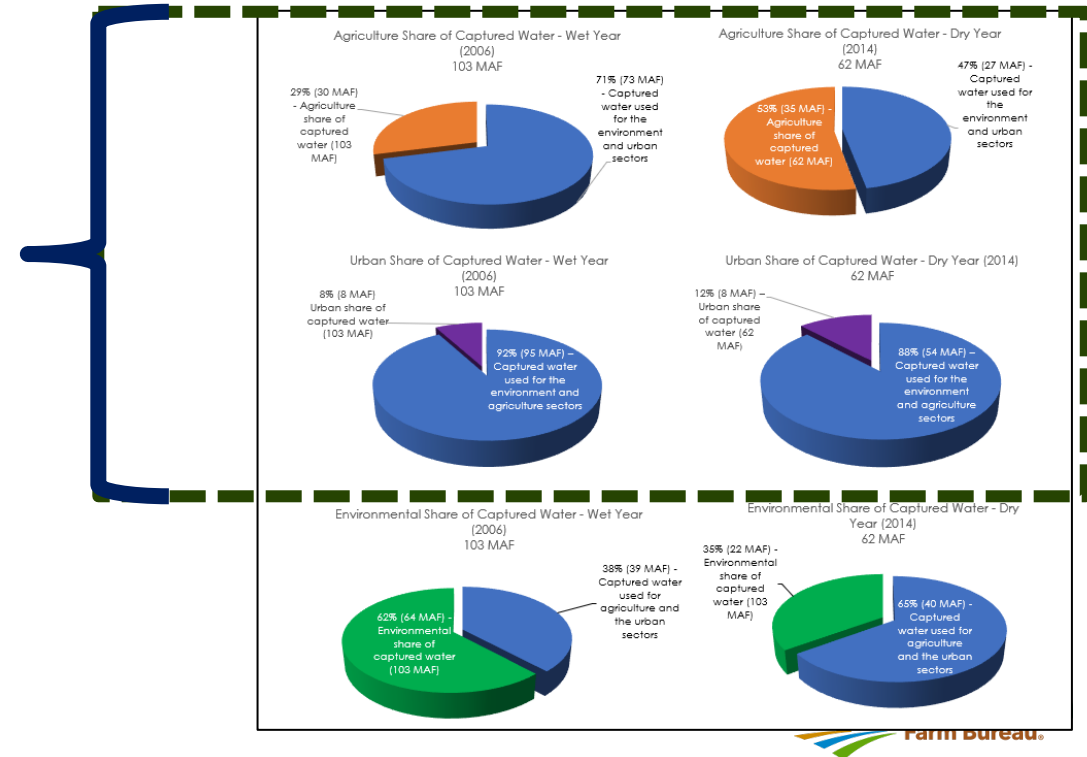
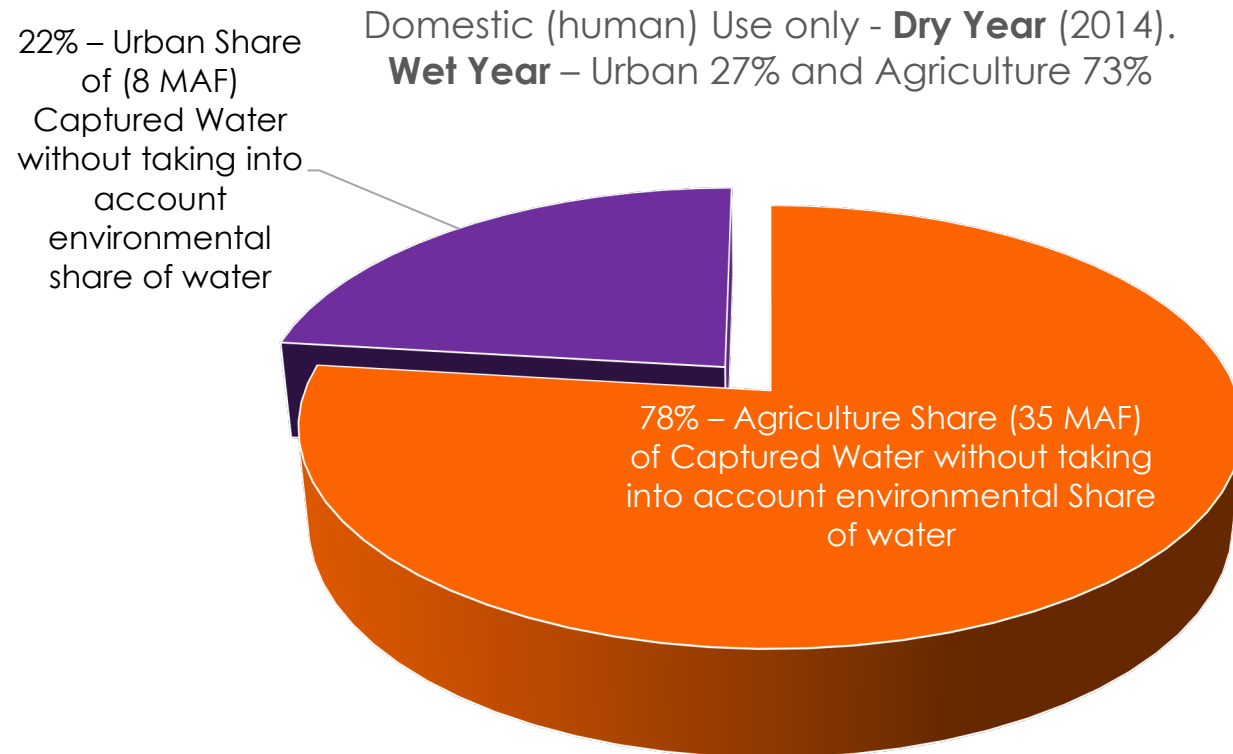


