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Study: Go veggie or face global famine

By Dan Buckley

Wednesday, August 29, 2012

Tofu and salad to save us from extinction, anyone? They may be the only hope for continuing life on the planet, according to the world's leading experts on water.

Issuing one of the sternest warnings yet about global food supplies, scientists warn that the world's population may have to switch almost completely to a vegetarian diet over the next 40 years to avoid catastrophic shortages and widespread famine.

Researchers at the Stockholm International Water Institute in Sweden say the planet will have to trim its meat-based diet from 20% to 5% to cope with water shortages and feed an extra 2bn people by 2050.

"There will not be enough water available on current croplands to produce food for the expected 9bn population in 2050 if we follow current trends and changes towards diets common in western nations," states the report, entitled Feeding a Thirsty World: Challenges and Opportunities for a Water and Food Secure World.

Co-written by a dozen experts from the institute, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, and the International Water Management Institute, the report provides new evidence that current methods of food production could lead to increased shortages and intense competition for scarce water resources in many regions of the world.

The report notes that 900m people are hungry and 2bn more are undernourished in spite of a continual rise in per capita production.

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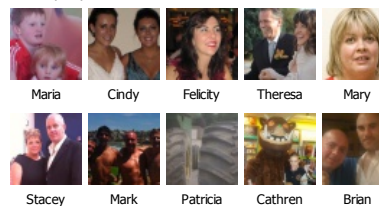
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