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POST FOOD

Vegetarian Diet Needed To Prevent Global Food And Water Crisis, Report Says

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A new report warns that unless the world's population [adopts a vegetarian diet over the next 40 years, we may face a global food shortage crisis](#) nothing short of a catastrophe.

The warning comes as [U.S. meat consumption declines](#) -- it'll be down more than 12 percent from 2007 by the end of 2012. The amount comes to 165.5 pounds per person a year, or under half a pound a day.

Growing awareness of global food security issues may be to thank in part, but the world still has a long way to go. The [findings](#) by leading water scientists at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) said that about 20 percent of protein in human diets is currently animal-based, but unless that drops to 5 percent by 2050 there won't be enough food to nourish the additional 2 billion people estimated to be alive by 2050.

What does all this have to do with water? According to a SIWI release, the raising of meat and fish require a lot of water -- and one third of all that food is either lost or wasted. If nothing is done, [pressure on water resources will threaten food and water security](#):

More than one-fourth of all the water we use worldwide is taken to grow over one billion tons of food that nobody eats. That water, together with the billions of dollars spent to grow, ship, package and purchase the food, is sent down the drain." said Torgny Holmgren, Executive Director of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). "Reducing the waste of food is the smartest and most direct route to relieve pressure on water and land resources. It's an opportunity we cannot afford to overlook," he added. SIWI recommends that in addition to cutting down on the amount of meat we eat, saving water by reducing food waste, increasing productivity, plant breeding and waste water recycling will be critical.

The Guardian points out that a separate report by the [International Water Management Institute \(IWMI\)](#) said that [investing in small pumps and simple technology](#) in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia will go far to help keep millions of farmers fed, rather than developing expensive, large-scale irrigation projects.