Environmental Share of Captured Water - **Dry Year** (2014)  
62 MAF



# How is water for California agriculture represented in the media?

Agriculture uses 80% of the water statement in media reports. Ag and urban sectors only compared. Environmental water is excluded in water distribution. Incorrect use of data.

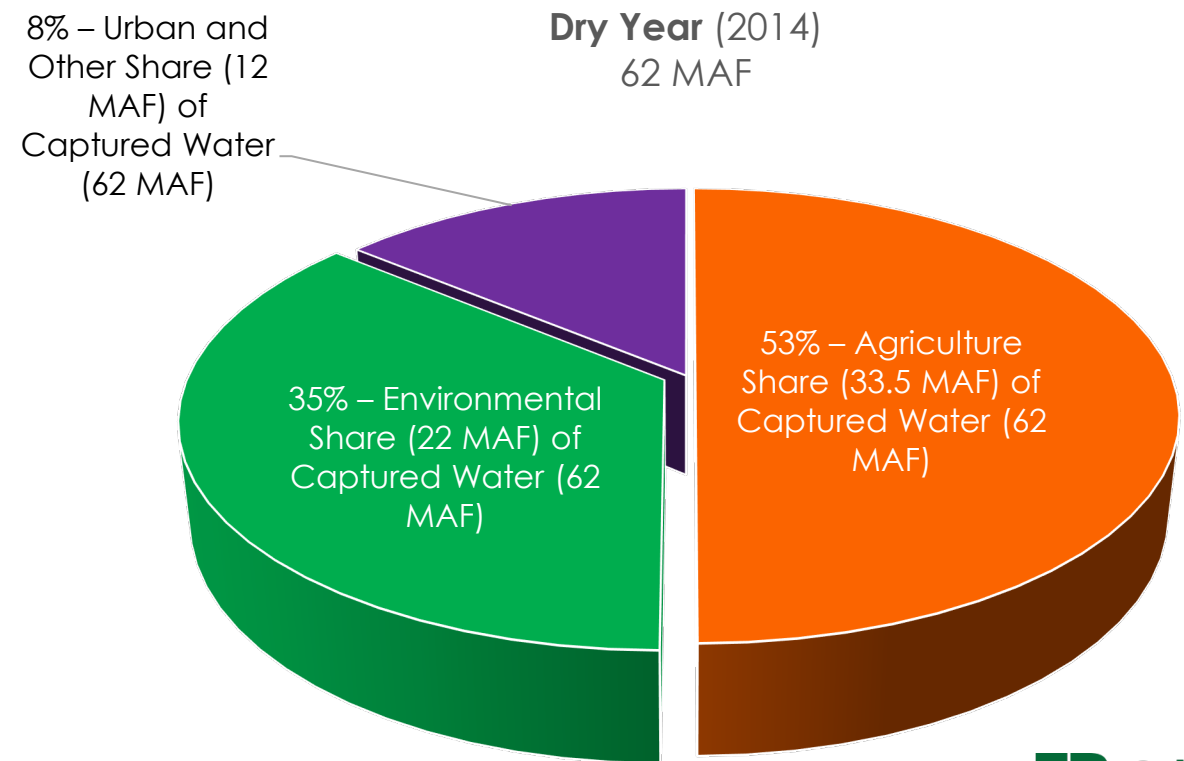
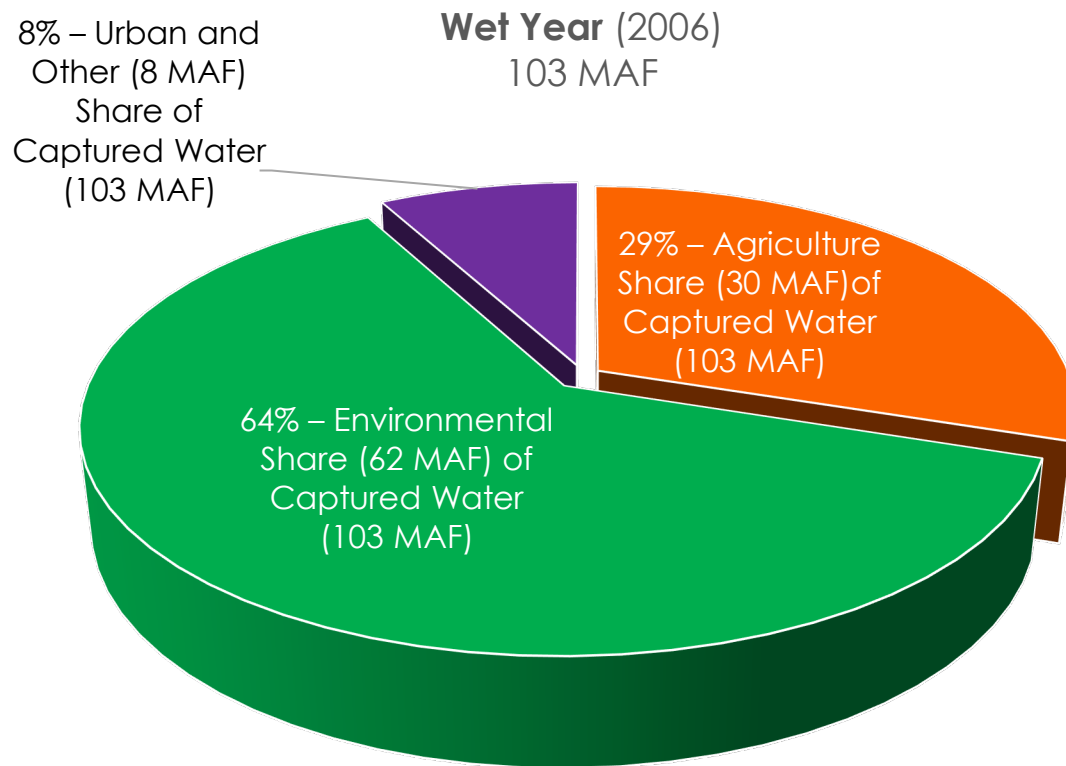


