

Stephanie Blenckner, SIWI  
+46 (0)8-522 139 86, [stephanie.blenckner@siwi.org](mailto:stephanie.blenckner@siwi.org)  
Josh Paglia, SIWI  
+46 (0)8-522 139 96, [josh.paglia@siwi.org](mailto:josh.paglia@siwi.org)  
Anna Norén, SIWI  
+46 (0)70-338 79 51, [anna.noren@siwi.org](mailto:anna.noren@siwi.org)  
[www.worldwaterweek.org](http://www.worldwaterweek.org), [www.siwi.org](http://www.siwi.org)

## **50 Percent of Food is Wasted Causing Water, Food and Hunger Crisis, Says SIWI, FAO and IWMI**

To meet the challenge of feeding growing populations and the global hungry, massive reductions in the amount of food wasted after production are needed. The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) released on Thursday, August 21, a policy brief "[Saving Water: From Field to Fork – Curbing Losses and Wastage in the Food Chain](#)," that calls on governments to reduce by half, by 2025, the amount of food that is wasted after it is grown and outlines attainable steps for this to be achieved.

### **Tossed Food: Like Leaving the Tap Running**

Tremendous quantities of food are discarded in processing, transport, supermarkets and people's kitchens. This wasted food is also wasted water. In the US, for instance, as much as 30 percent of food, worth some USD 48.3 billion, is thrown away. That's like leaving the tap running and pouring 40 trillion litres of water into the garbage can - enough water to meet the household needs of 500 million people. Through international trade, savings in one country might benefit communities in other parts of the world.

More than enough food is produced to feed a healthy global population. Distribution and access to food is a problem – many are hungry, while at the same time many over-eat. The Report highlights an often overlooked problem: we are providing food to take care of not only our necessary consumption but also our wasteful habits.

"As much as half of the water used to grow food globally may be lost or wasted," says Dr. Charlotte de Fraiture, Researcher at IWMI. "Curbing these losses and improving water productivity provides win-win opportunities for farmers, business, ecosystems, and the global hungry. An effective water-saving strategy requires that minimising food wastage is firmly placed on the political agenda."

Food production is constrained by the availability of water and land resources. An estimated 1.2 billion people already live in areas where there is not enough water to meet demand. And with rising demand for water-intensive agricultural products, such as beef and bioenergy, pressure mounts. According to the Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture 2007, these trends will lead to crises in many places, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. "Unless we change our practices, water will be a key constraint to food production in the future," said Dr. Pasquale Steduto of FAO.

### **Saving Water from 'Field to Fork'**

Water losses accumulate as food is wasted before and after it reaches the consumer. In poorer countries, a majority of uneaten food is lost before it has a chance to be consumed. Depending on the crop, an estimated 15-35 percent of food may be lost in the field. Another 10-15 percent is discarded during processing, transport and storage. In richer countries, production is more efficient but waste is greater: people toss the food they buy and all the resources used to grow, ship and produce the food along with it. The Report stresses that the magnitude of current food losses presents both challenges and opportunities. "Improving water productivity and reducing the quantity of food that is wasted can enable us to provide a better diet for the poor and enough food for growing populations," says Prof. Jan Lundqvist of SIWI. "Reaching the target we propose, a 50 percent reduction of losses and wastage in the production and consumption chain is a necessary and achievable goal." The report will be freely available at [www.siwi.org](http://www.siwi.org) August 21.