

# Sustainable cotton- an achievable goal in the Aral Sea area?

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The Swedish Aral Sea Society

# The Swedish Aral Sea Society

is a charitable organisation working for democracy and development in the Aral Sea Area with the support of Sida through Forum Syd.

We work mainly by organising seminars to draw attention to the situation in the Aral Sea Area.



# ARAL SEA BASIN

- Drainage Basin Boundary
- - - International Boundary
- River
- Lake
- Selected City

0 200 km



# Aral Sea : Pre-1960 Water Balance

Precipitation

$5-8 \text{ km}^3/\text{y}$   
( $\sim 150 \text{ mm}$ )

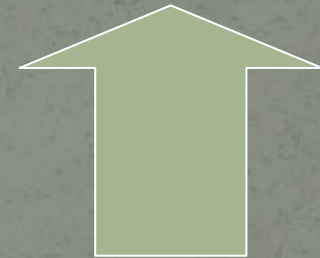
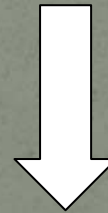
Evaporation

$58-65 \text{ km}^3/\text{y}$   
( $\sim 900 \text{ mm}$ )

River run-off

$52-56 \text{ km}^3/\text{y}$

$2/3 \text{ Amu D, } 1/3 \text{ Syr D}$



Groundwater  
flow

$0,07-5 \text{ km}^3/\text{y}$

Infiltration

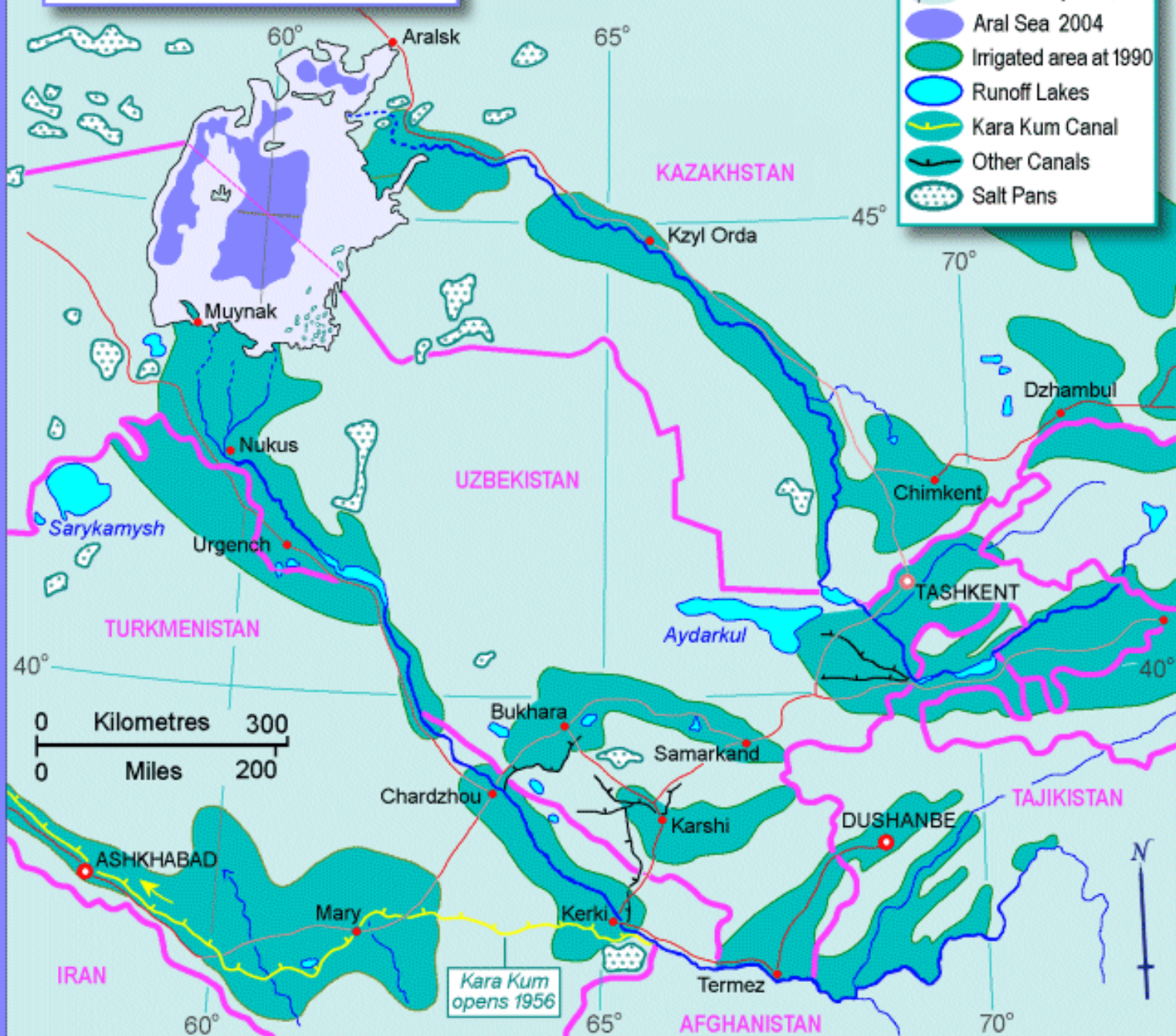
$1-2 \text{ km}^3/\text{y}$





# ARAL BASIN 2004

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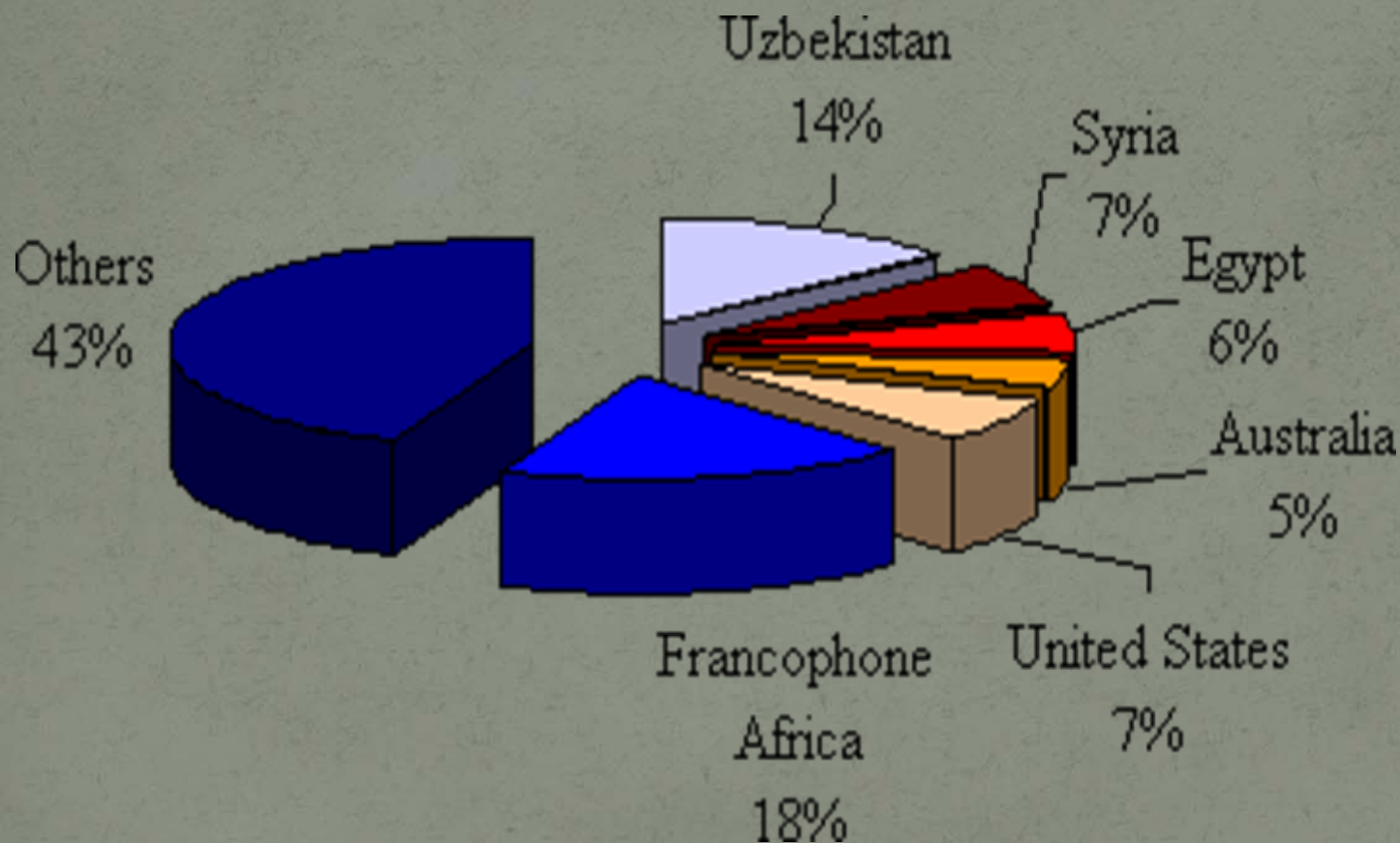


Conventional cotton  
production has - together  
with other water uses -  
resulted in one of the worst  
environmental and social  
catastrophes in modern times

What happened?