Note: This is a highly biased way to portray California agriculture and food production. California agriculture uses efficient irrigation in >55% of its 9 million plus irrigated acres and does not use 80% of the surface water that arrives in the state each year



# How is water for California agriculture portrayed?

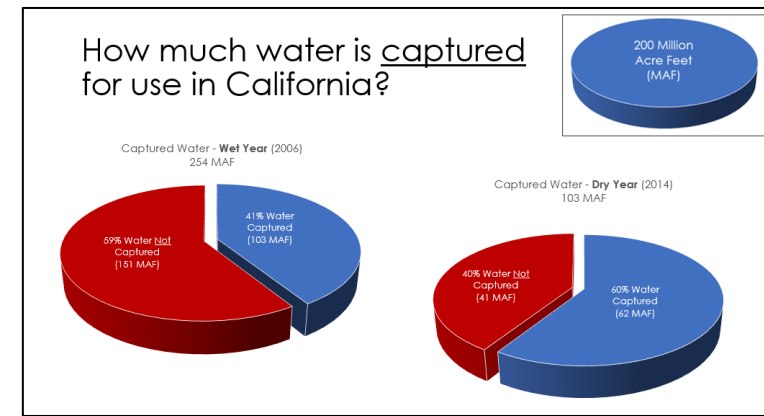
Captured Water only (not accounting for half of water that does not get captured)



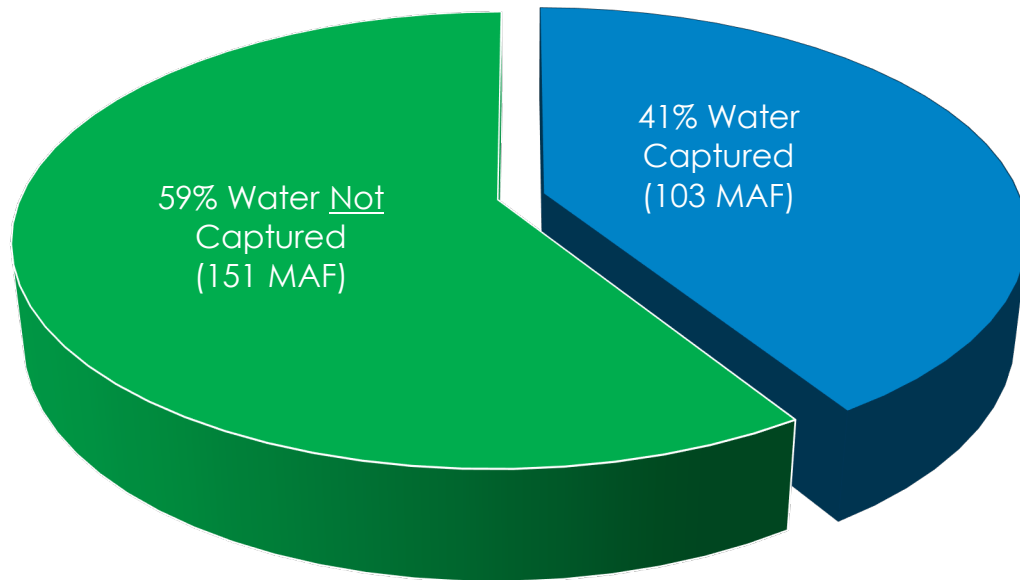
Note: This data supports the citation by academic institutions that agriculture uses 30-50% of "domestic" (human use) water in California.

