



Heatwave & Drought Threat Water and Food Systems

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August is a special month from the sustainability perspective. With the continuous heatwave and drought that we encounter this year, August 2012 indeed is the time to call for attention to the issue of sustainable living.

In the U.S., August has been designated as National Water Quality Month (NWQM) by Federal government to remind us of the importance of protecting our water supplies & quality. The ways in which we tend to our gardens & farms, produce and preserve our food, and dispose of our trash and solid including food wastes significantly impacts on our water usage & quality. From a world wide perspective, there are 7 billion people to feed on the planet today and another 2 billion are expected to join by 2050. Statistics say that each of us drinks from 2 to 4 litres of water every day, however most of the water we 'drink' is embedded in the food we eat: producing 1 kilo of beef for example consumes 15,000 litres of water while 1 kilo of wheat 'drinks up' 1,500 litres. When a billion people in the world already live in chronic hunger and water resources are under pressure we cannot pretend the problem is 'elsewhere'. An article titled "Heatwave turns America's waterways into rivers of death" on The Independent dated August 5 reveals that the cruel summer heat-wave that continues to scorch agricultural crops across much of the U.S. is leading to record-breaking water temperatures in rivers, streams & ponds, and the fast-falling water thus navigation & oxygen levels kill fish and food export. Locally, a Los Angeles Times article dated July 26 reports about an imminent rise in food and milk prices in California due to drought elsewhere. Resulting shortages in corn and soybean from the drought in the Midwest are driving up the cost for farmers to feed cattle, hogs, and livestock, meaning that it will cost more for us to eat.

August 18 is the National Honeybee Day, and the NHBD 2012 is themed " Sustainable Agriculture Starts with Honey Bees". Unfortunately, the drought is affecting the bees and sustainability of food production. The lack of rain has dried up the water supply for many flowers, which affects their production of nectar and pollen levels, which bees rely on. That is to say, dried-up flowers means the bees don't have much to eat and produce, and less pollination is affecting the food supply. In August 2011 the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that rainless, triple-digit temperatures in Texas stressed the bees, with honey production plummeting an estimated 50% since the year before. According to an article on HobbyFarms.com dated August 3, new hives and next year's harvest could be at risk because of the drought.

August 26-31, the last week of August is the World Water Week (WWW). Led by U.N. and Stockholm International Water Institute, WWW 2012 in Stockholm is themed on Water & Food Safety, continuing the theme of U.N.'s World Water Day on March 22. It will discuss the impact of food production on water and ecosystems on the context of food security and how to address solutions for managing the trade-offs between human needs and healthy ecosystems. Water is used throughout the food production chain from the farm to processing to the kitchen table and is often a direct ingredient in food and beverages. Thus, the quality of water can have significant impact on the quality and taste of food products. Food safety issues pose a more serious threat to the produce industry than damage from insects, plant diseases and other pest problems. Contamination may occur pre-harvest or post harvest. Pre-harvest issues include irrigation and irrigation

sources. Post harvest concerns include wash water and produce sanitation.

August 26 is also the World Kitchen Garden Day (WKGD), an annual, decentralized celebration of safe & nutritious food produced on a human & local scale, sponsored by Kitchen Gardeners International in which I'm a member, a Kitchen Gardner. Everyone has an impact on the water & food system and we individually are all responsible for making a difference. Coping with population growth, climate change and ensuring access to safe and nutritious food to everyone call for a series of actions that we individually can all help with:

? Follow a healthier, sustainable diet;

? Consume less water-intensive products;

? Produce more food, of better quality, with less water.

? Reduce the scandalous food wastage: 30% of the food produced worldwide is never eaten and the water used to produce it is definitively lost!

Every person deserves clean water and safe food - it is vital for our health, communities, environment and economy. We have made great progress in reducing pollution during the past 40 years. But many challenges remain and we must work together to protect clean water for our families and future generations. With 2012 marking the 40th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the U.S. law for protecting our most irreplaceable resource, it is significant for all of us to celebrate the 2012 NWQM, NHBD, WWW and WKGD. Led by Dr. Edward Huang, a Jamie Oliver Food Foundation's Food Revolution Ambassador, ISERI & CIEDM therefore extend our TEDxManhattan 2012 Viewing Party Change the Way We Eat hosted in January, World Water Day 2012 in March and the Food Revolution Day in May by engaging and participating a number of water & food related activities as following so as to fulfill Dr. Huang's role as the Ambassador and at the same time to raise public awareness and actions on those four important month/week/days. They include:

- Write and publish this article to disseminate the goals of the above four events.
- On August 3, CIEDM and ISERI took Water Environment Federation's (WEF) pledge for "Water's Worth It!" to support clean and safe water worldwide and protect public health and wellness.
- On August 9, we took action with Environmental Working Group (EWG) by pledging to vote "yes" on Prop 37 in November, a California ballot initiative requiring that foods containing genetically engineered substances be identified on the package.
- On August 10, we signed a petition at Change.org of asking: Trader Joe stop selling meat fed with drugs!"
- On August 17, we'll hold the ISERI-CIEDM Workshop on Water & Food Systems. The educational workshop is free and open to public. Confirmed participants include 10 students of Hsi Lai Temple's Buddhist College, 10 members of Buddha's Light International Association, and other invited guests. The workshop program begins with an introduction of the 2012's NWQM, NHBD, WWW and WKGD, a Dr. Huang's presentation on the subject of Water & Food System, a tour of Arcadia EcoHome, a green rated building with its Victory Garden and other yard areas as Certified Wildlife Habitat, Certified Pollinator Habitat and verified Ocean Friendly Garden, a Q&A session and group photo at the end. Meeting preparation includes property cleaning starts at 9am and the workshop is scheduled at 2-4:30pm.
- On August 21-23, Dr. Huang will attend Al Gore's Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training in San Francisco, learn the realities of climate change and to become one of his voluntary Climate Leaders
- On August 28, three ISERI & CIEDM personnel will attend the San Diego Gas & Electric's seminar on Update on Food Safety in San Diego.

Providing clean water and safe food to everyone is important. We as responsible global citizens believe that to accomplish that goal will require bold leadership, innovative approaches, the collaboration of many, and

the passion to make it happen. Please join ISERI and CIEDM making the strikes.

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