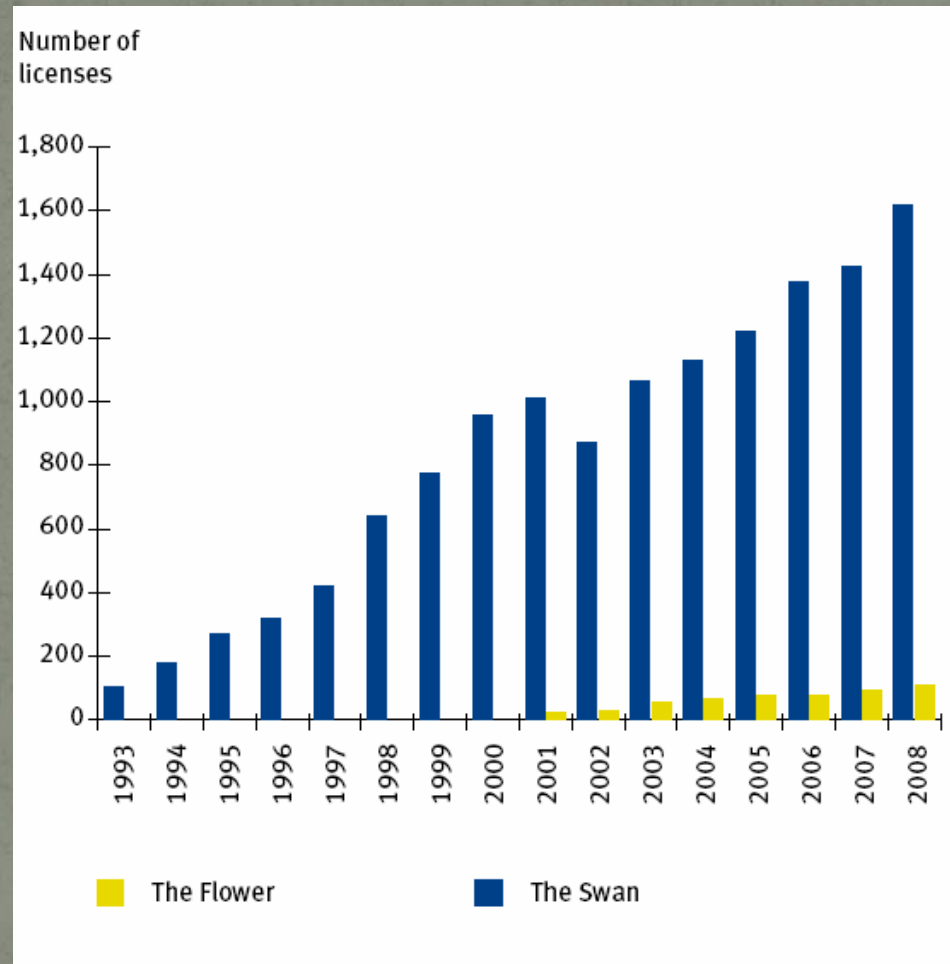


# EU imports (EU 15) by country of origin, average 2002-2004



Source: UNCTAD Secretariat, based on International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) <http://r0.unctad.org/infocomm/anglais/cotton/market/htm>

# Consumers are increasingly aware of their responsibility and their power



Source: Nordic Council of Ministers. 2009. Nordic Sustainable Development Indicators 2009



# Organic Cotton Production is NOT an Option for Central Asia

- Organic cotton requires MORE land per kg produced cotton - and in countries suitable for cotton production, land is needed for food production
- Organic cotton requires the same amount - or more – of water

# Organic Cotton Production is NOT an Option for Central Asia

- Organic cotton requires more energy,
- Organic cotton requires higher level of knowledge and management skills

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# Organic Cotton Production is NOT an Option for Central Asia

Organic Cotton needs substantial subsidies to provide for a living for cotton producers

Such subsidies are provided by the US and EU  
-still only about 1 % of the world's cotton is  
organic cotton

# CONCLUSIONs

Conventional cotton production has created today's problems

Organic cotton production is NOT a realistic option

Cotton production in the Aral Sea Area is NOT sustainable

Which are the options ?