# Uncaptured water is environmental water!

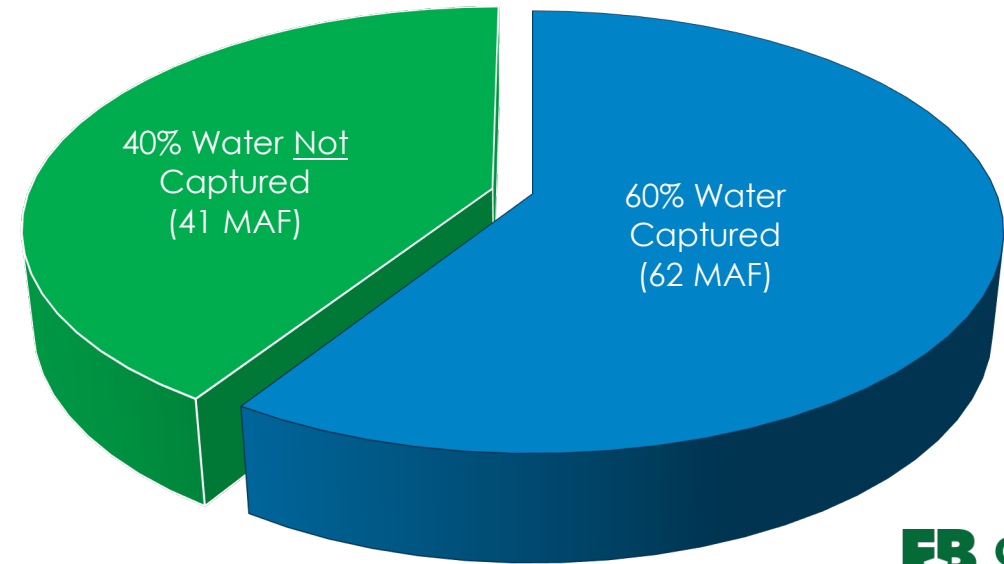
The uncaptured water is environmental water since it is not used by agriculture or the urban sector and flows through the rivers and streams to the ocean.



