

"AQUIFERS KNOW NO BOUNDARIES.... BUT *FARMERS DO!*" SO, WHO SHOULD CARE?!"

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Practically all aspects of human endeavours are somehow governed by “boundaries”, seen and unseen. Human social interactions are subject to boundaries that are set in cultural norms, certain activities are permitted and maybe encouraged, others are accepted, but not encouraged and yet others are completely taboo. Each day in our lives we either stay within these boundaries, go close to them or indeed cross them. Our perception of the world around us is also governed by boundaries though some of these may be very blurred boundaries.

Just as our daily lives are governed by boundaries, so our study of science is full of boundaries, explicit and implicit – for instance, the boundary between the science of biology and physics was once rigid and is now very blurred. This Author looks forward to the contributions and discussions that will take place in the Symposium to discuss and reflect on the dilemma. The discussion will relate boundaries in aquifers to the boundaries that a farmer might respect in his use of water in aquifers. I would suggest that it is us humans that need to make "boundaries" in a natural world, which is in fact a continuum, and exists in a smooth transition, from one state to the next.

In making a study of an aquifer system, the Rum-Saq Aquifer (Puri 1997¹) the Author stated that, “aquifers know no boundaries” (except hydraulic ones..) because it rapidly became clear that the area of study that initially was only several hundreds of square kilometres had to be extended to several thousand square kilometres. The experience gained from that study led the Author to be a proponent of the study of transboundary aquifers, which has now been recognised through the UN having adopted a Resolution that encourages those countries that possess transboundary aquifers, to approach the issue by referring to Draft Articles prepared by the International Law Commission, grounded in legal formulations. The presentation at the Symposium will be structured to move through conceptualisation of boundaries, to their characterisation and their calculation.

¹ “Aquifers know no boundaries”. Guest Commentary in Journal of International Groundwater Technology, April/May 1997, p6.