

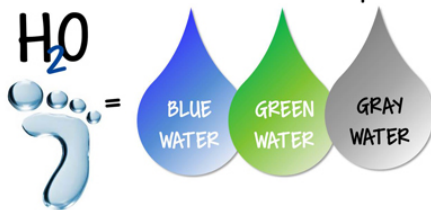
The theme for World Food Day, ‘**Water is Life – Water is Food, Leave No One Behind,**’ underscores the sacred nature of water and its pivotal role in sustaining all life on Earth.

Despite covering 71% of our planet’s surface, only 2.5% of the world’s water is freshwater, with agriculture and food production being the largest consumers.

Every bite of food carries a water footprint. Processed and animal-based products (meat, dairy, eggs) use more water than fruits, vegetables, and beans. Meat production, for instance, relies heavily on water to grow animal feed.

Food origin also matters; farming in water-scarce regions strains local sources and contributes to a ‘water export’ effect when products are shipped elsewhere. Long-distance food transport, especially when refrigeration is necessary, escalates water footprints due to fuel and electricity usage.

### 3 Elements of a Water Footprint



**Blue:** surface water and groundwater (rivers, aquifers) used for irrigation and livestock

**Green:** the amount of rainwater stored in the soil as moisture and used by plants/crops

**Gray:** wastewater and agricultural runoff caused by chemicals and industrial food production

Water security is inseparable from food security. The challenges of water scarcity, pollution, and unequal distribution are intensified by climate change. Wealthy countries who rely on foreign water for food production create unsustainable, unfair supply chains, depleting essential water sources and escalating conflicts in exploited regions.



Launched in 2021, the **Declaration** aims to reshape global supply chains by 2030, focusing on fair and responsible water use to benefit the global economy.

Water is our collective responsibility and future. By understanding our individual water footprint and making conscious choices, we can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world. Look up the water footprint of food items at: [watercalculator.org](http://watercalculator.org)

## CONTEMPLATION

*If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one – Saint Teresa of Calcutta*

Who comes to mind when you think of feeding 'just one'? Consider how this act could ripple through our shared, global food and water systems, especially when guided by the principle of 'leave no one behind.'



*Column by: Yolande Whalen (Justice Coordinator)*