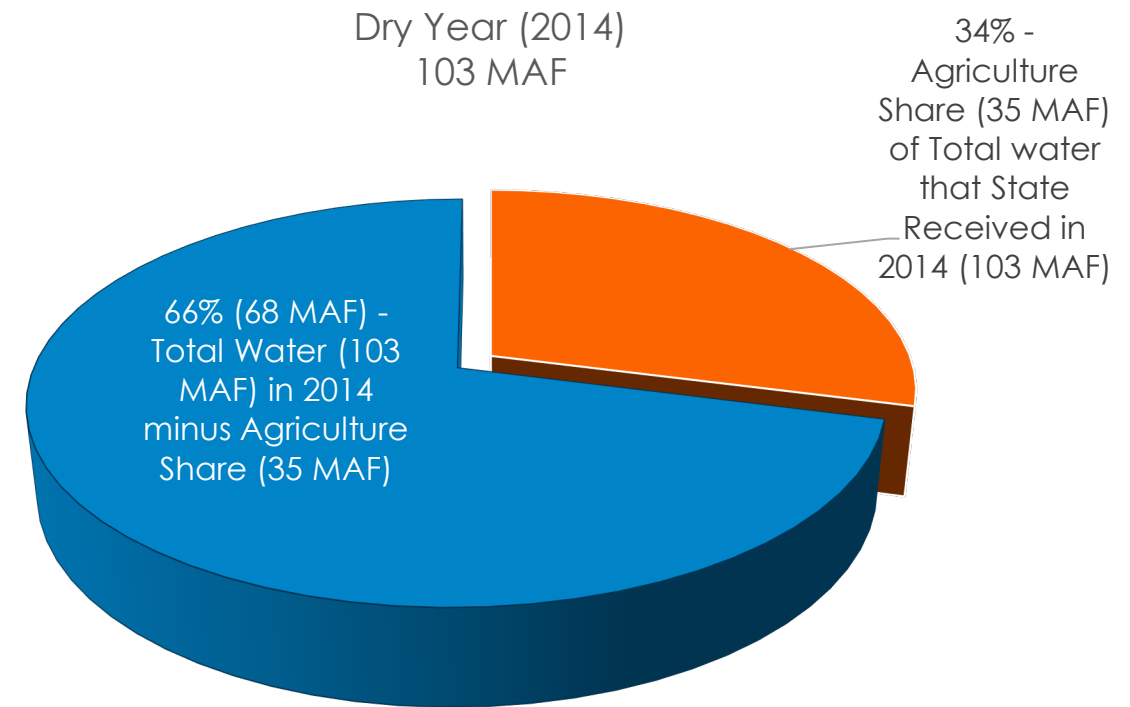
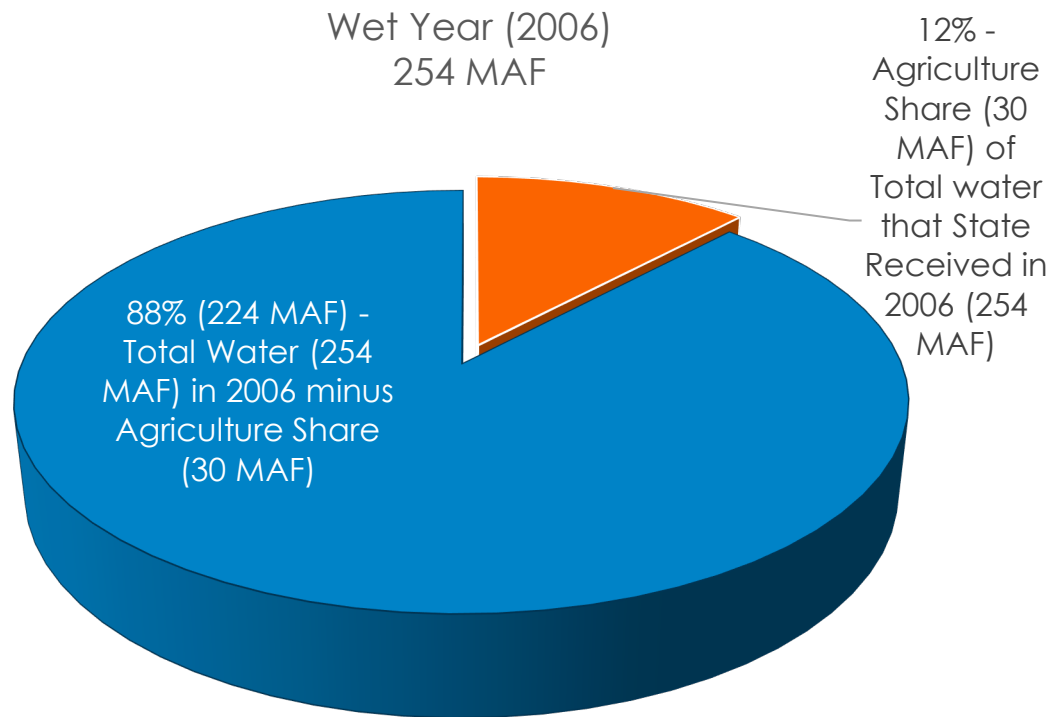
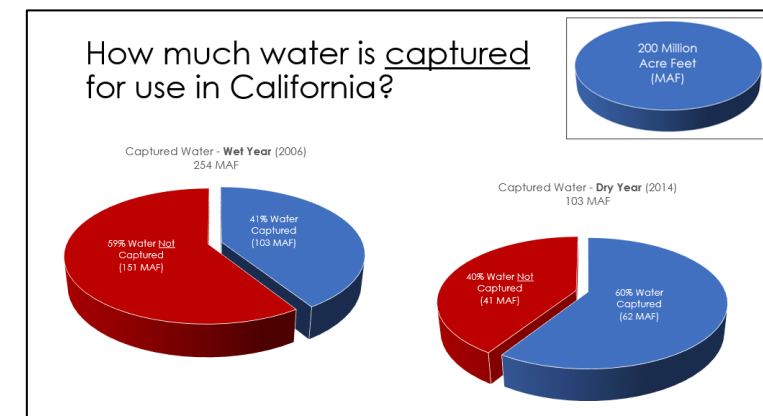
Captured Water - **Wet Year** (2006)  
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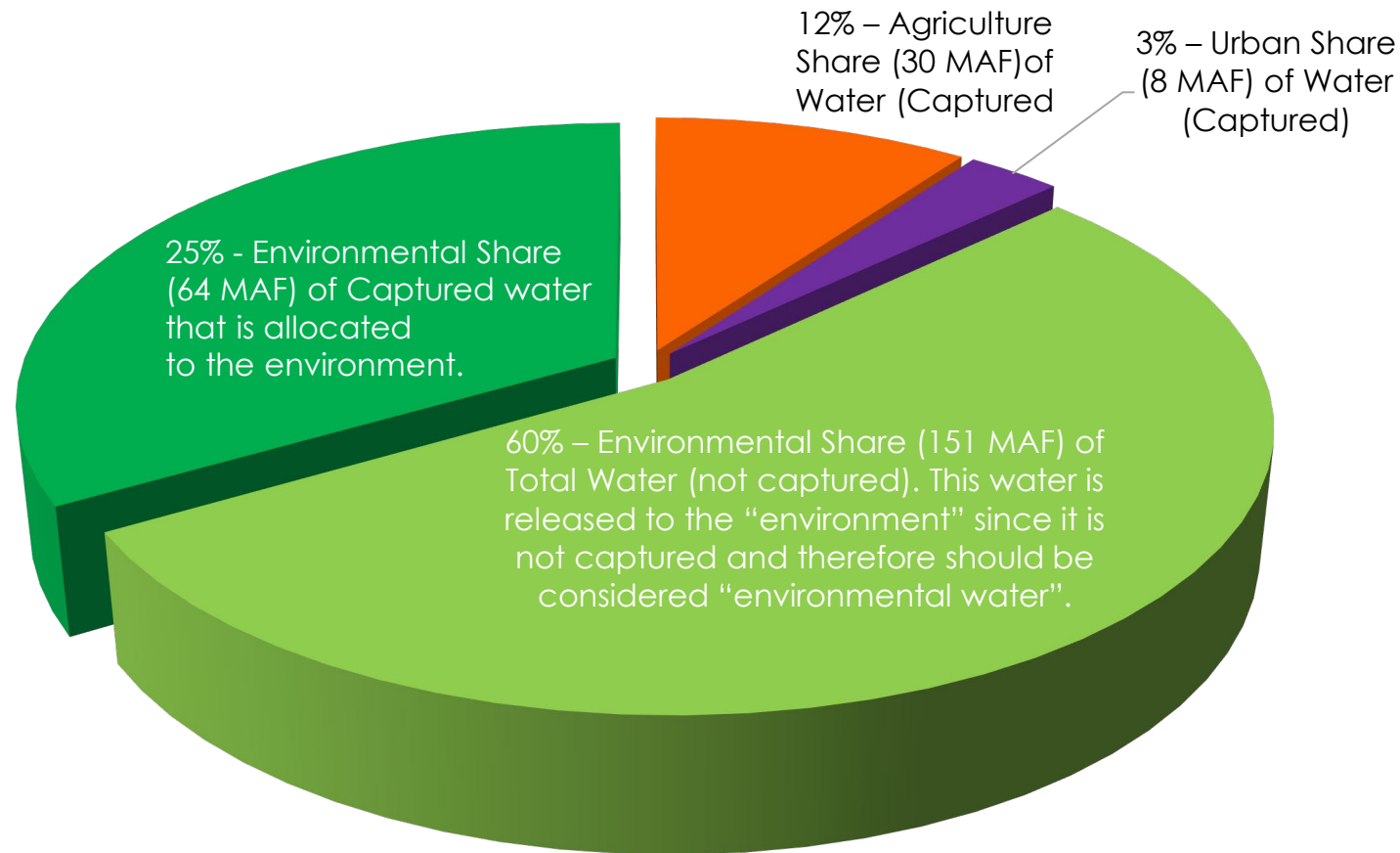


