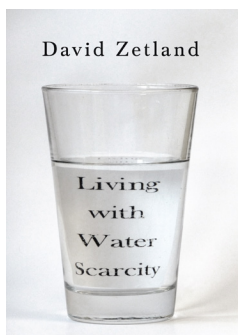


make a difference on how the actual food systems affect and shape our cities. It is through our conscious decisions about the food we choose (either to grow, buy, cook, eat, throw away, etc.) that the whole system can be greatly influenced. The questions “What if WE were to use food dif-

ferently?” and “What if we could return to ancient customs and choose sites for our cities?” give the readers an opportunity to reflect on their actions and hopefully lead to a change of attitude towards their own food culture. This book can be seen as a guide to see where we come from and correct some

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Cynthia Escobedo is from Mexico and obtained a bachelor degree in Food Science in Monterrey. She is currently studying International Food Business and Consumer Studies as a master degree program at the University of Kassel, Germany. She has work experience in research and development of new products, focusing on sensory science.



## Living with Water Scarcity

A book review by LJUBOV LAPATINA

Author: David Zetland

Book title: *Living with Water Scarcity* (116 pages, 10.00 USD)

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David Zetland is an experienced resource economist with a PhD in Agricultural and Resource Economics from University of California, Davis. He has engaged himself with political economy of water policies for ten years working as a consultant, speaker, teacher and blogger. He has published this book with a hope that people would implement the ideas presented and aims at getting readers to “think differently about problems, causes and responses” (Zetland 2014: 6).

As the title implies the emphasis of the book is centred around the problem of water scarcity –

its origins, costs and ways to tackle it. It draws on economic perspectives on the topic, backed up by environmental and political dimensions. The book is divided into two parts with the first one dedicated to economics and the second one dealing with politics. Further, each of two parts consists of 5 chapters focusing on private and social topics, respectively. The author starts by discussing water for private use first because, as he explained, these uses “are simpler to understand” (Zetland 2014: 109). David Zetland tried to keep his book short and simple so as to be understandable for a reader without the corresponding scientific background,

but for those interested in references and case studies the author recommended visiting [www.livingwithwaterscarcity.com](http://www.livingwithwaterscarcity.com) website to learn more. The book addresses important areas in understanding the topic of water scarcity issues such as rights to water, water regulations and water management, insurance for companies against dangerous spills and environmental-performance bonds, bottled water, recycled water, dams and many more. The author stressed that in order to ration our water demand we should not rely on prices and markets solely, but also integrate values that water supports in our lives, namely cultural, social and environmental. The origins of scarcity discussed in the book cover issues such as high demand driven by taste and price and often far exceeding supply, subsidies, inappropriate water management and regulation and corruption, just to name a few. Several times throughout the book the author emphasised inappropriate water pricing that does not include the scarcity cost of water and hence results in extremely cheap water that is affordable, highly demanded and as a result, overused. Furthermore, another crucial origin of scarcity is addressed – rights that have been issued by politicians without acknowledging physical limits which has led/ is leading to catastrophic consequences.

Through examples of both positive and negative managerial practices and regulations worldwide the author draws a clear line between what is right and what is wrong in the times when water becomes a scarce resource in many places around the globe. Besides, the examples of good practices prove that it is possible to regulate and allocate properly – all it takes is honest bureaucracy and management, correct allocations and fair pricing for water. David Zetland emphasises that regulations

and management systems that were established and used to work for centuries in the era of abundance are inappropriate for the time of scarcity. David Zetland has managed to write about a complex topic in an easy and accessible way, applying common sense economics and providing understandable comparisons. The author stressed that water scarcity is inevitable, be it a quantity or a quality scarcity, however what is important is learning the ways to live with it, finding appropriate solutions and adopting best practices.

At some point the reader might think that the book is addressed rather to politicians, bureaucrats and water managers than to a common citizen, however a careful reader will notice important messages left by the author several times throughout the book – calls for actions on an individual level and active participation instead of indifferent silence and ignorance, because the problem is dramatic and affects everyone at all levels in one way or another – today or tomorrow. After reading this book David Zetland wants his readers to become aware of the problem, prioritise the dimensions relevant in a particular community and start discussing options. And here the author's key message to his readers is: "Don't wait for others to do it. You have the right and an obligation to determine your future" (Zetland 2014: 109).

Undoubtedly the book should be a "must-read" for politicians and water managers to assist them in setting appropriate regulations, finding solutions and strategies, but the target audience is not limited to those in the decision-making process – everyone can benefit from reading it because a change can come only when everybody takes an action on his/her level, getting engaged and acting responsively.

### Author information:

Ljubov Lapatina studied Plant Protection and Quarantine at St. Petersburg State Agrarian University (Russia) and obtained her Master's degree in International Food Business and Consumer Studies at Kassel University and Fulda University of Applied Sciences in 2012. From January 2013 until March 2014 she has worked as a research associate at Kassel University, Department of Organic Food Quality and Food Culture, with research focus on organic food quality and sustainability. Since April 2014 - teaching assistant at Kassel University and Fulda University of Applied Sciences.