

## Water Energy Food Nexus FAQ

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### **Q. 1) Okay, food water and energy are connected. How does that impact me?**

While it may sound like an academic discussion, the food, water and energy nexus has everything to do with our lives. Government policies and actions and the choices we make as consumers greatly influence supplies, prices and security for all three.

There are many ways individuals and households can reduce food waste, and municipalities can lend a hand too.

Heavy reliance on drilling for domestic natural gas in the name of energy security can jeopardize our water security by polluting increasingly strained supplies of fresh water. As consumers and constituents, we can influence energy policy, and we have a choice where we get our power and fuel.

### **Q.2) I'm almost afraid to ask, but are there any other factors affecting food, water and energy?**

There are many factors that influence our food, water and energy systems and the complex web interconnecting these three systems. The list includes climate change, population growth, government and economic policies. A recent World Economic Forum report puts it this way: "A drought can lead to increasing food prices, or to power plants, which need water to function, shutting down. Similarly, water production, distribution and treatment are all energy intensive functions and can be affected by energy shortages and pricing. Climate change today is placing increasing stress on this nexus."

### **Q.3) These sound like big issues. Can I really do anything about it?**

There is plenty for us to do at the household level to use food, water and energy more sustainably. We can choose energy options that are water-friendly (and energy-friendly):

- Go renewable. By installing solar electric panels and other water-friendly renewable electric systems at your home (or elsewhere), you can reduce your dependence on electricity produced by water-guzzling (and fish-killing) nuclear and fossil-fuelled power plants. In addition, consider purchasing energy- and water-efficient appliances when you replace older models, because saving energy saves water.

We can choose water options that are energy-friendly (and food-friendly):

- Avoid purchasing bottled water.
- Saving water saves energy. By using less water at home - e.g. by taking shorter showers and repairing leaks right away - you will use less water in the first place, which means less energy is required to transport that water. You will use less energy to heat the water and you'll send less water down the drain. Wastewater treatment is energy-intensive so less water being treated means less energy being consumed.

We can choose food options that are water-friendly (and energy-friendly):

- Reduce food waste. Wasted food translates to wasted energy.
- Eat less meat. Animal production requires large volumes of water for livestock feed irrigation, drinking water and maintenance.

**Q.4)What is nexus approach?**

Improved water, energy and food security on a global level can be achieved through a nexus approach - an approach that integrates management and governance across sectors and scales. A nexus approach can support the transition to a Green Economy, which aims, among other things, at resource use efficiency and greater policy coherence. Given the increasing interconnectedness across sectors and in space and time, a reduction of negative economic, social and environmental externalities can increase overall resource use efficiency, provide additional benefits and secure the human rights to water and food. In a nexus-based approach, conventional policy- and decision-making in "silos" therefore would give way to an approach that reduces trade-offs and builds synergies across sectors.

Next FAQ Set >>  
**Rain Water Harvesting**