# How much water does agriculture get in California from total water?



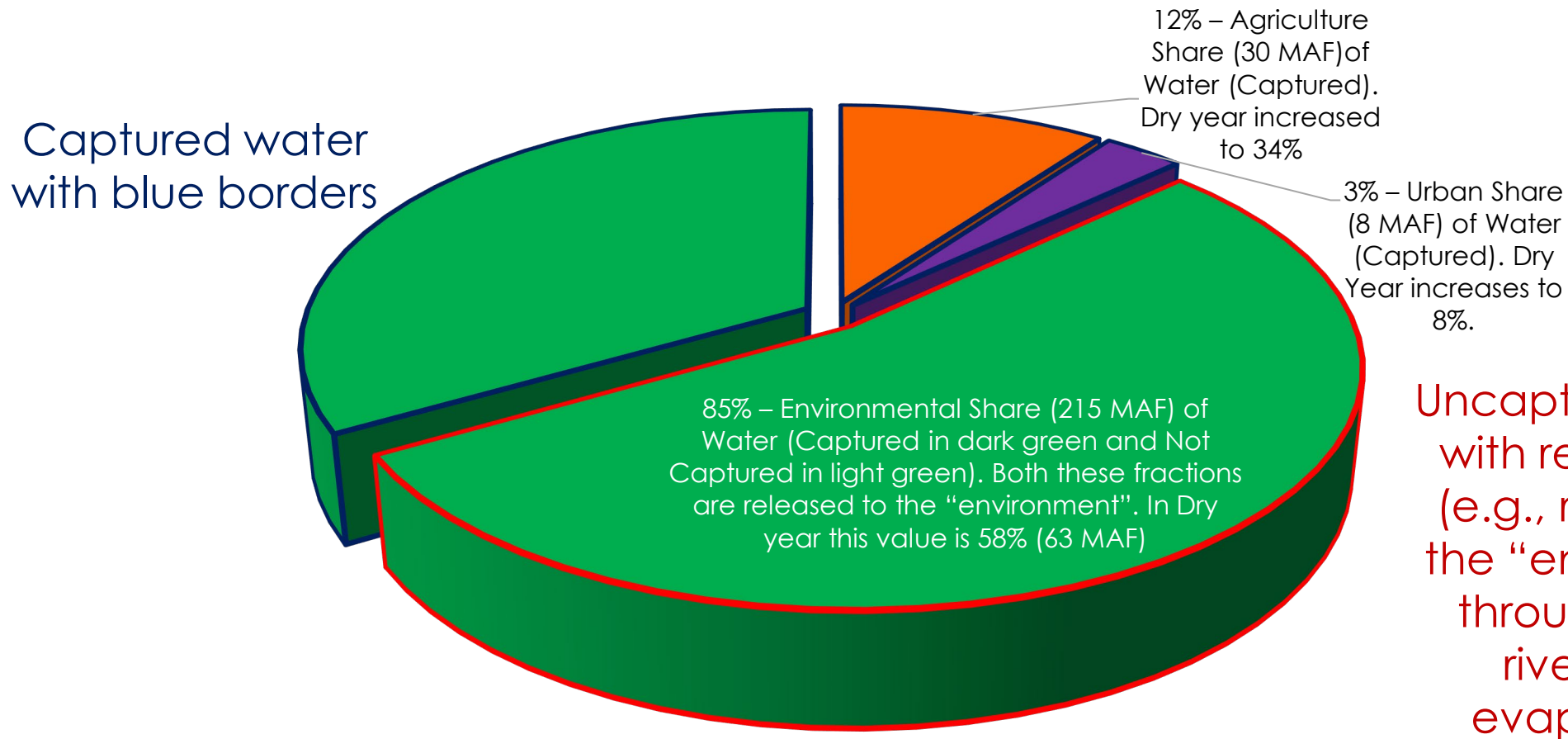
# How should agriculture be portrayed in California agriculture?

