

*'Peak Everything...'*

PEAK OIL THEORISTS SUCH AS Richard Heinberg, James Howard Kunstler, Matthew Simmons, and others turn out to be correct. Petroleum supplies are declining as demand increases. This unfolding trend will radically change human habitation on the Earth. Among the consequences will be the drastic reduction of food and fresh water available to people, not only in poorer parts of the globe, but throughout the planet.

Industrial societies with their industrial agriculture are dependent upon fossil fuels such as petroleum, natural gas, and coal for many things, including transportation, electricity, and making plastics and other modern essentials. Oil is the main ingredient in conventional food. As the supply of petroleum and other fossil fuels decline Peak Water and Peak Food will follow. In recent months the world has seen the return of food riots in the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa.

A growing scarcity of water threatens food supplies. Food production and agriculture are the largest users of fresh water, consuming about 70% of water globally, according to the study by the Stockholm International Water Institute. In his book "Peak Everything: Waking Up to the Century of Declines," Heinberg says that over 80% of fresh water goes toward agriculture in the United States.

Scarce supplies of water, "will be a key constraint to food production." If there is no change in current practices in food production and consumption, according to a contributor to the Stockholm report, "it is likely that twice as much water as that used today would be required by 2015 to produce the world's required food." But that amount of water would not be available, indicating the possibility of widespread food fights and even famine.

A solution—according to author John Jeavons in his classic book "How to Grow More Vegetables"—is to revive small-scale farming. In addition to Jeavons' biointensive farming, others advocate the system referred to as permaculture. Heinberg calls for the de-industrialization of agriculture. He says that a key will be getting more farmers and re-ruralization and re-localization.

"If gas keeps going up, it's going to be catastrophic in every possible way,"

"Present and future generations may become acquainted with that old, formerly familiar but unwelcome houseguest—famine."

The electrical grid in Baghdad is not expected to be restored for many years and is already down in other parts of the world. An increasing number of people in parts of Hawai'i, California's North Coast, and elsewhere are planning for the future by making homes that are off the electrical grid. Industrial societies run on electricity powered by the cheap energy of fossil fuels. As the supply of those energy sources decline and world-wide competition for them through wars and other means heighten, more electrical grids will fail, and with them access to both food and water.

The pace quickens. The signs are more numerous. People need even more than food security; they need food sovereignty. Who controls global food? Growing at

least part of one's own food--and having something to trade--will be essential to survival. *[contributed]* □□□