Environmental Water includes the water that is captured and not captured. Wet year example. Dry year environmental water is 58% or 60 MAF)



# How should agriculture be portrayed in California agriculture?

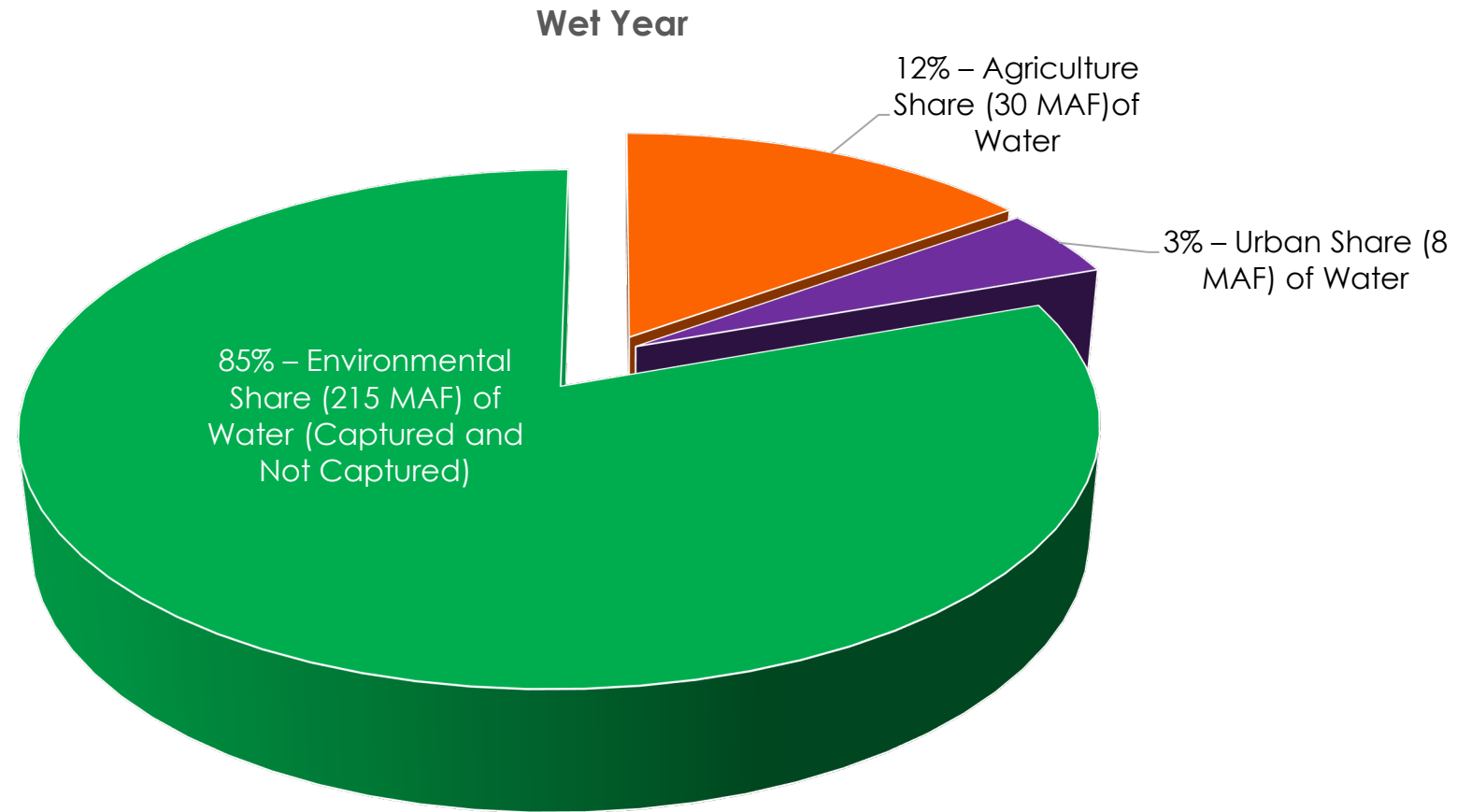
Environmental Water includes the water that is not captured. Wet year example. Dry year environmental water is 58% or 60 MAF)





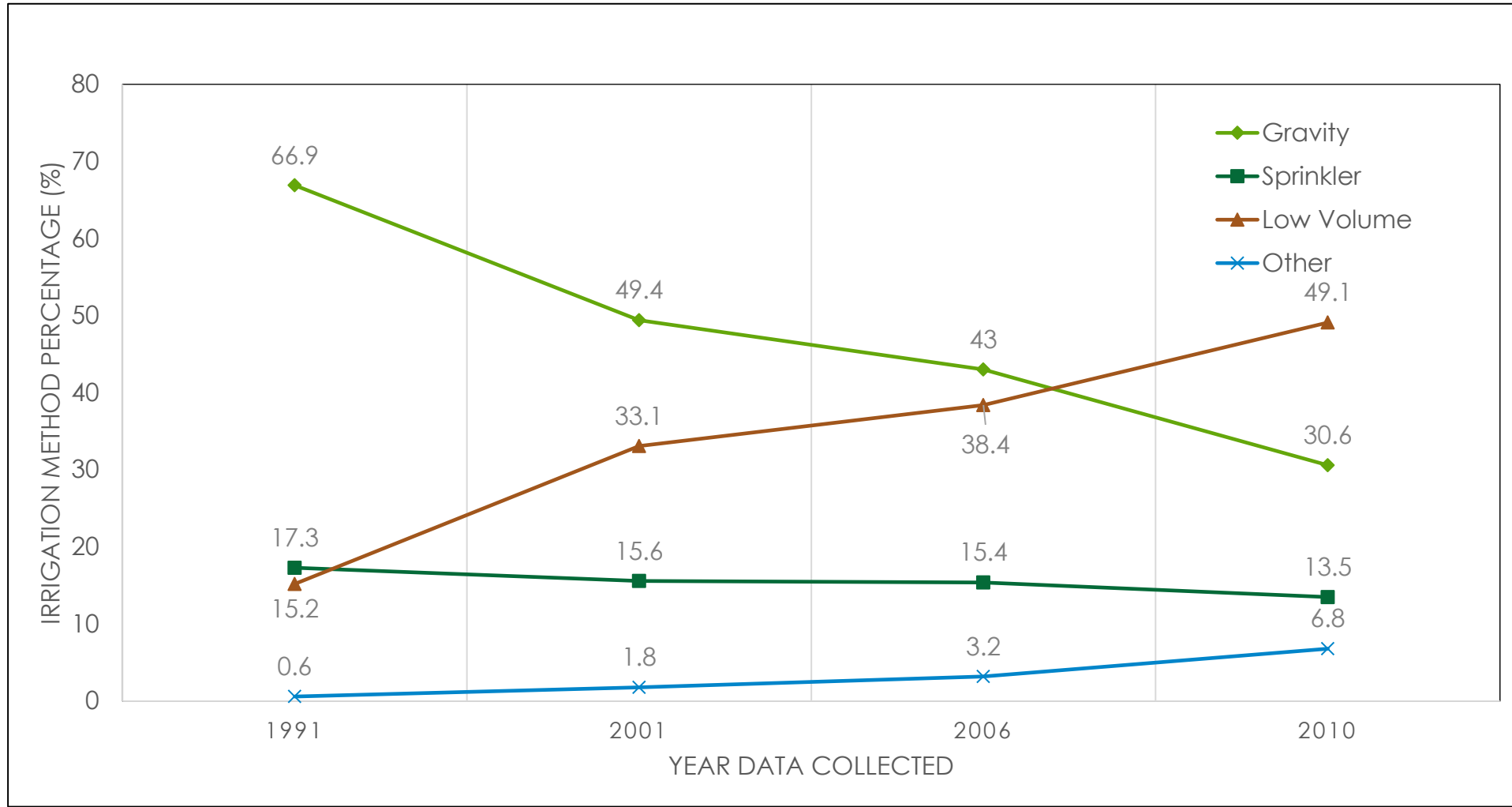
# How should agriculture be portrayed in California?

Environmental Water includes the water that is not captured. Agriculture uses 12% of total water in a wet year (2006) and 34% (35 MAF) in a dry year such as 2014.



Note: The fact is that the environment (not agriculture) gets 80% or more of the water in a wet year<sup>14</sup>

# California agriculture uses water efficiently



# Key Statistics about California Agriculture

- Media reports incorrectly claimed that California agriculture uses 80% of water.
- Number 1 state in the nation for agriculture outputs ([\\$55.9 billion in cash receipts](#)).
- Water use is very efficient – more than half the acres use efficient technologies such as drip irrigation.
- Acres in efficient irrigation technologies have been steadily increasing over time while less efficient methods are declining.
- Total irrigated acres – approximately 9.6 million acres.
- Only uses just over four times the water used for urban use.
- California is one of five unique Mediterranean regions in the world (with no rain for six to eight months of the year).
- Produces high-value “[specialty crops](#)” including fruits, nuts, and lettuces.
- Many specialty crops not grown anywhere else in the country.
- Reputation for providing a safe, affordable, nutritious, diverse, and consistent food supply to California and the nation.

Get more ag stats on California Agriculture from [CalPoly](#).

Policy Brief - <https://mura.cfbf.com/sites/foundation/assets/Water---Policy-Brief-2024.pdf?cacheid=0.725662340344279>



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